

Charter of the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC)

8 December 2024
Xiamen, PR China

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, through the signing of the Putrajaya Declaration in 2003, the countries in the East Asian Seas (EAS) region have adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) as a common regional platform for the implementation of national commitments under the Agenda 21 and other related global and regional environmental instruments concerning coasts, islands, and oceans;

WHEREAS, the Haikou Partnership Agreement on the Implementation of the SDS-SEA signed on 15 December 2006 and the Agreement Recognizing the International Legal Personality of PEMSEA signed on 26 November 2009 established the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) as a regional partnership mechanism involving Country Partners (CPs) and Non-Country Partners (NCPs) and facilitated the performance of its tasks of coordinating, facilitating, and assisting in the implementation of the SDS-SEA;

WHEREAS, the SDS-SEA was updated and approved at the Da Nang Ministerial Forum in 2015 to take into account and recognize country commitments to the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Paris Climate Agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Sendai Framework and was further expounded to provide detailed outcomes, indicators, and actions in the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022, which was approved by the Iloilo Ministerial Forum in 2018;

WHEREAS, PEMSEA is committed to build the capacities of local, national, and regional integrated coastal management (ICM) practitioners to enable them to implement the SDS-SEA and provide the relevant tools, knowledge, and expertise needed by the CPs in the region;

WHEREAS, the PEMSEA Learning Centers and Regional Centers of Excellence (RCOEs) have proven to be valuable in providing technical assistance to national and local governments, ICM sites, nongovernmental organizations, private firms, and local communities, among others, as well as in providing expert advice and support for the SDS-SEA implementation across the region by undertaking studies and projects on coastal and ocean management as well as organizing regional training courses;



WHEREAS, the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (“PNLC”) was officially launched during the EAS Congress in November 2015 as a regional forum for information exchange, networking, and sharing of expertise, experiences, and techniques in coastal and ocean management;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above premises and under the auspices of PEMSEA, we, the authorized representatives of our respective institutions, signify our institutions’ willingness and commitment to formally organize and serve as the founding members of the PNLC and to work together under the spirit and principle of cooperation, and further, do hereby enact and promulgate the following charter.

Article 1 – Name

1. The name of this network will be the “PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers” (herein referred to as the PNLC or “The Network”).

Article 2 – Vision and Mission

- 2.1 The PNLC’s vision is to build a committed network of nationally recognized academic and research institutions that can contribute to the achievement of the SDS-SEA and other relevant commitments and policies at the global and regional scales.
- 2.2 The PNLC’s mission is to serve as a network of PEMSEA Learning Centers and RCOEs (or hereinafter referred to as “Centers” collectively) to provide exceptional services in the line of technical advisories and capacity-building for the sustainable development of coasts and oceans.

Article 3 – Goals and Objectives

- 3.1 The PNLC will provide the following technical and coordination support to national and local governments, ICM sites, nongovernmental organizations, private firms, and local communities, among others:
 - a. Development/exchange of relevant information, tools, methodologies, and publications with other PEMSEA Learning Centers and ICM sites via the Seas of East Asia (SEA) Knowledge Bank;
 - b. Development of new ICM sites within the region; and
 - c. Conduct of joint activities in education, research, network-building, and outreach among members.
- 3.2 The PNLC will also facilitate the capacity development of new and existing PEMSEA Learning Centers and ICM or integrated river basin management (IRBM) sites through the sharing of knowledge, tools, and experiences.

Article 4 – Membership

- 4.1 The founding members of the PNLC will be composed of PEMSEA Learning Centers and RCOEs that have expressed interest and commitment to join the network.

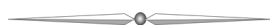




- 4.2 For the purpose of this Charter, the PEMSEA Learning Centers and RCOEs are defined as follows:
- a. PEMSEA Learning Centers: higher education institutions (HEIs) that have the institutional capacity and track record to provide academic degree programs and other means of capacity development, research, and technical advisory services on sustainable coastal and marine resource development.
 - b. RCOEs: HEIs or research institutions that may or may not offer academic degree programs but have received recognition of high distinction from their national governments for exemplary performance in capacity development, research, and technical advisory services on sustainable coastal and marine resource development.
- 4.3 Within the first year of the Charter’s signing, the Executive Committee may revise the current eligibility criteria, documentary requirements, and process for the application and screening of new applicants for membership in the PNLC, whether as PEMSEA Learning Centers or RCOEs.
- 4.4 A member may terminate its membership anytime by notifying the PNLC President in writing. The termination of membership will take effect one year from notice to the PNLC Secretariat who will in turn inform all PNLC members, or for such period of time deemed necessary, to give sufficient time for the member to complete any project or activity that it leads/conducts on behalf of the network.

