



PEMSEA EC Meeting Report 24

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING

Conducted via Zoom

24 April 2020



**24th Executive Committee Meeting
Meeting Proceedings**

A. INTRODUCTION

- i. The 24th Executive Committee Meeting was conducted via zoom on April 24, 2020. The meeting was participated by EAS Partnership Council Chair, Mr. Arief Yuwono; Technical Session Chair, Dr. Jae Ryoung Oh; Intergovernmental Session Chair, Dr. Vu Thanh Ca; Council Co-Chair, Dr. Vann Monyneath; Technical Session Co-Chair; Dr. Keita Furukawa; and Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair Mrs. Chen Yue. Members of the PEMSEA Audit Committee, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), PR China, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippines participated as observers.
- ii. The PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) served as Secretariat for the meeting.
- iii. The agenda for the meeting is attached as Annex 1. The full list of participants is attached as Annex 2. The meeting documents and presentations are attached as Annex 3.

1.0 Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of Agenda (EC/24/DOC/01)

- 1.1 On behalf of the EAS Partnership Council Chair Mr. Arief Yuwono (who experienced technical problems at the start of the meeting), the PRF Executive Director (ED) Ms. Aimee Gonzales opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and meeting participants.
- 1.2 Ms. Gonzales thanked the EC, MNR, and DENR for their continued active support to PEMSEA and the secretariat. The ED stated that we are living in extraordinary times with the COVID-19 pandemic and the conduct of virtual meetings will be considered as the “new normal”.
- 1.3 The ED explained the three strategic objectives of the 24th Executive Committee Meeting, namely:
 - a) To assess the implications of COVID-19 on PEMSEA’s organization and sustainability and come up with short-medium term solutions;
 - b) To identify opportunities in terms of actions, partnerships, and funding brought about by COVID-10 that PEMSEA can capitalize on; and
 - c) To approve the audited financial statement of 2019, endorse new partnerships and provide guidance to the Secretariat on the 12th PC agenda in July 2020.
- 1.4 All meeting participants were reminded to observe the rules of conducting a virtual meeting.
- 1.5 Ms. Vida Isabel Vasquez, PRF Secretariat Assistant, presented the amended meeting agenda and schedule.

- 1.6 The 24th Executive Committee Meeting adopted the meeting agenda as presented.
- 2.0 Audit Report 2019 (EC/24/DOC/02)**
- 2.1 Discussion Highlights**
- 2.2 Ms. Corazon Davis, Assistant Secretary of the DENR and PEMSEA Audit Committee Chair, apprised the EC that the Audit Committee held their meeting last April 1 to discuss PEMSEA's Audit Report of 2019 undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Ms. Mary Ann Dela Pena, PRF Financial Specialist, presented the results of the Audit Report.
- 2.3 The total revenues in 2019 amounted to \$2.5M, which was slightly lower than the \$3.1M generated in 2018. Multilaterals and other grants represent 64% of the total receipts in 2019, the bulk of which came from GEF/UNDP. Government contributions and grants from country partners represent 33% of the total receipts. The decrease in gross receipts is due to the decrease in the budget of the UNP/GEF funded SDS SEA project because of the no cost project extension from August 2019 - August 2020. The committed funding for 2019 (i.e. deferred grants) amounted to \$1,148,066, a 25% increase from 2018.
- 2.4 Expenses in 2019 totaled \$2.6M, a 30% decrease from 2018. Project expenses (combined direct and indirect expenses) reached \$2.2M, representing 87% of the total expenses for 2019. The direct expenses for the projects amounted to \$2M. Administrative expenses represented 13% of the total expenses for 2019. The 13% can be broken down into: 5% for administrative cost and 8% for in-kind contribution provided by the Philippine Government (for office space and utilities). Personnel and consultancy expenses amounted to 37% of the total expenses for 2018.
- 2.5 PEMSEA's total asset increased by 8%, that is mainly attributable to the 13% increase in cash in 2019 and the 25% increase in commitments from countries under deferred grant.
- 2.6 The PRF Secretariat is thankful for its partners' continuing support in working together towards the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia.
- 2.7 The findings of the external auditor reported no significant issues, no material weaknesses and no indicative weaknesses in PEMSEA's internal control.
- 2.8 Furthermore, the External Auditor recommended that PRF should consider requesting from DENR the inclusion of the estimated rental fee of the building facility in its Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to support the amount of rent expense recognized in the audited financial statements. The legal opinion is recommended to be sought to clarify the feasibility of explicitly stating the rental value given that there is no actual monetary exchange from PEMSEA to DENR since the building and the land are provided for free by DENR as part of the signed agreement.

