



History of Singapore's Engagement in Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia

1993

Singapore joined the pilot phase of PEMSEA, namely the Regional Programme for the Prevention and Management of Marine Pollution in the East Asian Seas (MPP-EAS), which ran from 1993 to 1998. Funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the project focused on the prevention and management of marine pollution through setting up integrated coastal management (ICM) in two pilot sites at Xiamen (PR China) and Batangas Bay (Philippines), mobilizing subregional efforts to address marine pollution problems in the Straits of Malacca (involving the littoral states, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore), and strengthening capacity development in the East Asian Seas (EAS) region. The successful completion of the pilot phase project led to the building of confidence and recognition of the need to develop stakeholder partnerships in addressing the enormous environmental challenges in the region. From 1999 to 2007, the second phase project focused on building intergovernmental, interagency and multisectoral partnerships.

1996

The Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) of Singapore co-sponsored the First Regional Training Course on the Application of ICM System in Marine Pollution Prevention and Management, which was held in Singapore under the auspices of the MPP-EAS Project.

The project also organized the IMO/APCEL/MPA Workshop on the Ratification and Implementation of International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) 73/78 in Singapore. The workshop aimed to develop individual work plans, which can be utilized by the four participating countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Viet Nam) in the short-term to strengthen their respective capacities for ratifying and implementing MARPOL 73/78 using the experience of Singapore as a guide.

Singapore participated in the Inception Workshop for the Regional Network of Legal Experts on Marine Pollution for the East Asian Seas held in Pasig City, Philippines. The objectives of the workshop were to produce a directory of members of the network, formulate the network's operational plan, and obtain commitments from the members to participate in the network's activities.

1997 The MPP-EAS Project produced the environmental profile and initial risk assessment of Malacca Straits.

1998 The MPP-EAS Project conducted cost-benefit analysis of tourism development in the Malacca Straits.

1999 The following MPP-EAS outputs concerning Malacca Straits were published: total economic valuation of coastal and marine resources; natural resource damage assessment; and refined risk assessment.

PEMSEA's second phase occurred from 1999 to 2007 through the project entitled "Building PEMSEA." The success of the pilot phase created confidence in the project and further highlighted the need for stakeholder partnerships in environmental management for the coasts and ocean. This success expanded the initial project focus from pollution prevention to sustainable development of the coasts and ocean as well as building inter-agency, intergovernmental, and multisectoral partnerships under the second phase. Specifically, in this phase, efforts in the two pilot ICM sites were replicated in six more areas. Together, the first two phases were considered the period for establishing the foundation of PEMSEA as a regional coordinating mechanism for the sustainable development of the coasts and ocean in the EAS region.

PEMSEA and MPA Singapore jointly organized the Regional Consultative Workshop on the Recovery of Oil Spill Clean-Up Costs and Pollution Damage Claims in Singapore to discuss issues and priorities with regard to the implementation of the Civil Liability and Compensation (CLC) Convention and the Fund Convention (FUND). The project

2001 The Building PEMSEA Project and MPA Singapore organized the Regional Consultative Workshop on Strengthening Recovery of Ship Pollution Clean-up Costs and Damage in Singapore. The workshop discussed the implementation of international instruments regarding liability for pollution from ships, compensation of related damages, and proposals for strengthening regional and national capacities in addressing ship pollution.

2003 Singapore participated in the inaugural EAS Congress hosted by the Government of Malaysia and signed the Putrajaya Declaration of Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia adopting the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), a common framework for regional cooperation for sustainable development of shared seas and resources in East Asia. Held every three years, the EAS Congress serves as an intellectual marketplace and forum on the sustainable development of the seas of the world's fastest-growing region. It provides a platform for ministerial and high-level technical discussions along with opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking between different sectors of society from international organizations, multilateral banks, local governments, the scientific community, youth sector, private firms, academe, nongovernment organizations, and other development partners.

2006

Singapore participated in the 2006 EAS Congress hosted by China, where it signed the Haikou Partnership Agreement, which formally established PEMSEA as the regional coordinating mechanism for implementing the SDS-SEA, including the Partnership Operating Arrangements that specify the roles and responsibilities of PEMSEA country and non-country partners in implementing the SDS-SEA. As part of the operating arrangements, the project steering committee of PEMSEA was transformed into the EAS Partnership Council.

Singapore also joined the meeting of experts in China to discuss the development of an efficient and cost-effective monitoring system for monitoring the state of the ocean and coasts at the national and local levels in the EAS region.