Article 5 – Principles of Engagement

- 5.1 PNLC members, subject to agreements on intellectual property rights, commit to share and exchange knowledge, tools, and experiences related to ICM, including but not limited to blue economy, marine protected area management, and biodiversity conservation.
- 5.2 PNLC members agree that addressing sectoral and jurisdictional conflicts as well as unsustainable patterns of use of coastal and marine resources can be achieved through the application of ICM approach.
- 5.3 PNLC members further agree that research, training, and education play an important role in pursuing the sustainable development of coasts and oceans and the participation of academic and research institutions are critical in this undertaking.
- 5.4 Within the first year of the Charter’s signing, the Executive Committee of the PNLC will develop the Code of Conduct and 5-year operational plan and have the same approved by the General Assembly. These documents will guide the smooth and efficient operations of the network and will be updated as needed during the annual General Assembly.
- 5.5 The Code of Conduct will provide the standards for professional conduct in every major field of operation of the PNLC.
- 5.6 The operational plan will identify the strategic areas of interest in terms of education, training, research and project-related pursuits in the next five years, taking into consideration the existing capacity and expertise of the members as well as the development needs of their respective localities and the EAS region at large.





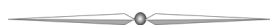
- 5.7 PNLC members can partner with a non-PNLC member to perform PNLC activities, provided that the non-PNLC member is incapacitated to join the PNLC due to inability to comply with institutional requirements. For this purpose, the recommending PNLC member will submit to the PNLC President a formal letter request for approval as well as a certification that the non-PNLC member has the capacity, qualification and expertise required by the activity and that the said non-PNLC member has worked or has existing engagement with any PNLC members on activities aligned with the SDS-SEA implementation.
- 5.8 Without prejudice to the previous paragraph, PNLC members will enjoy preference over non-PNLC members at all times in the receipt of member incentives and engagement in PNLC-related activities.

Article 6 – Incentives

- 6.1 The PNLC members may avail of the following incentives:
- a. Participation in an annual network meeting/workshop;
 - b. Information exchange concerning knowledge, solutions, and tools related to ICM, blue economy, marine protected area management, habitat restoration, biodiversity conservation, integrated river basin and coastal area management, fisheries management, alternative livelihoods, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and ocean policy and governance;
 - c. Participation in learning fora, workshops, and seminars organized jointly by the PNLC and PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG) and other PEMSEA events such as the EAS Congress 2021;
 - d. Participation in research collaboration;
 - e. Access to the latest and relevant developments in coastal and marine science and research through the SEA Knowledge Bank;
 - f. Access to consulting opportunities, among others, through the SEA Knowledge Bank;
 - g. Participation in PEMSEA training courses; and
 - h. Invitations to relevant regional workshops and conferences outside of PEMSEA.

Article 7 – Financing

- 7.1 Within the first year of the Charter’s signing, the Executive Committee of the PNLC will develop the 5-year financial sustainability plan as part of the network’s operational plan and have the same approved by the General Assembly. The plan will identify the initial funding requirements, resource mobilization initiatives, and cost-effective measures for the Network’s operations to ensure the sustainability of the PNLC. This will be revisited annually by the General Assembly for further enhancement.
- 7.2 Sources of funding may include:
- a. Voluntary financial and in-kind contributions of PNLC members (e.g., self-funding of members to attend meetings/conferences);
 - b. Training and capacity development funds from relevant PEMSEA projects, provided that the PNLC capacity building activities are in connection with the delivery of the outputs of the relevant PEMSEA projects;
 - c. Capacity development initiatives of relevant PEMSEA projects, CPs, and NCPs;
 - d. PNLC-PRF joint resource mobilization initiatives; and
 - e. Donations or grants from other sources.





Article 8 – Governing Body


- 8.1 The governing body of the PNLC will be the General Assembly, which will be composed of all PNLC members.
- 8.2 The General Assembly will perform the following functions:
- a. Elect the officers of the PNLC during the annual PNLC General Assembly meeting;
 - b. Establish the policies and programs that are designed to fulfill the goals and objectives of the PNLC;
 - c. Report the annual accomplishments of the PNLC to the EAS Partnership Council for reference; and
 - d. Approve the annual work programs, budgets, and projects.
- 8.3 In any given meeting of the General Assembly, the presence of more than 50 percent of the total number of members is required to establish the quorum to transact business. Decisions will be arrived at through consensus.

