



Proceedings of the Seventeenth East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting

22-23 July 2025

Seda Vertis North, Quezon City, Philippines
Hybrid, face-to-face and Zoom

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17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting

22 July 2025, 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM (UTC+8)

23 July 2025, 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM (UTC+8)

Seda Vertis North, Quezon City, Philippines, and Zoom

PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION

- I. The 17th East Asian Seas (EAS) Partnership Council (PC) Meeting was held on 22-23 July 2025 at Seda Vertis North, Quezon City in the Philippines (UTC+8).

Onsite participants of the meeting included the EAS PC Chair and Co-Chair; the Intergovernmental Session Chair and Co-Chair; the Technical Session Chair and Co-Chair; the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF); Country partners from Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Philippines, RO Korea, Timor Leste, and Vietnam; Non-Country Partners from the Conservation International Philippines (CI PH), Ipieca GISEA, Korea Institute for Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST), Korea Maritime Institute (KMI), Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), and the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS).

Online participants included country partners from Singapore and RO Korea; Non-Country Partners from the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity (ACB), International Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas Center (EMECS), Korea Maritime Institute, Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL), and the Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML). The meeting was also attended by online observers from UNDP Philippines, Tokai University, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

- II. Supporting documents may be found in the Annexes:
 - A. Annex 1.0 - Agenda of the meeting
 - B. Annex 2.0 - Meeting Documents
 - C. Annex 3.0 - Main Presentation
 - D. Annex 4.0 - Meeting Photos
 - E. Annex 5.0 - NCP Presentations
 - F. Annex 6.0 - List of Participants
 - G. Annex 7.0 - Agenda 8.0 Country Interventions
 - H. Annex 8.0 - Agenda 8.0 Non Country Partners Presentation
 - I. Annex 9. Photos from Workshop

COUNCIL SESSION (JULY 22, 2025 | 9:30-11:45 AM)

1. OPENING OF THE 16th EAS PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL (PC) MEETING

- 1.1. The meeting commenced at 9:30 AM (UTC+8). Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Annaliza Rebuelta-Teh, PEMSEA National Focal Point for the Philippines, welcomed the participants and reaffirmed the Philippines' commitment to the SDS-SEA and the PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030, highlighting national priorities on climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and the sustainable blue economy. She recognized the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program as a key tool for enhancing ocean-based climate action and integrating coastal ecosystems into NDCs and expressed support for scaling up ICM implementation, strengthening monitoring systems, and promoting South-South cooperation.
- 1.2. Dr. Vann Monyneath, the Council Chair, expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Philippines and the DENR for their hosting of the PC Meeting for the second consecutive year.
- 1.3. He acknowledged his fellow PC Officers and Co-Chairs: Council Co-Chair DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones; Director-General Chen Danhong, Chair of the Intergovernmental Session; Mr. Le Dai Thang, Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair; Dr. Keita Furukawa, Technical Session Chair; and Dr. Suk-jae Kwon, Technical Session Co-Chair. He also commended the PEMSEA Resource Facility, led by Executive Director Aimee Gonzales, for serving as Secretariat and organizing the meeting, as well as DENR Undersecretary Analiza Teh, PEMSEA National Focal Point for the Philippines, and her team for their excellent arrangements.
- 1.4. Dr. Monyneath underscored the importance of the meeting in assessing progress and agreeing on key actions under the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) Implementation Plan 2023–2027, while continuing to operationalize commitments under EAS Ministerial Declarations since 2003, encouraged active and constructive participation in the meeting and thanked them for the continued collaboration to ensure that PEMSEA remains an effective and pro-active regional coordinating mechanism.
- 1.5. Furthermore, he reaffirmed his support for a seamless transition with the incoming Partnership Council Chair, Undersecretary Leones, before officially calling the 17th Meeting of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council to order and requesting Ms. Abigail Cruzada, Secretariat Coordinator, to present the agenda for the Council Session.

1.6. **Decision:** The agenda was adopted.

2. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EAS PC) CHAIR (PC/17/DOC/02)

- 2.1. The Council Chair presented actions taken on major conclusions, recommendations, and decisions made by the EAS PC during the 16th EAS PC Meeting and the 32nd and 33rd PEMSEA Executive Committee meetings.
- 2.2. **On policies:**
- 2.3. SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 extension. During the 32nd Executive Committee and 16th EAS Partnership Council Meetings, the EC actively monitored the progress of the SDS-SEA IP 2023–2027 and approved a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan to track regional initiatives. The M&E Plan was first piloted during the 16th PC Meeting, where Council feedback highlighted the need to simplify reporting and address emerging regional issues and trends.
- 2.4. In response, the EC supported PRF’s proposal to extend the SDS-IP to 2030, aligning with global frameworks such as the UN SDGs, and emphasized the inclusion of youth engagement and updated indicators. Dr. Monyneath noted that PRF has since undertaken a comprehensive review of implementation efforts for 2022–2025, with initial findings to be presented under Agenda 8.
- 2.5. PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program. During the 16th EAS PC Meeting, the Council noted the updates on the recently approved PEMSEA Blue Carbon program, which included findings from commissioned regional baseline studies on blue carbon ecosystem supply and demand in the region, the comparative assessment of national BC accounting methodologies of five countries¹ as well as initial discussions on developing a regional BC accounting protocol together with an ad hoc working group composed of select PNLC members and the Technical Session Chair.
- 2.6. Upon recommendation of the Council during the same meeting, the EC directed PRF to establish a formal Blue Carbon Technical Working Group, comprising Country and Non-country partners and PNLC members with blue carbon expertise. The TWG has since met twice—in February and June of 2025—providing recommendations on

¹ China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, RO Korea. Thailand’s BC accounting methodology was included in the report presented at the meeting.

refining the Blue Carbon Roadmap and working on a harmonized regional protocol for blue carbon accounting.

2.7. PEMSEA Sustainability Plan. To strengthen PEMSEA's long-term viability, the Executive Committee and EAS PC welcomed the Secretariat's updates on the Sustainability Plan and encouraged increased strategic collaboration and resource mobilization through the following recommendations:

- China encouraged the promotion of new Country Members and greater participation of research institutions;
- Vietnam emphasized the importance of ocean-climate resilience;
- Cambodia recommended regional action on marine plastic pollution; and
- Lao PDR called for the continued development of Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM);

2.8. In response, PRF co-organized technical events and strategic stakeholder engagements between August 2024 and June 2025, together with other PEMSEA Partners, including:

- Sponsoring and/or Co-organizing side events and exhibits for the EAS Congress 2024;
- Co-organizing a Blue Carbon Training with the University of Hawai'i and Burapha University, engaging early career professionals in the PNLC.
- Co-organizing a Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Application in the Scaling-up of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Training with PNLC and FISO-Xiamen University in April 2025 in Xiamen, China.
- Co-organizing the 2nd BC TWG meeting in Haikou, Hainan, China on 5-6 June 2025 with the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources of China;
- Exploring with KOEM the possibility to develop a joint proposal to access APEC Fund grants;
- Collaborating with key regional organizations (i.e., COBSEA, CTI-CFF, IUCN, IOC-WESTPAC, NEAMPAN, etc.) to launch a Collaborative Network of MPAs to support 303x30 targets (details in PC/17/DOC/10);
- Convening a regional orientation workshop on the development of the Rapid Evaluation of the Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystems (REWEFe) Nexus Toolkit for river basins in Southeast Asia in June 2025 in Bali, Indonesia under the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Project ; and
- Confirmation by the Busan Metropolitan City to host the 2026 PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Annual Forum.

2.9. On partnerships and project development:

- 2.10. The EC recommended that PRF provide regular project updates and continue its engagement with scientific institutions such as the PNLC, as well as think tanks and Non-Country Partners to strengthen PEMSEA's knowledge base and encourage innovation. Furthermore, the EC and PC urged the PRF to expand PEMSEA's visibility in the global arena.
- 2.11. From January to June 2025, PEMSEA participated/ committed to join in the following regional and international events in various capacities:
- Convenor and panelist in the Our Ocean Conference in Busan, RO Korea with COBSEA, CTI-CFF, NEAMPAN, IUCN, SCS-SAP, and IOC-WESTPAC (April 2025);
 - Participation in the High-Level Legislative Forum on BBNJ Agreement with High Seas Alliance (May 2025);
 - Panelist on "Sustainable Uses of Oceans and Marine Resources Supported by International Cooperation' in the Nikkei Forum Future of Asia in Tokyo, Japan (May 2025);
 - Panelist in international events highlighting MPA regional collaboration and the EAS Blue Carbon program at the 3rd UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France (June 2025);
 - 2nd Southeast Asia Environmental Systems Regional Workshop: Climate, Global Health and Resources and Livelihoods in Aquatic Socio-ecosystems (June 2025);
 - Organizing a Virtual Ocean Pavilion at the Thirtieth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP30) (10 – 21 November 2025) with the Global Ocean Forum and Plymouth Marine Laboratory;
- 2.12. **On PEMSEA Officers and Management Bodies:**
- 2.13. The Executive Committee approved the procedure and timeline for the 2025 EAS PC elections and reviewed the Terms of Reference for the recruitment of the next Executive Director for the 2027–2029 term during their 33rd Meeting. The TOR will be presented to the Council under Agenda 5 for final approval.
- 2.14. Dr. Monyneath noted that the Committee had addressed a wide range of matters from program implementation and governance to partnership strengthening and policy alignment. He emphasized that the recommendations and steps taken will help PEMSEA remain responsive and relevant to emerging environmental and geopolitical challenges.

- 2.15. **Discussion highlights:**
- 2.16. DENR Undersecretary Analiza Teh of the Philippines expressed appreciation for the comprehensive reporting and emphasized the need for a more robust sustainability plan that incorporates ocean financing. She called on Country and Non-Country Partners to continue supporting PEMSEA and encouraged enhanced knowledge-sharing and the exchange of good practices on sustainable ocean development through PEMSEA as a regional platform.
- 2.17. Dr. Yu Xinwei of China acknowledged PEMSEA's efforts and expressed support for the extension of the implementation plan and the approval of the Chair's Report, noting that the objectives, principles, and roadmap of the SDS-SEA align with international marine priorities, particularly the UN 2030 Agenda. China also appreciated PEMSEA's promotion of Blue Carbon initiatives and active participation in international conferences.
- 2.18. Mr. Roath Sith of Cambodia expressed agreement with the Chair's Report and confirmed its commitment to contribute USD 10,000 to PEMSEA this year.
- 2.19. Indonesia moved to accept the report, which was seconded by Timor-Leste.
- 2.20. **Conclusion:** The Council expressed broad support and appreciation for PEMSEA's work, unanimously approved the Council Chair's report, and emphasized the need to strengthen sustainability planning through incorporation of ocean financing initiatives, improving regional knowledge-sharing, and alignment with global marine priorities.
- 2.21. **Decision:** The Council Chair's report is approved.

3. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (PC/17/DOC/03)

- 3.1. Ms. Gonzales delivered her report on PEMSEA Resource Facility's key accomplishments, challenges, and outlook for FY 2024-2025 on accelerating actions to fulfill its mission of fostering healthy and resilient coasts, oceans, people, and economies in the EAS region.
- 3.2. EAS Congress 2024
- 3.3. The EAS Congress 2024, held on 6-8 November 2024 in collaboration with the World Ocean Week in Xiamen, China, convened 855 participants from 27 countries, with representation from IGOs, NGOs, academic institutions, governments, and local stakeholders.

- 3.4. Key outcomes included the validation of innovative and locally optimized solutions, strengthened partnerships for implementing the SDS-SEA vision, and increased cross-border collaboration among innovators. The Congress produced strategic outputs such as the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, which outlined 10 synergistic actions to effectively implement the SDS-SEA and advance the PEMSEA 2030 Roadmap, and the 2024 East Asian Seas Youth Call to Action, which emphasizes increased engagement and meaningful participation of the youth in the regional governance and management of the ocean and coasts.
- 3.5. The EAS Congress also saw the launch of the State of the River Basin (SORB) Reporting Guidebook, a landmark document in the region to support the development of the SORB reports of key river basins.
- 3.6. Furthermore, strategic partnerships were formalized including the cooperation agreement between PEMSEA and the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity to implement the Effectively Managing Networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems (ENMAPs) Project; a memorandum of understanding between the PNLG and PNLC to strengthen collaborative capacity building initiatives for local governments; and discussions to develop a regional blue carbon accounting protocol.
- 3.7. Main conclusions and recommendations from the International Conference of the EAS Congress 2024 include:
- The EAS Congress is recognized as an excellent platform to share experiences and good practices, transfer knowledge, as well as bring together various stakeholders in the region.
 - The PNLG and PNLC are unique mechanisms which facilitate the linkage between science and local management practices. These linkages between the networks should be optimized to promote information and knowledge exchange amongst scientists, local policymakers and communities.
 - There is a need to strengthen PEMSEA's existing mechanisms to engage scientists, decision makers and implementers, including the comprehensive documentation of good practices for wider audiences, beyond the region.

- Effective coastal and marine management should integrate scientific expertise, indigenous knowledge, and promote stakeholder engagement and collaborative partnerships to address complex ecological challenges.
- Elevate the EAS Profile Globally: Various regional mechanisms and initiatives need to come together in key international events (i.e., UN Ocean Conference 2025) to showcase the collaborative efforts in the region and boost the visibility of the East Asian Seas at a global level, demonstrating Oneness.
- Recognizing that various regional initiatives operate within the same government agencies and engage with similar focal points can result in inefficiencies, establishing a network of National Partners in the future could streamline coordination efforts across countries and enhance collaboration on joint actions
- The rise of digital twins, AI-driven monitoring, and underwater sensing technologies is revolutionizing ocean observation, enabling real-time marine ecosystem management and data-driven solutions for sustainable ocean practices.
- Financial institutions and policymakers should prioritize developing diverse financing mechanisms - from blended financing to blue bonds - to accelerate sustainable ocean investments while strengthening marine conservation efforts and ocean governance frameworks.

