



GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND
PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS
THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN
MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Proceedings of the Fourth Regional Steering Committee Meeting

**8 July 2026
Vientiane, Lao PDR
and via Zoom**



APPROVAL SIGNATURES



Mr. Oudomsack Philavong
Chair

Date **03 SEP 2026**

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Mr. Gerd Trogemann
Co-Chair

Date **07-Sep-2026**



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Executive Summary

The Fourth Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in ASEAN countries was held on 08 July 2026 in Vientiane, Lao PDR, in conjunction with the 26th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM). Co-chaired by Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, AWGWRM Chairperson, and Mr. Gerd Trogemann of UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub, the meeting brought together 55 participants from ASEAN Member States (AMS), the ASEAN Secretariat, UNDP, PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF), and the East Asian Seas Executive Committee, both in-person and online.

The Meeting reviewed implementation progress of the six participating ASEAN Member States and the regional component, including key achievements, lessons learned, implementation challenges, co-financing delivery, and planned next steps. The RSC also reviewed progress in implementing the approved Mid-Term Review (MTR) Management Response, the preparation of the 2026 Project Implementation Report (PIR), the planned activities for the third and fourth quarters of 2026, and the proposed 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget, including the proposed no-cost extension of the Project.

The RSC noted and adopted the following key decisions and recommendations:

- Noted the implementation progress, lessons learned, challenges, and next steps presented by the six participating ASEAN Member States and the regional component.
- Provisionally endorsed the proposed no-cost extension of the Project, subject to the availability of project funds and completion of UNDP's due diligence. Within 2026, the RPMU, in consultation with the participating countries, will review the available project funds and remaining activities, and prepare the revised Work Plan and Budget covering the remaining period of 2026, 2027 and the proposed 2028 extension period. The revised Work Plan and Budget will be submitted to the RSC for review and consideration at an Ad Hoc RSC Meeting to be convened in late 2026 or early 2027.
- The ASEAN Secretariat to confirm whether endorsement of the project extension would be required by the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN).
- Urged the RPMU, participating countries, and project partners to complete the remaining Mid-Term Review (MTR) management actions and requested the RPMU to align the proposed process in the review of key technical outputs in accordance with the ASEAN procedure highlighting the engagement of the ASEAN Secretariat and the AWGWRM.

- Noted the proposed activities and budget for the remaining period of 2026 and approved in principle the proposed 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget, subject to final review and endorsement, and noted that the RPMU would prepare a consultation timeline, including the possible use of email circulation, to facilitate its timely review and approval.
- Noted the request to expand the engagement of National Focal Points from all 11 ASEAN Member States in key project activities, ensure the proper review and endorsement of IRBM Project knowledge products, and further discuss their possible integration into the ASEAN IWRM Platform and Water Data Management and Reporting System maintained by Malaysia, including arrangements for proper handover of knowledge products.

The Meeting concluded with appreciation to the Government of Lao PDR for hosting the Meeting and to all participants for their continued commitment to advancing Integrated River Basin Management in ASEAN.

Introduction

- i. The Fourth Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the East Asian Seas through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in ASEAN countries was held on 08 July 2026. Organized back-to-back with the 26th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM), the meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, with in-person attendance at Amari Hotel in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and online participation via Zoom.
- ii. The RSC meeting was hosted by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic through the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE), and attended by a total of 55 participants (32 female and 23 male). In particular, the Meeting was attended by the Chairperson of the AWGWRM, representatives from the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the AWGWRM from nine ASEAN Member States (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam), the East Asian Seas Executive Committee (EAS EC), the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF), UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub in Asia and the Pacific (UNDP-BRH), and representatives from the local governments of the Project's seven priority river basins.
- iii. The RSC meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chairperson of the AWGWRM, and Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, Regional Programme and Global Policy Network, UNDP-BRH. The RPMU and the MAE of Lao PDR served as the Secretariat for the RSC meeting.
- iv. The complete list of participants is provided in **Annex A**.

Pre-RSC Meeting Activity

- i. Prior to the formal opening of the Fourth RSC Meeting, delegates witnessed the initial screening of the IRBM Project Animated Explainer Video and the formal launch of the State of River Basin (SORB) Baseline Report for the Nam Tha River Basin of Lao PDR. The animated explainer video was developed to enhance public awareness and understanding of IRBM and the Source-to-Sea approach and the objectives and targets of the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN IRBM Project. Meanwhile, the SORB Baseline Report provides a comprehensive baseline assessment of the biophysical, socioeconomic and governance conditions of the Nam Tha River Basin and will serve as an important reference for river basin planning, monitoring, and implementation of IRBM in Lao PDR.

Opening of the Meeting

- i. Mr. Gerd Trogemann, Manager, Regional Programme and Global Policy Network, UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub for Asia and the Pacific, welcomed the participants on behalf of UNDP. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Lao PDR, particularly the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, for hosting the Meeting. He also thanked his co-chair, Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chairperson of the AWGWRM and Director General of the Department of Water Resources, together with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) and the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) for their support and excellent organization of the Meeting.

Mr. Trogemann welcomed the signing of Malaysia's Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on 16 June 2026, noting that all six participating ASEAN Member States are now actively implementing project activities. He likewise welcomed the participation of representatives from the local government partners from the Project's seven priority river basins, recognizing their crucial role in the successful implementation of integrated river basin management at the basin level.

As the project is now on its fourth year of implementation, Mr. Trogemann noted that it has reached an important stage where the plans, assessments, and preparatory work undertaken by the participating countries are expected to translate into concrete implementation and tangible results on the ground. Recognizing that the project is scheduled to conclude in 2027, he encouraged the participating countries to maintain a strong implementation focus to ensure the timely delivery of project outcomes and objectives.

- ii. Mr. Oudomsack Philavong, Chairperson of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management (AWGWRM) and Director General of the Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Lao PDR, welcomed all delegates and expressed appreciation to the PSC members, ASEAN Member States, UNDP, PRF, ASEC and development partners for their continued commitment to the successful implementation of the Project. He emphasized that the IRBM Project is one of the flagship regional initiatives under the AWGWRM, directly supporting implementation of the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Water Resources Management through strengthening integrated river basin management, improving water quality, reducing pollution, protecting environmental flows, and enhancing regional cooperation and capacity building among ASEAN Member States. He further noted that, through the Project, the AWGWRM is not only implementing activities in selected river basins but also developing regional knowledge, technical guidance and practical tools that contribute to AWGWRM priorities and can benefit all ASEAN Member States.

Mr. Philavong highlighted the progress achieved over the past year, including the preparation of State of River Basin Reports, development of regional technical guidance and knowledge products, implementation of capacity-building activities, and strengthened collaboration among participating countries. He noted that while the Mid-Term Review confirmed the continued relevance of the Project, it also underscored the need to accelerate implementation, strengthen coordination among partners, advance pilot project implementation, and ensure the sustainability of project results. In this context, he expressed that the Meeting would provide an important opportunity to review progress and agree on practical actions for the coming year. Emphasizing that although project implementation currently covers six ASEAN Member States, its benefits extend to all ASEAN Member States. He therefore encouraged all AWGWRM focal points to actively participate in the Project's regional meetings, technical workshops, training programs and knowledge-sharing activities. He also encouraged the RPMU to continue engaging all AWGWRM focal points and provide opportunities for all Member States to contribute to technical discussions and regional activities.

