

# ATSEA

N E W S L E T T E R

**Marine Conservation Towards  
a Sustainable Blue Economy**



## PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TOWARDS RESILIENT COASTAL COMMUNITIES

ATSEA-2 Annual Report 2022  
Promoting Sustainable Practices Towards Resilient Coastal Communities

04

## ACHIEVEMENTS NUMBERS

347.22km

- 334.4km Rote Ndao, Indonesia
- 12.82km Barique, Timor-Leste

Coastline covered by Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Program under ATSEA-2:

147 Technical Publications released

Total hectare of Marine Protected Area (MPA) coverage

- Support to existing MPAs: Southeast Aru, Indonesia covers 114,000ha, and Nino Konis Santana, Timor-Leste 55,660ha
- New MPA established in Kolepom, Indonesia: 356,337.90ha
- New MPA to be established in Manufahi, Timor-Leste: ~51,000ha

5 local regulations issued

- 3 in Indonesia
- 2 in Timor-Leste

in support of ICM, pollution management, MPA establishment, IUU fishing

816 individuals benefited from livelihood-related trainings:

- 373 Men
- 334 Women

200 Events organised or co-hosted (2019-2022) to share ATS information/initiatives and enrich learning on coastal and marine management

2,329 individuals benefited from trainings/capacity building activities:

- 1,134 Indonesia
- 45 Papua New Guinea
- 680 Timor-Leste

54,045 Individuals

- 31.6% Women
- 56.38% Men

of stakeholders engaged in various activities (2019-2022)

Co-Financing Commitment mobilised from 4 ATS countries and key partners (as of 2022):

- A. GRANT: US\$ 3,976,028
- B. IN-KIND: US\$ 23,158,713

Extent of coastline implementing Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) under ATSEA-2:

5,205.92km

4 EAFM Plans in place (3 EAFM Plans in Indonesia for Red Snapper, Shrimp and Barramundi; 1 EAFM Plan for South Coast Timor-Leste); EAFM Plans applied in Aru and Merauke of Indonesia, South Coast communities of Timor-Leste, and 1 draft Artisanal Fishery Management Plan for final validation in South Fly District of Papua New Guinea

# WELCOME

Welcome to the second edition of the 2024 ATSEA newsletter!

This issue highlights regional collaborations and initiatives for sustainable development and environmental conservation in the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region. We cover the outcomes of the Senior Government Officials' Meeting in Australia, which led to the final draft of the ATS Ministerial Declaration for long-term regional collaboration.

Learn about the ATS Strategic Action Programme Monitoring System (ATS SAP MS), a tool designed to track progress and ensure effective conservation strategies. Explore the sustainability of marine and fisheries governance in Indonesia through exit strategy workshops, aimed at benefiting local communities and ecosystems.

Celebrate the enactment of the first fisheries management law at the local government level in Papua New Guinea, supporting community-based artisanal fisheries. Witness a step towards gender equality and economic empowerment in Timor-Leste with the inauguration of the Tok Derek Women's Cooperative fish shop.

We hope this edition inspires you to join our commitment to coastal synergy and building resilient futures. Let's navigate the currents of change and progress together!

The ATSEA-2 Team

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

### Talk to us



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# Australia Hosts Senior Officials Meeting to Draft Declaration for Sustainable Transboundary Marine and Coastal Ecosystems

By Stella Puteri and Yulia Dewi

Senior government officials from Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea (PNG), and Timor-Leste convened in Brisbane on 25 and 26 June 2024 for the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) Senior Government Officials' Meeting (SGOM). Hosted by the Australian Government through the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment, and Water (DCCEEW), this crucial meeting served as a Special Session of the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project's Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting.

The SGOM was a key preparatory session for the upcoming ATS Ministerial Forum, scheduled for September 2024 in Dili, Timor-Leste. The SGOM's primary role was to review and finalise the draft ATS Ministerial Declaration for endorsement to the ATSEA focal ministries. The ATS Ministerial Declaration is a crucial document that sets the stage for future collaboration to address persistent and emerging key transboundary issues in the ATS region.

In particular, the Ministerial Declaration focuses on the formal adoption of the updated ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for 2024-2033, establishment of the long-term Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM), and corresponding Financing Strategies and Plans in support of the SAP implementation. Additionally, the SGOM provided guidance on the program for the Ministerial Forum and the steps to operationalise the RGM as a long-term mechanism.

As the host country, Australia was instrumental in steering the discussions. Katrina Maguire, Division Head of the International Environment, Reef and Ocean Division at DCCEEW, who also served as Chair of the meeting, commented, "It is my privilege to welcome you to this meeting as we prepare the way for the next phase of ATSEA long-term collaboration. I would like to acknowledge the Timor-Leste delegation for hosting the forthcoming Ministerial Forum and appreciate all of us here working together to ensure the meeting is a success."

Additionally, Iwan Kurniawan, representing UNDP Indonesia as the ATSEA-2 Project Implementing Agency, reflected on the substantial advancements made in marine and coastal management. He stated, "Our achievements in implementing the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management, expanding Marine



*Iwan Kurniawan, representing UNDP Indonesia as the ATSEA-2 Project Implementing Agency, delivers remarks during the Senior Government Official's Meeting*

Protected Areas (MPAs) and initiating community-based conservation plans demonstrate our commitment to ensuring the long-term ecological and economic resilience of the ATS region. As we convene at the SGOM, these accomplishments highlight the importance of our continued collaboration."