- 2.9 Ms. Davis also shared that the Audit Committee agreed that PRF will formalize this request to DENR. The legal department of DENR will review the request in view of the original MOA with PEMSEA and could issue a supplemental MOA, if necessary.
- 2.10 The EC was also informed that a separate fund will be set-up and designated for the contributions of PEMSEA's retirement plan for its employees.
- 2.11 **Conclusion:**
The Executive Committee noted the results of the auditors' clean opinion of audit findings and the recommendation of the Audit Committee to seek a legal review from the Legal Department of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines on whether or not to add the amount of rental value of the PRF building in a supplementary agreement to the existing MOA
- 2.12 **Recommendation:**
The Executive Committee agreed with the Audit Committee's recommendation for PRF to seek legal opinion on including the value of rental cost of the building provided for the PEMSEA Secretariat by the Philippine government as host country.
- 2.13 **Decision:**
The Executive Committee approved the PRF Audited Financial Statement 2019.

3.0 Work Plan and Budget 2020-2021 (EC/24/DOC/03)

3.1 Discussion Highlights

- 3.2 The ED explained that the Work Plan and Budget for 2020 – 2021 was prepared prior to the government issued lockdown and other restrictions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It does not consider the implications of the tight restrictions on PEMSEA's implementation of its programs and projects but shows the best case scenario if COVID-19 pandemic will be under control by mid-year 2020. . The next agenda item which tackles the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on PEMSEA's operations will cover the adjustments and recalibrations to the workplan and budgets that were considered and will be taken into account in the months to come.
- 3.3 The ED emphasized that the PRF workplan and budget 2020-2021 is based on the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022, the commitments made in the Ministerial Declarations in 2015 and 2018, various reports initiated by PEMSEA such as the Third Party Assessment Report and PEMSEA's Futures Report as well as EC and PC recommendations and decisions in the past years;
- 3.4 The strategic services of the PRF Secretariat, include :
- a) Management and Coordination of PEMSEA;
 - b) Partnership and Resource Mobilization;

- c) Communications and Marketing;
- d) Monitoring and Reporting;
- e) Administration and Finance; and
- f) Preparation, Coordination and Reporting on the triennial EAS Congress and Ministerial Forum;

3.5 The ED highlighted some activities of the work plan and its status as of the first quarter of 2020.

- a) The PEMSEA Post-2020 Sustainability Plan is currently being revised to take into account the pandemic and post-pandemic situation;
- b) Due to the ongoing crisis, there have been some delays experienced in the implementation of the SDS-SEA project which is on its final year PEMSEA and the participating partners have sent a request for extension of its termination from August 2020-December 2020 to UNDP;
- c) New projects such as ATSEA 2, ASEANO and Coca Cola have started well during the first quarter of 2020, but is experiencing some slowing down of activities in the second quarter of 2020.
- d) Activities under the Communications, Monitoring and Reporting, Administration and Finance are ongoing, despite the difficult situation;

3.6 Under the strategic services on Communications, Technical Session Co-Chair Dr. Keita Furukawa, stressed the importance of strengthening global communications and outreach and disseminating PEMSEA's knowledge products and information not only within the region but also outside the region, including the UN systems and other international discourses at the global level.