In closing, Mr. Philavong conveyed his appreciation to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, PRF, the ASEC and all implementing partners for their continued support and collaboration. He expressed confidence that, through sustained partnership and active participation, the Project would achieve its objectives and wished the members a productive and successful meeting.

1. Approval of Meeting Agenda

- 1.1 The RSC Meeting adopted the agenda, as presented (**Annex B**).
- 1.2 The RSC meeting documents, PowerPoint presentations, and photos are accessible via the [4th RSC Gdrive](#).

2. Matters Arising from the Third RSC Meeting

- 2.1 Ms. Daisy Padayao, IRBM Project Technical Officer, presented the key decisions and recommendations arising from the Third RSC Meeting held in Bali, Indonesia on 04 June 2025, together with the status of actions undertaken in response to those decisions, as follows:

2.2 **Country and Regional Progress Reports**

- The RSC noted the implementation progress, key lessons learned, and planned next steps at the regional and national levels.
- The RSC noted the status of the MOAs for project implementation in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, including Malaysia's request for a one-year no-cost extension, and agreed to revisit the request at the 2026 RSC Meeting based on project implementation progress.
- Status: The MOA for project implementation in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia were signed in July 2025, November 2025 and June 2026, respectively, thereby formalizing project implementation in the three countries. Discussions regarding Malaysia's request for a one-year no-cost project extension and further updates on implementation progress were covered under Agenda Item 3.0.

2.3 **Mid-Term Review Findings and Recommendations**

- The RSC agreed in principle with the MTR recommendations and proposed Management Response, and members were invited to submit any additional comments or concerns to the RPMU and UNDP following the Meeting.
- Status: The Management Response had been finalized incorporating comments received during the Third RSC Meeting. The RPMU and UNDP BRH, in collaboration with the project partners, have since undertaken actions to implement the agreed management responses, with progress being periodically monitored and reported to UNDP. A detailed update on implementation of the Management Response is covered under Agenda Item 4.0.

2.4 **2025 Reprofiled Work Plan and Budget and Proposed 2026 Annual Work Plan and Budget**

- The RSC agreed in principle with the reprofiled 2025 Work Plan and Budget and the proposed 2026 Work Plan and Budget, subject to further adjustments based on emerging priorities, and to apply corrections on the 2026 Work Plan and Budget title and commencement schedule of the pilot project development process.
- Status: Necessary amendments in the meeting documents were incorporated in the final 2025 RSC Proceedings. The level of fund utilization as of 30 June 2026, together with the proposed 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget, is presented under Agenda Item 5.0.

3. Country and Regional Progress Reports

3.1 The RSC received progress reports from the six participating AMS. Presentations highlighted the cumulative implementation progress since project commencement, focusing on major accomplishments under the four project components, co-financing delivery, implementation challenges, lessons learned and next steps. The presentations were delivered by the following representatives:

- **Cambodia:** Ms. Nai Rathana, Vice Chief Officer, Department of Water Quality Management, Ministry of Environment;
- **Indonesia:** Ms. Irene Batara Batoarung, Coordinator of the Working Group for Programme, Information Systems and Cooperation, Environmental Control Agency, Ministry of Environment;
- **Lao PDR:** Mr. Thanongxay Douangnoulack, Director of Division, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment;
- **Malaysia:** Ms. Norlida binti Mamad, Director, River Basin Management Division, Department of Irrigation and Drainage, Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation;
- **Philippines:** Engr. Josephine Billones, OIC-Chief, Policy and Program Division, National Water Resources Board;
- **Viet Nam:** Ms. Tran Thi Le Anh, Deputy Head, Division of Environment Quality Management, Viet Nam Environment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment.

3.2 The detailed Country Progress Reports were submitted as meeting documents for the information of the RSC. The following are highlights from the presentations:

3.3 Cambodia

- **Key implementation progress**
 - **Component 1 (Baseline Assessment for Source to Sea Continuum):** Finalized the SORB Report for the Kampong Bay River Basin (KBRB) and shared the SORB reporting experience and progress with regional project partners in Xiamen (Nov 2024) and Technical Working Group (Dec 2025); completed the Total Pollutant Loading (TPL) assessment from agriculture and livestock sources around KBRB, with TPL assessment expanded to domestic and tourism sources; conducted a National Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus consultation workshop (June 2026) building on learnings from the regional REWEFe Toolkit training and WEFE Nexus application (April 2026).
 - **Component 2 (IRBM Pilot Projects):** Collaborated with EnviroStrat (regional consultant) to gather information for a generic solutions template for pilot project

development and held stakeholder discussions in Kampot Province on proposed interventions, including a centralized wastewater treatment plant for western Kampot City and decentralized sewage/solid waste management for the Kampong Samaki fishing community; feasibility studies for both interventions are targeted for completion within 2026.

- **Component 3 (Knowledge Management and Capacity Development):** Coordinated the Royal University of Agriculture's (RUA) application to join the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers as an IRBM Learning Center; participated in regional IRBM trainings and knowledge-sharing activities; contributed to development of the IRBM Guide on Improved Governance and Management of River Basins; and supported initial surveys in support of the development of the IRBM Training Manual.
- **Component 4 (Monitoring and Evaluation):** Facilitated the Mid-Term Review visit and stakeholder interviews with DWQM-MoE, RUA, RUPP, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Kampot provincial authorities and the Kampong Samaki community (April 2025); participated in the RSC Meetings.
- **Co-financing delivery**
 - In-kind co-financing contribution for the reporting period (July 2025-June 2026): USD 222,100.
- **Key challenges and lessons learned**
 - Delayed establishment of the Technical Working Group (TWG) due to government and ministry restructuring.
 - Data availability across the 32 SORB core indicators and stakeholder participation are limited.
 - Lack of participation in the conduct of online surveys for the Technical Report on IRBM Governance and Management, and IRBM Training Manual and Program.
 - Regular TWG meetings and application of the SoRB Guidebook strengthened ownership of project outputs and the credibility of technical assessments.
- **Way Forward**
 - Complete feasibility studies and finalize the pilot solution for wastewater treatment (Kampot City, west side) and sewage/solid waste management (Kampong Samaki); finalize the TPL study for domestic and tourism sources; and finalize the updated river basin-level stakeholder engagement plan and GESI validation.

3.4 Indonesia

- **Key implementation progress**
 - **Project Management:** The MOA between the Ministry of Environment/Environmental Protection Agency and PRF was signed, and the project was launched on 10 November 2025.