Building on these reflections, each country then proposed specific initiatives and commitments. Australia proposed developing the legal policy and structural adjustments necessary to establish the RGM. They confirmed support for the shift from project to program arrangements and indicated ongoing in-country discussions on establishing necessary national RGM components and functions in support of the RGM and SAP. Additionally, Australia reaffirmed its commitment to support the operations of the Regional Secretariat during the bridging phase.

The Indonesian delegates proudly announced that the SAP has been signed by the Indonesian Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, marking a significant achievement and good news for the



*Katrina Maguire (left), Division Head of the International Environment, Reef and Ocean Division at DCCEEW, in discussion with Dr Handoko Adi Susanto (right), ATSEA-2 Regional Project Manager*





*Participants of the Senior Government Officials' Meeting for the Arafura and Timor Seas*

SGOM. Indonesia also proposed developing the legal, policy, and structural adjustments needed to establish the RGM as a separate entity with legal personality. Indonesia expressed support for the final decision of the participating countries while recognizing the need for further studies. The country confirmed its commitment to continue hosting the regional secretariat office in Bali, with plans to finalise arrangements for seconding national and local staff by the end of 2024. Additionally, Indonesia recommended considering the proposed program for the Inaugural Meeting of the RCC as part of the transitional or bridging period.

PNG reaffirmed their support for the transition of ATSEA into a program and emphasised the necessity of a legal personality for the RGM to facilitate financial commitments and transfers. PNG confirmed their commitment to provide annual financial contributions during the bridging phase and to explore the legal basis for transferring funds to the interim fund manager.

Timor-Leste suggested conducting a study on potential options for the transition to a program in addition to developing ATSEA's legal personality. Timor-Leste indicated that securing a legal

personality for the RGM requires further analysis to evaluate benefits and potential drawbacks. Furthermore, the government of Timor-Leste confirmed their commitment to provide financial support for the bridging phase, incorporated in the 2025 government budget.

Beyond reviewing key documents targeted for the Ministerial Forum, the SGOM provided further guidance on the remaining key activities of the year, including plans for the inaugural meetings of the Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) and the Regional Stakeholder Working Group (RSWG), as part of the target operationalisation of the RGM. These discussions aimed to align all logistical and strategic elements to foster successful collaboration among the participating countries.

On the second day, a Special Forum with Australian Agencies was held. This forum facilitated knowledge exchange and sought to create synergy between the ATS SAP and Australian environmental initiatives, focusing on aligning Australia's programs with regional conservation goals and enhancing cross-border efforts for significant environmental impacts.

# Developing Monitoring System for the ATS Strategic Action Programme Implementation

By Yulia Dewi and Ingrid Narcise



*Discussion during the second Technical Working Group meeting*

The Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project continues to make significant progress in enhancing regional collaboration and sustainable management of marine-coastal ecosystems in the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region. On 2 May 2024, the Second Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting took place virtually, focusing on advancing the ATS Strategic Action Programme Monitoring System (ATS SAP MS).

In collaboration with the TWG, an ATS SAP MS Framework Document was developed in 2023, which was designed to monitor and share information about the ATS region, in conjunction with the implementation of the updated ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and National Action Plans (NAPs) for 2024-2033.

The monitoring system will track progress and impacts of SAP and NAPs implementation using a comprehensive set of indicators to ensure actions are effectively monitored and evaluated, and provide feedback in the form of reports to support adaptive management. It will be aiding in results-based planning, budgeting, and monitoring and

evaluation, as well as ensuring accountability and learning among the ATS countries and stakeholders in the implementation of the ATSEA Program.

During the meeting, Dr Handoko Adi Susanto, ATSEA-2 Regional Project Manager, welcomed the members and provided an overview of the progress of development of the ATSEA Program and the ATS SAP MS. He emphasised the importance of the ATS SAP MS in achieving the program's goals, stating, "The development of the ATS SAP Monitoring System is a crucial step in ensuring that our efforts in the ATS region are effectively monitored and that we have the necessary tools to assess and communicate our progress. This system will help us align our activities with the strategic objectives and ensure transparency and accountability."

The meeting was organised to review and refine the draft training materials for the ATS SAP MS. These materials were designed to orient future staff of the ATS Regional Secretariat and National Secretariats, ensuring they are well-equipped to implement the monitoring system. Participants reviewed the draft training materials and provided



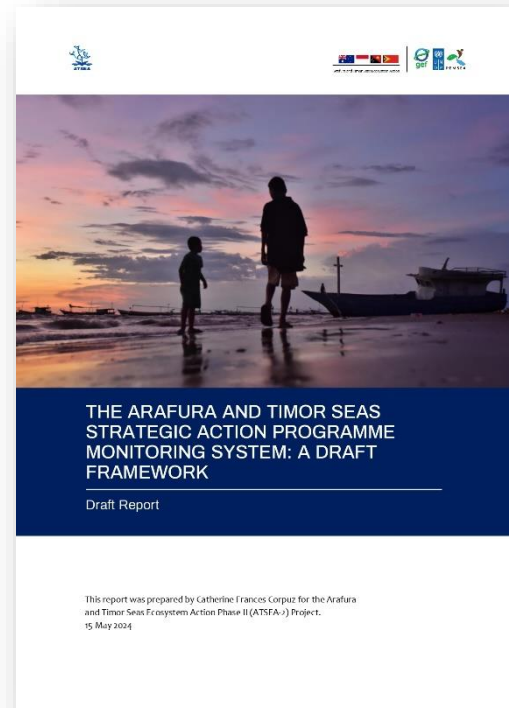
valuable inputs to enhance their effectiveness, focusing on making the training guide comprehensive and user-friendly.