3.7 Council Co-Chair Dr. Vann Momyneath expressed that it is expected to have disruptions in the deliverables of the Work Plan due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Thus, he requested that the PRF Secretariat advise the EC of the impending revisions in the schedule and budget. Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair Mrs. Chen Yue also agreed that a proposed timeline in consideration of the current situation would be helpful.

3.8 **Conclusions:**

The Executive Committee noted that:

- The Work Plan and Budget for 2020-2021 was developed prior to the global situation caused by COVID-19 and is considered as a standard work plan under regular circumstances;
- In light of the global pandemic, several disruptions are expected in implementing the activities in 2020-2021 and will need to be reflected in a revised Work Plan.

3.9 **Recommendations:**

The Executive Committee recommended that:

- PRF expand the target of Component 3 on Communications and Knowledge Management to include global communications and outreach. As such the text of Component 3 will be reflected as follows ‘disseminating information and knowledge products within the region as well as the global arena, including various UN systems and other international discourses;
- PRF provide a revised timeline or schedule of activities considering the COVID-19 situation;
- PRF revise the current Work Plan and Budget for consideration and approval during the 12th Partnership Council Meeting in July 2020.

4.0 COVID-19 Pandemic implications on PEMSEA’s Operations (EC/24/DOC/04)

4.1 Discussion Highlights

4.2 The ED gave a summary of the COVID-19-related measures taken by PEMSEA partner countries and other countries in the region. These measures vary per country, but commonalities include travel restrictions, quarantine on arrivals, and restrictions on public meetings. While a few countries are beginning to ease restrictions, others are strengthening them. It is impossible to know when and how restrictions will be eased off and ended throughout the region. The decisions will be made at a country by country level.

4.3 The ED described how these measures and the impact of the virus itself had affected PEMSEA projects throughout the region. In addition to measures restricting work, many partners in governments across the region are devoting their time and energy to responding to the ongoing health crisis. For the headline SDS-SEA project, the activities planned for the terminal year, including end of project workshops to discuss post project sustainability and mainstreaming in country programs and the conduct of terminal evaluation has been disrupted, an application for extension of project conclusion from August 2020 to December 2020 has been filed to UNDP. UNDP-GEF Arafura Timor Seas (ATSEA-2) and ASEANO capacity building project on reducing plastics pollution are in early stages of multiyear implementation, but are experiencing some disruption to planned activities. The risks of delay to a planned project on integrated solid waste management with Coca-Cola Philippines and potential mitigating measures is under discussion with relevant actors. Pipeline projects such as the UNDP/GEF Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) and the IKI funded ‘Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the Maritime Transport Sector in the ASEAN’s which were expected to start in early 2020 has been delayed.

4.4 An overview was then provided of measures taken by the PRF to continue work where possible, while ensuring the health and safety of staff and their families. PRF are working from home in line with the policy of the Philippine government, while monitoring contractual obligations. Use of digital tools, for example in documentation, has increased. The PRF is also looking into a post-pandemic strategy, considering the reinforced link between human health and the environment.