- **Component 1:** Completed a draft SORB Baseline Report for the Ciliwung River Basin, now under technical review with PRF; draft TPL Report in progress with data compiled, pollution hotspots identified, and pollutant loading trends being assessed; initiated GESI mainstreaming through preliminary stakeholder engagement, with further consultation planned for July 2026.
- **Component 2:** Site assessment and technical coordination for the pilot project at Nutritional Provision Service Unit (SPPG) in Depok City were undertaken, including a benchmarking visit to SPPG Halim Perdanakusuma. Findings confirmed the need for a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) and food waste digester, with planning and design preparations currently underway; Ministry of Environment Decree (No. 1239/2025) formally establishing the Water Quality Management Plan (RPPMA) for the Ciliwung River Basin, including river segmentation, with a more detailed action plan for the Depok segment to follow; supported cross-sector river restoration actions, including clean-up, tree planting, ecosystem recovery and public awareness activities with the private sector and state-owned enterprises, engaging over 1,100 participants, 2,500 trees planted, and removing more than 30,000 kg of waste since 2020; and completed the Monitoring of Business and Activities 2025-2026 around Ciliwung River Basin which highlighted continuing need for compliance follow up, technical guidance and law enforcement to support pollution reduction.
- **Component 3:** Participated in the Regional Training on the REWEFe Toolkit and WEFE Nexus Application (April 2026); proposed targeted in-country capacity building on water sampling, scientific assessment, community stewardship and river safety for the Ciliwung River Basin.
- **Co-financing delivery**
 - In-kind co-financing contribution for the reporting period (July 2025-June 2026): USD 2,481,913.
- **Key challenges and lessons learned**
 - Varying availability and quality of technical data across institutions and the need to sustain multi-stakeholder coordination remains a challenge.
 - Continued data validation and regular technical consultations are being applied to support evidence-based decision-making.
 - Meaningful stakeholder engagement, supported by public awareness and inclusive GESI approaches, is essential to promote shared ownership and ensure the long-term sustainability of river basin management interventions.
- **Way Forward**
 - Indonesia requested a project extension to 2028, to complete the SPPG Depok pilot project, including technical and capacity studies, permitting, construction, commissioning and knowledge transfer, in view of the additional preparation and permitting time required under the Ministerial Decree governing SPPG facilities' environmental obligations.

3.5 Lao PDR

- **Key implementation progress**

- **Component 1:** Finalized the SORB Baseline Report for the Nam Tha River Basin, following stakeholder validation, stakeholder consultation on the final draft, and technical review by DWR and RPMU; and conducted a rapid assessment of TPL identifying major land-based pollution sources with results incorporated into the SORB Report.
- **Component 2:** Governance assessments focusing on financing and institutional arrangements were undertaken across the three provinces (Luang Namtha, Oudomxay and Bokeo) to support pilot project development. Prioritized intervention areas and solutions identified: headwater protection and municipal water supply in Paktha District, eco-tourism and catchment afforestation in the Nam Dee Basin, and community livelihood enhancement and climate-smart agriculture around the Nam Hin Reservoir.
- **Component 3:** Continued strengthening of institutional capacity and governance mechanisms through technical workshops and stakeholder consultations at national, provincial and district levels (e.g., national IWRM workshop/training; project exhibition on World Water Day; participation in regional IRBM workshops/trainings).
- **Component 4:** Facilitated the Project Mid-Term Review visit and multi-stakeholder interviews; conducted National PSC meetings; participated in regional forums; submitted quarterly and annual progress reports; collected data in support of GESI; and development of Stakeholder Engagement plan.

- **Co-financing delivery**

- In-kind and investment mobilized co-financing contribution for the reporting period (July 2025-June 2026): USD 250,000.

- **Key challenges and lessons learned**

- Pilot project development is progressing slowly; apart from identification of long-term interventions, the team from DWR and consultant is looking into integrating small-scale priority activities from the Nam Tha River Basin Management Plan that are expected to yield quick wins and directly benefit local communities.
- Strong coordination among government agencies, local stakeholders, the private sector, and the RPMU is essential to support effective basin management and pilot project development.
- Development and review of technical outputs require adequate time to incorporate regional best practices and ensure thorough analysis.

- **Way Forward**

- Finalize the assessment of the Nam Tha River Basin Management Plan (2021–2025), refine the IRBM Pilot Project concept for RPMU approval (targeting a late Q3 2026 launch), and develop the basin-level GESI Action Plan and conduct stakeholder consultations.

3.6 Malaysia

- **Key implementation progress**

- **Project Management:** Formalized the institutional framework for the Kedah River Basin through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (between PRF and Universiti Sains Malaysia, USM) and a Memorandum of Understanding (among the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) Malaysia, the Kedah State Water Resources Board [*Lembaga Sumber Air Negeri Kedah* (LSANK)], and USM) on 16 June 2026.
- **Component 1:** Conducted a Pre-Inception Data Availability Workshop (37 participants) and compiled secondary data on hydrology, water quality, land use and watershed conditions, with the SORB Inception Workshop scheduled for August 2026 and the draft report targeted for November 2026; completed a WEFE Security Nexus Assessment through an online briefing and a stakeholder workshop in Alor Setar (August 2025), identifying key water security challenges for the basin.
- **Component 2:** Conducted field assessments across the upper catchment (Pedu Dam), midstream (MADA irrigation scheme) and downstream estuary (Kuala Kedah) which identified monsoon flooding, excessive sedimentation and deteriorating water quality as priority issues to inform the pilot project intervention.
- **Component 3:** Identified Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) as Malaysia's proposed IRBM Learning Center in recognition of its expertise in river engineering and urban stormwater management; published a river basin profile story (Sustaining a Way of Life: Kedah River Basin); participated in regional trainings on SORB reporting, GESI, and the IRBM Forum.
- **Component 3:** Established the National Steering Committee and National Technical Committee, jointly coordinated by DID, LSANK and USM; incorporated key MTR recommendations into implementation; advanced GESI mainstreaming through the "Life-Giving Water, Life-Giving Women" initiative strengthening household water security and climate resilience.

- **Co-financing delivery**

- In-kind and investment mobilized co-financing contribution: USD 63.76 million.

- **Key challenges and lessons learned**
 - Government restructuring and changes in coordination required strengthened engagement with the GEF Operational Focal Point and the new Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation; ensuring technically robust outputs and reliable stakeholder inputs, limited timeframe for technical assessments and pilot projects; and limited GESI integration.
 - Strong governance, early coordination, country ownership, technical excellence, and inclusive stakeholder engagement are fundamental to achieving sustainable and climate-resilient IRBM.
- **Way Forward**
 - Malaysia proposed a 12-month extension of the project implementation period to ensure completion of all deliverables within the existing approved project budget and available resources from 31 December 2027 to 30 June 2028 with the remaining six months, from 01 July to 31 December 2028, intended for terminal evaluation and project closure.