2008

The year 2008 marked the commencement of PEMSEA's third phase, entitled "Implementation of the SDS-SEA," considered as the partnership's transition period (2008-2013). This phase facilitated the expansion of ICM and the evolution of PEMSEA into a regional intergovernmental organization with an international legal personality and formally established headquarters.

2009

Since 2009, Singapore has been implementing integrated urban coastal management (IUCM) based on the ICM approach promoted by PEMSEA while taking into account the country's unique coastal city-state context.

Singapore participated in the 2009 EAS Congress hosted by the Government of the Philippines, where it signed the Manila Declaration committing to strengthen the implementation of ICM and climate change adaptation in the Seas of East Asia.

2010

Atty. Raphael Lotilla, then Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF), the technical and secretariat arm of PEMSEA, conveyed one of the keynote addresses at the 2020 International Oil Spill Response Conference in Singapore. The conference served as a vehicle for sharing strategies and best practices in oil spill preparedness and response.

2011

Ambassador Mary Seet-Cheng, then a Senior Specialist Adviser at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and concurrently a non-resident Ambassador of Singapore to Panama and Cuba, commenced her three-year term as the Council Co-Chair of the EAS Partnership Council from 2011 to 2013.

2012

Singapore participated at the 2012 EAS Congress hosted by the Government of RO Korea, where it signed the "Changwon Declaration Toward an Ocean-based Blue Economy: Moving Ahead with the SDS-SEA," which adopted the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2012-2016 and the definition of blue economy.

2013

Ambassador Mary Seet-Cheng assumed the position of Council Chair of the EAS Partnership Council from 2013 to 2015

2014

The year 2014 marked the commencement of PEMSEA's fourth and last phase entitled "Scaling up the Implementation of the SDS-SEA." With a seven-year implementation period, the last phase focused on PEMSEA's transformation towards organizational sustainability by scaling up the implementation of the SDS-SEA as a regional framework through national action programs while drawing from the experiences of successful ICM practices, establishing a stronger link between the management of coastal and marine areas and their contiguous watersheds, and conducting pilot investment studies to pursue a blue economy in the EAS region. Singapore participated in the project on a cost-sharing basis.

2015

Singapore participated in the 2015 EAS Congress hosted by Viet Nam, where it signed the Da Nang Compact, which adopted the 2015 SDS-SEA. The updated SDS-SEA lays down the post-2015 strategic targets of PEMSEA in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2018

Singapore participated in the 2018 EAS Congress hosted by the Government of the Philippines, where it signed the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration, which commits to pursue PEMSEA's sustainability post-2019 and adopted the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022. The regional and national State of the Ocean and Coasts of the EAS region, including the national state of the ocean and coasts report of Singapore, were presented at the Congress.

2020

The year 2020 saw the successful conclusion of the SDS-SEA Scaling up Project.

The overall project target was to extend ICM programs to cover 20 percent of the regional coastline. In 2020, ICM programs across the SEA have covered an estimated 40 percent of the regional coastline, which included the scaled-up national and local ICM programs in 12 countries (i.e., Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam), including the ICM sites that were directly supported by the SDS-SEA Project.

2021

Singapore participated in the 2021 EAS Congress hosted by the Government of Cambodia, where it signed the Preah Sihanouk Ministerial Declaration. The Declaration endorsed the development of the PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030 as the region's decadal strategic guide, anchored on the SDS-SEA vision and commitment to blue economy and aligned with the countries' green recovery plans and programs as well as key international environmental commitments.

PRF produced the Rapid Assessment Study on Biofouling Management and Invasive Aquatic Species in the EAS Region. Based on desk research and survey done with eight countries in the region. The study identified invasive aquatic species found in the region; compiled and classified laws, policies, and studies related to biofouling; documented institutional arrangements and capacity; and identified key stakeholders in biofouling management. The study serves as a crucial reference material in the region's efforts to produce a shared strategy on biofouling management.

2022

PRF completed the project preparation phase of the IKI/IMO Regional Project on Reducing Maritime Transport Emissions in East and Southeast Asian Countries

(Blue Solutions Project) with 5 participating countries in the EAS region and Singapore as a strategic knowledge partner along with China, Japan, and RO Korea. The project aims to reduce greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions from maritime transport through energy efficiency improvements, optimized processes, and innovative technologies. The project is expected to start in 2023.

A Regional Task Force to develop the Biofouling Management Strategy in the ASEAN/EAS region was created. The objective of the task force is to develop a regional biofouling management strategy that will help inform the development of global guidelines on biofouling management. Singapore is represented by government officials from the MPA as well as expert-advisers from the National University of Singapore.

PEMSEA is formulating the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 in consultation with country and non-country partners.