- 4.5 Ms. Gonzales then concluded her presentation by sharing the three scenarios that PEMSEA staff had developed. Under the best-case scenario, which assumes rapid containment of the virus, restrictions may be lifted in July or August, with a return to normalcy by 2021. Under the middle scenario, projects which considers a gradual lifting of restrictions will see continued delays in the implementation of SDS-SEA. Further implementation will need to be calibrated to deal with restrictions. The worst case considers a failure in virus containment and management, restricting funding to PEMSEA and current modest list of PEMSEA projects. In which case, the PRF would have to restrict itself to core secretariat functions of management, communications, monitoring and evaluation with limited partnership and resource mobilization and finance and administration activities.
- 4.6 As a conclusion, Ms. Gonzales noted that the key issue during this pandemic would be funding PRF's operations. Co-sharing arrangements from country partners would be an important source of resources during this time. Country contributions and the availability of other sources of funding during and after this pandemic must be considered and actively sought. National government budgets may be reallocated to emergency and disaster funding which may have an impact on sourcing government co-financing for PEMSEA projects. Planning and financing will also have to be reassessed for the EAS Congress 2021, through reviewing what format it should take, what benefits the host may expect, what could be achieved, and how the congress would fit into wider events.
- 4.7 There should be more opportunities for funding post pandemic activities from international and bilateral donors. PEMSEA will need to position itself as a key organization on marine pollution and solid waste management, work with other partners on the links between human health and ocean health as well as on ecosystem restoration and biodiversity loss and climate change.
- 4.8 Undersecretary Analiza Teh of the DENR, Philippines thanked the PRF for the valuable presentation as it sets the direction of the region. She said that although it is important for countries to continually support PEMSEA's operations through voluntary contributions, it is crucial to note that countries are also confronted with a very difficult situation. For instance in the Philippines, the Department of Budget and Management issued guidelines to cut down DENR's budgetary releases by 35% and has imposed several limitations. Most of its budget will now be used to respond to the pandemic. As such, she proposed that PRF consider to explore other sources of funding from international institutions to support countries in financing activities to continue its implementation of the SDS-SEA (i.e., areas such as biodiversity laws, health, or climate change). This would also allow PEMSEA and its partners to recast or recalibrate its focus while working on the COVID-19 crisis.
- 4.9 Moreover, Usec. Teh suggested that PEMSEA use this time to organize or spearhead the sponsorship of online capacity development training for focal points and technical staff members. PEMSEA could provide leadership and ensure a continuance of knowledge transfer during the period of pandemic restrictions.

- 4.10 Dr. Furukawa underscored the importance of the ecosystem's health. While COVID-19 has shown great effects to the world, both socially and economically, its impacts on the environment is still unknown. If the health of the oceans improved after the pandemic, it would be a good opportunity to promote blue economy again. PEMSEA may consider producing a report on this with non-country partners and how it can help in boosting blue economy and societal wellbeing.
- 4.11 Mr. Yuwono agreed that the critical importance of ensuring marine ecosystems and environment are protected during this time, taking into consideration that this would be an economic resource after the pandemic. He further encouraged that PEMSEA develop a post-pandemic strategy to take advantage of this opportunity.
- 4.12 Mrs. Chen appreciated the Secretariat's effort to provide the meeting with key scenarios in this pandemic but suggested that deeper studies with experts should be conducted on the issue in developing a post-pandemic strategy
- 4.13 Furthermore, Mrs. Chen also shared that PR China is experiencing similar budgetary constraints like in the Philippines. MNR has received information that the government's budget will also be cut down. She assured the ED that they are doing their best to ensure China's contribution and apply the same amount as was given in 2019. The central government has yet to approve of the proposed budget and the PRF Secretariat will be apprised of the progress of China's country contribution for 2020.
- 4.14 **Conclusions:**
The Executive Committee noted that:
- The PRF has instituted several measures to adapt and adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures include working from home, monitoring affected contractual obligations, and increasing digital documentation and the use of online technologies, among others;
 - The presentation on the current situation of COVID-19 travel and mobility restrictions in the region and at the national and local levels, its impacts on PEMSEA's operations (on the ground services and funding), the contingency measures during the pandemic situation and the opportunities that PEMSEA can pursue in light of global pandemic;
 - Three scenarios developed by PEMSEA on different outcomes (best, medium and worst case) of the COVID-9 pandemic provide an outlook on what strategy PEMSEA may consider from 2021 onwards;
 - The quarantine period serves as a good opportunity for PEMSEA to provide leadership in using online training and capacity building courses for Country Partners at national and local levels;
 - While it is crucial to secure country contributions from PEMSEA Country Partners, it is also important for PRF to support country projects or activities by looking into external sources of funding (UN, GEF, bilateral donors) on, for example, biodiversity and climate change initiatives, that could be coordinated by PEMSEA. This will

require recalibration of PEMSEA’s focus areas to incorporate pandemic concerns and opportunities;

- Although the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the world’s social and economic aspects, its effects on the environment, especially on the health of coastal and marine ecosystems, are less well researched and less understood;
- In addition to the initial list of opportunities provided in the draft discussion paper, the post-COVID-19 period may provide an opportunity for PEMSEA to promote sustainable blue economy upon reviewing the impact of COVID-19 on the state of the region’s coasts and oceans.