3.7 Philippines

- **Key implementation progress**
 - **Component 1:** SORB Reports for the Imus-Ylang Ylang-Rio Grande Rivers (IYRR) and the Pasac-Guagua Watershed (PGW) completed and are undergoing technical review, with publication targeted in 2026; completed WEFE Nexus Assessments for both basins (July 2025), with results incorporated into the Regional WEFE Nexus Assessment Report.
 - **Component 2:** For IYRR, the WQMA Governing Board endorsed establishment of a Septage Treatment Plant (STP) in Amadeo, Cavite (March 2026) following consultations with the Office of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (OPENRO) Cavite, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and members of the Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) Governing Board, with the feasibility study due for updating in compliance with DPWH National Sewerage and Septage Management Program; supported the updating of the 10-year IYRR WQMA Action Plan (2026-2035), with an inception report presented to the 2nd WQMA Governing Board Meeting (June 2026). For PGW, the proposed pilot was refocused from mangrove rehabilitation to food waste management following expert consultation and stakeholder agreement, with procurement of a consultant for a Technology Needs Assessment for food and biodegradable waste management underway.

- **Component 3:** IYRR was featured in the Project's river basin profile story, entitled "Restoring the Flow"; engaged in the Cavite Coastal Summit and Cavite Sustainable Development Strategy Workshop (December 2025); participated in and hosted regional trainings, including a GIS training course, the RBIIMS orientation workshop, and the Regional Training on the REWEFe Toolkit and WEFE Nexus Application (Manila, April 2026).
- **Project Management:** The MOA between DENR and PEMSEA was signed in July 2025; established the National Project Steering Committee (PSC) and National Technical Working Group by Special Order in December 2025, followed by the inaugural PSC Meeting in January 2026, which approved the country's 2026 Annual Work Plan and Budget.
- **Co-financing delivery**
 - In-kind co-financing contribution for the reporting period July 2025-June 2026: USD 302,462,79.
- **Key challenges and lessons learned**
 - The delayed signing of the MOA compressed the implementation period for the pilot projects in IYRR and PGW. Project extension will help ensure completion of pilot project activities.
 - Expert opinion on mangrove rehabilitation which requires long-term intervention and may not show positive results within the project duration provided guidance in shifting the focus of the pilot project to food waste management.
 - Exploration of possible funding sources identified national programs that can co-finance projects requiring large capital outlay that are beyond local government capacity.
- **Ways Forward**
 - Finalization and publication of the SORB Baseline Reports for IYRR and PGW in 2026.
 - Implementation of pilot projects, as well as support for the updating of the 10-year IYRR WQMA Action Plan and designation of the Angeles-San Fernando-Minalin-Sasmuan River System WQMA Area with Governing Board and 10-year Action Plan for 2026 up to possibly 2028.
 - Semestral conduct of National PSC meetings, conduct of Inter-agency TWG meetings, and continuous compliance to M&E requirements.

3.8 Viet Nam

- **Key implementation progress**
 - **Component 1:** Completed baseline surveys for the SORB of the Vu Gia-Thu Bon River Basin; consultation workshop organized in June 2026 to review key technical outputs including: draft SORB report, Rapid Pollution Load Assessment, Baseline

Biophysical Profile, Socioeconomic and Demographic Profile and Governance and Coordination Assessment.

- **Component 2:** Conducted joint field missions with PRF, EnviroStrat and Da Nang DAE to identify focus of pilot projects and locations, and with the Korea Institute of Environmental Technology and Industry (KEITI) to assess technical assistance needs for municipal solid waste management; selected two pilot demonstration sites in Da Nang: the Duy Nghia Fishing Port (waste collection, segregation at source, plastic waste reduction) and a plastic-free community model along the Truong Giang River, with preparation of a MOU and a Korean-funded cooperation proposal underway for implementation from 2027; completed governance and policy recommendations and a draft Pollution Source Control and Water Quality Monitoring Plan, for submission to the Da Nang DAE in the second half of 2026.
- **Component 3:** Conducted WEFE analysis surveys and integrated river basin governance consultations engaging a total of 95 participants (July 2025-March 2026); participated in regional activities such as the WEFE Consultation Workshop (June 2025) and Regional REWEFe Toolkit and WEFE Nexus Application Training (April 2026).
- **Component 4:** Submitted quarterly progress reports on schedule; participated in the 3rd RSC Meeting.
- **Co-financing delivery**
 - Based on January to December Fiscal Year, Viet Nam's in-kind co-financing report covered 2024-2025: USD 2,508,000.
- **Key challenges and lessons learned**
 - The merger of Quang Nam Province and Da Nang City under national administrative restructuring rendered the originally proposed river basin coordinating mechanism inappropriate, prompting a shift toward practical technical instruments (i.e., development of Pollution Source Control and Water Quality Monitoring Plan for Vu Gia-Thu Bon River Basin).
 - Data fragmentation following the merger and limited local capacity for project coordination is being addressed through streamlined indicators and strengthened inter-agency coordination and data integration.
 - Pressure during the flooding season where large volume of wastes is transported from upstream can be addressed by employing a multi-layered approach that combines technical solutions, economic incentives and upstream-downstream agreements (e.g., pilot project focus on Duy Nghia Fishing Port).
 - Project funding (USD 737,400) is available only until 2027, underscoring the importance of long-term partnerships, including with KEITI, to sustain pilot outcomes beyond project completion.

3.9 **Regional Progress Report**

The Consolidated Regional Progress Report was presented together with the Planned Activities for the Third and Fourth Quarters of 2026 and the Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget under Agenda Item 5.0.

3.10 **Discussion Highlights and Decision**

- In line with the proposed no-cost project extension by Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, Mr. Trogemann of UNDP acknowledged that requests for a no-cost extension were likely to be necessary but emphasized that no-cost extension has associated costs and would be subject to due diligence process. UNDP therefore proposed that the RSC provide a provisional agreement to the no-cost extension, subject to completion of the required technical and administrative review process before a final decision is made.
- In response, the Chair emphasized that the Project should aim to maximize implementation within the current project period (December 2022 to December 2027) and clarified that any extension should primarily provide sufficient time to complete and consolidate the remaining project outputs.
- Lao PDR expressed no objection to the proposed no-cost extension but requested that UNDP and PRF ensure that approval of the extension would not affect opportunities for future AWGWRM projects.
- The Philippines likewise supported the need for an extension and underscored the importance of increasing counterpart support from national and local government partners during the extension period to reduce dependence on project resources.
- Viet Nam informed the Meeting that it would continue implementing activities in line with the agreed project schedule while supporting regional implementation.
- The Philippines further sought clarification on the sustainability of project interventions beyond project completion. In response, the RPMU explained that sustainability measures were already being incorporated into project implementation, including institutionalization of project tools and guidance, strengthening of basin governance arrangements, and integration of project outputs into existing national and local planning instruments. As an example, the RPMU noted that the State of River Basin Report and related outputs in the Philippines were being incorporated into the 10-year Water Quality Management Area (WQMA) Action Plan, thereby supporting continuation of project outcomes beyond the project lifetime.
- The ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) supported the proposed no-cost extension, noting that additional implementation time would provide an opportunity for the Project to better facilitate preparation, consultation, technical review, and finalization of key regional knowledge documents or products, as well as completion of both country- and regional-level activities. The ASEC also informed the RSC of the ASEAN Environment

Knowledge Hub, where key knowledge products from the regional and country level may be uploaded for sharing, but emphasized the need for a complete review and consultation process to ensure the quality of the documents or knowledge products. The ASEC also indicated that a one-year extension may be more beneficial to complete all project initiatives.

