



**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN: REGIONAL**

**Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture (GEF ID: 10573)**

**GEF Agency: WWF US**

**Lead Executing Agency: Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center**

**Philippines National Executing Agency: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources**

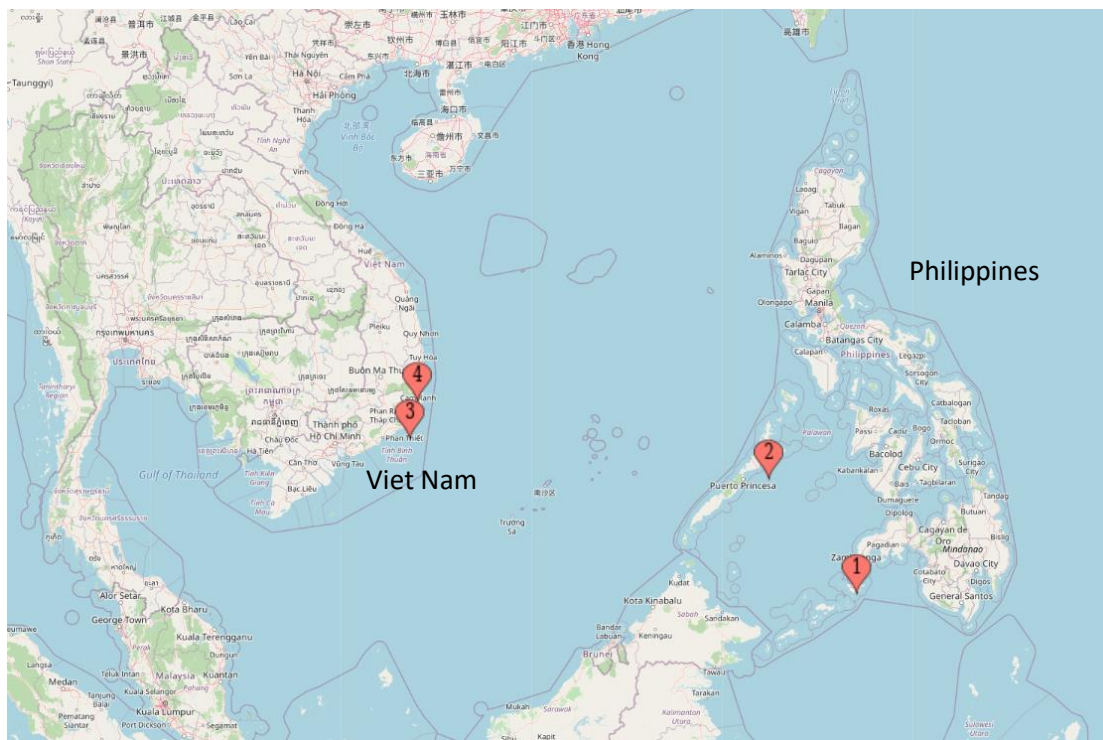
**Vietnam National Executing Agency: Directorate of Fisheries**

**February 28, 2022**

## 1. Introduction

The project ‘Blue Horizon: Ocean Relief through Seaweed Aquaculture’ will work regionally in Southeast Asia, as well as in Philippines and Viet Nam specifically, to develop seaweed value chains that deliver ecosystem services and socio-economic benefits. Ecosystem services include the assimilation of excess nutrients from coastal waters, which mitigates ocean eutrophication and acidification and improves habitat for marine life. Seaweed also captures carbon, which reduces ocean acidity and allows for greater capacity of the ocean to slow the rate of climate change. Downstream of the farming segment of the value chain, additional environmental benefits will be derived from the manufacture of seaweed-based products that are biodegradable, such as bioplastics, and other low-energy product substitutes (such as seaweed-based animal feed). Social and economic benefits include the diversification of livelihood options, improved household and community revenues, and opportunities for equitable participation of women and men in the improved or new livelihood opportunities along the value chain.