4.15 **Recommendations:**

The Executive Committee recommended that:

- PRF explore external sources of funding, particularly international institutions to support the SDS-SEA implementation of Country Partners during the pandemic and post pandemic period;
- PRF organize online capacity building trainings and activities for PEMSEA Partner focal point and technical staff members at the national and local level;
- PRF, in collaboration with partners, promote the need to monitor the effects of COVID-19 on the EAS region's coastal and marine ecosystems health during and after the crisis;
- PRF work with experts in further analyzing the COVID-19 outbreak in developing PEMSEA’s post-pandemic strategy.

5.0 **EAS Congress 2021 (EC/24/DOC/05)**

5.1 **Discussion Highlights**

5.2 Ms. Vasquez presented the proposed working theme and ongoing preparations of the PRF Secretariat and the Ministry of Environment (MOE) Cambodia for the East Asian Seas Congress in 2021.

5.3 In the first quarter of 2020, the PRF Secretariat engaged in initial consultations with experts, partners, and collaborators in developing proposals for the EAS Congress 2021 theme. Several considerations came about during the discussion such as the review of ICM’s effectiveness and impacts; highlight of PEMSEA’s work in local governments; delivery of SDGs; and planning for the next decade/s in contributing to the global agenda.

5.4 Summarizing these concepts, the PRF Secretariat recommended three ‘working’ themes:

5.4.1 *Building a new decade of action for the coasts and ocean in the East Asian region*

5.4.2 *Heralding a new decade of collaborative action in the East Asian Seas*

5.4.3 *Fostering sustainable ocean blue economies in the East Asian Region*

- 5.5 Apart from this, an initial list of proposed plenary and/or sub-themes have been suggested including the Post-2020 EAS Future: dealing with natural and manmade crises; What's next for ICM?; Review of the region's delivery of UN SDGs; Coastal and Ocean Governance and Global Pandemics; Integrated River Basin Management: Source to Sea, etc.
- 5.6 The expected outcomes of the EAS Congress is to highlight local initiatives and solutions that contribute to global targets; 10-year vision for the SDS-SEA implementation and region in response to the global decade of action; and the Seventh Ministerial Declaration.
- 5.7 Prior to the pandemic, PRF and MOE agreed to hold the Congress in Sihanoukville, Cambodia on December 1-4, 2021. Sihanoukville was taken into consideration for its 20-year worth of experience as an ICM demonstration site, a pioneering PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG) member, and the opportunity for PEMSEA to support the government's initiative to develop the province as its Industrial Economic Zone. Moreover, a summary of the 2021 regional and international events was provided, including the postponed meetings and conferences of 2020, which were studied carefully in plotting December 1-4 as the most feasible date for the Congress.
- 5.8 Dr. Monyneath stated that in principle, MOE agreed with the proposed venue and date but has not yet submitted its endorsement to the Prime Minister. This is in view of the government measures against COVID-19 as mass gatherings are currently prohibited. He encouraged continued discussions to refine the congress theme objectives, nature and technical and logistical preparations, and conduct of the EAS Congress to be taken up in July at the Partnership Council meeting.
- 5.9 Dr. Furukawa asked whether the topic on 'Ocean Governance and Global Pandemic' could be discussed scientifically and what outcomes are expected from this topic. The ED explained that it is still in its explorative stage and would need further studies and research on finding out its root causes and how it could be linked to ocean and coastal governance and policy actions.
- 5.10 **Conclusions:**
The Executive Committee noted that:
- The Ministry of Environment (MOE) of Cambodia has agreed, in principle, with the proposed venue and dates of the EAS Congress;
 - The final approval of the venue and date is still subject to review, given the COVID-19 pandemic and the Prime Minister's decision on lifting the mass gathering ban policy;
 - The proposed topic on 'Coastal and Ocean Governance and Global Pandemic' is still a general concept that needs further scientific research on tackling its root causes and its link to policy actions.