3.8. On Financial Sustainability.

- 3.9. The PEMSEA Resource Facility maintained good financial status in 2024 and 2025 through sustained contributions from Country Partners, including China, Japan, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore and Timor Leste. Vietnam has initiated voluntary contributions from 2024 to the present, while Cambodia provided voluntary contributions in 2024 in support of EAS Congress 2024 operations. Indonesia transferred funds in 2021 and is currently processing its contribution for 2025.
- 3.10. The PRF was also able to conduct successful fundraising and marketing of the EAS Congress 2024 to cover costs of implementation, effectively replenishing the EAS Congress Trust Fund.
- 3.11. Funding from the management fees of the following PRF Regional projects and provision of technical services were secured:

- UNDP/GEF./ASEAN/PEMSEA project in Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in ASEAN through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management
 - ROK/ODA Marine Plastics Pollution Project
 - UNDP/GEF Arafura Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Program Phase 2 (ATSEA2)
 - PRF technical advisory services rendered to WB/UNOPS/ASEAN Southeast Asia Program on Marine Plastics (SEA-MaP)
 - Support from KIOST on biofouling management
 - Support from UNDP/GEF IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project as regional cooperation partner in EAS
- 3.12. Furthermore, the PRF has operationalized the training, capacity development, and monitoring services of the PRF in collaboration with the PNLC and non-country partners.
- 3.13. A detailed breakdown of revenue sources is outlined in Table 1 of PC/17/DOC/03.
- 3.14. On Strategic Partnerships developed and/or strengthened
- 3.15. During the 16th EAS PC Meeting in July 2024, The National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS) of the Ministry of Natural Resources of China was formally admitted as a Non-Country Partner of PEMSEA.
- 3.16. In the same meeting, the Partnership Council endorsed the establishment of the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Technical Working Group (TWG) to support the implementation of the regional Blue Carbon Program. The TWG was established on January 31, 2025, comprising 19 blue carbon experts from the Country and Non-Country Partners.
- 3.17. Furthermore, PEMSEA networks saw an increase in members in 2024, with the addition of Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development, and Yancheng City, China under the PNLC and the approval of Mindanao State University-Naawan (Philippines), National University of Laos (Lao PDR), Guangdong Ocean University (China), and Fujian Institute of Sustainable Oceans (China) as members of the PNLC.
- 3.18. The PRF also confirmed a new cohort of 19 young leaders from 10 countries under the PEMSEA Network of Young Leaders, who participated in the EAS Youth Forum 2024 in Ulsan, RO Korea, in collaboration with the Korea National Ocean Science Museum.
- 3.19. On Regional Project Updates

- 3.20. The **UNDP/GEF/ASEAN/PEMSEA project on Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM)** marked several milestones as it enters its midterm year of implementation. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Vietnam, underlining the key roles of PRF and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE) to effectively implement the project, was signed in February 2025, with the project officially launched in April 2025. The Philippines followed with the signing of its MOA in July 2025. To support implementation, a SORB (State of River Basin) Guidebook was launched during the EAS Congress 2024 and four draft SORB reports have been produced.
- 3.21. Gender and social inclusion were mainstreamed through the publication of a GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) Analysis and a framework guide for integrating GESI into IRBM programs. Regional Steering Committee meetings were convened in Siem Reap, Cambodia (July 2, 2024) and in Bali, Indonesia (June 4, 2025) to provide strategic guidance on project implementation. A project midterm review was also recently completed in the second quarter of 2025, alongside the development of a framework and solutions template for IRBM pilot projects.
- 3.22. The **ROK/ODA Marine Plastics Pollution Project** conducted regional learning exchanges in Seoul, Timor-Leste, and the Philippines between the second quarter of 2024 to the second quarter of 2025. In the Philippines, plastic waste reduction campaigns were launched through the Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program under the project's fourth component, i.e., increasing capacity and awareness.
- 3.23. The MEP program engaged local environmental non-government organizations (NGOs) in the four sites of the Philippines to mobilize local support from communities in their respective sites to improve behavior and practices in conserving coastal areas and the marine environment through proper plastic waste management. Additionally, 14 marine pollution hotspots were mapped in Timor-Leste and the Philippines.
- 3.24. Public engagement was further supported through coastal cleanup activities. Capacity-building efforts on sustainable waste management reached over 200 local officials in participating countries.
- 3.25. The **Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Phase II (ATSEA-2) Project**, which concluded in 2024, adopted a 10-year Strategic Action Programme (SAP) covering the period 2024–2033. A Ministerial Forum was convened in Sydney, Australia, culminating in the adoption of the Sydney Declaration, signed by Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Australia, which formalized the ATSEA regional governance mechanism (RGM), which will assume the critical role of implementing the ATS SAP and National Action

Programmes (NAPs) 2024- 2033, fostering cooperation, mobilizing resources, and guiding the regional Secretariat.

- 3.26. Following the signing of the Declaration, the first ATSEA Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) Meeting was conducted in December 2024 in Bali, Indonesia, marking a key milestone in the regional collaboration among ATSEA participating countries.
- 3.27. The first RCC marked the initiation of operations of the ATSEA RGM and endorsed the establishment of a Regional Stakeholder Working Group (RSWG), to provide expert, technical and cross-issue advice to support the effective and efficient implementation of the ATS SAP and NAPs. During the same meeting, Dr. Handoko Adi Susanto, the ATSEA-2 Regional Program Manager, was formally appointed as the Interim Executive Director of the ATSEA Program.
- 3.28. The **UNDP/GEF IMO GloFouling Partnerships Project** achieved the completion of the Regional Biofouling Strategy and Action Plan under the GloFouling Partnership framework. National strategies and action plans were finalized for both Indonesia and the Philippines, strengthening national and regional efforts to address marine biofouling and invasive aquatic species.
- 3.29. On Communications, Information Dissemination, and Knowledge Management
- 3.30. The IRBM Project and ATSEA-2 Project were prominently featured during the 10th International Waters Conference (IWC-10), held in Punta Del Este, Uruguay in September 2024, reinforcing regional efforts in integrated water and ocean governance. The IRBM Project was also showcased at the Pavilion for People's Discussion on Women and Oceans during the 2025 World Economic Forum, highlighting the role of gender-responsive approaches in environmental action.
- 3.31. PEMSEA released more than 46 publications in 2024 and early 2025, including but not limited to the river basin profile story of the Pasac-Guagua Watershed; baseline studies on blue carbon supply, demand, and assessment of accounting methodologies; the GESI Analysis Report under the GEF/UNDP/ASEAN IRBM Project; PEMSEA's Annual Report 2024, the EAS Congress 2024 Report, and PEMSEA's monthly e-bulletins.
- 3.32. Furthermore, the PRF participated in national and regional exhibitions such as the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources Annual Exhibition, the East Asian Seas Congress 2024 Exhibition, and UNEP INC-5, contributing to the visibility of regional initiatives and fostering policy dialogue.

- 3.33. Knowledge platforms were strengthened with the update of the SEA Knowledge Bank (SEAKB), which now hosts microsites for the IRBM and Marine Plastics Projects. Additionally, PEMSEA launched the “Humans of EAS” story series to showcase personal narratives and lived experiences of individuals advancing coastal and marine sustainability in the region.
- 3.34. On Future Outlook, Challenges and Strategic Milestones for 2025
- 3.35. In light of accelerating global environmental challenges—such as climate change, biodiversity loss, marine pollution, and growing inequalities—the need to scale up coordinated action remains urgent. While notable progress has been made globally and locally, the current pace falls short of what is needed.
- 3.36. In 2025, PEMSEA will enter a pivotal phase, following the outcomes of the EAS Congress 2024 and the new commitments under the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration. Guided by these, PEMSEA will pursue a strategic transition toward sustainable, inclusive, and resilient coasts and seas.
- 3.37. Milestone actions planned for 2025 include:
- 3.38. *Governance*: Election of new PEMSEA Executive Committee members during the 17th EAS Partnership Council Meeting; new PNLG Executive Committee to be selected at the 2025 PNLG Forum in Jakarta; identification of the EAS Congress 2027 host country partner; and initiation of the selection process for a new PRF Executive Director.
- 3.39. *Strategic Programming*: Review and approval of the updated SDS-SEA 2023–2030; endorsement of the organizational and capacity development report; revision of PEMSEA’s Sustainability Plan; adoption of a harmonized blue carbon accounting framework; and approval of a training manual integrating ICM, MSP, and other area-based management tools.
- 3.40. *Global and Regional Visibility*: PEMSEA will participate in key events such as the 10th Our Ocean Conference (Busan) and the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (Nice), host the Mayors’ Pact on marine plastic pollution, and co-organize the Virtual Ocean Pavilion at COP30 with the Global Ocean Forum and Plymouth Marine Laboratory. Additional outputs include the launch of governance and investment solution templates for IRBM.
- 3.41. To sustain momentum, PEMSEA aims to reinforce its position as a credible regional coordinating mechanism by deepening partnerships with non-country partners, the IMO, ASEAN Secretariat, ADB, and ASEAN countries. It will also strengthen collaboration

across the PNLC and PNLG networks to nurture the next generation of coastal managers and scale up community-driven, co-designed, and locally appropriate solutions. Continued participation in global fora and strengthened digital visibility will support outreach, knowledge sharing, and regional leadership.

3.42. Discussion Highlights

- 3.43. China expressed appreciation for the Executive Director's report and highlighted the successful co-hosting of the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress and Xiamen World Ocean Week, which received high recognition from the international community. China thanked partner countries that signed the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration and emphasized that the ten synergistic actions outlined in the Declaration will serve as a roadmap for strengthening regional synergy. Furthermore, called on all Country Partners to stay true to PEMSEA's founding vision as a regional intergovernmental organization, encouraging continued contributions to advance regional marine cooperation.
- 3.44. Ms. Nguyen Thoc Hoan of Viet Nam commended PEMSEA for its activities and reporting over the past year and suggested expanding IRBM activities by involving more country stakeholders. Furthermore, Viet Nam recognized the usefulness of PEMSEA's knowledge products for application in EAS countries and suggested translating them into national languages for wider dissemination. Furthermore, they also reported on the country's implementation of its national marine spatial planning (MSP) and sustainable ocean strategy, and expressed willingness to co-organize events with PEMSEA and non-country partners to further promote ICM and MSP.
- 3.45. The Philippines expressed gratitude for the Executive Director's report and supported the proposed directions and plans. The delegation highlighted the importance of integrating key conclusions and recommendations from EAS Congress 2024 into PEMSEA's strategic programming, noting the opportunity to position PEMSEA as an innovative regional platform on the global stage.
- 3.46. The Philippines underscored the need to strengthen science-policy interfaces, scale community-based ocean financing initiatives, and promote sustainable ocean technologies and innovation. It also supported streamlining coordination and mobilizing non-country partners (NCPs) to support national-level implementation. Additionally, the Philippines encouraged the expansion of PEMSEA's technical services by leveraging existing knowledge products and achievements.
- 3.47. Ms. Joonyoung Chang of the Republic of Korea (ROK) expressed strong support for the report and reaffirmed its commitment to work closely with PEMSEA to achieve concrete

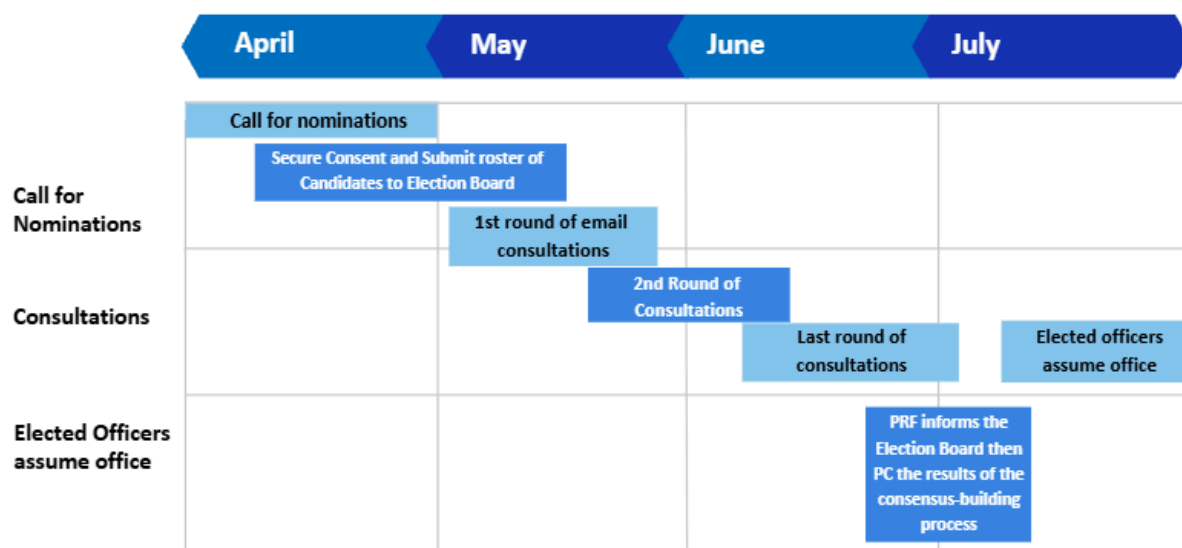
results. ROK called for deeper engagement of local governments and NCPs through the PNLG and PNLC networks and committed to increasing collaboration with these bodies. It emphasized the importance of area-based best practices, multilateral cooperation, and advancing the climate change and blue economy agendas.

- 3.48. Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral of Timor-Leste acknowledged the Executive Director's report and reiterated its commitment to implementing the ROK ODA Marine Plastics Pollution Project. Furthermore, Timor-Leste is finalizing its national Blue Economy policy and expressed hope for PEMSEA's support in operationalizing and implementing the policy at the national level.
- 3.49. Ms. Soukphaphone Soodtharavong of Lao PDR expressed agreement with the report and highlighted progress under the IRBM Project, including completion of SORB reports and GESI data. The delegation also shared that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has agreed in principle to host the EAS Congress 2027, subject to identifying a suitable host local government, with Vientiane under consideration. Furthermore, meetings with other relevant Ministries will be held in the following weeks prior to formal confirmation from Lao PDR regarding the hosting.
- 3.50. Cambodia expressed support for the report and highlighted the need to strengthen national capacity in the Gulf of Thailand, particularly in oil spill response. Cambodia called on PEMSEA and the IMO to jointly explore capacity-building projects related to marine pollution and debris management in the subregion.
- 3.51. **Conclusion:** The Council welcomed the Executive Director's report, commending PEMSEA's achievements in 2024 and expressing strong support for ongoing initiatives. Partners emphasized the importance of aligning future actions with global and regional priorities, strengthening national implementation, enhancing knowledge dissemination, and increasing engagement with local governments and stakeholders.
- 3.52. **Recommendations:**
- 3.53. The Philippines emphasized the need to integrate key conclusions from EASC 2024 into PEMSEA's programming, including strengthening the science-policy interface, scaling sustainable ocean financing, and promoting innovation and technology transfer.
- 3.54. Vietnam proposed expanding IRBM activities by involving more country stakeholders and considering translating PEMSEA's technical materials into national languages for wider use.
- 3.55. Vietnam also proposed to collaborate on organizing joint events focused on ICM and MSP with PRF and interested Non-Country Partners.

- 3.56. China and the Philippines recommended to raise PEMSEA's global and regional profile by articulating its comparative advantage and actively engaging in international marine and sustainable development forums.
- 3.57. ROK emphasized the need to facilitate area-based best practices and multilateral collaboration, especially in climate change and the blue economy, through deeper engagement with PNLG and PNLC.
- 3.58. Timor-Leste requested the continued support of PRF in effectively developing and implementing their planned Blue Economy policy.
- 3.59. Lao PDR informed the Council that the Minister of Minister of Agriculture and Environment agreed in principle for hosting the EAS Congress 2027, but needs to secure the approval of the local government partner (Vientiane) and other relevant ministries. The Department of Water Resources will need to hold a meeting with relevant stakeholders on hosting and will provide an official response letter to PEMSEA.
- 3.60. **Decision:** The Executive Director's report was approved.

4. FORMAL ELECTION OF THE EAS PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL OFFICERS (PC/17/DOC/04)

- 4.1. Ms. Cruzada presented the process and results of the 2025 EAS PC Elections.
- 4.2. The term of the current Chairs and Co-Chairs of the EAS PC will end on 30 July 2025. For this purpose, the incumbent Executive Committee (EC), in their capacity as PEMSEA's Election Board, commenced the call for nominations through PRF as Secretariat on 1 April 2025 in accordance with the provisions on the nomination and election of candidates as stated in PEMSEA's Rules of Governance. The schedule and process for the elections follows the diagram below.