The Project sites are in the Philippines and Viet Nam (see map below). In the Philippines, the sites are in (1) Buenavista, a district of Zamboanga City in the Southwestern Philippines, and (2) off Green Island in waters under the authority of the municipal government of Roxas, Palawan Province. In Vietnam, the sites are in (3) the district of Thuan Nam in the Province of Ninh Thuan, and (4) in the district of Ninh Hoa in the Province of Khanh Hoa.



**Project Sites: (1) Buenavista, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Peninsula, Philippines; (2) Green Island, Roxas, Palawan, Philippines; (3) Thuận Nam District, Ninh Thuan province, Vietnam; (4) Ninh Hòa District, Khánh Hoà Province, Vietnam**

The project objective “to create new sustainable seaweed value chains that will deliver ecosystem services and provide socioeconomic benefits” will be achieved through four components:

**1: Regional capacity building for seaweed aquaculture.** Under this Component, the project will develop plans, tools, and trainings to build a supportive regional enabling environment for seaweed aquaculture.

This will include development of a Regional Guide for Seaweed Aquaculture in the Region, to be adopted by the SEAFDEC Governing Council, principles of responsible and safe seaweed aquaculture that are adapted to the region and provide guidance on operational, environmental and consumer safety standards (aligned with those of the Safe Seaweed Coalition), the development or updating of codes of conduct and good management practices, and trainings and capacity building to support both the Guide and application of the principles. Such a regional approach will support the region's capacity to further expand, modernize and establish a strong influence in global seaweed value chains.

**2. Enabling Environment for Seaweed Aquaculture in Philippines and Viet Nam.** Involves creating an enabling environment for seaweed aquaculture at the national level. A governance framework comprising policy, regulatory and technical guidelines for seaweed aquaculture (including offshore seaweed farming) will be developed. The project will support processes to identify suitable areas for seaweed expansion, and to formulate and operationalize management plans specific to such areas, with accompanying plans and coordination mechanisms (provincial/national/regional/global) to support this component.

**3. Seaweed Value Chains (production + processing + market access).** This will require working with producers (organized into associations or cooperatives) to pilot farms in areas farther than current sites (i.e. off-the-coast or off-shore) that will serve as proof of concept for seaweed production in these environments. Demonstration farms will be established within national marine spatial plan (MSP) frameworks, and with the purpose of advancing uniformly accepted risk assessment, rapid alert systems and data collection in order to develop safe modes of production, focusing on food safety, environmental safety and occupational safety and in order to overcome barriers of insufficient information that directly limit off-take agreements among global supply chain actors, contribute to the low level of regulations, and pose a barrier to insurability. The project will support seaweed value chain initiatives to address barriers to production and processing. This includes establishing new biorefinery and processing solutions closer to the site-level, both to increase livelihood benefits for coastal seaweed farmers and to develop markets for value-added seaweed products (thereby encouraging additional seaweed aquaculture that further compounds the environmental benefits).

**4. Knowledge Management, M&E, and IW Learn (regional).** The project will support knowledge sharing and monitoring and evaluation. Project activities will be monitored and communicated through multiple channels, including through IW:LEARN. In this way the project will utilize and expand on current baseline activities in the seaweed industry in the Philippines and Viet Nam to promote the interests of seaweed farmers and their communities, and grow the global market for seaweed in a sustainable and responsible fashion.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan is specific to the regional level (Component 1 and Component 4). A Stakeholder Engagement Plan has also been prepared for Philippines and Viet Nam, respectively.

## 2. Regulations and Requirements

### WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

The WWF GEF Agency requires all GEF projects comply with GEF and WWF standards on Stakeholder Engagement, specifically the WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement and the associated Procedures for Implementation of the Standard on Stakeholder Engagement. Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management.

The WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement requires the Executing Agency to engage stakeholders throughout the life of the project; communicate significant changes to project stakeholders and consult on potential risks and impacts; establish a grievance redress mechanism and register and respond to grievances throughout project execution, and; disseminate information in a way that is relevant, transparent, objective, meaningful, easily accessible. The Standard on Stakeholder Engagement promotes an inclusive process to support the development of strong, constructive and responsive relationships that help to identify and manage risks, and which encourage positive outcomes for stakeholders and project activities.