5.11 **Recommendations:**

The Executive Committee recommended that:

- PRF report on the EAS Congress preparations and present an updated concept note at the 12th Partnership Council Meeting;
- PRF continue to monitor the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on the EAS Congress preparations and report to EC periodically.

6.0 12th Partnership Council Meeting (EC/24/DOC/06)

6.1 Discussion Highlights

6.2 Ms. Gonzales presented the proposed 12th Partnership Council Meeting Agenda for the Executive Council's approval.

6.3 Mrs. Chen raised a concern that a face-to-face meeting might still not be feasible by July since the COVID-19 situation is still uncertain and preparation time is limited. The ED appreciated the Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair's comment and informed her that the Secretariat would have to review the implications if the physical meeting would be postponed or conducted virtually. The postponement of the meeting can cause a the delay in approval of the 2020-2021 Work Plan and Budget which is reviewed and approved at PC meetings. The Secretariat will examine the necessary issues, actions and decisions that can be undertaken via electronic correspondence or a face-to-face meeting. Moreover, PRF will also be conducting bilateral consultations with country partners to seek their suggestions on the nature and format of the meeting. The Secretariat will inform the EC of the results of these meetings once these are completed.

6.4 Conclusions:

The Executive Committee concluded that:

- A face-to-face Partnership Council meeting may still not be feasible by July 2020 given the fluidity and uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in each country partner and in the region as a whole;
- It is important to review which actions and decisions are time-sensitive that can be undertaken through an electronic correspondence and what issues need to be resolved through a face-to-face meeting.

6.5 Recommendations:

The Executive Committee recommended that:

- PRF classify 12th PC meeting agenda items based on those that would need immediate decisions that can be handled via electronic conference calls and those that are better dealt with in collective face to face consultations;
- PRF proceed with the bilateral consultations with Country Partners in May to discuss the agenda and decide on the format, schedule and process of the 12th Partnership Council Meeting.
- Should the situation become better in July, the EC and PRF consider holding a "mixed" kind of meetings i.e., conduct a face-to-face meetings between the EC and PRF staff while facilitate a virtual meeting with Country and Non-Country Partners.

- 6.6 **Decision:**
The proposed agenda and identified pre-meeting actions needed for the 12th PC meeting was approved by the Executive Committee.
- 7.0 **Other Business:**
- 7.1 **Application of Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner (EC/24/DOC/07a)**
- 7.2 Discussion highlights
- 7.3 Ms. Vasquez reported on the application of Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner.
- 7.4 NIVA is Norway’s leading institute for fundamental and applied research on marine and freshwaters. The institute’s research comprises of a wide array of environmental climactic and resource-related fields. Its world class expertise is multidisciplinary with broad scientific scope, combining research, monitoring, evaluation, problem-solving and advisory services at international, national and local levels.
- 7.5 NIVA is working with PEMSEA in the in implementing the ASEAN – Norway cooperation project on local capacity building for reducing plastic pollution in the ASEAN region as its lead partner agency.
- 7.6 On February 2, 2020, NIVA has expressed its interest to apply as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner.
- 7.7 Technical Session Chair, Dr. Jae Ryoung Oh, strongly supported the application of NIVA and noted that the institute is also one of the leading institutes in the field of fate (transport) of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) modelling.
- 7.8 **Conclusion:**
The Executive Committee concluded that NIVA has met PEMSEA’s minimum qualifications for its application as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner.
- 7.9 **Recommendation:**
The Executive Committee recommended to endorse NIVA to the Partnership Council for admission as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner.
- 7.10 **Designation of Coastal and Ocean Management Institute – Xiamen University (XU - COMI) as PEMSEA Regional Center of Excellence in Sustainable Coastal Development (EC/24/DOC/07b)**