TWG representatives from the ATS countries provided valuable insights and suggestions during the meeting. Dr Mario Cabral from Timor-Leste stressed the importance of continuous capacity building for staff, particularly in validating key outcomes and understanding the Theory of Change (ToC). Building on this, the Indonesian representatives from the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ratna Ayu Rahardini and Anita Setianingsih, emphasised the need for a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to tailor the training program according to participants' knowledge and requirements, ensuring the training is relevant and impactful. They also suggested the inclusion of data management and analysis in the training program.

Complementing these insights, Vagi Rei from the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority of Papua New Guinea highlighted the integration of both quantitative and qualitative measures for monitoring and evaluation (M&E), seeking clarification on combining these measures effectively. This dual approach allows for a more comprehensive assessment of progress and outcomes.

Further adding to the discussion, Dr Andrew Chek from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) of Australia discussed the significance of developing detailed results chains, which help guide the assessment of the program's pathways of change and ensure that intermediate outcomes are clearly understood and aligned with overall objectives. The meeting also recognised that the ATS SAP MS is a 'living document', which will be updated as needed to align with the completion of the ToC and the review and updating of the SAP and implementation plans.

The meeting concluded with a clear outline of the next steps, including finalising and disseminating the refined ATS SAP MS Framework Document and training materials,



*The draft of the Arafura and Timor Seas Strategic Action Programme Monitoring System*

scheduling and conducting the training sessions for the ATS Regional and National Secretariats, developing and fine-tuning results chains to better guide the monitoring and evaluation process, and ensuring ongoing support and capacity building for staff involved in the implementation of the ATS SAP MS. The timing of the ATS SAP MS training will be coordinated with the ATS countries considering upcoming events and commitments in the fourth quarter of 2024.

The development of the ATS SAP Monitoring System marks a significant milestone in the ATSEA-2 Project's efforts to promote sustainable development in the ATS region. Through effective monitoring and dissemination of information, the ATS SAP MS will be essential in enhancing the health of marine-coastal ecosystems and improving the quality of life for communities dependent on these vital resources.



# Four Littoral Countries Adopt Updated 10-year Strategic Action Programme for the Arafura and Timor Seas

By Ingrid Narcise and Yulia Dewi

Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste have come together to take an important step towards protecting the marine and coastal resources of the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS). They have signed and adopted a new 10-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for 2024-2033, marking a significant milestone in regional cooperation.

This collaborative effort aims to tackle major environmental issues in the region, aligning with national priorities and international commitments. The SAP was developed in 2023 and endorsed at the ATSEA-2 5th Regional Steering Committee Meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. Key ministers, including Hon. Tanya Plibersek of Australia, Hon. Sakti Wahyu Trenggono of Indonesia, Hon. Jelta Wong of Papua New Guinea, and Hon. Marcos da Cruz of Timor-Leste, signed the SAP in the second quarter of 2024.



Scan the QR code or visit:  
<https://bit.ly/SAPforATS>



The vision of the ATS SAP is to create a healthy, resilient, and productive Arafura and Timor Seas that support human well-being and nature. The mission is to foster social, ecological, and economic progress through a blue-economy-oriented regional partnership in the ATS region. The four countries have all agreed to this vision and mission, setting a unified direction for long-term sustainability and collaborative efforts.

For the next ten years, they have committed to address four key issues through this updated SAP:

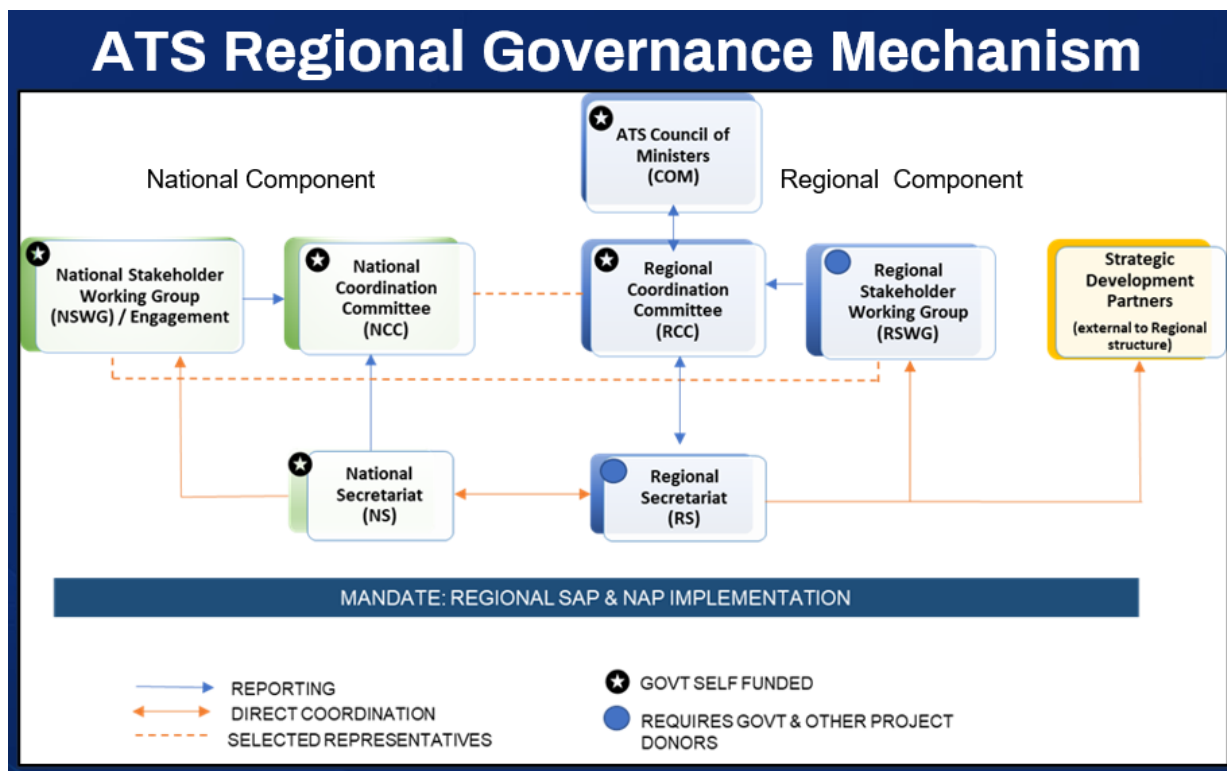
1. **Reducing Marine Plastic Pollution:** This includes tackling Abandoned, Lost, and Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG).
2. **Preventing and Responding to Oil Spills:** Strengthening regional coordination and capacities.
3. **Combating Illegal Fishing:** Reducing incidence of small-scale illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in transboundary areas.
4. **Conserving Endangered Species:** Protecting regional populations of Endangered, Threatened, and Protected (ETP) species and their habitats.