\*The project will comply with WWF and government restrictions to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. During field visits and in-country travel, all attempts to practice social distancing will be made, as well as the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

### 3. Project Stakeholders

#### **Member Governments of SEAFDEC**

The Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) is an intergovernmental body that supports fisheries development in the region, and is the lead executing agency for the project. SEAFDEC has 11 member states: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. These member states represent key stakeholders to the project, especially as it relates to Component 1 deliverables: a Regional Guide to Promote a Sustainable Seaweed Industry in the SEA Region and regional principles for seaweed aquaculture. Adoption of these documents will be made by the member governments through the SEAFDEC Council. In addition, the project will support regional trainings and capacity building to SEAFDEC member states. The SEAFDEC organization will have the lead role in the adoption, promotion and implementation at the regional and national levels.

#### **ASEAN**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a political and economic union of 10 member states in Southeast Asia which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration between its members and other countries in Asia. ASEAN has 10 member states, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Lao PDR Myanmar, and Cambodia. An expansion and modernization of a sustainable seaweed industry across the region would boost the ASEAN's primary objective of accelerating economic growth and through that social progress and cultural development. It will also contribute to the Associations' programs on mitigating climate change risks and environmental degradation. A regional cooperation on seaweed development is in line with ASEAN's goal of economic integration. All ASEAN members are members of SEAFDEC.

Many ASEAN member states are active in the seaweed industry. Indonesia and the Philippines are the second and third largest producers of seaweed in the world. Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam have growing seaweed industries. There is good potential for expansion of the small seaweed sectors of Cambodia, Brunei and especially Myanmar with its long coastline. Japan has a small seaweed aquaculture production, Myanmar only has wild seaweed production but with a large potential for mariculture, Brunei currently does not participate in seaweed aquaculture but a feasibility study (March 2021) by the ASEAN-Japan Centre has identified seaweed aquaculture (for the export market) as a high

potential investment area. Singapore's private sector is focusing on seaweed food species, particularly Caulerpa.

ASEAN's involvement with the project will be facilitated through the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership.

*Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG).* The FCG as part of ASEAN is mandated to identify important regional and international fisheries (including aquaculture) issues, provide technical assistance to ASEAN for the formulation and implementation of common policies and assist the Member Countries in formulating common positions on regional and international fisheries issues.

### **Safe Seaweed Coalition**

The Safe Seaweed Coalition is a global partnership established to oversee the safety and sustainability of the seaweed industry as it scales up, supported through the investment of three major partners: CNRS (French national Centre for Scientific Research), UN Global Compact and Lloyds Register. Its members work together to establish a seaweed industry that provides safe products, safe working conditions and environmental protection as it grows. Experts from the SSC will be participating in the development of the Regional Principles of Responsible and Safe Seaweed Aquaculture and the toolkit (under Component 1) to guide the application of the Principles in developing safety standards adapted to the SEA Region, developing or updating codes of practice and developing or updating best management practices by national authorities and private industry.

### **ASEAN Seaweed Industry Club (ASIC)**

ASIC members are industry associations designated by the government of member country to represent the country in the Club. The Club is under the auspices of the Joint Committee on ASEAN Cooperation in Agriculture and Forest Products Promotion Scheme. The members of national industry associations are producers and processors/exporters of RDS, precursors or ingredients (such as semi-refined and refined carrageenan) for the manufacture of higher value product forms, and consumer products. ASIC organizes regional workshops to share industry developments, process and product innovations, and global market status, analyses and forecasts. They encourage members to adhere to or comply with standards and best practices that are required by the market. ASIC can provide inputs on different aspects of seaweed business practices in the region. Its participation will be through invitation to specific industry associations that are their members. At present membership includes one national industry association each from Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand. Designated experts will participate in the forums of the Seaweed Technical Working Group to develop the principles of responsible and safe seaweed aquaculture and the toolkits that guide the application of the principles in developing the standards, updating codes of practice, and developing or updating best management practices. Adherence or compliance with the standards would enhance the reputation of the seaweed industry of the region and make its products desirable and competitive in the international market."