7.11 Discussion Highlights

- 7.12 Ms. Johanna Diwa-Acallar, PRF Capacity Development manager, provided an update on the status of designating PEMSEA's 4th RCoE, in the area of Sustainable Coastal Development.
- 7.13 Following the presentation made at the 23rd Executive Council Meeting, Ms. Diwa-Acallar informed EC that the Coastal and Ocean Management Institute - Xiamen University (XU-COMI) submitted its application and all required documentation to PRF by 29 March 2020.
- 7.14 With the concurrence of PRF's internal Technical Committee, COMI's application proceeded to an External Review procedure. The assessment form and application documents were sent to eight experts who will conduct their independent evaluation based on the criteria of RCoE designation. They were requested to submit their evaluation reports by mid-May.
- 7.15 Based on the evaluation of the external experts, a PRF Technical Review Panel will conduct the final evaluation for the endorsement of the Executive Director, and formal approval of the Partnership Council in July 2020.
- 7.16 Following a question from the Chair whether COMI has satisfied the criteria for RCoE designation, the ED clarified that COMI satisfied the application requirements by submitting the required supporting documents. As for the criteria, she mentioned that COMI has been an active partner of PEMSEA and was the first to organize the PNLG-PNLC joint training event last year.

7.17 Conclusion:

The Executive Committee thanked the Secretariat for the information provided on the status of the process of designating the Coastal and Ocean Management Institute – Xiamen University (XU - COMI) as PEMSEA's Fourth RCOE and looks forward to the completion of the external review in time for the 12th EAS PC meeting.

- 7.18 There are no additional business raised during the meeting.

8.0 Closing of the Meeting

- 8.1 In closing, Mr. Yuwono underscored the significant recommendations and discussions determined at the meeting particularly on the COVID-19 implications on PEMSEA's operations and sustainability, the opportunities that PEMSEA may explore in light of the pandemic i.e., linking human and ocean health, preparations for the EAS Congress 2021, and the considerations to be undertaken in seeking external sources of funding among other concerns.

8.2 The Council Chair also expressed his appreciation to his fellow Executive Committee members, observers from MNR and DENR, and the PRF Secretariat for their active participation and contribution in this virtual meeting.

8.3 The Meeting was adjourned on 23 April 2020 at 12:30pm.

9.0 Inputs from the Intergovernmental Session Chair

9.1 Due to some internet connection issues, Intergovernmental Session Chair Dr. Vu Thanh Ca was unable to stay throughout the duration of the virtual meeting. The PRF Secretariat had a short meeting with him on 29 April 2020 to gather his comments on the results of the 24th Executive Committee Meeting

9.2 Dr. Ca reported that Vietnam is dealing with the COVID-19 situation better than its neighboring countries and is preparing to lift its lockdown, including lifting the ban on incoming international travels. Government offices and agencies have recently resumed work normally and only a few provinces are showing COVID-19 cases. While international travels were banned in recent months, domestic travels and Vietnamese citizens coming from abroad have been permitted.

9.3 On the economic impacts of COVID-19, he shared Vietnam's economy would heavily be damaged due to its dependency on exports and tourism. The country is estimated to cost around USD 7 million from tourism revenues alone.

9.4 Regarding the conduct of PEMSEA meetings and events, he supported the virtual meetings of the Partnership Council. Given the uncertainty brought about by COVID-19 for this year, he also suggested that the EC and PRF Secretariat re-convene by mid-June to discuss the results of the ED's bilateral consultations with country partners and how to effectively organize the PC meeting among Country and Non-Country Partners. As for the EAS Congress 2021, he informed the Secretariat that there are speculations pointing to a third wave of pandemic. PRF should note that the winter season in December 2021 could stimulate a new wave of the virus. While it is understandable that there are a lot of events that have been postponed to 2021, PRF should still monitor and consider exploring another date for the Congress or consider a PC plus Congress.