- In response to further clarification regarding the implications of a “no-cost extension”, Mr. Sofiane Mahjoub, UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, clarified that the GEF does not have a separate policy on project extensions and instead follows the policies of the project implementing agency, which is UNDP. Accordingly, any request for extension would be processed under UNDP procedures, and only one extension request may be submitted. Mr. Ugyen Dorji, Program Management and Oversight Specialist, UNDP BRH, further explained that, although no additional GEF financing would be provided, PEMSEA’s project management cost and UNDP oversight costs should have sufficient funds within the approved project budget to cover the project extension. These considerations would guide the determination of an appropriate extension period.
- Moreover, UNDP clarified that a no-cost extension allows participating countries to continue utilizing unspent project funds and approved savings during the approved extension period. UNDP encouraged countries to fully utilize their allocated project resources, noting that any unused funds remaining at project closure would need to be returned to GEF.
- The Philippines also sought clarification regarding the implications of a project extension on the existing MOAs and associated national co-financing commitments. The RPMU explained that, following approval of the extension through the required formal process, PRF would notify National Implementing Partners through formal correspondence and consultations. Where necessary, amendments to the existing MOAs would be prepared to reflect the approved extension period.
- On the process for requesting the extension, UNDP clarified that, following the RSC’s provisional endorsement, the RPMU would assess the availability of project resources to support the extension period. The RPMU, in consultation with participating countries, would then prepare a work plan and budget for the extension period, including the corresponding Annual Work Plan (AWP) for 2028, for review and endorsement by the RSC prior to submission of the formal extension request to UNDP.
- The Chair requested for an Ad Hoc RSC Meeting be organized online to review the Work Plan and Budget to be prepared by the RPMU for the proposed extension period, to which the RPMU has concurred.
- The ASEC further informed the Meeting that, as the Project is endorsed through the ASEAN as a sponsoring body, the ASEC would undertake an internal review to determine whether additional ASEAN endorsement from ASOEN would be required as part of the formal no-cost extension process.

3.11 **Conclusions and Decisions**

- The RSC endorsed in principle the proposed no-cost extension of the Project, subject to completion of PRF's and UNDP's due diligence process and the formal approval procedures through the RSC, and the ASEAN as may be required.
- The RSC requested the RPMU, in consultation with participating countries, to review the available funds and remaining activities, and prepare a revised Work Plan and Budget for the remaining period of 2026 and 2027, and for the 2028 extension period. The proposed Revised Work Plan and Budget will be considered by the RSC through an Ad Hoc RSC Meeting planned for late 2026 or early 2027 prior to submission of the formal project extension request to UNDP.
- The RSC further noted that the ASEAN Secretariat would advise whether additional ASEAN endorsement would be required as part of the formal no-cost extension process, given that the Project is implemented under an ASEAN sponsoring body.

4. Monitoring Progress on Mid-Term Review (MTR) Recommendations and Preparation of the 2026 Project Implementation Report (PIR)

- 4.1 Ms. Kathrine Rose G. Aguilin, IRBM Project M&E Specialist, presented the status of implementation of the approved Mid-Term Review (MTR) Management Response and the preparation of the 2026 Project Implementation Report (PIR), noting that both activities form part of the Project's monitoring and evaluation framework and constitute key project reporting requirements.
- 4.2 On the MTR Management Response, following its approval in 2025, three monitoring updates had been submitted to UNDP BRH (September and December 2025, and March 2026), documenting progress in implementing the approved management actions. As of June 2026, of the 13 MTR recommendations and 24 management actions, seven actions had been completed, 15 actions were under implementation, and two actions remained to be initiated.
- 4.3 It was noted that implementation of the 15 ongoing management actions was progressing well, with activities integrated in the different regional and national/basin-level activities primarily related to the development of pilot projects and development or updating of IRBM strategies and action plans.

- 4.4 The two remaining management actions relate to strengthening ASEC and AWGWRM engagement in the review of key project technical outputs, and to the preparation of basin-level Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) and Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs). For the first action, consultations on regional knowledge products have continued through the six project participating countries and relevant regional activities; however, the proposed process for reviewing key outputs, consolidating inputs, and submitting final outputs for endorsement has yet to be fully operationalized, pending further clarification and alignment with established ASEAN consultation and endorsement procedures. For the second action, preparation of the ESIAs and ESMPs forms part of the ongoing pilot project development process and is dependent on the results of the basin-level baseline assessments and feasibility studies. While the TORs for local specialists to undertake the assessments have already been developed, the actual ESIAs and ESMPs are scheduled to commence in the second half of 2026 as the pilot project assessments progress.
- 4.5 To facilitate implementation of engagement of ASEC and AWGWRM in the review of key project technical outputs, the RPMU proposed a six-step process which comprises: (i) submission of draft outputs to the ASEAN Secretariat; (ii) technical review by the AWGWRM; (iii) consolidation and revision of comments by the RPMU; (iv) validation of revised outputs; (v) final review and clearance by the ASEAN Secretariat and AWGWRM; and (vi) presentation of the finalized outputs to the Regional Steering Committee for information and guidance. The RPMU explained that the proposed process aims to strengthen regional ownership, enhance technical inputs from ASEAN Member States, and facilitate wider adoption of project knowledge products beyond the Project lifetime.
- 4.6 On the preparation of the 2026 Project Implementation Report (PIR), the RPMU informed the Meeting that this would be the Project's third annual PIR covering the reporting period July 2025 to June 2026. The first draft had been submitted to UNDP BRH on 30 June 2026, in accordance with the agreed timeline, and comments from UNDP had already been received. The RPMU explained that the revised draft would be uploaded to the UNDP-GEF online system by 20 July 2026, followed by technical review by the UNDP Project Officer and Regional Technical Advisor, with final submission due on 1 September 2026. From September to December 2026, UNDP would undertake a quality assessment of the report to verify its completeness, clarity, substantiveness and the sufficiency of supporting evidence. The RPMU also requested countries that had not yet submitted their Co-financing Delivery Reports to do so before 20 July 2026 to facilitate timely completion of the PIR.
- 4.7 **Discussion Highlights**
- The Philippines sought clarification on whether the proposed no-cost extension of the Project would affect the reporting period for the 2026 PIR. In response, the RPMU clarified that the current PIR would continue to cover project implementation from July

2025 to June 2026, consistent with GEF and UNDP reporting requirements. Approval of the no-cost extension would be reflected in the subsequent PIR reporting cycle, while actions related to the extension would also be monitored through the Project's quarterly progress reports.