## Key Targets

This updated SAP sets specific and measurable targets to address these four main areas. By focusing on concrete actions and outcomes, the program aims to make significant progress in improving the health and sustainability of the ATS region. Here are some of the key targets:

- **Marine Plastic Pollution:** Implement new policies, develop a Circular Economy Guideline, adopt a Regional Action Plan for ALDFG, engage at least 9 coastal communities, and create at least 3 new circular economy pilot programs to reduce plastic waste by 1000-5000 tonnes.





- **Oil Spill Response:** Establish a regional coordination mechanism and framework agreement for oil spill preparedness and response in the ATS, and build capacity on regional oil spill preparedness and response.
- **IUU Fishing:** Develop at least 3 transboundary agreements, achieve 25-50% reductions in illegal fishing at three identified IUUF hotspot sites, and benefit at least 5000 fisheries livelihood beneficiaries through improved management and alternative livelihoods.
- **ETP Species Conservation:** Implement action plans for endangered species, establish 70,000 km<sup>2</sup> of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Other Effective (area-based) Conservation Measures (OECMs), and integrate traditional ecological knowledge into management systems.
- A Regional Component with a Council of Ministers, Regional Coordination Committee, Regional Secretariat, and Regional Stakeholder Working Group
- A National Component with a National Coordination Committee, National Secretariat, and National Stakeholder Working Group
- A mechanism for engaging Strategic Development Partners

### Looking Ahead

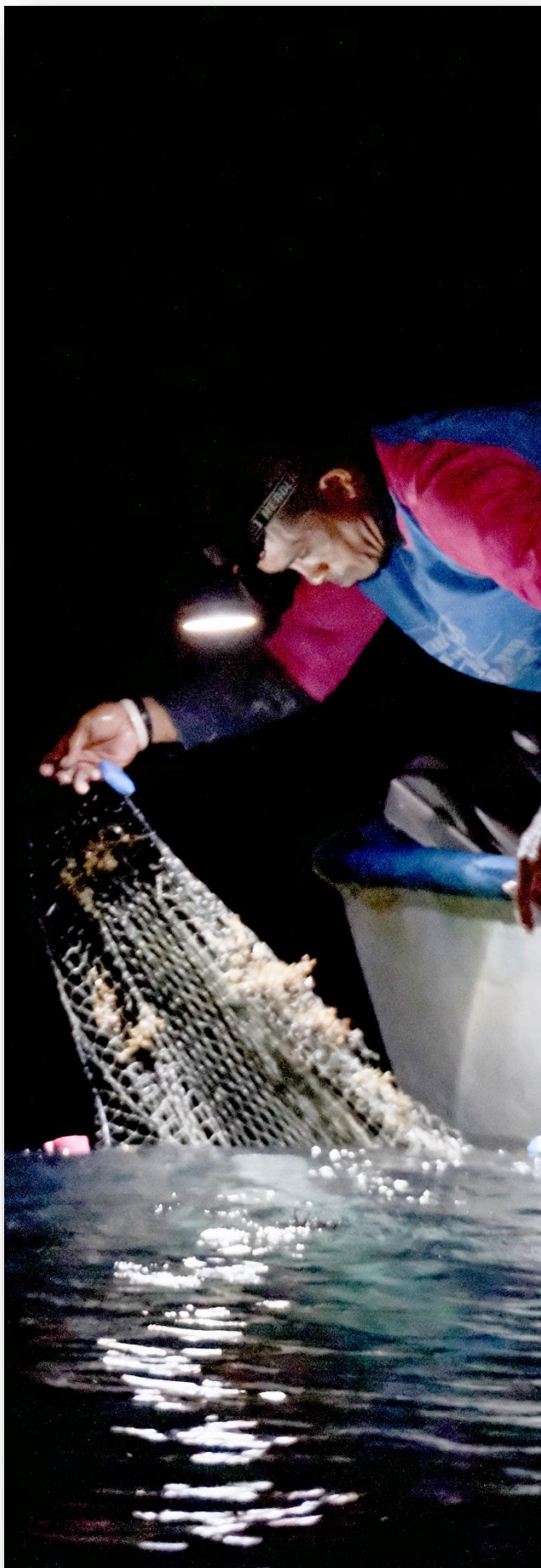
The SAP and RGM will be formally adopted and launched at the ATS Ministerial Forum in Dili, Timor-Leste, on September 19-20, 2024. This event will mark the transition to long-term ATSEA Program implementation, building on the achievements of the ATSEA-2 Project, which concludes in December 2024.