## **4. Summary of previous stakeholder engagement activities**

February to September 2020 (PIF stage): The project team of WWF-US engaged with stakeholders at the regional and national level including Lloyds Register Foundation, World Bank, SEAFDEC, PEMSEA, Cargill, Mars, Nestle, USAID, ARPA-e, Grantham Family Trust, Walton Family Foundation, Ocean2050, Skretting, OceanKind, and the Moore Foundation. From these consultations, the objective of the Project was formulated and the strategic approach to its achievement more clearly defined. Ecosystems services and their benefits to the marine environment, and the social and economic benefits of a sustainable seaweed aquaculture industry were identified. Barriers, especially, to its achievement were

characterized and the strategic solutions to overcoming them were outlined. These were informed by the collective experiences and lessons from the initiatives of these entities.

In the Philippines, the project team had meetings with BFAR National Coordinating Unit-Seaweed Development Program (NCU-SDP), Philippines Foreign Assisted Special Projects Service (FASPs), and Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (SIAP). In Viet Nam, Department of Fisheries, VASI, MCD, ICAFIS and VISI were consulted and contributed towards the PIF. Status, needs and goals of the seaweed industry were discussed. This identified broad opportunities for a seaweed development project. Ongoing and planned development programs on which a new project can build on were described. The contributions to the national and the regional objectives of an expanded, modernized and sustainable seaweed industry were then outlined. This informed the expansion of the scope of the project to include regional participation in its implementation, sharing of the results, and regional technical cooperation in sustaining key project activities.

During Project Development, several consultations took place at the regional level to inform project design.

This included a Kick-off workshop (May 6, 2021), to review and agree upon the workplan, timeline, and roles. SEAFDEC, SEAFDEC AQD, D-Fish, BFAR, WWF GEF Agency, and the Lead and Technical Consultants participated.

SEAFDEC Member Governments, through the action of the Program Committee, at its meeting on 15-17 November 2021, have placed the Project under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership (ASSP). This Project was presented at the Program Committee Meeting by the SEAFDEC Secretariat. Members welcomed the Project, appreciated the objective and expected outcomes, and expressed their agreement to the implementation arrangements.

WWF-US staff and the regional lead person in the Project development, following several correspondence, met (on-line) on October 20, 2021 with the Head of the Safe Seaweed Coalition to identify areas of synergy and receive feedback on the project strategy (specifically Component 1, which is to develop principles that will build off the Safe Seaweed Coalition guidance). SSC agreed to provide co-financing to the Project. Another meeting took place on November 10 with a representative from SSC to further outline opportunities and synergies. Both meetings confirmed the relevance and desirability of the outputs in Component 1.

## 5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The purpose of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to ensure appropriate and consistent involvement of project stakeholders in every stage of the project implementation, supporting effective communication and working relationships. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will ensure that the views and inputs of stakeholders are taken into consideration throughout project implementation.

Stakeholder Type	Name	Frequency of Engagement/ Project Years	Engagement During Project Implementation
	SEAFDEC Member Governments	Ongoing	SEAFDEC is the lead executing Agency for the project.

<b>Inter-governmental organizations</b>		Year 1-4 (1-4 meetings per year)	During implementation, representatives from member states will participate in the project-established <u>Seaweed Technical Working Group</u> , which will support participatory development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional Guide for Seaweed Aquaculture in the Region</li> <li>• Regional Principles of Responsible and Safe Seaweed Aquaculture and toolkit</li> </ul>
		Yrs 2-4	Country personnel will be invited to project-hosted trainings (at least 3 webinars).
		Ongoing	Other responsibilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expert consultations</li> <li>• Adoption of relevant Project outputs (i.e. Regional Guide, Regional Principles)</li> <li>• Dissemination of knowledge products</li> <li>• Implementation of project recommendations</li> </ul>
	ASEAN	Yrs 1 to 4: Once a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultations on technical and policy issues through the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership Fisheries Consultative Group</li> <li>• Adoption of policy recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>International institutions</b>	Safe Seaweed Coalition	Ongoing	Expert participation in the development of Outputs in Component 1.
	Lloyds Register	Yrs 1-4:	
	UN Global Compact	Quarterly	
<b>Private Sector</b>	ASEAN Seaweed Industry Club	Yrs 1-4: Half Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in expert consultations and development of outputs in Component 1</li> <li>• Promotion of relevant recommendations from the Project to the Club's members</li> </ul>
<b>GEF Multilaterals</b>	World Bank country offices	Yr 4	Advice on the preparation of the investment forums and participation in the investment forums the Project will organize under Component 3
	IFC	Half yearly	