9.5 The Intergovernmental Session Chair also noted the opportunities that PEMSEA such as the link between ocean and human health. He stressed that its expertise on solid waste management can play to PEMSEA's advantage. While he recognized that governments have solid waste management policies in place, its implementation and especially consistent and regular monitoring and reporting schemes still need to be improved . PEMSEA may explore on how it could capitalize and help countries in this matter.

ANNEX 1
MEETING AGENDA

**24th EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MEETING AGENDA**

April 23, 2020 (Thursday), Manila Time

9:00 – 9:10

1.0 Opening of the Meeting and Approval of Meeting Agenda

The Council Chair will open the meeting and request the Secretariat to present the Meeting Agenda for review and approval by the Executive Committee.

9:10 – 9:30

2.0 Audit Report 2019

Audit Committee Chair, Ms. Corazon Davis (Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines), will present the results of the Audit Report 2019.

The Meeting is requested to review and approve PRF's Audited Financial statements 2019.

**9:30 – 10:30
operations**

3.0 COVID-19 and other implications on PEMSEA's

In light of recent global pandemic, the PRF has developed a discussion paper to review the situation in terms of policies taken among member countries and project implementors that are affecting SDS-SEA implementation, the approval and startup of pipeline projects and the provision of PEMSEA Secretariat Services, present a three response scenarios and its implications on PEMSEA's operations.

The Meeting is invited to provide guidance and feedback on the following discussion questions:

1. What is the current situation in the East Asian Seas region?
2. What measures are in place in PEMSEA country partners and PRF to stay safe and healthy?
3. What would be a good contingency plan under the circumstances to help PRF manage and sustain its operations throughout the pandemic period?
4. What would be the organizational and sustainability impacts under best case, medium and worst case scenarios?
5. What would be a good post pandemic strategy that looks into PEMSEA's organizational sustainability?

10:30 – 11:00	4.0	Work Plan and Budget 2020-2021
		<p>Under the best case scenario, the Secretariat will proceed in presenting the Work Plan and Budget for 2020-2021.</p> <p>The Meeting is requested to review the proposed work plan and budget and provide further guidance and feedback on the document.</p>
11:00 – 11:30	5.0	EAS Congress 2021
		<p>The Secretariat and Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair Dr. Vann Monyneath will provide an update on the preparations being conducted with the host Country, Cambodia, for the East Asian Seas Congress 2021.</p> <p>The Secretariat will also provide initial information on the proposed theme, focus, and objectives of the EAS Congress 2021.</p> <p>The meeting will be requested to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise PRF on the preparations for the Congress in light of the global pandemic and how PEMSEA can use the crisis as an opportunity to push for our integrated coastal management solutions approach linking ecosystems health to human health especially at the local level. 2. Endorse the venue and date of the EASC 2021 3. Provide inputs on the objectives, theme and focus of the proposed Ministerial Declaration and other key outputs such as an updated SDS-SEA (post pandemic strategy, etc). 4. Identify alternative options for ‘global gathering’
11:30 – 12:00	7.0	12th EAS Partnership Council Meeting Agenda
		<p>The Executive Committee will be requested to discuss the conduct of the 12th Partnership Council Meeting and decide the Meeting Agenda in July 2020.</p>
12:00 – 12:30	8.0	Other Business
		<p>Application of NIVA as a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner</p> <p>Designation of PEMSEA’s Fourth RCOE</p>
12:30 – 13:00	9.0	Close of Business

ANNEX 2
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Ms. Vida Isabel Vasquez
Secretariat Assistant
PEMSEA Resource Facility

Mr. Jun Dacaymant
IT System Administrator
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ANNEX 3
MEETING DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

ANNEX 3. MEETING DOCUMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Meeting documents and presentations are accessible via this link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/11u76wIFodzJ8c_XopriGLc_Mk61N8a5v