With this new plan, the countries are committed to a decade of collaborative efforts to protect and sustain the vital marine and coastal ecosystems of the Arafura and Timor Seas, ensuring a healthier environment for future generations.

### Governance and Implementation

To ensure the effective implementation of the SAP, a Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) has been established. This includes:





## Ensuring Sustainability of ATS Region through Exit Strategy Workshops in Indonesia

By Stella Puteri and Yulia Dewi

The health of our oceans is crucial for the well-being of countless communities and ecosystems. The Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project has been at the forefront of this mission, working to support the enhancement of marine and fisheries governance in Indonesia. A collaborative initiative between the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (MMAF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), this initiative has been making significant strides since its inception in 2020. As the project nears its conclusion in December 2024, a series of exit strategy workshops have been conducted to ensure the sustainability of its achievements.

## Rote Ndao District

The first of these workshops took place on 23 October 2023 in Rote Ndao, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). This workshop was integral to ensuring the sustainability of the project's accomplishments as it nears the conclusion of its implementation phase. The event brought together local government officials, community leaders, academic representatives, and other stakeholders.

The consultation's main goal was to identify priority activities to continue after the program's conclusion and ensure the effective use of resources across various government levels. Discussions centred on extending the program's reach into additional districts surrounding the Timor Sea, aiming to implement a broader, more effective approach to marine and fisheries management.



*A seaweed farmer from Rote Ndao dries his freshly harvested seaweed*



*A fisher from Aru navigating his boat in the waters of the Arafura Sea*

A key aspect of the meeting was the collective push for strategic actions to ensure ongoing support from both the central government and external donors. This support is deemed essential for maintaining and expanding the program's initiatives.

The meeting concluded with a strong consensus on several recommendations for future programs and activities, which will be forwarded to the provincial government for implementation. These recommendations are intended to integrate into future phases of the ATSEA program, focusing on sustainable marine and fisheries management.

These activities are intended to catalyse sustainable development in the marine and fisheries sector in Rote Ndao. Continued support and sustainable funding are vital for maintaining the program's benefits and enhancing marine ecosystem governance at both national and local levels.





*Participants of the technical consultation workshop on the exit strategy in Merauke, South Papua*

## **Merauke District**

Continuing the series, on 25 April 2024, a technical consultation workshop on the exit strategy for the ATSEA-2 Project was held in Merauke, South Papua Province. Local government officials, community groups, academia, and private sector representatives came together to ensure the project's sustainability.

A standout achievement from this workshop was the establishment of the Kolepom Island Marine Protected Area (MPA). This included biodiversity assessments, public consultations, zoning plans and preparation of an academic manuscript for the Ministerial Decree. Local communities were also trained to manage conservation efforts effectively.

Additionally, the workshop focused on reducing IUU fishing through a Fisheries Crime Forum in South Papua. This forum brings together enforcement agencies to enhance surveillance and legal measures. Two community-based surveillance groups (*Kelompok Masyarakat Pengawas/Pokmaswas*) were formed to monitor and report IUU activities, with local fishers receiving training on handling protected marine species.

Supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in fisheries was another key focus. Training on marketing and financial literacy was provided to improve their operations, alongside technical

assistance for sustainable practices. The program also collaborated with local agencies, including the Merauke Cooperative and SME Office and the Fisheries Office, to provide comprehensive support to SMEs.

The workshop also emphasised coordination and capacity building. Efforts were made to harmonise vessel registration and fisheries oversight programs, strengthen Special Use Occupancy Permit (SUOP) capacities, and integrate conservation area management plans with existing wildlife reserve plans. Sustained collaboration among stakeholders is crucial for the long-term success of conservation and fisheries management initiatives.



*Participants engaged in discussions during the technical consultation workshop on the exit strategy in Merauke*



Participants at the exit strategy workshop in Dobo, Aru Archipelago

## Aru Archipelago District

On 6 June 2024, a similar workshop was also held in Dobo, Aru Archipelago. The workshop brought together representatives from various stakeholders, including local government officials, academia, the private sector and community groups.

Significant contributions to sustainable red snapper and shrimp fisheries were highlighted, including updated fishery profiles and technical training. Efforts also included improving the management of the Southeast Aru MPA through zoning outreach and biodiversity monitoring. The creation of an Atlas of Biodiversity was a notable achievement.

The workshop emphasised continued community engagement and support for anti-IUU fishing measures. Gender equality was promoted through the establishment of the Women's Indigenous Group in Lutur Village (Nata Lutur), aiming for inclusive development outcomes.