A Gender Analysis and Action Plan was developed for the regional level, recommendations from this plan will be applied throughout implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

## 6. Resources and Responsibilities

The WWF GEF Project Agency is responsible for oversight. The lead Executing Agency, SEAFDEC, is responsible for executing the regional Stakeholder Engagement Plan and overall compliance with the WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement. It will coordinate with the national executing agencies (BFAR in the Philippines and D-Fish in Vietnam) in the implementation of their respective Stakeholder

Engagement Plans. A Project Manager will be recruited to the Project Management Unit hosted by SEAFDEC. He/she will oversee implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plans at an overall project level. In the Philippines and Vietnam, the National PMU project manager will be responsible for overseeing stakeholder engagement with communities and local partners.

## 7. Grievances Mechanism

Grievance redress mechanisms are designed to enable the receipt of complaints of affected women and men and public concerns regarding the environmental and social performance of the project. In short, the aim of the mechanisms are to provide people fearing, or suffering, adverse impacts with the opportunity to be heard and assisted. They are designed to address the concerns of the community(ies) with a particular project, identify the root causes of the conflicts, and find options for the resolution of grievances. Therefore, they are an essential tool to foster good cooperation with project stakeholders and ensure adequate delivery of previously agreed-upon results.

These mechanisms is designed to:

- Address potential breaches of WWF's policies and procedures;
- Be independent, transparent, and effective;
- Be accessible to project-affected people;
- Keep complainants abreast of progress of cases brought forward; and
- Maintain records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.

**The national PMU will be responsible for informing project-affected parties about the grievance mechanisms.** Contact information of the staff member responsible for the grievance mechanism in the national PMU will be made publicly available.

### **Project-Level Grievance Mechanism**

The project will have two grievance mechanisms, one in the Philippines and one in Viet Nam; these grievance mechanisms will be established by each country PMU at their inception workshop. The PMU at SEAFDEC is welcome to establish a grievance mechanism at the regional level. The PMU at SEAFDEC is responsible for informing stakeholders of any project-level grievance mechanisms, as well as WWF's grievance mechanism.

### **WWF GEF Agency Grievance Mechanism**

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the WWF GEF Agency. Contact information of the WWF GEF Agency will be made publicly available.

A grievance can be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the WWF GEF Agency, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at: Email: [SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org](mailto:SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org).

#### **Mailing address:**

Project Complaints Officer Safeguards Complaints,  
World Wildlife Fund  
1250 24<sup>th</sup> Street NW



Washington, DC 20037

Complaints may be submitted in the Affected Party's native language and should include the following information:

- Complainant's name and contact information;
- If not filed directly by the complainant, proof that those representing the affected people have authority to do so;
- The specific project or program of concern;
- The harm that is or may be resulting from the project;
- The relevant Environmental and Social Safeguards policy or provision (if known);
- Any other relevant information or documents;
- Any actions taken so far to resolve the problem, including contacting WWF;
- Proposed solutions; and
- Whether confidentiality is requested (stating reasons).

The PCO will respond within 10 business days of receipt, and claims will be filed and included in project monitoring.

Stakeholders may also submit a complaint online or over the phone through an independent third-party platform at <https://report.whistleb.com/en/wwf>.

## 8. Monitoring and Reporting

Progress against the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be monitored and reported on throughout implementation.

