



2nd Project Steering Committee Meeting WP01

Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture Project

Coron Westtown, Palawan, Philippines

Terms of Reference (ToR)

I. BACKGROUND

The **Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture** project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF US) as the GEF Implementing Agency, with the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) as Lead Regional Executing Agency, and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR, Philippines) and the Department of Fisheries and Surveillance (DFiS) as national executing partners. The Project duration covers the period from 2024 to 2028¹, with the possibility for extension. The overarching goal of the project is to develop sustainable seaweed value chains that deliver ecosystem services and socioeconomic benefits.

The project comprises four components: 1) Regional approach and capacity for seaweed value chains in Southeast Asia; 2) Enabling Environment for Seaweed Aquaculture in the Philippines and Viet Nam; 3) Seaweed Value Chains (production, processing, and marketing); and 4) Knowledge Management, M&E, and IW Learn (regional). The Project execution is managed by the Project Management Unit (PMU), under the supervision of the SEAFDEC Secretary-General. The PMU Office is based at the SEAFDEC Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand. The Project is governed by the Project Steering Committee to oversee implementation throughout the project’s duration.

II. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

To facilitate the achievement of the goals and objectives of the project entitled “*Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture*”, a **Project Steering Committee (PSC)** will be established as the primary decision-making body for the project, to provide strategic oversight, guidance, and approval of key project deliverables in line with the Project Document, Grant Agreements, and GEF requirements.

The role of PSC shall provide guidance, coordination, and accountability across the regional and national levels to the project, and to guide the Project Management Unit (PMU) of SEAFDEC and National PMUs in the Philippines and Viet Nam in the implementation and monitoring of the project,

¹ SEAFDEC’s activities will be completed within this period, while implementation in the Philippines and Viet Nam will extend to 2029.

ensuring that the project remains on track to deliver tangible environmental and socio-economic benefits both at regional and national level.

The PSC will serve as a regional forum for reviewing and resolving cross-cutting concerns, reviewing and approving annual work plans and budgets, and facilitating stakeholder participation. One of the first activities during full project implementation will be to reconfirm and/or constitute the membership of the PSC, agree on meeting procedures, and finalize the Terms of Reference for the PSC.

III. THE TERM OF REFERENCE OF THE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE

- a. Provide direction and strategic guidance to the Project Management Unit (PMU) and National executing partners regarding project execution of agreed activities over the entire period of the project, including incorporating gender mainstreaming
- b. Approve at their first meeting: a) the membership, meeting arrangements, and terms of reference of the committees; and b) such standing orders and manner of conducting business as may be considered necessary by the committee
- c. Meet on an annual basis during the implementation of the project to guide the timely execution of project activities
- d. Approve annual work plans and budgets and approve any changes to the project strategy or budget alongside WWF GEF Agency
- e. Approve the financial reports of the expenditure for prior years and also adopt the audited financial reports
- f. Provide guidance and advice for the Project Management Unit (PMU) on the project monitoring and evaluation plan, Project Progress Report (PPR), annual Results Framework and workplan tracking, Mid-term Project Evaluation Report, and Project Closeout Report, for submission to SEAFDEC, WWF US, and GEF Secretariat
- g. Approve key project outputs (e.g. reports, policy documents, communication and knowledge projects, etc)
- h. Assist the PMUs in ensuring coordination among national site-based activities and other national-level activities to further enhance national capacity to develop integrated approaches seaweed aquaculture and environmental management.
- i. Provide guidance on the interactions and partnership with other relevant bodies and network
- j. Assist the PMU in leveraging required project co-financing and additional funds that may be required from time to time
- k. Work with the PMU and National Lead Agencies in mainstreaming integrated seaweed aquaculture and environmental management and the replication of project successes at the national level.
- l. Participate in both virtual and in-person annual reflection workshop to discuss the theory of change and project progress.

IV. COMPOSITION OF PSC

The PSC members will consist of well-balance representatives from target countries and agencies with equal representation men and women, comprising:

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Environment of Viet Nam (2 person)
2. Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines (2 person)

3. SIAP (Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines) – (1 person)
4. Secretary General SEAFDEC Secretariat (1 person)

The PSC shall elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from amongst its full members with responsibility for chairing each formal meeting of the Committee and for acting as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of any meetings convened during the subsequent inter-sessional period. At the start of each meeting, the PSC may agree by consensus to invite additional experts to participate as observers or advisors for all or part of the meeting, as deemed appropriate by the Committee.

V. SECRETARIAT OF THE COMMITTEE

- a. The Project Manager/Technical Advisor of SEAFDEC's PMU shall act as Secretary to the meetings of the Committee.
- b. Other staff of SEAFDEC's PMU may provide secretariat and technical support to the meetings of the PSC as required.

VI. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

- a. The PMU shall convene regular biannual and annual meetings
- b. *Ad hoc* meetings may be convened by the Chairperson both in person and online: when a majority of the Committee members make a request for such a meeting to the Project Steering Committee; and at the request of the Project Steering Committee when circumstances demand.

VII. CONDUCT OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Committee shall operate and take decisions on the basis of consensus, regarding any matter relating to project execution that has regional significance. Where full consensus cannot be achieved in reaching agreement during a full meeting of the Committee, on any matter relating to project execution that has regional significance, the Secretariat shall, in consultation with the Chairperson, facilitate negotiations during the subsequent inter sessional period with a view to seeking resolution, and will report the results of these negotiations to the Committee members. The detailed operational guidance of the PSC is provided below:

- a. *Members*: Each organization represented in the PSC will appoint a primary representative and an alternate in case the primary representative is not available to ensure that each organization is represented appropriately.
- b. *Convening*: PSC meeting invitations, materials and agenda will be issued by the PMU at least fourteen (14) calendar days before the meeting. New items can be added to the agenda at the request of any member of the PSC on the condition that it is informed before the meeting to the other members.
- c. *Quorum*: the quorum of the PSC will be 80% of the member institutions.

- d. *Protocol*: PMU SEAFDEC will coordinate with the PSC Chair to set the date of meetings, agenda, and invitation to PSC members. PSC materials will be shared in advance.
- e. *Meeting minutes*: as the secretary of the PSC, the SEAFDEC PMU will provide PSC meeting minutes (including summary of decisions and agreements) and share with all PSC members no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the meeting is held.
- f. *Amendments to the PSC TOR*: Any changes to the TOR, including its membership, must be approved by both WWF GEF Agency and approved by the PSC following the decision-making clause above.