- Lao PDR expressed support for strengthening the engagement of the AWGWRM in reviewing project technical outputs, while emphasizing that AWGWRM focal points should be involved from the outset of the development process, including at the consultation stage, rather than only at the endorsement stage. Lao PDR further encouraged the RPMU to work closely with the ASEC to involve not only the six participating countries but the AWGWRM focal points of the non-participating Member States as well through online or face-to-face consultations, to promote wider regional ownership of the Project's technical outputs.
- Responding to the proposed steps for engaging the ASEC and AWGWRM, Dr. Nam So of the ASEC provided further clarification on the consultation and review process in accordance with the ASEAN procedures, as follows:
 - The RPMU prepares a concept note outlining the rationale, approach, expected outputs, and proposed consultation process for the technical output.
 - The RPMU submits the concept note to the ASEC for initial review and refinement.
 - The ASEC circulates the concept note to the AWGWRM for comments and consultation.
 - The ASEC consolidates the comments from the AWGWRM and transmits them to the RPMU.
 - The RPMU revises the draft to address the comments and resubmits to the ASEC.
 - The ASEC reviews the revised draft with the RPMU and, once agreed, circulates it to the AWGWRM for validation and finalization.
 - Following incorporation of the final comments, the ASEC circulates the final draft to the AWGWRM for endorsement.

Dr. Nam further clarified that the RSC's role is to monitor project progress, provide recommendations, and approve the work plan and budget, while endorsement of technical outputs is undertaken through the AWGWRM via the ASEC.

4.8 **Conclusions and Decisions**

- The RSC noted the actions completed and remaining MTR management actions.
- The RSC noted the process, timeline and current status of preparation of the 2026 PIR and encouraged participating countries to submit their outstanding Co-financing Delivery Reports within the requested timeframe.
- On the proposed process for the engagement of ASEC and AWGWRM on the review of regional technical outputs, the RPMU noted the guidance provided by the ASEC. The RPMU will further coordinate with ASEC to formalize the process and schedule for the preparation, review and endorsement of key technical outputs targeted for 2026 and 2027, as well as those proposed for the 2028 extension period, subject to the revised Work Plan and Budget to be reviewed and approved by the RSC.

5. Planned Activities for the Third and Fourth Quarters of 2026 and Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget (Including the Consolidated Regional Progress Report)

Regional Progress Report

- 5.1 Ms. Nancy Bermas, Regional Project Manager, presented the Consolidated Regional Progress Report, together with the planned activities for the third and fourth quarters of 2026 and the proposed 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget.
- 5.2 Based on the Project Results Framework, Ms. Bermas reported that implementation remained on track across all nine indicators. At the objective level, the Project continued to contribute to the management of four Large Marine Ecosystems - the South China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indonesian Sea (Indicator 1). With the signing of Malaysia's MOA, all six participating AMS are now implementing the Project, placing the seven participating river basins under cooperative management arrangements (Indicator 2). In addition, direct beneficiaries of the GEF grant, targeted at one percent of the combined river basin population with equal representation of men and women, recorded increased engagement by 59 percent since the previous RSC Meeting (Indicator 3).
- 5.3 Under Component 1, preparation of the seven SORB Reports (Indicator 4) remained on track. The Nam Tha River Basin SORB Report had been launched, five SORB reports are undergoing technical review, and the remaining reports for Viet Nam and Malaysia are expected to be completed until 2027. The Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus assessment had been completed for all seven river basins, and the resulting WEFE Nexus guidance toolkit had been introduced through two regional workshops in 2025 and 2026. Ms. Bermas also highlighted the proposed governance assessment tool to help identify gaps and appropriate interventions and strategies for improving governance arrangements in the seven river basins, covered in the IRBM Governance Workshop.
- 5.4 Under Component 2, Ms. Bermas reported that progress towards commissioning and operationalizing the seven IRBM pilot projects, subject to government approval

and investment commitment (Indicator 5), and towards endorsement of seven IRBM Strategies and 10-year Action Plans (Indicator 6), remained on track, although further time would be required to complete consultation processes, secure the necessary government approvals, and mobilize investments. She noted that this was reflected as a caution flag in the presentation and supported the no-cost extension requests submitted by three of the participating countries. A range of knowledge products, solution templates, governance assessment tools and pre-feasibility business cases had also been developed to support pilot project development across the seven river basins.

- 5.5 Under Component 3, continued progress towards the Project's knowledge enhancement targets was noted (Indicators 7 and 8), with pre- and post-assessments showing that at least 69 percent of participants had increased their knowledge. The RPMU also reported continued expansion of the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC), preparation of an IRBM training manual, and a Regional Training of Trainers scheduled for September 2026. Ms. Bermas also highlighted that the Project had recently been featured in a guidebook, entitled "*IWLEARN Guidance on How to Apply S2S Approach in GEF IW Projects*", published by the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN), showcasing the Project's application of the source-to-sea approach.
- 5.6 Under Component 4 (Indicator 9), the Project continued to meet the monitoring and evaluation requirements of UNDP and GEF, including through the regional and national inception workshops, RSC meetings and other M&E activities.
- 5.7 Overall, the project is on track in line with the 2026 Annual Work Plan, with a caution flag under Component 2 reflecting the additional time needed to complete pilot project development, implementation and the establishment of corresponding monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Planned Activities for third-fourth Quarter of 2026 and Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget

- 5.8 On overall fund utilization, as of 30 June 2026, cumulative project expenditure amounted to USD 3.27 million, or approximately 38.6 percent of the total project budget of USD 8.4 million. An estimated USD 5.2 million remained available to support activities for the remainder of 2026 and 2027, and subject to approval of the proposed no-cost extension, into 2028. Ms. Bermas indicated that annual expenditure had been increasing since 2023, corresponding with the scale-up of country-level activities, including the recent signing of Malaysia's MOA. Against the 2026 AWP and Budget of USD 2.8 million, only 21.4 percent had been utilized as of June 2026, though spending is expected to accelerate as pilot project implementation is anticipated to scale up over the following six months.