- 4.3. Following the nomination stage, PRF received consent from the nominees for each post. Per the Rules of Governance, incumbent Co-Chairs are automatically elected in the as respective Chair positions. Furthermore, the Secretariat only received one nominee each for the posts of Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair and Technical Session Chair, despite an extension in the nomination stage to May 31 instead of April 30, thereby removing the need to conduct consensus-building consultations with the PC.
- 4.4. From June 17 - July 4, 2025, the Secretariat proceeded to seek formal approval from the Partnership Council via email on the following roster of Chairs and Co-Chairs:
- **Council Chair:** Undersecretary Jonas Leones, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippines
 - **Intergovernmental Session Chair:** Mr. Le Dai Thang, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment (MAE), Viet Nam
 - **Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair:** Dr. Xinwei Yu, Ministry of Natural Resources, China
 - **Technical Session Chair:** Dr. Suk-jae Kwon, Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, Republic of Korea
 - **Technical Session Co-Chair:** Dr. Kazumi Wakita, Tokai University, Japan
- 4.5. The individuals were selected based on PEMSEA's longstanding principle of selecting leaders based on balance, diversity, and geographic representation and the excellent personal qualifications of the nominees.

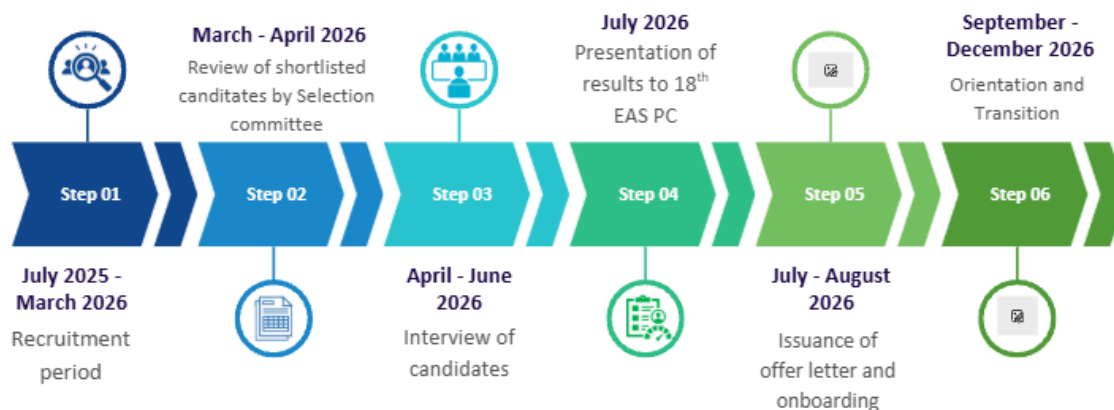
- 4.6. Due to inclement weather and urgent responsibilities of the incoming Council Chair on July 22, the oath taking ceremony was moved to the morning of July 23. During this time, the new roster of Officers and co-Chairs received the consensus of the Council, and took their oath of office, administered by the incumbent Chairs and witnessed by PRF and the Council.
- 4.7. After taking their oaths, the incoming Executive Committee was invited to deliver short messages.
- 4.8. Undersecretary Jonas Leones, incoming Council Chair, expressed gratitude for the trust and confidence bestowed upon him to lead the East Asian Seas Partnership Council. He acknowledged the responsibilities of the role and, despite his absence on the first day due to urgent matters, reaffirmed his commitment—together with the new officers—to work with sincerity and dedication in fulfilling the Council’s collective mission.
- 4.9. Mr. Le Dai Thang, incoming Intergovernmental Session Chair, reflected on his previous term as Co-Chair and expressed appreciation for the collaboration and achievements made in ocean governance, marine pollution, and blue economy. He pledged to continue aligning PEMSEA’s work with global frameworks and to support the implementation of the SDS-SEA, institutional development, and financial sustainability, while encouraging active participation from all partners.
- 4.10. Dr. Sukjae Kwon, incoming Technical Session Chair, emphasized the importance of balancing conservation and development in achieving a healthy ocean economy. He reaffirmed his commitment to serve the PEMSEA community and acknowledged the contributions of outgoing Chair Dr. Keita Furukawa, expressing appreciation for their friendship and partnership over the years.
- 4.11. Dr. Xinwei Yu, incoming Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair, underscored the importance of collaboration, science-based governance, and united action in addressing climate change, marine pollution, and biodiversity loss, and committed to advancing PEMSEA’s shared agenda through inclusive dialogue and joint efforts.
- 4.12. Dr. Kazumi Wakita, incoming Technical Session Co-Chair, conveyed her gratitude and excitement to serve once again within PEMSEA, drawing from her prior experience at the PEMSEA Resource Facility. She pledged full support to the Technical Session Chair and to enhancing collaboration among Country and Non-Country Partners toward shared goals.

- 4.13. The Council extended its warm congratulations to the newly elected Officers and expressed sincere appreciation to the outgoing Officers for their dedicated service and leadership in advancing the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia.
- 4.14. **Conclusion:** The PC witnessed the Oath Taking of the Incoming EAS PC Officers Co-Chairs;
- 4.15. **Decision:** The EAS PC approved the new Roster of EAS PC Officers and Co-Chairs for 2025-2028.

5. SELECTION & APPOINTMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE PEMSEA RESOURCE FACILITY (PC/17/DOC/05)

- 5.1. Ms. Cruzada provided the Council with an update on the preparations for the selection and appointment process for the next Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) for the term 2027–2029.
- 5.2. With the current Executive Director, Ms. Aimee Gonzales, completing her third and final term in December 2026, the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Selection Committee, commenced the development of the Terms of Reference for the selection of the next ED.
- 5.3. In accordance with established procedures, the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the position and the proposed timeline for the selection process (shown below) was endorsed by the Executive Committee during its 33rd Meeting in April 2025.

Selection Process and Timeline



- 5.4. The Secretariat informed the Council that the TOR outlines the qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of the Executive Director, as well as the timeline for the application, evaluation, and selection process.
- 5.5. **Discussion:**
- 5.6. Japan provided comments on the qualifications stated in the TOR, emphasizing the need to secure PEMSEA's sustainability through strong leadership. In particular, Japan emphasized that candidates should possess not only strong financial knowledge but also demonstrated experience in financial management, given the nature of the organization's operations and strategic goals.
- 5.7. The Republic of Korea expressed that the draft TOR was generally appropriate. However, they suggested that if the recruitment process is to proceed, key terms and conditions—such as the salary grade and overall compensation—should be clearly specified in the TOR. This would help reflect the expected level and capacity of the Executive Director position. ROK kindly requested that these details be formally included to guide expectations and ensure transparency.
- 5.8. China thanked the Secretariat for the arrangements related to the Executive Director selection and noted that the information would be shared at upcoming international events, including the XWOW, the Shandong Ocean Development Forum, and the World Coastal Forum, to encourage broader participation. China also sought clarification on the wording used in the TOR, noting slight differences compared to previous

versions—specifically, the previous reference to a “Senior Manager” role in relevant organizations has now been updated to “Director,” and requested that PRF clarify this change. Additionally, China raised a concern regarding the description of the Selection Committee in document DOC/05, noting that while the committee is organized by Partnership Council members, this was not consistently reflected in the documentation.

- 5.9. Lao PDR briefly added that integrated river basin management should be considered among the areas of expertise relevant to the Executive Director’s role, aligning with broader environmental and governance priorities in the region.
- 5.10. The Secretariat Coordinator thanked the members for their constructive recommendations and valuable inputs and committed to incorporating the comments into a revised version of the TOR, which will be circulated to Country Partners for further review and to seek consensus.
- 5.11. In response to clarifications on the composition and role of the Selection Committee, as per PEMSEA Governance Rules, the Selection Committee is composed of the Partnership Council Officers - the Council Chair, Intergovernmental Session Chair and the Technical Session Chair. The Selection Committee will be chaired by the Council Chair and will be responsible for the recruitment, selection and appointment of the Executive Director.
- 5.12. **Conclusion:** The EAS PC approved the process of the selection and recruitment of PRF Executive Director for 2027-2029, and sought clarifications on some of the contents of the Terms of Reference which will be advertised, once finalized.
- 5.13. **Recommendations:**
- 5.14. On the Terms of Reference of the ED:
- Japan recommended including financial management skills and relevant experience as qualifications.
 - ROK suggested specifying the salary grade and level of the Executive Director (ED) post.
 - China indicated that they would circulate the information on the Selection and Appointment of the ED. they also requested clarification on the wording in the Terms of Reference (TOR), particularly on (1) the difference between the new requirements and the previous TOR; (2) the shift in title from "senior manager" to "director" and its implications; and (3) The composition of the Selection Committee.
- 5.15. **Decision:** The EAS PC provisionally approved the TOR of the PRF Executive Director for advertisement, subject to refinements based on the recommended inclusions.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

- 6.1. No other business was tabled for the Council Session. The Council Chair closed the Session and turned over the chairing of the meeting to Dr. Keita Furukawa, the Technical Session Chair to open the Technical Session.

TECHNICAL SESSION

7. OPENING OF THE TECHNICAL SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE TECHNICAL SESSION AGENDA (PC/17/DOC/07)

- 7.1. Dr. Furukawa opened the technical session of the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting with a heartfelt farewell, marking his final time as Technical Session Chair. Reflecting on personal loss and the urgency of ocean conservation, he drew a powerful parallel between fading voices and the planet's silent warnings. He underscored the importance of timely action to address the triple planetary crisis and expressed confidence in the region's collective capacity—through strong partnerships and the SDS-SEA—to implement solutions. He concluded by thanking all partners for their support and formally called the session to order, inviting the adoption of the technical session agenda presented by the Secretariat.
- 7.2. **Decision:** The agenda was adopted.

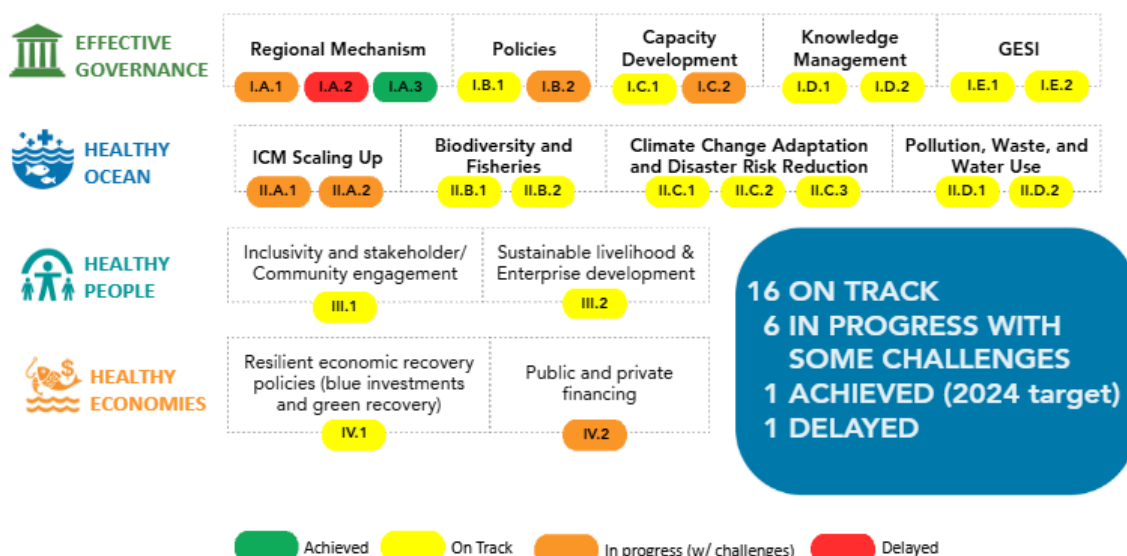
8. REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SDS-SEA IP VIS-À-VIS UN SDG 2030 (PC/17/DOC/08)

- 8.1. Ms. Aimee Gonzales and Ms. Kathrine Rose Aguilin, PRF M&E Consultant, presented key progress on the initiative to extend the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 to 2030, as part of a bigger PEMSEA Sustainability initiative. The initiative aims to align with relevant global frameworks and international agreements such as the UN SDGs, KMGBF, and UNFCCC Paris Agreement, among others, as well as consider new developments on coastal and ocean governance and management to ensure PEMSEA's continued relevance.
- 8.2. Ms. Gonzales provided an overview of the initiative, emphasizing that sustaining the relevance, effectiveness, and impact of PEMSEA requires strengthened efforts across three interconnected core areas: **strategic programming, institutional capacity, and financial sustainability**. This includes reviewing the progress and gaps in the SDS-SEA IP

2023–2027, aligning with new global and regional developments (e.g., the Xiamen Declaration), and setting priorities for an updated 2025–2030 implementation plan.

- 8.3. Parallel efforts are being made to strengthen institutional effectiveness. An organizational capacity assessment is ongoing at the PEMSEA Resource Facility, with plans to expand this process to include inputs from Country and Non-Country Partners. The aim is to ensure that the regional mechanism is fit for purpose, with sufficient technical and human capacity to deliver on its commitments. A capacity development strategy is being drafted to support this goal.
- 8.4. On financial sustainability, Ms. Gonzales highlighted the importance of developing viable business models and diversifying funding sources. The identification of resource mobilization strategies is underway, with emphasis on innovation, partnerships, and financial planning. The Council was invited to validate the results of the SDS-SEA IP midterm review, contribute additional inputs, and take part in the collaborative prioritization of regional actions. Final decisions will be made during the Expanded Executive Committee Meeting scheduled for late 2025.
- 8.5. Ms. Aguilung presented the results of the midterm review of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 (PC/17/DOC/08a and 08b), which assessed progress against 24 target outcomes under the four strategic pillars of Effective Governance, Healthy Ocean, Healthy People and Healthy Economies. The scope of the review was from January 2023 to April 2025.
- 8.6. Among these, one outcome (I.A.3) was reported as achieved, 16 are on track, six show early signs of progress but require reinforcement, and one is delayed (I.A.2) as shown below.

Mid-Term Review: Progress Status



8.7. **Effective Governance:** Progress under this pillar was highlighted across five key areas:

- **Regional Mechanism:** Regional collaboration was reinforced through increased voluntary contributions from Country Partners (cash and in-kind). Engagement of 22 Non-Country Partners vary with many collaborations remaining short-term. Five bilateral and multilateral projects were completed, 6 are underway, and several are currently in the pipeline. Key PEMSEA knowledge-sharing and strategic platforms-East Asian Seas Congress, Youth Forum, and Ministerial ' Forum successfully conducted in 2024 and culminated with the adoption of the Xiamen Declaration.
- **Policy, Legislation & Institutional Development:** Advancements in policy and legal frameworks among Country Partners reflect growing adoption of blue economy, marine spatial planning, and ocean governance reforms. Notable developments include the restructuring of relevant agencies in Vietnam and Indonesia, and the planned establishment of an Ocean Environments Bureau within the Philippines' DENR. Progress in the ICM Code implementation continued, with four local governments attaining Levels 1 and 2 recognition.
- **Capacity Development:** A Capacity Development framework and regional database are now operational. Over 11 e-learning modules and 111 thematic training have reached approximately 5,000 participants. PNLC expanded its membership to 25,

with the IPB University hosting the Secretariat. It continues to support technical development, including PEMSEA's blue carbon program. PEMSEA also aligned capacity-building initiatives with global targets through engagements with the Global Ocean Forum and the ABNJ initiative.

- **Knowledge Management and Stakeholder Engagement:** Significant enhancements were made to the SEAKB platform, integrating more functionalities and project portals. PEMSEA's KM strategy was advanced through improved use of digital tools and collaboration with platforms such as UNDP in Asia-Pacific and IWLEARN. These efforts improved accessibility of project outputs and supported better knowledge dissemination among partners.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI):** GESI assessments and action plans were implemented across PEMSEA programs and internal operations. Thousands of women beneficiaries engaged in training, workshops, and livelihood activities under GESI-responsive projects. PRF also strengthened institutional capacity by conducting internal GESI workshops, updating its policy, and mainstreaming GESI into communication outputs.