Dr Johan Gongga, District Head of the Aru Archipelago, remarked, "Our marine resources are sources of life that must be managed responsibly to ensure public prosperity and sustainability." He further stressed the importance of community

involvement in conservation efforts, stating that the management of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Southeast Aru should continue to involve local communities, "especially to harmonise with community protection areas to strengthen their conservation efforts," he added.

The ATSEA-2 Project has laid a strong foundation for sustainable marine and fisheries management in Indonesia. The recent workshops in project working areas in Indonesia show the critical need for a comprehensive exit strategy to maintain and build upon these achievements. With continued support and collaboration, the initiatives started by the collaborative effort among various stakeholders through the ATSEA-2 Project can lead to long-lasting benefits for the environment and local communities in the region.

The success of the project, including exit strategy workshops, would not have been possible without the active participation and support of the local government, community groups, UNDP Indonesia, and various other stakeholders. Their commitment to sustainable development and conservation continues to drive positive change in Indonesia.





# A Historic Milestone: The First Fisheries Management Law at the Local Government Level in Papua New

By Kenneth Yhuanje

In Papua New Guinea, a significant legislative milestone has been achieved in the South Fly District of Western Province, marking a transformative moment in fisheries management. The Fore Coast Artisanal Fisheries Management Plan, a groundbreaking community-based multi-species fisheries management initiative, was meticulously developed to address the unique challenges of the region. This initiative culminated in the enactment of a Local-Level Government (LLG) Law, marking a historic first in Papua New Guinea: the establishment of a fisheries management law at the local government level, broadening the focus from commercial fisheries to community-based artisanal fisheries.

Supported by the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) through the Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project, this legislation significantly advances the sustainable management of marine environments and artisanal fisheries. Its enactment represents a monumental achievement for the Fore Coast Kiwai Local-level Government (LLG) in Papua New Guinea's Western Province. This groundbreaking approach sets a new precedent for environmental governance, offering a model for sustainability that can inspire and be replicated in other regions, illustrating a major step forward in conservation efforts across the region.



Members of the Fore Coast Kiwai LLG holding the artisanal fisheries management plan and the law they passed on 9 April 2024

Initiated in 2021, the ATSEA-2 Project represents the second phase of the ATSEA Program, which is financed by a GEF grant of US\$9.7 million and bolstered by co-financing commitments totaling US\$60.2 million from various country partners. Running from 2019 to 2024, this regional initiative includes the participation of the governments of Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and receives additional support from the Australian Government. The ATSEA Program aims to foster enhanced collaboration and coordination within the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region. It supports the implementation of the endorsed ATS regional Strategic Action Program (SAP) for 2014-2024. The overarching goal of the program is to promote sustainable development and improve the quality of life for the region's inhabitants by focusing on the restoration, conservation, and sustainable management of marine-coastal ecosystems.

### The Path to a Sustainable Future

Spanning from Sui Village on the Fly River delta to Bula Village at the Indonesian border, the region confronts several sustainability challenges. The ATSEA-2 Project's baseline assessment in 2022 identified critical overfishing issues and proposed a

community-based Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM). This approach culminated in the development of a comprehensive management plan, which was legally formalised on 9 April 2024, empowering local communities to manage their resources effectively.

The specific challenges faced by the Fore Coast communities, leading to the development of the new law, were primarily related to the inability to gazette the Fore Coast Artisanal Fishery Management Plan (FAFMP) under the Fisheries Management Act 1998. This limitation would have shifted implementation responsibility to the NFA, contrary to the intended community-based approach. Hence, an LLG law was necessary to legalise the FAFMP and ensure local implementation.

Community involvement was integral throughout the drafting and decision-making processes. Communities were consulted extensively before and during the FAFMP development, with management measures derived from the plan adopted into the LLG Law. LLG members, representing the Fore Coast communities, were actively engaged in the drafting and review of the law until its finalisation.





*A fisher from South Fly District, Papua New Guinea stands waist-deep in water, drawing in a net with a hopeful catch*

The ongoing preparation for the implementation of the law involves various stakeholders, including the NFA, Conservation and Environment Protection Authority (CEPA), Western Province Fisheries, South Fly Fisheries, Fore Coast Kiwai LLG members, and Fishing Industries representatives in Daru. These entities constitute the Fore Coast Fisheries Management Committee, which will convene annually to review the effectiveness of FAFMP implementation and its associated law.

While the FAFMP and its law are yet to be fully implemented, their potential impact on the local environment and fishing practices is eagerly anticipated. Once the law is passed, both the plan and the law will undergo a socialisation process before implementation commences, ensuring community readiness and support for the forthcoming changes. This legislative success has garnered acclaim from community leaders, including Hon. Sampson Ma'a Uku from Mabudauan village, who highlighted its importance for sustainable community development.

This initiative aligns with the broader goals of the ATSEA-2 Project, aiming to manage community-based artisanal fisheries and achieve sustainable

fisheries objectives. While preliminary feedback from the community following the enactment of the law indicates satisfaction and anticipation for more sustainable fishing practices, further assessments are necessary to gauge its full impact.

Future initiatives planned to support fisheries sustainability in the region include fisheries development outlined in the National Action Plan (NAP), indicating a holistic approach to long-term resource management and community welfare.

The Fore Coast Kiwai LLG's enactment of this law is a profound testament to the power of collaborative efforts between local governments, communities, and international partners. It underscores a significant shift towards sustainable environmental stewardship and community empowerment in Papua New Guinea.

This article has also been published in [IW: LEARN](https://bit.ly/LLG_PNG).