Fund Utilization from 2023-2026 (as of 30 June 2026)

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026
Approved budget by RSC	USD 1,824,999	USD 2,176,637	USD 2,160,937	USD 2,865,939
Expenditures	USD 541,320.20 (29.7%)	USD 836,349.20 (38.4%)	USD 1,278,834.29 (59.2%)	USD 614,626.73 (21.4%)

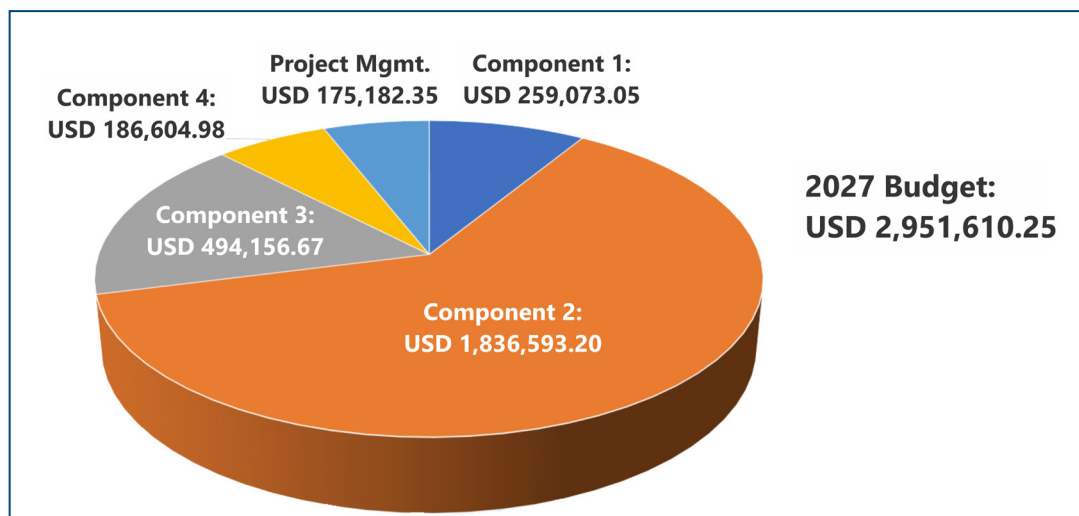
5.9 The RPMU outlined the budget allocation and planned activities for the third and fourth quarters of 2026. Key activities or outputs for Component 1 include the publication and dissemination of the six SORB Reports and WEFE documents at the regional level, while efforts to complete the SORB reports in Viet Nam and Malaysia and TPL assessments in five countries will continue. For Component 2, regional efforts will focus on the support to complete the pre-feasibility business cases and development of ESIA's and ESMPs in pilot project sites and completion of regional Technical Reports, Guides and Templates on Improved IRBM Governance and Management, and Environmental Monitoring and Reporting. While country-level efforts on pilot project development and assessments or development in support of improved IRBM governance and strategies and action plans will continue. For Component 3, four key capacity development activities will be undertaken including the Regional Workshop on Environmental Monitoring and Reporting, IRBM Training of Trainers, participation in the 11th International Waters Conference, and engagement of IRBM Learning Centers. Development and dissemination of communication products will also continue. Component 4 will focus on the delivery of the quarterly and annual progress reports, which includes monitoring on actions in support of GESI, SES, stakeholder engagement, and risk management.

Budget Allocation for Q3-Q4 2026

Component	Budget (USD)	Share (%)
Component 1	84,391.43	3.7%
Component 2	1,575,026.00	69.4%
Component 3	572,074.00	25.2%
Component 4 and Project Management	37,059.00	1.6%

5.10 For the 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget, Ms. Bermas presented the proposed budget allocation of USD 2,951,610.25 to support activities at the regional, national, and river basin levels across the six participating countries.

Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget



5.11 Under Component 1, planned activities include a regional workshop on the SORB reporting process and indicators, basin-level consultations, publication of the Kedah River SORB Report, and development of Version 2 of the SORB Guidebook, which will follow the established ASEAN endorsement process. Under Component 2, the Project will continue the implementation of the seven pilot projects, environmental monitoring programs, Environmental and Social Management Plans and Gender Action Plans, completion of the remaining river basin strategies and action plans, and convening of an ASEAN-wide IRBM Forum towards project completion. Under Component 3, the RPMU will refine the IRBM Training Manual following the September 2026 Training of Trainers, implement a learning exchange program for policymakers and local government leaders, continue documenting good practices from the seven river basins, and maintain project communications through newsletters, microsite updates, and IW:LEARN networking. Under Component 4, monitoring, evaluation, and project management activities include quarterly progress reporting, preparation of the 2027 Project Implementation Report, convening of the Fifth RSC Meeting, and completion of the financial audit and terminal evaluation. The RPMU also noted that approval of the proposed extension would require some activities to be rescheduled to 2028.

5.12 Discussion Highlights

- The Philippines sought clarification on the distinction between the existing SORB Guidebook and the proposed version 2, and on whether the presented expenditure figures included project co-financing or reflected the GEF grant alone. In response, Ms. Bermas explained that the current Guidebook is treated as a living document, piloted through preparation of the seven SORB reports. Noting the concerns raised by some countries on data availability and specific indicators, the SORB version 2 would draw

on this implementation experience and consider other SORB reporting frameworks (e.g., Mekong River SORB reporting framework, Freshwater Health Index), aimed to promote comparability of indicators across systems. On expenditure, it was clarified that the figures reflect the GEF grant only, and do not include co-financing, which is largely provided in-kind through existing country programs.

- Lao PDR emphasized the importance of maximizing budget utilization by project completion, noting that annual fund expenditure in previous years had often been below the approved budget. Lao PDR further encouraged data sharing generated through the SORB reports and pilot projects through the ASEAN IWRM Platform and Water Data Management and Reporting System maintained by Malaysia, and recommended broader participation of ASEAN National Focal Points in Component 3 on regional capacity building activities, supported by appropriate budget allocations, apart from their engagement on the review and endorsement of key technical project outputs.
- In response to Lao, the RPMU confirmed that pilot project development already involves local governments, national governments, and local communities. The RPMU welcomed Lao PDR's proposal on data sharing, noting that further discussion would be needed, including through the AWGWRM. The RPMU also acknowledged the recommendation to strengthen the engagement of National Focal Points from all eleven ASEAN Member States and confirmed that this would be considered in preparing the proposed extension work plan and budget.
- The Chair emphasized the need to accelerate implementation and improve budget utilization in 2027 and, if approved, during the extension period. The Chair further recommended convening the proposed Ad Hoc RSC meeting at the earliest opportunity to endorse the 2027 Work Plan and Budget and address any outstanding issues.

5.13 Conclusions and Decisions

- The RSC noted the remaining activities and budget for 2026 and approved in principle the 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget amounting to USD 2.95 million, subject to final review and endorsement during the Ad Hoc RSC meeting.
- Noted the request to further discuss the possible integration of the project's relevant outputs into the ASEAN IWRM Platform and Water Data Management and Reporting System maintained by Malaysia.
- The RSC recommended engaging ASEAN National Focal Points from all 11 AMS throughout the planning, development, and completion of key knowledge products intended for AWGWRM endorsement and ASEAN-wide application. The RPMU will also consider allocating resources in the proposed work plan and budget for the extension period to support the participation of all 11 AMS in the planning and review of key project outputs, as well as in key regional capacity building activities.

6. Summary of Meeting Decisions and Recommendations

6.1 Ms. Daisy Padayao presented the following decisions and recommendations arising from the Fourth RSC Meeting:

- **Agenda Item 1.0: Adoption of the Meeting Agenda**

Decision: The meeting agenda was approved as presented.

- **Agenda Item 2.0: Matters Arising from the Third RSC Meeting**

Noted: The RSC noted the matters arising from the Third RSC Meeting, including the actions taken in response to the matters discussed at that meeting.