8.8. **Healthy Ocean:** Efforts under the Healthy Ocean pillar have advanced significantly. Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) remains a key driver for integrating biodiversity conservation, sustainable fisheries, climate resilience, and pollution reduction in national and local governance frameworks across the region. Though some challenges remain including limited participation of private sector, and structured knowledge-sharing across partners is inconsistent.

- **ICM Scaling Up:** The PNLG expanded its membership to 59, with its SAP 2022–2030 implementation supported through various institutional and project-based initiatives. A Letter of Cooperation between PNLG and PNLC was signed to scale ICM. A separate agreement between PNLC and Tangerang Regency of Indonesia was also signed to leverage expertise through the Tangerang Mangrove Research Center. The China-PEMSEA Center also initiated an ICM effectiveness assessment, supporting the expansion of ICM certification training and audits in China.
- **Biodiversity and Fisheries:** Four country partners (China, Indonesia, Japan, ROK) updated their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), while updating in other countries is ongoing. Through different projects like ATSEA-2 and the recently initiated ENMAPS project, various initiatives have been undertaken and planned to improve management of existing MPAs as well as to establish new MPAs

in support of the 30x30 global biodiversity goals. At the same time, efforts to combat IUU fishing and promote EAFM are advancing across the region.

- **Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCA-DRR):** Climate change adaptation and DRR measures are increasingly reflected in national strategies across EAS countries in line with the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework. Countries are beginning to report progress on NDC implementation, and DRR-related planning is being scaled. The PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program and projects under ATSEA-2, IRBM, and ENMAPS directly support CCA and DRR outcomes.
- **Pollution, Waste, and Water Use:** National Action Plans (NAPs) or equivalent policies for marine litter and plastics are in place in nine Country Partners. The completed ASEANO project and the ongoing Marine Plastics ODA Project are supporting efforts in reducing marine plastic waste through community engagement, Plastics Analysis and Characterization Study (PACS), baseline studies, and pilot interventions. In terms of oil spill preparedness, ATSEA-2 supported Early Warning Systems and Oil Spill Response System and Guidelines in project sites in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. In the Gulf of Thailand, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam also adopted a joint Strategic Action Plan on OSPR and dispersant guidelines. Another initiative is the IRBM Project operating in seven river basins across six ASEAN member states, focusing on reducing pollution and sustaining freshwater flows. So far, the project has developed draft State of River Basin or SORB reports, Guidebook for SORB reporting, and is in the process of completing a Water, Energy, Food ecosystem (WEFE) nexus assessment and identification of solution templates for pilot projects in target river basins. ATSEA's new 10-year SAP also targets marine plastic pollution, including abandoned and lost fishing gear or ALDFG.

8.9. **Healthy People:** PEMSEA partners advanced efforts to strengthen community inclusion and promote sustainable livelihoods across the region..

- **Inclusivity, Stakeholder, and Community Engagement:** PEMSEA-supporting frameworks and plans are already in place to ensure inclusivity and broader stakeholder engagement. This includes the GESI, KM and Stakeholder engagement plans. . In particular, GESI assessments and stakeholder engagement plans were developed for ATSEA-2 and IRBM projects.
- **Sustainable Livelihood and Enterprise:** The ATSEA-2 project supported alternative livelihood initiatives in Indonesia and Timor-Leste aligned with EAFM, ICM, and GESI

approaches. These included seaweed soap production, mangrove-based beverages, ready-to-eat seaweed products, and resilient home gardens and aquaculture systems. National efforts also contributed to this pillar. Some examples cited are China's farmland-to-wetland restoration with income diversification in coastal villages, and Japan's coastal community revitalization and green food system strategies to enhance economic sustainability and food security.

8.10. **Healthy Economies:** Progress under this component centered on strengthening national policy environments and unlocking public and private financing for blue economy initiatives.

- **Resilient Economic Recovery Policies:** Country Partners are increasingly aligning their financing priorities and policies with national and regional frameworks on the blue economy, climate resilience, green growth, and post-COVID recovery.. These include BE-specific initiatives from China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam, and BE-related strategies from Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore. PEMSEA-supported activities such as the Blue Carbon Program, BE Forums, and strategic action plans under PNLG and ATSEA continue to drive BE mainstreaming. The Philippines' Second State of Coasts Report emphasized ocean industries aligned with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals, while nature-based job programs, digitalization, marine biotechnology, and cutting-edge technologies are gaining traction as innovative solutions.
- **Public and Private Financing:** Several countries have also developed plans and PPP strategies to advance sustainable investments. Cambodia's Investment Support Facility and China's Blue Bonds and ecosystem product insurance scheme are notable examples. Japan's Hakata Blue Bay Carbon Offset Programme, Indonesia's blue bonds and financing instruments (e.g., sharia and debt-for-nature swaps), and the Philippines' issuance guidelines for blue bonds were also highlighted. The Republic of Korea promotes green marine fuel infrastructure, while Viet Nam is operationalizing its PPP law. Pilot PPPs are also being explored under the IRBM project, which is creating solution templates, and identifying financing opportunities across seven river basins. ENMAPS also aim to leverage existing investments and PPP initiatives on biodiversity conservation. Additionally, project ideas also emerged in the assessment done in ICM sites as part of PEMSEA's Blue Carbon program.

8.11. **Pending Targets in SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027**

- 8.12. Following the presentation on progress under the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan, the Secretariat introduced the pending targets needed to fully realize PEMSEA's regional vision and commitments toward 2030. These targets build on the progress achieved under the four SDS-SEA pillars and reflect emerging needs across governance, knowledge management, ecosystem management, livelihoods, and partnerships with the private sector.
- 8.13. Key priorities moving forward include the updating of NSOC/RSOC reports, integrated KM strategies, a reinforced regional capacity development framework, and systematic tracking of GESI mainstreaming. Pending targets also call for progress tracking of increase in ICM coverage from the 2020 baseline, enhanced sharing of studies or data and monitoring on biodiversity, fisheries, climate resilience, and pollution reduction status and initiatives, and strengthened national platforms, community engagement and nature-based solutions to enhance blue carbon assessment, restoration and sequestration. . In parallel, the development of livelihood management strategies and indicators, along with a revitalized corporate recognition system, were identified as critical next steps for embedding inclusive, market-responsive, and ecosystem-sensitive approaches across PEMSEA's workstreams.
- 8.14. These pending deliverables underscore the need for sustained partner engagement, technical inputs, and policy support to ensure that PEMSEA remains responsive and aligned with regional and global frameworks, including the UN SDGs and the Xiamen Declaration.
- 8.15. **Status and Trends in Ocean and Coastal Governance**
- 8.16. Ms. Aguilin also presented the results of the research on status and trends in coastal and ocean governance, which builds upon PEMSEA's Post-2020 Futures Report and Strategy released in 2021. She noted that recent assessments and forums have underscored the global triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, which are now being compounded by rising systemic risks and polycrises including economic instability, food insecurity, geopolitical tensions, and rapid technological change. These crises continue to disproportionately affect East and Southeast Asia.
- 8.17. Notable trends include record-high temperatures, sea-level rise, and worsening acidification. Biodiversity degradation, notably in mangroves and coral reefs, and the dominance of marine plastic pollution underscore the urgent need for strengthened

ocean governance. Southeast Asia is among the top contributors to plastic leakage. Global nitrogen production is also rising particularly in developing countries. The oil spill response sector also continues to evolve bringing with it both challenges and opportunities.

- 8.18. Blue Economy sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, offshore energy, tourism, and maritime transport were shown to be undergoing transformation. Capture fisheries remain only moderately sustainable, while aquaculture continues to expand, particularly in China and across Asia. Maritime transport and shipping is seeing innovations in alternative fuels, port digitization, risk management, and biofouling management. Marine tourism is growing, with a shift toward more sustainable, community-based models. While significant new discoveries and investment on offshore oil and gas is observed including in East Asia, and offshore renewable energy is rapidly expanding as a key pillar of the global clean energy transition.
- 8.19. New Blue Economy sectors—such as blue carbon, marine biotechnology, and blue tech, deep sea mining—present both opportunities and regulatory challenges. However, decommissioning of oil infrastructure, and scaling of renewable energy, including offshore wind and tidal systems, remain constrained by high costs and policy gaps.
- 8.20. Governance progress was acknowledged, particularly in integrated coastal and ocean management and regional collaboration, backed by new international agreements and regional frameworks. Yet, challenges persist across governance, finance, and technology. Data and knowledge gaps, uneven digital access, and insufficient financing for SDG 14 and blue economy initiatives were flagged.
- 8.21. The need for diversified, accountable financing mechanisms was emphasized. Traditional ecological knowledge and local community engagement were highlighted as essential for equitable and inclusive ocean governance, along with a call to bridge gaps in adaptation, monitoring, and compliance.
- 8.22. Building on the progress review and the identification of persistent and emerging challenges, the Secretariat outlined key considerations for updating the SDS-SEA IP beyond 2027. The update process will build on PEMSEA's achievements, strengths, networks, and partnerships, while preserving focus on the four established SDS-SEA pillars for consistency and alignment with the SDS-SEA vision, Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, and current SDS-SEA IP.

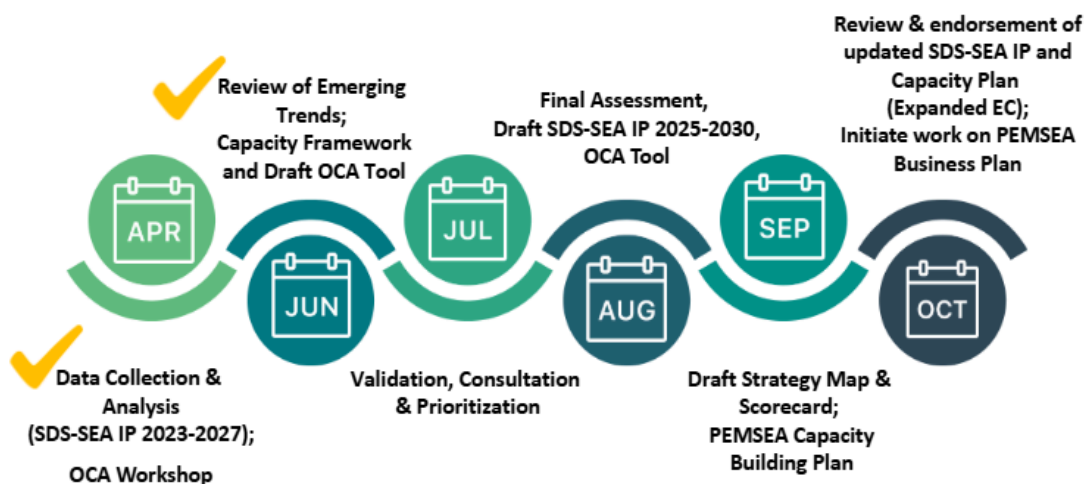
8.23. The majority of current programs and targets remain relevant but may require refinement, modification, or expansion in light of recent developments. These include alignment with the 10 synergistic actions outlined in the 2024 Xiamen Ministerial Declaration and the evolving priorities of country partners. The update will emphasize smart, country-driven priorities, with guidance from the technical review and mid-term assessment results.

8.24. Potential new additions to the updated IP include greater emphasis on ocean literacy, youth engagement, and inclusive blue economy strategies. Opportunities were identified to integrate outputs from PEMSEA-supported projects such as IRBM, ATSEA, Marine Plastics ODA, and ENMAPS, and to include co-designed solutions, traditional ecological knowledge, and innovation in blue technologies. Alignment with ESG frameworks, blue food and health, and ocean-based climate and DRR solutions were also noted as strategic directions.

8.25. **Discussion Highlights:**

8.26. Ms. Gonzales then presented the next steps following the validation of the progress review and trends report. In particular, country partners were requested to provide their feedback on the review through oral interventions under the agenda item, as well as written feedback to be submitted no later than July 31, 2025 to support the refinement and finalization of the Midterm Review and Research on Status and Trends. From the 17th PC meeting, the following key steps will be undertaken toward the completion of the updated SDS-SEA IP 2025-2030:

8.27.



- 8.28. Dr. Keita Furukawa acknowledged the comprehensive presentation on the progress and direction of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan. He noted the dynamic developments achieved so far and emphasized the importance of maintaining momentum while enhancing implementation efforts.
- 8.29. The Technical Session Chair pointed out the need to deepen PEMSEA's engagement on less familiar areas such as offshore oil and gas, blue renewable energy, blue carbon mechanisms, ocean literacy, and youth engagement. He encouraged building on existing achievements and moved to the next phase of the discussion where country partners share their feedback and national priorities, followed by inputs on key initiatives of non-country partners.
- 8.30. Singapore expressed support in principle for the proposed five-step approach but emphasized the need to integrate the reviews of strategic planning, institutional arrangements, and financial sustainability. They cautioned against conducting these processes in isolation, noting that doing so may pre-empt key discussions and result in misaligned outcomes.
- 8.31. A summary of interventions of the Country Partners and key initiatives of Non-Country Partners is shown in Annexes 7 and 8 of this document, respectively.
- 8.32. Following the presentations, the Technical Session conducted an initial priority mapping workshop of issues and trends that need to be addressed in the extended plan. The workshop aimed to:
- Identify top priorities and actionable programs under each of the four SDS-SEA pillars;
 - Highlight potential synergies between or among Country and Non-Country Partners, and PEMSEA Networks; and
 - Determine enabling conditions and collaboration needs to deliver these actions.
- 8.33. Onsite participants were divided into four groups, to represent each pillar of the SDS-SEA IP, while online participants were provided with an online questionnaire. The participants were given 40 minutes to identify priority issues, suggested actions and collaborative support and actors to address said issues. Complete outputs of the workshop are shown in Annex 9 of this document.
- 8.34. **Effective Governance:** The group, composed of country representatives from Cambodia and Lao PDR, Non-Country Partners KMI and NMHMS, the Council Chair and

Intergovernmental Session Chair identified the seven key systemic issues that must be addressed to effectively implement the extended SDS-SEA Implementation Plan (IP) to 2030.

- 8.35. These include weak policy enforcement, coordination gaps, limited access to sustainable financing, inadequate monitoring and evaluation (M&E), knowledge-sharing challenges, capacity limitations, and the limited inclusion of communities and non-state actors.
- 8.36. In response, the group proposed a set of integrated actions to strengthen governance systems, including the development of policy-to-action toolkits and legal gap assessments; establishment of interagency technical working groups and enhanced reporting platforms; creation of blended finance strategies and investment cases; co-development of standardized M&E frameworks; facilitation of collaborative research and regional knowledge exchange; implementation of demand-driven capacity development programs; and institutionalization of participatory planning and feedback mechanisms.
- 8.37. The group emphasized the need for cross-cutting collaboration and enabling conditions, including technical assistance, digital infrastructure, donor support, and facilitation by PEMSEA's governance platforms.
- 8.38. **Healthy Ocean:** The group presented a consolidated output of discussions under the Healthy Ocean pillar, developed through active contributions from both Country and Non-Country Partners. Country representatives from Japan, Vietnam, and Indonesia shared national insights, while Non-Country Partners such as KIOST (Korea) and Ipieca offered regional and technical perspectives. Discussions initially covered four thematic areas: ICM scale-up, biodiversity and fisheries, pollution, and climate change/DRR.
- 8.39. The group prioritized three key issues—ICM scale-up, biodiversity and fisheries, and pollution—with corresponding action points such as expanding coastal management coverage, promoting sustainable aquaculture, and improving water quality monitoring and waste management. Pollution was identified as the top priority, followed by ICM scale-up and biodiversity and fisheries.
- 8.40. **Healthy Economies:** The group, composed of Country Partners from China (MNR), Timor-Leste (CPC and MALFF), and Non-Country Partner Conservation International, was facilitated by Dr. Sukjae Kwon and Ms. Aimee Gonzales, with additional participation from Ms. Kathryn Aguilin and Mr. Hunguen Kim.