Scan the QR code or visit:  
[https://bit.ly/LLG\\_PNG](https://bit.ly/LLG_PNG)





# Enhancing the Management Effectiveness of Nino Konis Santana National Park: A Collaborative Roadmap

By Yulia Dewi

The Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) region is home to Nino Konis Santana National Park (NKNP) in Timor-Leste, an important area for marine and coastal ecosystems. To protect these resources, effective management is essential. Recently, a significant step was taken to enhance the park's management through a collaborative meeting organised under the ATSEA-2 Project.

In May 2023, the latest Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) assessment for NKNP resulted in a score of 46, highlighting the need for concrete actions to enhance management effectiveness. To address this, a follow-up meeting was held on 17 May 2024, bringing together stakeholders from 14 organisations with a total of 32 participants (19 men, 13 women). The main objectives were to share the METT results and develop a detailed action plan focusing on roles, timelines and budget allocations.

Expedito Belo, ATSEA-2 National Project Coordinator for Timor-Leste, shared opening remarks from the ATSEA-2 Project. Belo elaborated on the background and objectives of the meeting. He highlighted the significance of the METT assessment results and the critical need for concrete actions to enhance the park's management.

Lino de Jesus Martins, Director of Marine Spatial Planning and Aquatic Resources Management, Directorate General of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry Timor-Leste, welcomed participants and provided context on the ATSEA-2 Project and its objectives. He emphasised the need to address the gaps identified in the METT assessment to improve NKNP's management effectiveness.



Deti Triani, the facilitator of the 2023 METT assessment, provided a refresher on the METT methodology and results. She highlighted key areas needing improvement, which would be the focus of the day's discussions. Dominica Guterres from UNDP then updated participants on the NKSNP Management Plan, outlining ongoing efforts and future plans aligned with METT recommendations.

### Group Discussions and Key Insights

Participants were divided into small groups to ensure open dialogue and diverse perspectives. Each group was tasked with identifying immediate (1 month), medium-term (3 months), and long-term (6 months) actions to enhance park management. The discussions were guided by questions designed to elicit detailed plans for improving the METT score.

Key insights emerged from these group discussions. Participants recognised the cultural, historical, and natural resources of NKSNP, with tourism identified as a significant potential benefit. However, they also noted the need for improved facilities, such as better road access and public toilets. The discussions also highlighted the importance of community participation and partnerships with organisations like Conservation International (CI) and other NGOs.

One of the critical areas of focus was the formalisation of the NKSNP Management Plan. Participants realised that the approval process would take longer than initially anticipated, requiring detailed steps and a clear timeline. This understanding was crucial for effective planning and ensuring that future METT assessments would reflect meaningful progress.

The meeting concluded with each group presenting their proposed action plans, followed by a plenary session for feedback and refinement. The final action plans included steps for formalising the management plan, capacity building for staff and the community, strengthening cooperation among stakeholders, increasing survey and monitoring activities, improving facilities and equipment and implementing existing regulations.



Group discussion during the follow-up meeting on the METT assessment for NKSNP

The collaborative spirit and active participation throughout the meeting underscored a shared commitment to improving NKSNP's management. The agreed-upon actions, responsibilities, and timelines mark a significant step towards ensuring the park's sustainable future. As the meeting concluded, participants expressed optimism and a renewed sense of purpose, ready to implement the roadmap and enhance the management effectiveness of Nino Konis Santana National Park.

The journey towards improved management effectiveness is ongoing, but with a clear action plan and collaborative effort, NKSNP is poised to continue thriving as a beacon of biodiversity in the ATS region.

# High-Level Officials Visit for Inauguration of Tok Derek Women's Cooperative Fish Shop

By Bernardo Belo and Stella Puteri



*Adeline Carrier (left), DRR of UNDP Timor-Leste; H.E. Marcos da Cruz (second from left), Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry; Domingos Conceição dos Santos (third from left), Secretary of State for Fisheries; Jose Ramos (right), Administrator Barique Post Administrative*

The Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project recently celebrated the inauguration of the Tok Derek Women's Cooperative fish shop in Uma Boko Village, Barique, Manatuto Municipality, Timor-Leste. The event, attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF), accompanied by the Deputy Resident Representative (DRR) of UNDP Timor-Leste, showcased strong support for this initiative. From 8 to 10 May 2024, a series of activities were organised to promote local economic growth and sustainable practices, with the main event being the opening of the fish shop by the Minister and the UNDP DRR. This women-led cooperative is a significant step towards gender equality in the region, supporting the sustainable use of local coastal and marine resources.

Initiated in 2022, the Tok Derek Cooperative consists of 45 members (40 women and 5 men) from various coastal villages. The ATSEA-2 Project

has supported the cooperative with training in accounting, financial management, aquaculture, and fish feed processing.

In 2023, ATSEA-2 helped build a shop centre and fishpond and provided necessary equipment. The cooperative now has a fully stocked shop with electricity, water, and a conference room, and a functioning fishpond. In December 2023, they harvested fish worth about USD 120. The cooperative is working to improve infrastructure, including expanding shop space and enhancing the clean water network with the Village Head's support. Plans are underway to increase the number of fishponds, promising greater income from future harvests.

On 9 May 2024, the delegation from MALFF, the Secretary of State for Fisheries, the DRR of UNDP Timor-Leste, along with local leaders and community members from Manatuto and Barique, attended the fish shop inauguration. The new fish



shop was officially opened by the Minister, H.E. Marcos da Cruz, Secretary of State for Fisheries, H.E. Domingos Conceicao dos Santos, and DRR of UNDP Timor-Leste, Adeline Carrier.