The following comprises the monitoring and reporting activities to be undertaken with respect to stakeholder engagement **by the PMU**:

- The SEP will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary at an annual Reflection Workshop. The review will ensure that the list of project stakeholders and methods of engagement remain appropriate.
- Activities related to stakeholder engagement will be documented and reported by the PMU every 6 months in a Project Progress Report (as part of regular reporting). The project Results Framework and Annual Work Plan and Budget will track beneficiaries of the project and activities related to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

Stakeholder Engagement will be evaluated by **independent consultants** recruited for the project midterm and terminal evaluation.

The **WWF GEF Agency** will undertake annual supervision missions to ensure compliance, and report on progress against the Stakeholder Engagement Plan annually to the GEF through Project Implementation Reports.

## Annex 1: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder Name	Interest/Involvement in the Project	Project Effect on Stakeholder / Stakeholder Influence on the Project
<b>Governments</b>	Member governments of SEAFDEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building for their seaweed sector</li> <li>Participation of country experts in development of knowledge products, training</li> <li>Uptake of project recommendations in national programs and policies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalyst for further expansion of the seaweed sector; Promote a sustainable seaweed aquaculture industry.</li> <li>Governments express their priorities which the project may address, and adopt project recommendations.</li> </ul>
<b>Regional association of nations</b>	ASEAN	Economic, social and environmental benefits of project in line with ASEAN's strategy to advance the SDGs.	Fisheries Consultative Group of the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership acts on technical and policy recommendations from the Project and endorses these to the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry for uptake into ASEAN regional programs and policy.
<b>International Institution</b>	Safe Seaweed Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and promotion of safety standards and participation in global seaweed value chain</li> <li>Experts participate in the Technical Working Group's forums.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coalition's programs are promoted to the Southeast Asian Region; a potential increase in membership.</li> <li>The global standards of safety are enhanced by development of standards applicable to Southeast Asia.</li> <li>SSC will support with communications and knowledge sharing on their website.</li> </ul>
<b>Private Industry Sector</b>	ASEAN Seaweed Industry Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of principles of responsible and safe seaweed aquaculture</li> <li>Industry experts will participate in Technical Working Group forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve market access and global competitiveness with products that meet safety standards.</li> <li>Reputation of the region's seaweed industry is enhanced, which boosts the competitiveness of its products in the world market.</li> </ul>
<b>GEF Multilaterals</b>	World Bank country offices; IFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for potential investments in value adding enterprises and industrial scale farming.</li> <li>Participation in investment forums</li> </ul>	Project results could be added to Bank's country assistance portfolios and IFC's assistance to private investors.

## Annex 2: Documentation of Stakeholder Consultations

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Consultation</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Objective of the Consultation</b>	<b>Summary of Meeting Outcomes</b>	<b>Participants</b>
06 May 2021	Kick-off Workshop	On-line	Review policies/standards and workplan/timeline for project development	Workplan, timeline and roles agreed with participants  Policies and standards reviewed	SEAFDEC SEAFDEC AQD VN PH WWF GEF Agency Lead and Technical Consultants
05 Oct 2021	Virtual Meeting with Safe Seaweed Coalition	On-line	Identify areas of synergy and receive feedback on the project strategy (specifically Component 1, which is developing standards that will build off the Safe Seaweed Coalition guidance).	It was agreed that communications will be a key area that could be used to amplify project knowledge products; that SSC experts participate in the technical working group/expert group forums to develop principles of responsible and safe seaweed aquaculture and the toolkit to guide the application of the principles to the development of standards of safety and toolkits adapted to Southeast Asia; and SSC provides co-financing to the Project	Head of Safe Seaweed Coalition/Lloyds Register/UN Global Compact  WWF officers  Lead Consultant (Regional)
15 Nov 2021	Regular Meeting of SEAFDEC Program Committee	On-line	Formally inform member states of the Project and its status; and SEAFDEC's responsibility for the Project	Project was included in ASEAN-SEAFDEC Strategic Partnership	SEAFDEC Secretariat  SEAFDEC Departments  Members of Program Committee  SEAFDEC Officers involved in Project Preparation