- **Agenda Item 3.0: Country Progress Reports**

Noted: The RSC noted the progress, lessons learned and next steps presented by the six participating countries.

Decision:

- The RSC endorsed in principle the no-cost extension of the Project, subject to the availability of project funds to cover the extension period and completion of the necessary documentation.
- The RPMU, in consultation with the participating countries, will review the Work Plan and Budget, and prepare and finalize the revised Work Plan and Budget covering the remaining period of 2026, 2027, and the proposed 2028 extension period, based on the availability and allocation of remaining project funds. The revised Work Plan and Budget will be submitted to the RSC for review and consideration at an Ad Hoc RSC Meeting to be convened in late 2026 or early 2027, prior to formal submission of the proposed project extension to UNDP.
- The ASEAN Secretariat will confirm whether endorsement by the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN) is required for the extension request.
- The RSC further noted that the six participating countries should continue to implement and deliver required outputs until December 2027, with the no-cost extension period to be used to complete and consolidate project results.

- **Agenda Item 4.0: Monitoring Progress on MTR Recommendations and Preparation of the 2026 PIR**

Noted: The RSC noted the progress made in implementing the approved MTR Management Response, including the status of completed and ongoing management actions. The RSC further noted the process, timeline and current status of preparation of

the 2026 PIR, including the request for outstanding Co-financing Delivery Reports to be submitted within the prescribed timeline.

Decision: The RSC urged the RPMU, the six participating countries and concerned partners to ensure completion of the remaining MTR management actions.

Based on the guidance provided by the ASEAN Secretariat, the RPMU will align the proposed process in the review of key technical outputs in accordance with the ASEAN procedure highlighting the engagement of the ASEAN Secretariat and the AWGWRM.

- **Agenda Item 5.0: Planned Activities for the Third and Fourth Quarters of 2026 and Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget (including Consolidated Regional Progress Report)**

Noted: The RSC noted the planned activities for the third and fourth quarters of 2026. The RSC also noted the request for the Project to further discuss the possible integration of the project's relevant outputs into the ASEAN IWRM Platform and Water Data Management and Reporting System maintained by Malaysia, including data-sharing arrangements, and the request to engage the National Focal Points of all 11 AWGWRM Member States not only in the review and endorsement of project outputs, but also in the Project's capacity building activities.

Decision: The RSC approved in principle the proposed 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget, subject to final review and endorsement at the Ad Hoc RSC meeting to be organized in late 2026 or early 2027.

6.2 The RPMU further presented the following timeline for the preparation and dissemination of the Fourth RSC Meeting Proceedings:

- Circulation of the first draft of the Proceedings to RSC members: 8 August 2026
- Review period for RSC members to submit comments on the first draft: 10-21 August 2026
- Circulation of the final Proceedings to RSC members: 28 August 2026

6.3 **Discussion Highlights**

- Mr. Mahjoub, clarified that, since the GEF does not maintain a separate policy on no-cost extensions and instead defers to the policy of the implementing agency, there was no need at this stage to consult the GEF on the proposed extension, and requested that references to the GEF in relation to the extension process to not be included in the Meeting Proceedings.

- The ASEC clarified that the regional data and information platform referred to under Lao PDR's earlier intervention is managed by Malaysia, and not Indonesia.
- The ASEC sought clarification on the timeline for formal endorsement of the 2027 Annual Work Plan and Budget. He suggested that both the 2027 Work Plan and Budget and the proposed extension Work Plan and Budget could be endorsed through email circulation, following the ASEAN procedure, without waiting for the proposed Ad Hoc RSC meeting. The RPMU agreed to prepare a consultation timeline, including the possible use of email circulation, and the Chair noted that this approach could expedite the endorsement process.

6.4 The RSC noted and adopted the summary of key decisions and recommendations from the Fourth RSC Meeting, as amended to reflect the corrections and clarifications raised during the discussion.

Closing of the Meeting

- Before closing the Meeting, the Chair informed the RSC members that the key decisions and recommendations arising from the Fourth RSC Meeting would be presented during the open session of the 26th AWGWRM Meeting scheduled for the following day.
- The Chair thanked Mr. Trogemann for co-chairing the Meeting and thanked the members of the RSC for their active participation and engagement throughout the half-day Meeting, and extended his wish that participants would also enjoy their stay in Vientiane.
- The Co-Chair, Mr. Trogemann, joining online, and the ASEAN Secretariat representative, likewise conveyed their thanks to the Chair and the Meeting participants.
- The Chair declared the Fourth RSC Meeting of the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Project on IRBM adjourned at 5:30pm on 08 July 2026.

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Annex B. Annotated Agenda

FOURTH REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

GEF/UNDP/ASEAN PROJECT ON REDUCING POLLUTION AND PRESERVING ENVIRONMENTAL FLOWS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT (IRBM) IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

Vientiane, Lao PDR
08 July 2026

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA

14:30	1.0	Opening of the Regional Steering Committee Meeting The Meeting commences with remarks from UNDP Representative. This will be followed by opening remarks of the Chairperson of the AWGWRM. The AWGWRM Chair and UNDP Representative will co-chair the Meeting.
14:40	2.0	Approval of Meeting Agenda The RSC will review and approve the meeting agenda.
14:50	3.0	Matters Arising from the RSC Meeting 2025 The RSC will review the key recommendations and decisions from the 3 rd RSC Meeting 2025 and the status and actions taken.
15:00	4.0	Country and Regional Progress Reports Representatives from the six project participating countries and the RPMU will be invited to share their respective progress reports focusing on major accomplishments, lessons learned, including constraints and challenges encountered, and proposed solutions.

16:30	5.0	Mid-term Review (MTR) Recommendations and Monitoring and Reporting and 2026 Project Implementation Report (PIR)
		RPMU will present the status of key actions taken on the management responses to the MTR recommendations, including the process and timeline for PIR preparation.
16:45	6.0	Planned Activities for 3rd-4th Quarters of 2026 and Proposed 2027 Work Plan and Budget
		RPMU will present the level of fund utilization as of 30 June 2026 and the planned activities to accelerate project implementation in the remaining quarters of 2026.
		RPMU will also present the proposed Project Work Plan and Budget for 2027 for each Component outputs at national and regional levels.
17:10	7.0	Meeting Recommendations and Next Steps
		RPMU will present the summary of the key decisions and recommendations that were generated from the discussions, for review and approval of the RSC. RPMU will also request the RSC to discuss and announce the venue of the 2027 RSC meeting.
		RPMU will also outline the next steps, including the preparation and dissemination of the meeting proceedings to the RSC.
17:25		Closing of the PSC Meeting



About the Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Project

Supported by the [Global Environment Facility](#), the Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Project is working to set-up functional management mechanisms in priority river basins of six ASEAN countries to reduce pollution and sustain freshwater environmental flows as well as adapt to climate change vulnerabilities. The regional Project is being implemented by the [United Nations Development Programme Bangkok Regional Hub](#), and executed by [Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia](#), in collaboration with [ASEAN](#).