- 8.41. While noting the need for more discussion time, members shared that both China and Timor-Leste have enabling frameworks for the blue economy, using Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and marine spatial planning (MSP) as key tools. Discussions highlighted two main challenges: the multiple and often conflicting uses of coasts and seas—balancing food production, energy, tourism, and conservation—and the lack of technical and financial resources to advance blue economy initiatives. MSP was seen as an effective approach to address competing uses through inclusive planning and stakeholder engagement.
- 8.42. The group stressed the need to strengthen policy and technical capacity, secure financing for eco-friendly infrastructure, and expand regional knowledge exchange on blue economy innovations. Reflections emphasized continuing integrated management approaches initiated through ICM, mobilizing Non-Country Partner capacities, and enhancing south-south training and collaboration. Further work on engaging the private sector, particularly in developing blue SMEs, was identified as a priority for promoting sustainable blue investments.
- 8.43. **Healthy People:** The group underscored the critical role of empowering coastal communities in building healthy and resilient societies. Key actions included promoting biodiversity-friendly enterprises in marine protected areas (MPAs), providing short-term financing and capacity development to support eco-friendly practices, and strengthening climate resilience in fisheries through timely scientific forecasts and adaptive tools for fisherfolk. The group also emphasized the importance of inclusive and rights-based approaches to enhance community participation in MPA management, alongside enabling equitable coastal livelihoods through policy reforms, access to finance, innovative technologies, and market opportunities.
- 8.44. The group highlighted the need to adopt a One Health approach, recognizing the interconnection between human, animal, and ecosystem health. They called for strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration to manage marine zoonotic diseases, supported by public awareness campaigns and interdisciplinary research. Ensuring food and water security was also a major concern, with strategies focusing on ecosystem restoration, improved governance, and integrated land- and sea-based management. Education, public awareness, and behavior change communication were recognized as essential to sustaining long-term improvements in coastal health and well-being.

8.45. **Conclusion:** The Technical Session acknowledged the progress presented in the SDS-SEA IP 2023–2027 Review and emphasized the need for an extended implementation plan to build on validated achievements, updates on national commitments, and evolving regional priorities. Country and non-country partners underscored the importance of aligning with global frameworks, integrating ICM/MSP and blue economy actions, improving reporting and institutional mechanisms, and mobilizing financing and partnerships for priority coastal and marine initiatives.

8.46. **Recommendations:**

- Additional updates or information on Country and Non-Country Partner initiatives contributing to the SDS-SEA IP to be incorporated by the PRF in the final SDS-SEA IP Midterm Review Report, and Research on Status and Trends.
- **More detailed written updates or information from Country Partners to be provided to PRF by 31 July 2025;**
- Proposed next steps and timeline on the completion of key documents in support of PEMSEA's sustainability (i.e., updated SDS-SEA IP 2025-2030 as well document on PEMSEA's institutional capacity development) adopted;
- **Partner inputs/insights from PC workshop group exercise will be refined and incorporated in ensuing prioritization for the updated SDS-SEA IP, with additional inputs from Partners to be provided by email by 4 August 2025.**

8.47. **Decision:** The EAS PC approved the conduct of an expanded Executive Committee Meeting in October/November 2025 to discuss and approve the extended SDS-SEA IP, among other agenda.

9. **UPDATES ON THE BLUE CARBON PROGRAM (PC/17/DOC/09)**

- 9.1. The Technical Session resumed at 9:45 on July 23. Dr. Furukawa turned over the Chairmanship of the meeting to Dr. Suk-Jae Kwon, the Technical Session Co-Chair.
- 9.2. Dr. Kwon called on Dr. Furukawa, who serves as the current Chair of the BC TWG, and the Secretariat to present updates on the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program.
- 9.3. Dr. Furukawa opened the agenda with a presentation on the progress of the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program and the development of the **Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services Management Mechanism (BCESMM)**. He provided an overview of the program's evolution from 2017 to 2025, highlighting milestones such as the approval of the Blue

Carbon Roadmap, establishment of the BC TWG, and ongoing efforts to integrate blue carbon into regional policy and market mechanisms.

- 9.4. A key initiative is the development of the Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services Management Mechanism (BCESMM), which serves as a regional, non-binding framework to support the quantification, certification, and sustainable use of ecosystem services beyond carbon. The mechanism is structured around four components: reporting, certification, recording, and market creation/credit trading.
- 9.5. He emphasized a stepwise, inclusive, and adaptive approach to implementation. Key principles of the BCESMM include integrated and adaptive management, recognition of national circumstances, collaborative partnerships, gender equality and social inclusion, and the application of the precautionary principle in the face of scientific uncertainty. These align with SDS-SEA implementation and broader international frameworks.
- 9.6. The BCES Management Roadmap, which builds on the original Blue Carbon Roadmap, includes four pillars: reporting, certification, recording, and market creation. The Roadmap was further enhanced (as shown below) by the BC TWG to include a fifth pillar on project development, and the services that PEMSEA may provide for each pillar.

BCES Management Roadmap (revised)

BCESM (BCP)	BCES Reporting (BC Accounting Mech.)	BCES Certification	BCES Recording (BC Accounting Mech.)	BCES Marketing (Supply & Demand)	BCES Project Development
Immediate (2023-2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stack the supply of BCESs in PEMSEA/s ICM learning sites with the help of PNLC and PNLG members has been assessed Basic protocol of State of Blue Carbon Ecosystem Service Status (SOBCE) has been developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outline on BC certification has been prepared for mangrove forests and seagrass bed An outline on BC certification has been studied for seaweed/kelp bed, aquaculture, tidal flats, and saltmarshes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A basic database of BC ecosystem services has been designed based on SOC format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A market demand study on blue carbon ecosystems has been done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nomination of Pilot Project site from CPs Mining available base-line data from Global DB, NCPs, and Research Projects Search for Funding/Voluntary commitments
Medium-term (2026-2029)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue carbon in each country has been assessed SOBCE has been implemented in each country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC certification process has been implemented with third party certificate committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A basic database of BC ecosystem services has been implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed market for partners has been implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Pilot Project local/National based Market exercise
Long-term (2030-2034)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue carbon supply status and future projection has been assessed Updates of SOBCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC certification process has been open for global arena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An advanced database of BC ecosystem services has been designed/implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open market for EAS region has been implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaling up of BCES Projects Extended market in EAS region
PEMSEA Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology Development and Capacity Building Assessment Monitoring Network Support: Research, Hardware (equipment, labs, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocols Capacity-building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessors Managers (project) Auditors - Trainers Certifying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation/ credits/ projects - Assessors Auditors - Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Database/Registry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valuation/ (BC and ecosystem services/sites) Credits Market Research and information platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing and Communications Partnership-building Vetting/certifying of market players Market mechanism Code of conduct/ manual for trade (?) Capacity-building (database) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information gathering through CPs/NCPs Matching between candidate sites (w/PNLC) and technical support (w/PNLC)

- 9.7. Reporting will follow a tiered approach, allowing countries to adopt methods aligned with their capacities. Certification requires third-party validation and peer review. Recording involves a secure, centralized database of credits, while the envisioned regional market will facilitate transparent and accountable trading of ecosystem service credits.
- 9.8. The mechanism outlines specific roles for stakeholders: Country Partners lead national-level reporting and project integration into their NDCs; PNLC and NCPs provide scientific support and implementation expertise; PNLC members serve as project implementers at the local level; and PRF acts as the Secretariat managing the system's operations.
- 9.9. Sustainability mechanisms include cost-sharing arrangements, where a portion of proceeds from BC credit transactions (e.g. carbon markets) will be allocated as overhead fees to support the certification process and maintenance of the regional blue carbon database. Capacity development, conflict resolution mechanisms, and GESI-based stakeholder engagement are central to ensuring long-term implementation.

- 9.10. Ms. Abigail Cruzada, Secretariat Coordinator, presented the key activities of the Blue Carbon Program from January to June 2025, including the formation of the 19-member BC TWG, composed of experts from Country and Non-Country Partners and PNLC members. The first online meeting in February 2025 refined the Roadmap and explored establishing a regional monitoring network.
- 9.11. Capacity-building activities included a training on integrating blue carbon into ICM frameworks, co-hosted by the University of Hawai'i and Burapha University, targeting early-career professionals. The second BC TWG meeting in June, held in Haikou, China and co-hosted by NMHMS, focused on finalizing the BCESMM, refining the Workplan for 2025–2026, and initiating the Blue Carbon Monitoring Network. Proceedings from these activities can be found in [here](#).
- 9.12. Ms. Kristina Ticman, PEMSEA's Geomatics and Blue Carbon Specialist, presented the draft Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol (RBCAP). The protocol is based on comparative reviews of existing methods from EAS countries (China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, RO Korea, and Thailand) against the globally recognized standard, VERRA. It aims to harmonize approaches across carbon pools, ecosystems, and methods for stock and sequestration assessment in the EAS region.
- 9.13. The RBCAP will cover the following components: a comprehensive coverage of BC Ecosystems and organisms, unified accounting categories, standardized field and data analysis methods, and uncertainty management. A tiered approach to accounting was also proposed to accommodate varying country capacities, with Tier 1 offering simplified estimations and Tier 3 enabling advanced, research-based GHG flux assessments. The protocols cover aboveground and belowground biomass, litter, deadwood, soil organic carbon, and—where applicable—carbon in water columns.
- 9.14. The draft protocol, which initially covered both general rules and governance and ecosystem-based methodologies in one main document, was refined based on the BC TWG's inputs during their second meeting. These included clarifying project eligibility, improving risk management, enhancing accessibility for new users, and addressing the sustainability of monitoring and verification practices.
- 9.15. The refined RBCAP is now currently being reorganized into two parts: a Main document which covers the cross-cutting principles, general methods and governance, and annexes including ecosystem-specific methodologies. The mangrove annex is currently

under development, with upcoming modules on seagrasses, salt marshes, and other ecosystems (e.g., tidal flats, seaweeds, mollusks) to follow.

- 9.16. Ms. Cruzada then presented the revised TWG Workplan for the remaining months of 2025 - 2026 (see below). Next steps include finalizing the main RBCAP document and initial annexes for review by the expanded Executive Committee, developing a certification business plan, building a prototype database for credit tracking, conducting market demand studies, and identifying pilot sites to test the regional protocol.

Component	Target Activities
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regular BC TWG Meetings (TBC) ● BC Core Group Meetings for specific tasks ● Coordination ● Present workplan on BCP for review and approval at the 17th EAS Partnership Council (July 22) and Executive Committee (October)
BCES Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Refining of the RBCAP with TWG members and partners (PNLC BC experts, other collaborators) ● Present refined RBCAP to EAS PC for review/consensus ● Assessment of current status and needs to establish a regional BC monitoring network
BCES Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review and seek consensus on BC Certification Concept note ● Draft guidelines/business plan outline
BCES Recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design a basic database of BC ecosystem services ● Discussions on other protocol: project development, ecosystem services valuation
BCES Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Market demand study on blue carbon ecosystems

<p>BCES Project Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Baseline assessments ● Case study collection ● Identification of pilot sites ● Search for funding/voluntary commitments ● BC Accounting protocol pilot-testing
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9.17. The Partnership Council was requested to: (1) provide input on the draft BCESMM; (2) endorse the updated TWG Workplan, subject to resource availability; (3) support the identification and operationalization of pilot sites; and (4) request the TWG to submit a progress report at the next Council meeting.

9.18. **Discussion Highlights**

9.19. Mr. Taehee Lee of KIOST expressed strong support for the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program and the development of a regional management mechanism. It shared that Blue Carbon MRV pilot projects are currently being implemented through its overseas centers, with the intention to align these with PEMSEA's regional framework. KIOST also offered technical support, including training, joint workshops, and scientific advice, and is exploring pilot sites to contribute to the certification roadmap. In addition, KIOST is engaging with Korea's ODA system to support long-term investment in PEMSEA's Blue Carbon Program.

9.20. Dr. Yeajin Jujng of KMI shared plans to collaborate with the World Bank on developing short reports that identify the policy and scientific limitations in applying Korea's blue carbon to the carbon market. KMI will lead on the policy and science aspects, while the World Bank will focus on market-related insights. The knowledge generated will be used to support the work of the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Technical Working Group.

9.21. KMI emphasized that the strategic objective of the program should go beyond conservation to also promote the blue economy, and suggested distinguishing between IPCC-certified blue carbon and potential blue carbon to develop more concrete strategies for market application.

9.22. China commended the PRF and the Blue Carbon Technical Working Group for their extensive work, recognizing it as a solid foundation for future progress. China shared its own advancements, including the development of survey and assessment standards for

mangroves, seagrass beds, and salt marshes, and the launch of two blue carbon trading projects on the international VCS platform, with two more projects planned for China's voluntary carbon market.

- 9.23. Given the complex nature of blue carbon involving monitoring, verification, and certification, China recommended leveraging international technical standards (e.g., from CI and IUCN) and country-level best practices to enhance effectiveness.
- 9.24. The Philippines expressed full support for the adoption of the proposed BCESMM and commended the TWG's efforts. It emphasized the importance of on-site blue carbon accounting for certification and market application and deferred to the TWG in selecting pilot sites in the Philippines.
- 9.25. The Philippines shared ongoing efforts under its National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), which includes a forthcoming national Blue Carbon Roadmap supported by geospatial mapping of mangroves, corals, and seagrasses. Furthermore, the Philippines emphasized that the BC program should be seen as a pathway to access nature-based climate finance while strengthening coastal resilience and the ocean-based economy.
- 9.26. RO Korea thanked the Technical Working Group for their efforts and expressed intent to submit detailed comments on the BCESMM and blue carbon certification methodologies via email.
- 9.27. ROK recommended incorporating the forthcoming 2027 IPCC methodology on carbon dioxide removal, CCUS, and other technologies into PEMSEA's mid-term planning. It also proposed the formal inclusion of tidal flats in the scope of blue carbon accounting.
- 9.28. ROK sought clarification on whether PEMSEA's blue carbon initiatives aim primarily at supporting NDCs or establishing a role as an internationally recognized certification body, noting that collaboration with existing certification entities would be critical for market development.
- 9.29. The Technical Session Co-Chair acknowledged the value of the suggestions and affirmed the potential of tidal flats in future protocol development, while also clarifying that methodologies for accounting BC in tidal flats have not officially been adopted by IPCC at the moment.