During the visit, the Minister expressed profound appreciation for the project's intervention and encouraged the community to continue supporting activities aimed at community-resilient economic growth. Government members praised the ATSEA-2 Project for its concern for the coastal community and its contribution to increasing their income through the processing of marine resources. They urged the women's cooperative to continue developing diligently and to manage financial resources effectively based on their training, with emphasis on managing fishponds to increase income from aquaculture activities.

Local authorities from Barique expressed strong satisfaction with the ATSEA-2 Project and other UNDP initiatives, recognising their significant support in village development. After the inauguration ceremony, the delegation inspected the fishpond managed by the Women's Cooperative, where the Minister harvested around 80 kg of fish.

The Tok Derek Cooperative, led by six women and two men, has made a significant impact on the local community. They operate a well-equipped shop with essential utilities and a conference room. Despite challenges, their December harvest generated around USD 120. The enthusiastic and cooperative community urged the government to continue supporting them, showing a strong sense of ownership during the inauguration. Maria da Gloria Mendes, the cooperative leader, highlighted their role in fostering economic growth and empowerment. The fishpond operation, managed by cooperative members according to aquaculture standards, plans to add more ponds for better results. Their training in management, accounting, financial management, and aquaculture has positively impacted the members. The cooperative is also awaiting results from selling basic necessities from the shop, reflecting their unity and effective management practices.

To ensure the continued success and sustainability of the Tok Derek Cooperative, several recommendations were made. These include enhancing women's participation by ensuring that representatives from marginalised groups, such as the head of the cooperative, are included in official



*H.E. Marcos da Cruz, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry, delivers welcome remarks during the field visit*

programs to share their experiences. Additionally, addressing infrastructure issues and developing an exit strategy that incorporates knowledge sharing with other successful cooperatives is crucial for long-term success. Finally, a debriefing session with the Climate Change and Environment (CCE) unit is recommended to address concerns and provide continuous support for the cooperative's initiatives.

In the future, cooperative members plan to further develop their shops and fishponds to increase their income and expand their business. The local government supports and monitors their activities, as outlined in the letter of agreement between cooperative members and local authorities. They also plan to replace inactive members and recruit new ones based on cooperative policies and rules.

Another activity during the mission was the delegation's visit to Aubeon Village to observe the program progress and the response of beneficiaries to the ATSEA-2 Project. The ATSEA-2 Project's recent activities highlight the importance of community involvement, sustainable practices, and gender empowerment in achieving long-term development goals. The inauguration of the Tok Derek Women's Cooperative and the field visits demonstrate the impact of collaborative efforts in fostering resilience and prosperity in the ATS region.

# Announcement

## THE ARAFURA AND TIMOR SEAS MINISTERIAL FORUM

Following the Senior Government Officials' Meeting (SGOM), we are pleased to announce the Arafura-Timor Seas (ATS) Ministerial Forum, taking place on 19 and 20 September in Dili, Timor-Leste. Themed “Shaping a New Decade Together Towards a Sustainable Blue Economy in the ATS,” this forum will launch the ATS Regional Governance Mechanism (RGM) and initiate the implementation phase of the ATS Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for 2024-2033.

A key highlight will be the signing of the ATS Ministerial Declaration 2024, marking a significant milestone in collaborative efforts among four littoral countries; Australia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste, for regional sustainability and governance. The forum will also include the inaugural meeting of the ATS Regional Coordination Committee, an exhibition, a field visit to the Mangrove Conservation Centre, and other side events.

## EAS CONGRESS

Mark your calendars for an oceanic adventure! The [East Asian Seas Congress 2024](#) will be held in conjunction with Xiamen World Ocean Week from 6-8 November 2024 in Xiamen, China. Orchestrated by the Ministry of Natural Resources of China, Xiamen Municipal People's Government, and the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), this event is more than just a conference—it is a model for sustainable ocean management. Register online by 15 October 2024 via this [link](#) ([https://bit.ly/EAScongress\\_registration](https://bit.ly/EAScongress_registration)). Join us in Xiamen for a voyage of discovery and impact, where every drop in the ocean counts towards a wave of change. For inquiries, email us at [eas.congress@pemsea.org](mailto:eas.congress@pemsea.org).

## NEW SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS RELEASED!

We are thrilled to announce the release of six new scientific publications, now available for access. Dive into the latest research and findings in our field by visiting Taylor & Francis Online. The featured papers include:

- ATSEA: A Regional Collaboration to Address Transboundary Threats to Ecosystems for Human Well-Being in the Arafura and Timor Seas
- Coastal and Marine Ecosystems of the Arafura and Timor Seas – Characterization, Key Features and Ecological Significance
- Toward Sustainable Fishing Practices in Indonesia: Defining a Catch Quota Allocation for Saddletail Snapper (*Lutjanus Malabaricus*) in the Arafura Sea
- Tougher Evidence-Based Policy Does Matter: Deterring Illegal Fishing in the Arafura and Timor Seas
- Transboundary Environmental Harm and the Increasing Risk of Oil Spills and Marine Debris in the Semi-Enclosed Arafura and Timor Seas Region
- A Resilient Marine Protected Area Network Design: A First for the Arafura Timor Seas

For full version of these publications, go to this [link](#) (<https://bit.ly/6publications-ATSEA>). Happy reading!





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