Article 9 – Officers

- 9.1 The officers, which comprise of the President and Vice President, will administer the affairs of the PNLC in accordance with its goals and objectives. The President, or in his/her absence, the Vice President, will represent the PNLC before the major meetings of PEMSEA as well as other relevant meetings and fora at the global and regional scales. The President and Vice President will serve as the Chair and Vice-Chair of the General Assembly, respectively.
- 9.2 The officers will be nominated and elected by the General Assembly and will hold office for a term of three years or until such time that their successors have been duly elected. No member will be nominated and elected to hold any officer position for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 9.3 An office will be declared vacant in the event that an officer no longer represents their respective Center in an official capacity, dies, becomes incapacitated, resigns, or his respective Center ceases to be a member of the PNLC. In the case of vacancy of the President’s post, the Vice President will automatically assume the position for the remaining period of the term. Vacancy of the Vice President’s post will be filled for the remaining period of the term through appointment by the Executive Committee of the network.

Article 10 – Executive Committee

- 10.1 The Executive Committee will be comprised of the officers of the PNLC, Executive Director of the PRF, and the Head of the PNLC Secretariat, who will serve as the Secretary of the Executive Committee.
- 10.2 The Executive Committee will ensure and oversee the implementation of the decisions of General Assembly and report to the General Assembly.



Article 11 – Secretariat

- 11.1 The PRF will serve as the interim Secretariat to the PNLC upon effectivity of this Charter until such time that the General Assembly has already established the Secretariat, which will not be later than three (3) years from the effectivity of this Charter. Any PNLC member is eligible to serve as a Secretariat, on a permanent or rotational basis, depending on the decision or resolution of the General Assembly.
- 11.2 The roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat will include:
- a. Organizing the meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Committee;
 - b. Preparing the Code of Conduct, operational plan, and financial sustainability plan of the network;
 - c. Implementing/coordinating the decisions and actions made by the General Assembly and Executive Committee;
 - d. Developing and maintaining records of network-related operations and member information;
 - e. Disseminating relevant news, information, and opportunities to PNLC members;
 - f. Processing all payments, donations, and in-kind contributions received by the PNLC;
 - g. Disbursing and monitoring the funds;
 - h. Preparing status reports on PNLC-related activities;
 - i. Publishing the annual accomplishments of the network in the PEMSEA website; and
 - j. Performing all other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee.

Article 12 – Validity, Amendment, and Interpretation

- 12.1 The Charter will take effect upon signing by the founding members and will remain valid unless the General Assembly recommends its revocation. Reforms to the Charter will be taken up by the General Assembly, in consultation with the PRF.
- 12.2 Any proposed amendment to the Charter, in part or in whole, will be submitted in writing during a meeting of the General Assembly and will be deliberated on and adopted, in full or in part, after reaching consensus.
- 12.3 Legal interpretation of any provision of the Charter will be according to the intent of the founding members who made the concerned provision. In case of ambiguity in the language, members may resort to the basic rules of construction and the minutes during the discussions or deliberations to determine the intent. The legal interpretation will be decided upon in a meeting of the General Assembly.



Adopted in Xiamen, PR China this 8th Day of December in the Year Two Thousand Twenty-Four.

Burapha University:

Assoc. Prof. Watcharin Gasaluck, Ph.D.
President

Catanduanes State University:

Patrick Alain T. Anzanza, Ph.D., J.D.
SUC President III

Cavite State University:

Dr. Hernando D. Robles
President

De La Salle Lipa:

Br. Dante Jose R. Amisola, FSC
President

**De La Salle University –
Dasmariñas:**

Br. Francisco V. de la Rosa IV, FSC
President

Diponegoro University

Prof. Dr. Yos Johan Utama, SH, MHum.
Rector

**Fujian Institute for Sustainable
Oceans (Xiamen University):**

Prof. Dr. Xiongzhi Xue
Dean

Guangdong Ocean University:

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**Institute for Global Environmental
Strategies:**

Dr. Kazuhiko Takeuchi
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**IPB University – Center for Coastal
and Marine Resources Studies:**

Prof. Dr. Arif Satria, S.P., M.Si.
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Mr. Kim Sung-Chan
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Dr. Elnor C. Roa
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National University of Laos:

Prof. Dr. Phouphet Kyophilavong
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Oriental University of Timor Leste:

Prof. Drs. Florindo Pereira, M.Si, PhD
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Prince of Songkla University

Assistant Prof. Dr. Niwat Keawpradub
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H.E. Chet Chealy, Ph.D.
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Udayana University – Center for Sustainable Development:

Dr. Ketut Gede Dharma Putra
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Fr. Mars P. Tan, S.J., PhD
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Xiamen University – Coastal and Ocean Management Institute:

Dr. Rong Zhang
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Zhejiang University – Ocean College:

Mr. Wu Feng
Deputy Party Secretary