- 9.30. Cambodia expressed appreciation for the work of the Technical Working Group and conveyed its interest in having its coastal local governments as pilot sites for the Blue Carbon Program. It noted that Cambodia has suitable ecosystems—seagrass, coral reefs, mangroves, and coastal wetlands—across four coastal provinces.
- 9.31. Given limited national capacity, Cambodia welcomed support from development partners to conduct pilot testing, which would generate valuable primary data to support sustainable marine resource management and blue carbon policy development.
- 9.32. The National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS) expressed appreciation for the work of the Technical Working Group and the leadership of the outgoing Technical Session Chair. As a member of the BC TWG, it highlighted key reflections from recent meetings, particularly the need to quantify carbon removal through standardized protocols while allowing qualitative assessment of other ecosystem services.
- 9.33. NMHMS emphasized balancing certification with conservation, noting both are critical to achieving NDC targets, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and SDS-SEA implementation outcomes. It reiterated support for improved technical capacity in monitoring carbon stock and fluxes, and reaffirmed its commitment to contribute through targeted training, research, regional knowledge synthesis, and piloting of monitoring protocols, particularly through the East Asian Seas Blue Carbon Monitoring Network.
- 9.34. Dr. Keita Furukawa, Technical Session Chair, responded to clarificatory questions from KMI and ROK. On KMI's inquiry about the integration of blue carbon and blue economy, he referenced the 2021 IPCC-IPBES joint workshop, which highlighted both synergies and trade-offs between climate action and biodiversity conservation.
- 9.35. He emphasized that PEMSEA's mechanism focuses on ecosystem services, not just carbon credits, to capture broader co-benefits and align more closely with the blue economy agenda. He expressed hope that the TWG will further define and operationalize this integration.
- 9.36. In response to ROK's question on international certification, Dr. Furukawa clarified that the mechanism is intended for the voluntary carbon market, not compliance-based schemes.

- 9.37. He noted that international recognition can be achieved through transparency and scientific credibility, and emphasized the importance of starting with pilot projects at the national and regional levels. He recommended a step-by-step approach to eventually scale up recognition and credibility at the global level.
- 9.38. Dr. Kwon expressed appreciation for the recommendations shared by Dr. Furukawa as Chair of the Blue Carbon Technical Working Group. He acknowledged the challenges and time required to build capacity for blue carbon initiatives but emphasized its importance, noting that blue carbon can serve as a potential Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- 9.39. Dr. Kwon highlighted the opportunity to develop a credit market that could generate income for local governments, offering a strong incentive to advance blue carbon projects.
- 9.40. **Conclusion:** The Technical Session welcomed the progress on the PEMSEA Blue Carbon (BC) Program and expressed broad support for the draft Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services Management Mechanism and revised TWG Workplan. Partners emphasized the importance of aligning with international and national standards, piloting methodologies, strengthening technical capacity, and establishing a credible, regionally grounded approach to blue carbon certification and financing.
- 9.41. **Recommendations:**
- 9.42. KIOST confirmed its strong support for the PEMSEA BC program through the provision of technical assistance, training, and scientific advice, including but not limited to the identification of potential pilot sites in the ROK that will contribute to PEMSEA's BCESM roadmap. It expressed pursuing Korea's ODA to support long-term investment in the program.
- 9.43. KMI recommended that PEMSEA's Blue Carbon strategy go beyond conservation by linking it to blue economy promotion and distinguishing it from IPCC frameworks, to develop a certifiable methodology for voluntary carbon markets. KMI also committed to support the program through organizing joint workshops, seminars, and sharing insights generated from its upcoming report with the World Bank that will reflect KMI's blue carbon technical and policy expertise and experience complemented by the Bank's carbon market expertise.

- 9.44. China recommended to leverage international (e.g., IUCN, IPCC) and national standards for mangroves, seagrasses, and salt marshes in developing the regional protocols; and share results and technical resources via PEMSEA platforms. They also underscored the need to put equal emphasis on three key elements: monitoring and accrediting BC projects; understanding the distribution and quality of BCEs supply at the regional level; and enhancing understanding of carbon stock and fluxes
- 9.45. ROK recommended that the regional blue carbon accounting protocol incorporate the 2017 IPCC Methodologies on Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage, proposed the official inclusion of tidal flats in the BCESMM and recommended collaboration with internationally recognized certification bodies to refine the certification component of the BCESM roadmap.
- 9.46. Philippines recommended onsite BC accounting and pilot testing to ensure applicability to strengthen national policy and marketing applicability.
- 9.47. NMHMS expressed continued support of the BC program through training, research, synthesis of BC knowledge and piloting of RBCAP at regional level through the EAS Monitoring Network and in coordination and consultation with PRF Team, PNLC and BC TWG.
- 9.48. **Decision:** The EAS PC endorsed the BCESMM, with additional recommendations for enhancement and considerations, and approved the BC TWG 2025-2026 Workplan.

10. OTHER BUSINESS (PC/17/DOC/10)

- 10.1. Under Other Business, Ms. Aimee Gonzalez provided an update on the regional initiative titled **Towards 30x30: Regional Collaboration on Marine Protected Area Networks—the commitment to conserve at least 30% of marine and coastal areas by the year 2030**, launched during the East Asian Seas Congress 2024 in Xiamen.
- 10.2. This initiative brings together nine regional organizations—including PEMSEA, ACB, COBSEA, CTI-CFF, IOC-WESTPAC, IUCN, NEAMPAN, and others—to collaborate in supporting East Asian Seas countries in achieving the global target of protecting 30% of marine and coastal areas by 2030. presented an overview of a collaborative effort of regional organizations titled

- 10.3. Currently, the initiative is conducting a regional baseline mapping on marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs), led by PRF. The effort aims to assess existing capacities, data gaps, and opportunities for synergy.
- 10.4. A consolidated report is targeted for completion by October 2026 and will serve as the basis for a concept proposal to mobilize resources under a joint integrated program. PEMSEA's contribution will focus on technical assistance, capacity building, and training, while other partners will engage in financing small-scale MPAs, OECMs, and community-based actions.
- 10.5. Country partners were invited to nominate contact points, experts, and share relevant data to help validate national profiles and build a unified regional position for international forums and conventions related to 30x30 commitments.
- 10.6. **Conclusion/Decision:** The PC noted the progress report on the East Asian Seas Regional Collaborative Network of MPAs. PRF will follow up with respective country partners on validating MPA country profiles.
- 10.7. **Closing of the Technical Session**
- 10.8. Dr. Kwon extended his sincere appreciation to all Country Partners, Non-Country Partners, technical experts, and observers for their active participation in the Technical Session of the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting. He acknowledged the depth and quality of discussions, noting that the outcomes—from the validation of progress under the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan to deliberations on the Blue Carbon Mechanism, priority setting, and proposed pilot actions—will serve as critical inputs in shaping PEMSEA's future work.
- 10.9. On behalf of the Secretariat and the Executive Committee, Dr. Kwon expressed gratitude for the Council's continued commitment to sustainable seas and regional cooperation.
- 10.10. He formally concluded the Technical Session and turned the floor over to the Secretariat for the transition into the Intergovernmental Session.
- 10.11. The Secretariat informed the body that the Intergovernmental Session would resume after lunch, to be participated only by Country Partners. The Secretariat thanked the Non-Country partners for their active participation in the previous sessions.

- 10.12. The meeting was suspended at 12:00.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION

11. OPENING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION AND ADOPTION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION AGENDA (PC/17/DOC/11)

- 11.1. The meeting resumed at 13:30 on July 23 with the opening of the Intergovernmental Session.
- 11.2. Ms. CHEN Danhong, Intergovernmental Session Chair, congratulated the newly elected officers of the EAS Partnership Council, noting that the new leadership team brings a valuable combination of experience and fresh perspectives. She expressed her anticipation for close collaboration with all partners to further advance regional ocean cooperation.
- 11.3. Ms. Danhong also extended her sincere appreciation to the outgoing Executive Committee members, Dr. Vann Monyneath and Dr. Keita Furukawa, stating it had been a privilege to work alongside such dedicated and outstanding colleagues.
- 11.4. She highlighted the adoption of the Xiamen Declaration as one of the key achievements of the past year. The Declaration, she noted, reinvigorates the region's shared priorities and offers a strong foundation for enhanced cooperation and sustainable development. She concluded by expressing her honor in contributing to that important milestone.
- 11.5. Ms. Danhong then called the Intergovernmental Session to order. She then requested that Ms. Cruzada present the agenda for the session.
- 11.6. Decision: The agenda was adopted.

12. UPDATES ON THE PEMSEA SUSTAINABILITY PLAN (PC/17/DOC/12)

- 12.1. The Executive Director provided an update on the implementation of the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan, highlighting progress in resource mobilization efforts and the advancement of PEMSEA's service offerings, including the Blue Carbon Program.

- 12.2. She noted that the full Sustainability Plan has been under discussion with Country Partners since 2018, with increased focus on resource mobilization efforts during her tenure as Executive Director. The Executive Director clarified that the Sustainability Plan is interlinked with PEMSEA's strategic programming and organizational capacity assessment, both of which were discussed during the technical session.
- 12.3. These components will eventually be integrated into one consolidated document. She cited that resource mobilization for the mechanism is a collective responsibility of PC.
- 12.4. On financial sustainability, she shared that over the last seven years, PEMSEA has mobilized an average of USD 3 to 4 million annually, with fluctuations depending on project timing. While there have been years where the figure rose to USD 4 to 5 million, the Executive Director noted that it is more prudent to keep the reference range at USD 3 to 4 million, as the budget varies with project volume and availability.
- 12.5. Approximately 15% comes from country contributions, and 75% of PEMSEA's revenue comes from bilateral and multilateral grants, primarily GEF-funded initiatives. Around 10% is earned through technical advisory services provided by the PEMSEA Resource Facility to Country Partners and other stakeholders. The remainder is composed of smaller revenue streams from paid technical services performed by PRF. She clarified that due to the time-bound and restricted nature of these grants, there is limited flexibility to support institutional operations, further reinforcing the importance of diversifying revenue streams.
- 12.6. She underscored that this project-based model is not sustainable in the long term and reiterated the need to diversify funding sources, including boosting the services component and encouraging voluntary contributions—cash or in-kind—from Country Partners where possible.
- 12.7. To illustrate current and future opportunities, the Executive Director shared updates on some ongoing and pipeline initiatives:
- The Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Project, which involves six Country Partners;
 - The ODA-funded Marine Plastics Project, currently implemented in the Philippines and Timor Leste;
 - The ATSEA Program, a medium-sized grant with PRF serving as funding manager; the Project Identification Form (PIF) is still under development. The ED cannot

disclose information on amounts at this time as co-financing arrangements are still under negotiation;

- The Biofouling Management Project, medium sized grant's PIF is under review by IMO and valued between USD 3 to 5 million for a period of three years;
- A proposed Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Phase 2, with funding potentially sourced from the GEF Replenishment Fund 9, is currently under discussion with UNDP. PEMSEA could again serve as the executing agency. The Executive Director explained that the scope, objectives, and rationale would remain similar to the current project but may expand—subject to countries' confirmation—to include additional partners. She noted there is emerging interest from China, Thailand (a GEF-eligible but non-PEMSEA country), and Timor Leste.
- PRF supported PML in its grant application to the Earth Bezos on AI for Climate & Nature , but no further information has been provided by PML on the status of the grant ;
- The Blue Solutions Project, which has been presented over the past three years, remains under negotiation between IKI and IMO. The Executive Director noted originally planned as a 16-million-euro-funded project, the scope and budget have since been reduced to 10 million euros. The project is intended to involve all East Asian Seas Country Partners;
- A Regional Blue Carbon Pilot Study, currently under development with IUCN Managed Blue Carbon Accelerator Fund as potential source;
- A Regional Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network in the East Asian Seas is under discussion with COBSEA, UNEP and UNDP as a potential GEF-9 project. The Executive Director noted that UNEP could serve as the implementing agency, although this remains under discussion with COBSEA;
- The PRICELESS, in partnership with Conservation International and GEF, to be implemented in the Philippines pending approval by DENR;
- And the revitalization of a PEMSEA Network of Young Leaders as a program is in early-stage conceptual development with pending discussions ongoing with partners in China .

- 12.8. The Executive Director emphasized that the growing pipeline of projects highlights the urgent need for more structured fundraising efforts. At present, PEMSEA does not have a staff member dedicated to fundraising or marketing.
- 12.9. In this regard, she proposed the formation of a Fundraising and Marketing Committee, composed of volunteer members of the EAS Partnership Council and, where appropriate, external experts. The committee would go beyond project-based fundraising and work toward a business development strategy and value propositions, while also strengthening engagement with development agencies, the private sector, and NGOs.
- 12.10. She explained that the initiative aims to address the inherent limitations of PEMSEA's project-based model, underscoring that the organization does not generate surplus or maintain unrestricted income. She noted that PEMSEA projects hardly earn any profit, as all resources must be fully allocated to meet specific project results and objectives. This constraint prevents the use of funds for institutional overhead or flexible operational needs, highlighting the importance of establishing a more sustainable and diversified funding framework.
- 12.11. The Terms of Reference for the proposed committee were circulated as an annex to the resource mobilization update. The Executive Director concluded her report and returned the floor to the Chair.
- 12.12. The intergovernmental Chair thanked Ms. Gonzales for her report and shared that financial support from country partners is key to implementing the SDS-SEA. It remains a critical issue which needs collective thinking and discussion. He then opened the floor for interventions.
- 12.13. **Discussion Highlights:**
- 12.14. Japan congratulated the newly elected Chairs and Co-Chairs of the Council. On the topic of private financing, Japan noted that the initiative is commendable and feasible. However, they emphasized that in certain cases, public and private funds cannot be mixed together due to institutional or regulatory constraints. To address this, they suggested the establishment of separate funding management mechanism or account. Japan further recommended that the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) examine the practices of other international organizations in managing private funding sources.
- 12.15. The Republic of Korea expressed support for the observations made by Japan.

- 12.16. China acknowledged that the current Operations Plan remains largely reliant on project-based funding. They stressed the need to actively pursue additional project development opportunities and to strengthen collaboration with Country Partners in order to increase funding and identify priority initiatives.
- 12.17. China expressed hope that PRF would intensify its efforts to build relationships and integrate more regional projects into the programmatic framework. While they recognized that multilateral cooperation presents significant challenges, they encouraged PRF to take a more proactive role in initiating both bilateral and multilateral projects. They emphasized that, despite the complexities, increased coordination could lead to broader engagement and expansion of PEMSEA's activities.
- 12.18. The Philippines recognized and appreciated the agenda presented and recommended exploring potential projects under the Blue Carbon program, in alignment with ongoing national and regional efforts on coastal and marine ecosystem restoration and climate mitigation.
- 12.19. **Conclusion:** The Intergovernmental Session welcomed the update on the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan and acknowledged ongoing efforts to strengthen resource mobilization. Country Partners emphasized the need to diversify funding sources and explore innovative financing models.
- 12.20. **Recommendations:**
- 12.21. Japan expressed support for pursuing private sector financing but cautioned on commingling government contributions with private financing. To ensure proper fund management, Japan recommended managing public and private funding separately and suggested that the PRF study how other international organizations manage mixed-source funding. ROK seconded the recommendation.
- 12.22. China encouraged PRF to proactively secure multi- and bilateral projects, strengthen partnerships with Country Partners, and identify priority projects to enhance PEMSEA's financial sustainability.
- 12.23. PH endorsed the creation of the fundraising and marketing committee and exploring potential projects under the Blue Carbon program.

- 12.24. **Decision:** PRF secretariat noted the recommendations and used the above as a guide in resource mobilization efforts. It will also start forming the fundraising and marketing committee, seeking volunteers from country and non-country partners

13. PRF WORK PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2025 -2026 (PC/17/DOC/13)

- 13.1. The Executive Director presented the proposed work plan and budget of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) for the 2025–2026 period. The plan is anchored on three main objectives:
1. Ensuring the financial and operational sustainability of the PRF to effectively deliver technical and secretariat services to Country and Non-Country Partners;
 2. Continuing the implementation of Years 3 and 4 of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan (with some adjustments expected); and
 3. Strengthening strategic partnerships for SDS-SEA implementation.
- 13.2. She shared that the objectives have served PEMSEA for the past years, but welcomed suggestions from the Council on additional key objectives that could be considered for inclusion.
- 13.3. On Objective 1, she highlighted the priority of achieving financial sustainability. PRF's annual revenue target has increased from the previous range of USD 3–4 million to a projected USD 3.5–4 million. This is expected to come from three main sources: Country Partner contributions; execution fees from managed projects, typically ranging from 8–10%; and grants or technical services provided by the PRF.
- 13.4. She outlined the pipeline of upcoming projects that will support this objective. These include the Blue Solutions Project funded by the German government through IKI and in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions across ASEAN's maritime sector—including shipping, ports, and inland transport systems. She noted that this approach reflects PEMSEA's long-standing advocacy for an integrated management approach on ocean governance.
- 13.5. She also mentioned the anticipated second phase of the GloFouling Project, from which capacity development funds are expected. This will support ASEAN countries in ongoing IMO treaty negotiations related to biofouling management and the prevention of invasive aquatic species in ships.

- 13.6. The ATSEA project is being considered under the GEF 8 replenishment cycle, , with the Project Identification Form (PIF) currently under preparation for a medium-sized grant. Meanwhile, outreach to new and existing partners continues to be a focus of PRF's work.
- 13.7. Under Objective 2 & 3, she noted that implementation activities for Years 3 and 4 include operationalizing the ATSEA Programme and Secretariat, disseminating reports, tools, and lessons learned, and conducting training and capacity development aligned with the PEMSEA 2025 plan.
- 13.8. The ED shared that efforts are ongoing to engage with Thailand and Malaysia as project partners, but collaboration as formal Country Partners remain a desired goal. . She also emphasized that engagement with ASEAN bodies remains active. The PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) currently serves as a Dialogue Partner of the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment and ASEAN Working Group on Maritime Transport. It coordinates with the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management, which functions as the regional governance body of the IRBM project.
- 13.9. Regarding the Ocean Roundtable Dialogue, she shared that it may not be feasible to organize one in 2025 due to time and resource constraints, but a session is being targeted for 2026. She invited suggestions on potential topics or co-hosting opportunities from interested partners.
- 13.10. Turning to the financial overview, she presented the current funding status of PEMSEA, updated as of July 2025. She noted that this was an updated version of what had previously been circulated in June and encouraged partners to review the details carefully. She added that the names of contributors were listed on the table and invited corrections if any were missing or inaccurately reflected.
- 13.11. She explained that the leftmost table reflected all country cash contributions. Some contributions were still marked in green as these were pending transfer, but most of the 2025 contributions had already been committed and were available in PRF's accounts.
- 13.12. She clarified that while execution fees from projects are counted as part of PRF's revenue, the project funds shown in the table represent the total budgets committed to each project. She also noted that the annual in-kind contribution from the Government of the Philippines—covering the office premises, building, and parking space—had increased slightly, reflecting updated rental valuations of nearby properties.

- 13.13. She then turned to the PRF budget slide and further noted that the budget slide looks small because it covers core services only and does not reflect PRF's full budget. Many project staff are funded directly by project budgets; as a result, the PRF core budget covers only a portion of personnel costs—roughly one-third of the total.
- 13.14. She concluded the presentation and returned the floor to the Chair. The intergovernmental chair then requested the countries to review and provide suggestions for the work plan and budget of the PEMSEA Resource Facility for 2025-2026.
- 13.15. **Discussion Highlights:**
- 13.16. Japan pointed out that detailed budget expenditure breakdowns have not been provided to clearly show a picture of PEMSEA's overall financial position. They emphasized the importance of transparency and recommended that the financial statement be consistent with the Annual Report section of the ED's report provided in the Council Session. Japan also requested that providing detailed budget information be considered in reporting on the PRF workplan and budget in the succeeding years.
- 13.17. The Republic of Korea supported Japan on this issue.
- 13.18. In response, Ms. Gonzales shared that the current format of the PRF budget presentation has been used consistently since 2018. In response to the suggestion raised by Japan and the Republic of Korea regarding more detailed financial reporting, she requested partners to indicate what kind of information or additional breakdowns they would find most useful.
- 13.19. She mentioned that the audited financial statements are typically shared separately with the Executive Committee, but added that if partners feel it would be helpful, PRF is open to sharing those during the July Partnership Council meetings as well.
- 13.20. She reiterated that the Secretariat remains open to enhancing the reporting approach and invited partners to share specific suggestions or preferred formats for consideration.
- 13.21. The Philippines conforms with the Work Plan and Budget and remains supportive of the initiatives of the Partnership.
- 13.22. **Conclusion:** The Intergovernmental Session noted the workplan and budget of the PRF for 2025-2026, with some suggestions to further strengthen the report, including the

presentation of a detailed budget breakdown in reporting on the PRF workplan and budget in the succeeding years.

- 13.23. **Decision:** The Intergovernmental Session provisionally approved the Workplan and budget for 2025-2026, noting to provide a more detailed breakdown of the budget in future reports.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

- 14.1. Council Chair Dr. Vann Monyneath raised two governance-related concerns for the Council's consideration:
- The current absence of a Council Co-Chair; and
 - The identification of the next host country for the East Asian Seas (EAS) Partnership Council Meeting.
- 14.2. He introduced several options for consideration to strengthen country ownership and leadership within PEMSEA. One option proposed was to rotate the hosting of the EAS PC Meeting alphabetically among Country Partners, with the host country serving as interim Council Co-Chair during their hosting term (e.g., 2025–2028). This approach, he noted, is aligned with practices used in other regional mechanisms such as ASEAN. The intent is to strengthen engagement and ownership at different levels of governance among PEMSEA Country Partners.
- 14.3. There was also recognition that current procedures or rules of governance for electing Council Officers may need to be revised to accommodate these proposals. The Chair then opened the floor for discussion.
- 14.4. Indonesia informed the Council that the Ministry of Environment (MOE) is now the lead agency for PEMSEA in Indonesia. They emphasized the importance of all Country Partners being updated on PEMSEA projects. Indonesia requested that PRF regularly report progress on project implementation, specifically referencing the Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) project. They noted that the MOA for the IRBM project is awaiting ministerial approval, with internal processing completed. Given current delays, they expressed hope that the project timeline could be extended.
- 14.5. Indonesia also shared that Jakarta Province is preparing to host the PNLG Annual Forum on 16–18 September 2025, and encouraged PEMSEA National Focal Points to support and promote the attendance of local government representatives.

- 14.6. Cambodia inquired about the timeline and sequence of the proposed rotational hosting arrangement—specifically, whether it would commence with Cambodia or follow from the current host, the Philippines.
- 14.7. Undersecretary Jonas Leones, the current Council Co-Chair, referenced international practice, noting that in some UN bodies, the Co-Chair role is typically held by the host country. He supported exploring the possibility of having the host country assume the role of interim Co-Chair.
- 14.8. China expressed support for a second round of nominations for the Council Co-Chair position, in line with current procedures.
- 14.9. The Intergovernmental Chair summarized two possible options moving forward:
- Adopting a rotational hosting arrangement for the EAS Partnership Council Meeting, based on alphabetical order among Country Partners; and
 - Allowing the host country to nominate a representative to serve as Council Co-Chair, or alternatively, reopening the nomination process for the Council Co-Chair position.
- 14.10. She suggested that, in lieu of resolving the matter during the session, the Secretariat circulates an email containing all information related to the two matters to formally gather the views of all Country Partners on the proposals discussed.
- 14.11. **Decision:** The Secretariat will send a brief options paper document regarding the PC Meeting rotational hosting and options in addressing the lack of Council Co-Chair for 2025-2028 via email for further consideration and/or generate consensus from the Intergovernmental Session.

15. SUMMARY AND APPROVAL OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING (PC/17/DOC/15)

- 15.1. The Secretariat presented the summary of conclusions and recommendations of the Partnership Council Meeting for approval. She added that any further edits or comments on the summary of conclusions and recommendations could be provided during the review of the full proceedings.

- 15.2. **Decision:** The summary of conclusions and recommendations was approved, subject to enhancement in the meeting proceedings.

16. PRF SECRETARIAT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 16.1. The PEMSEA Secretariat requested participants to complete the feedback survey for the 17th EAS Partnership Council Meeting and outlined the timeline for the release of the meeting proceedings.
- 16.2. **Closing of the Intergovernmental Session**
- 16.3. Ms. Chen Danhong then proceeded to deliver her closing remarks as Chair of the Intergovernmental Session. She expressed her heartfelt gratitude to all Country Partners for their active participation, thoughtful inputs, and continued commitment to PEMSEA.
- 16.4. She highlighted that a key point of the day's discussion was the urgent need to ensure PEMSEA's financial sustainability beyond 2027, particularly in light of the rapidly changing global economic and political landscapes. She emphasized that the continued success of the SDS-SEA depends not only on strategic directions, but also on the ability to mobilize and sustain resources—both domestically and through engaged and active partnerships.
- 16.5. She reaffirmed that the implementation of the SDS-SEA up to 2030 requires stronger national ownership, closer alignment with government programs, and the scaling up of financial and institutional support. In this regard, she noted that the Council's endorsement of the PRF Work Plan and Budget for 2025–2026 is a concrete step in the right direction.
- 16.6. DG Chen shared that this session holds particular significance, as it marks the conclusion of her term as Chair of the Intergovernmental Session. She described it as a privilege to serve in this role and to work alongside such dedicated and visionary colleagues. She expressed pride in the collective progress made and optimism for the region's future.
- 16.7. She extended her sincere appreciation to the PEMSEA Resource Facility Secretariat and all those who contributed to the successful organization of the meeting. She concluded by encouraging everyone to carry forward the spirit of solidarity and action that defines the PEMSEA partnership.

- 16.8. With that, she turned over the floor to the Chair and Co-Chair of the EAS Partnership Council to deliver their closing remarks for the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting.

17. CLOSING OF THE 17TH EAS PC MEETING

- 17.1. Dr. Monyneath thanked Ms. Danhong for her excellent facilitation of the intergovernmental session. He then requested USec. Jonas Leones, Council Co-Chair, to deliver some closing remarks.
- 17.2. Undersecretary Jonas Leones of the DENR, on behalf of the Philippines, delivered the closing remarks of the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting, expressing deep appreciation for the trust, collaboration, and strong participation of all delegates. He emphasized that hosting the meeting was both an honor and a reaffirmation of the region's shared commitment to protect and sustain its marine and coastal resources.
- 17.3. He acknowledged the diversity of the region and the significance of uniting around a common goal. Reflecting on the outcomes, he noted that the meeting brought both progress and urgency—highlighting critical discussions on ocean governance, climate action, and the Blue Carbon Program. He urged delegates to carry the momentum forward and ensure that decisions made translate into meaningful action, concluding with a message of gratitude and a call to renew commitment to the Partnership's shared mission.
- 17.4. Dr. Vann Monyneath, Chair of the EAS Partnership Council, thanked Undersecretary Jonas Leones for his remarks and proceeded to deliver the closing statement for the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting.
- 17.5. He extended his sincere appreciation to all Country and Non-Country Partners, the Executive Committee, and the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) for their strong engagement and valuable contributions throughout the meeting.
- 17.6. He offered special thanks to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources of the Philippines for its warm hospitality and steadfast commitment to regional cooperation.
- 17.7. Reflecting on the outcomes of the meeting, Dr. Monyneath noted that the Council had reaffirmed its shared dedication to the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA). He highlighted the smooth transition of Council leadership, the

review of progress in implementing the SDS-SEA, and the validation of performance assessments. He also recognized the dynamic exchanges on thematic and emerging issues and the valuable contributions of Non-Country Partners.

- 17.8. He encouraged all partners to carry forward the spirit of solidarity and shared purpose that marked the discussions and to continue translating commitments into concrete actions—actions that promote the protection, resilience, and prosperity of the region’s shared seas and coastal communities.
- 17.9. As this session marked the conclusion of his term as Council Chair, Dr. Monyneath expressed gratitude for the trust and support extended to him during his tenure. He shared that it had been an honor to serve and expressed confidence in the next generation of leaders to continue advancing the work of PEMSEA.
- 17.10. He closed by thanking all participants once again, wishing everyone safe travels and continued success, and formally declared the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting officially closed at 15:30.

Annex 1.0 - Agenda of the meeting

I Agenda

22 - 23 July 2025 | Seda Vertis North, Quezon City, Philippines & Zoom

Day	Time	No	Agenda	Action Requested
21 July			Arrival of participants	
Council Session				
22 July	9:00 - 9:30		Registration	
	9:30 –9:40		Welcome remarks Representative of the Philippine Government as host of the 17th EAS PC Meeting	
	9:40 - 9:50	1.0	Opening of the 17th EAS Partnership Council Meeting The Council Chair will formally open the 17 th EAS Partnership Council Meeting.	
	9:50 – 9:55	1.0	Adoption of the Meeting Agenda The Council will be requested to review and adopt the Council Session Agenda.	Adoption of the Agenda
	9:55 - 10:10	2.0	Report of the Executive Committee (EAS PC) Chair The Council Chair will provide the EC's perspectives and key policy recommendations pertaining to major PEMSEA issues tackled by the Executive Committee during the intersessional periods.	Acceptance of the Executive Committee (EAS PC) Chair's report
	10:10 -10:45	3.0	Report of the Executive Director	Provision of strategic and operational directives to PRF

			<p>The Executive Director will present the key accomplishments of PRF as technical and secretariat in 2024, as well as the status of implementation relating to matters arising from the 16th EAS PC meeting.</p>	<p>Notation of the East Asian Seas Congress 2024: Summary Report and Ways Forward</p> <p>Acceptance of the Executive Director's report</p>
	10:45 - 10:55		Health Break	
	10:55 – 11:10	4.0	<p>Formal Election of the EAS Partnership Council Officers</p> <p>The Secretariat shall present the lone nominees for the EAS Partnership Council Officers resulting from the consensus-building based on the series of consultations with PEMSEA partners.</p>	Formal swearing in of incoming EAS Partnership Council Officers
	11:10 - 11:30	5.0	<p>Selection & Appointment of the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility</p> <p>The Secretariat shall present updates on the preparations for the Selection for the PEMSEA Executive Director for CY 2027 - 2029.</p>	Approval of the TOR for PRF Executive Director
	11:30 - 11:35	6.0	<p>Other business</p> <p>PEMSEA Partners may take this opportunity to raise other concerns.</p>	
Technical Session				

	11:35 - 11:40	7.0	<p>Opening of the Technical Session and Adoption of the Technical Session Agenda</p> <p>The Technical Session Chair will preside over the Technical Session with support from the Technical Session Co-Chair. The Technical Session will be requested to review and adopt the Session's agenda.</p>	Adoption of the Technical Session Agenda
	11:40 – 12:00	8.0	<p>Review of progress and recommendations of SDS-SEA IP vis-à-vis UN SDG 2030</p> <p>a. Highlights of the SDS-SEA IP Progress Review and Emerging Trends Report</p>	<p>Reviewing and validating the data and findings presented in PC/17/DOC/08a and Annex 1 (PC/17/DOC/08b), especially those relevant to each partner's context.</p> <p>Preparing brief interventions to clarify, refine, or supplement the SDS-SEA IP progress review.</p> <p>Reviewing the trends and analysis in PC/17/DOC/08a and contributing additional insights for discussion on regional and thematic priorities.</p>

				<p>Presenting key activities or initiatives (by Non-Country Partners) that support one or more SDS-SEA IP components: Effective Governance, Healthy Ocean, Healthy People, and Healthy Economy.</p> <p>Approving the conduct of an expanded 34th Executive Committee Meeting in October 2025 to finalize the updated SDS-SEA IP (2026–2030), including organizational and financial elements.</p>
	12:00 - 13:00		Lunch	
	13:00 - 15:45		Continuation of Agenda 8.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Validation of PRF secretariat review of country partners', PNLG & PNLC and PRF's contributions vis-a-vis SDS-SEA IP targets from 2023-2025 c. Presentation by non-country partners on programs and projects that contribute to SDS-SEA 	
	15:45 - 16:00		Health Break	


	16:00 – 17:00		Continuation of Agenda 8.0 d. Discussion on Emerging Issues and Trends	
	18:30 – 20:00		Partnership Night	
23 July	9:20 -9:45		Oathtaking Ceremony of EAS PC Officers and Co-Chairs The incumbent EAS PC Chair shall administer the oath of office to the incoming Officers immediately following the election. <i>* Incoming EAS PC Officers and Co-Chairs and Outgoing EAS PC Officers are requested to provide short messages.</i>	
	9:45 - 10:15		Resumption of Technical Session & Continuation of Workshop Presentations (Agenda 8) The Technical Session Chair shall provide a brief recap of the discussions made during the previous day and shall resume the conduct of the Workshop presentations.	
	10:15 - 10:35		Health Break	
	10:35- 11:20	9.0	Updates on the Blue Carbon Program The Secretariat shall present updates on the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program and its Roadmap, including the draft regional Blue Carbon Accounting	Review and provide guidance on the draft Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services Management Mechanism (PC/17/DOC/09c), and

			<p>Protocol, subject to the approval of the Technical Session</p> <p>endorse its adoption, as appropriate.</p> <p>Review and consider approval of the Blue Carbon TWG Workplan for 2025–2026, subject to resource availability.</p> <p>Authorize the PRF, with support from the BC TWG, to identify and operationalize pilot sites in coordination with interested partners, and/or recommend pilot sites to test the blue carbon methodology.</p> <p>Request the TWG to submit a progress report to the 18th EAS Partnership Council, including implementation outcomes, capacity-building efforts, and recommendations for full operationalization.</p>
	<p>11:20 - 11:35</p>	<p>10.0</p>	<p>Other business</p> <p>For information</p>

			<p>* Towards 30x30: Regional Collaboration on Marine Protected Area Networks</p> <p>PEMSEA Partners may take this opportunity to raise other technical-related concerns.</p>	
	11:35 – 11:40		<p>Closing of Technical Session</p> <p>The Technical Session Chair or Co-Chair shall close the Technical Session.</p>	
	11:40 – 13:30		Lunch	
<p style="text-align: center;">Intergovernmental Session <i>(Country Partners Only)</i></p>				
	13:30 - 13:35	11.0	<p>Opening of the Intergovernmental Session and Adoption of the Intergovernmental Session Agenda</p> <p>The Intergovernmental Session Chair will preside over the meeting. The Session will be requested to review and adopt the Intergovernmental Session agenda.</p>	Adoption of the Agenda
	13:35 – 13:50	12:00	<p>Updates on the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan</p> <p>The PRF shall present updates on the Resource Mobilization, including on the Blue Carbon Program and other services</p>	<p>Provide feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal to Establish a fundraising and marketing committee to develop PEMSEA business strategy and plan. • pipeline projects

	13:50 – 14:30	13.0	PRF Work Plan and Budget for 2025 - 2026	Review and approval of Work Plan and Budget
	14:30 – 14:45	14.0	Other business PEMSEA Country Partners may take this opportunity to raise other governance-related concerns.	
	14:45 - 14:50		PRF Secretariat Announcements	
	14:50 - 15:10		Health Break	
	15:10– 15:15	15.0	Summary and Approval of Conclusions and Recommendations of the Partnership Council Meeting The PRF Secretariat shall present the summary of conclusions and recommendations of all sessions.	Approval of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the all sessions
	15:15 – 15:20		Closing of the Intergovernmental Session The Intergovernmental Session Chair shall adjourn the session.	
	15:20 – 15:30	17.0	Closing of the 17th EAS PC Meeting The EAS PC Chair or Co-Chair shall close the 17 th EAS PC Meeting.	
	18:00 – 20:00		Dinner	


Annex 2.0 - Meeting Documents

 9 - Meeting Documents [External]

Annex 3.0 - Main Presentation

 8 - Presentations

Annex 4.0 - Photos

 PC 17 Photos

Annex 5.0 - NCP Presentations

[NCP Presentations](#)

Annex 6.0 - List of Participants

[List of Participants](#)

Annex 7.0 - Agenda 8.0 Country Interventions

17.11. Country interventions:

Country	Theme/Component/ Specific section	Suggested Addition/Correction	Supporting Document/Link/Remarks (for written submissions)
Cambodia	Effective Governance	<p>Cambodia provided the following updates on national policies and programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a national committee for implementing Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in Kampong Bay as part of the PEMSEA IRBM Project. Participated in governance-related regional activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2nd Regional Joint Project Steering Committee Meeting (July 2024, Siem Reap); Regional workshops on gender equality and coastal governance; EAS Congress 2024 in Xiamen, China. 	
	Healthy Ocean	<p>On Pollution Reduction Efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed status report and pollution load assessment for the Kampong Bay River Basin. Engaged in the EnviroStat project (supported by PRF), focusing on water pollution, solid waste 	

		<p>management, and diversion measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implemented a national “No Plastic Bag” campaign across schools and communities, participated by 3M students and 14M people, reporting a 30% drop in plastic bag importation after one year. ● Launched follow-up campaigns for national road cleanup and waste management in coastal communities. ● Introduced “no plastic zones” in select resorts coordinated by the Ministry of Tourism. ● Constructed and operationalized three sewage treatment plants to serve households and SMEs in Sihanoukville. Additionally landfill management was improved, with 80% of waste now being properly collected and disposed. 	
	Healthy Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrated pollution and plastic reduction into national economic strategies, promoting sustainable tourism and clean coastal economies. ● Activities such as zoning, waste management, and eco-tourism initiatives support circular economy principles and contribute to local livelihoods. 	

China	Governance, Policies and Monitoring	China reaffirmed the need to regularly update the regional State of the Coasts (SOC) report, recognizing its value as a benchmark for marine and coastal conditions in the region.	
	Environment Thematic Issues/Priorities and Blue Economy	China highlighted the continued importance of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) as a core technical pillar of PEMSEA and recommended establishing incentive mechanisms to encourage greater participation in ICM certification, particularly through collaboration with PNLG.	
	Capacity Development and Knowledge Management	China suggested integrating PEMSEA's ICM training modules into the existing training activities of partner countries, in addition to ongoing collaborations under the Ocean Decade and IOC-WESTPAC.	
Indonesia	Effective Governance	Indonesia mentioned that marine spatial planning has been developed across all provinces, reinforcing coastal management and supporting informed decision-making.	

	Healthy Ocean, Healthy People	<p>Indonesia has Implemented the following biodiversity-related programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coral reef restoration projects in multiple locations, conducted annually with the active participation of local communities and stakeholders • Promotion recreational areas that integrate reef restoration activities, combining tourism with conservation. <p>On Marine Pollution Reduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct of annual monitoring of seawater quality and marine debris to support pollution control and ecosystem health. 	
	Healthy Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private sector collaboration—both large and small companies—was emphasized in mangrove planting and marine protection efforts. • Highlighted the critical role of local enterprises and communities in sustaining marine conservation, restoration, and blue economy initiatives. 	
Japan	Component I.A (p.6 & p.98)	Correct the percentage of the GMS fee from “30%” to “8%” / from “USD38k” to “USD10k”	UNDP_Invoice_MLIT_2025_letter.pdf

	Component II.C (p.59)	Update the revised year of Japan's Plan for Global Warming Prevention from "2021" to "2025"	https://www.env.go.jp/earth/ondanka/keikaku/250218.html
	Component IV (p.89 & p.90)	Update the number of Japan's ports with decarbonization plans in place from "25" to "50" at 30/June/2025	https://www.mlit.go.jp/kowan/kowan_tk4_000054.html
	On Emerging Trends/Priorities	Japan emphasized the importance of promoting the Blue Carbon Ecosystem Initiative and addressing marine pollution as key priorities under regional ocean governance. It also highlighted the need to take action against the transboundary movement of invasive aquatic species caused by biofouling, recognizing the ecological risks posed to marine biodiversity in the region.	
Lao PDR	Effective Governance	Key policies that were not captured in the review include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vision to 2040 ● 	
	Healthy Ocean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lao PDR is currently updating their National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan for 2026-2030 ● National Water Resources Management Strategy to 2030, No. 96 (adopted in July 2023) 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland Management Plan 2026-2030 (adopted in June 2025) • National Strategy on Climate Change of the LAO PDR Vision to the year 2050, Strategy and Programs of Action to the year 2030 • Strategic Implementation Plan for the fisheries sector in Lao PDR • Agreement for water quality and wastewater, protection zone, data information system, and water use 	
Philippines	Effective Governance	<p>The Philippines reported significant progress in strengthening the policy framework for integrated coastal management (ICM), notably the passage of House Bill 7767 (ICM Act) by the House of Representatives.</p> <p>Interagency coordination mechanisms are being enhanced through a planned Joint Administrative Order and the reactivation of the ICM Inter-Agency Council to define agency roles in blue economy development.</p> <p>The Blue Economy Act is under review, and a policy refinement process is underway with ADB support. The 2024 National State of the Coasts (NSOC) Report is set for launch in September 2025.</p>	

	Healthy Ocean	<p>Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction are being advanced through the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023–2050 and the Nationally Determined Contribution Implementation Plan (NDCIP) 2023–2030.</p> <p>Blue carbon initiatives include the establishment of the National Blue Carbon Action Partnership (NBCAP), ongoing development of a Blue Carbon Roadmap and national policy, and national mapping of mangroves, corals, and seagrasses.</p> <p>The DENR is piloting blue carbon quantification in select NIPAS areas. Marine pollution is addressed through the NPOA-ML and EPR Act 11898, targeting 50% reduction in plastic waste by 2025 and “Zero Waste to Philippine Waters by 2040”.</p>	
	Healthy People	<p>The DENR implements DAO 2021-13 to support Biodiversity-Friendly Enterprises (BDFEs) in protected and conservation areas, promoting inclusive, sustainable livelihoods and local stewardship of ecosystems.</p> <p>ICM mainstreaming into local land use and</p>	

		development planning (CLUPs and CDPs) is ongoing to expand the National ICM Program and support ICM Bill implementation.	
RO Korea	Healthy Ocean	<p>Korea highlighted its comprehensive full-cycle marine plastic waste management policy, aiming for a 60% reduction by 2030, and shared progress under the first National Marine Debris Management Plan (2021–2030) and 2023 innovations.</p> <p>Korea also emphasized its regional engagement, particularly its six-year project supporting the Philippines and Timor-Leste in addressing plastic pollution.</p> <p>Moving forward, Korea intends to expand technical cooperation on blue carbon and marine plastics, while also supporting ICM and PNLG strategy implementation.</p>	
Singapore	<p>8b. SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 Progress</p> <p>(Page 61)</p>	<p>Singapore: A Blue Carbon Framework for Singapore's National Climate Change Policy (BlueCarbonSG) was initiated in 2023 and is targeted to be completed in 2026. It aims to integrate promote² blue carbon into to contribute towards Singapore's national greenhouse gas reporting and climate targets, and to develop a</p>	<p>As the paragraph is nationally focused, the mention of AOSIS is slightly out of place. Singapore would like to request for the highlighted portion to be removed, please.</p>

² Items highlighted in green indicate corrections to the text of the document

		Singapore Blue Carbon Accounting Framework, which can be adapted for similar small island nations through the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The Marine Climate Change Science (MCCS) programme under NParks launched its 2nd and 3rd grant calls in 2024 on various research areas including Blue Carbon Science, Marine Climate Impact, and Community Driven Climate Resilience Planning.	
8b. SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 Progress (Page 87)		Singapore: The country has no specific BE policy, but promotes a whole-of-nation approach through the Singapore Green Plan 2030. Some policies related to BE are: Sea Transport Industry Transformation Map 2025 (launched in 2022), Singapore Blue Plan 2018, and Maritime Decarbonisation Blueprint.	The policies listed were not intended as blue economy policies.
8b. SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 Progress (Page 89)		Singapore updated the green initiatives and incentives under the Maritime Singapore Green Initiative (MSGI) in 2024, to encourage early adoption of zero and near-zero emission technologies and fuels, which includes several programmes such as the Green Ship Programme and Green Port Infrastructure Programme; Singapore also updated the strategies under the Sea Transport Industry Transformation Map 2025 supported by a Maritime Transformation Programme with the aim to grow maritime R&D Capabilities.	The Sea Transport Industry Transformation Map was last updated in 2022, which falls outside of the review period of 2023-2027, and Singapore would propose to remove it.
8c. Status, Trends, and Transitions in Coastal and Ocean Governance		The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has also taken significant step by approving an IMO Net-Zero Framework, which combines mandatory GHG emissions limits with a global GHG pricing mechanism	Singapore proposes the following edits to better align with the language typically used at the IMO.

	(Page 17)	for the international shipping industry. The framework is expected to be formally adopted in October 2025 and enforced enter into force by 2027 and will be included in a new Chapter 5 of Annex VI of the International Convention on Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The framework establishes a two-tiered system of Greenhouse Gas Fuel Intensity (GFI) reduction targets and introduces the IMO Net-Zero Fund to support the transition. The approved measures will apply to large ocean-going vessels (ships of 5000 gross tonnage and above) responsible for a substantial portion of international shipping emissions.	
	8c. Status, Trends, and Transitions in Coastal and Ocean Governance (Page 28)	Singapore aims to reduce plastic pollution through legislative and public engagement initiatives. The Resource Sustainability Act (RSA), introduced in 2019, established the Mandatory Packaging Reporting framework for companies to report on the packaging (including plastic) that they introduce into Singapore annually. Singapore is also developing a beverage container return scheme, which will include plastic bottles. The scheme is scheduled to commence in 2026. The national public campaign “Say YES to Waste Less”, launched in 2019, aims to encourage the public to adopt reusable alternatives such as food containers, bottles, and bags for takeaway purchases. Across the hawker centres, the use of reusable cutlery and crockery is encouraged, with some hawker centres banning disposables for dine-in meals.	Singapore proposes another formulation to better reflect our initiatives to reduce plastic pollution.

	<p>8c. Status, Trends, and Transitions in Coastal and Ocean Governance (Page 32)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main sources of nitrogen and phosphorus are ranked low due to effective land-based pollution management. • Discharged nutrients are generally diluted by local seawater. • However, eutrophication and HABs have still been reported in Singapore. • Ongoing challenges include urbanization, aging infrastructure, climate change, and human behavior. 	<p>Singapore would like to clarify that the country is 100% sewerred, with water reclamation plants designed to remove nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus. Singapore also stringently monitors trade effluent and discharge from water reclamation plants, and conducts systematic rehabilitation on its sewer infrastructure.</p>
	<p>8c. Status, Trends, and Transitions in Coastal and Ocean Governance (Page 38)</p>	<p>Recent incidents in Southeast Asia include the sinking of the MT Princess Empress oil tanker in 2023, which contaminated the Verde Island Passage in the Philippines, and a 2024 oil spill off Singapore's Pasir Panjang Terminal that in Singapore, affecting Singapore and the southern coast of Johor, Malaysia. eastlines and reached protected areas.</p>	<p>Singapore would like to propose these edits for better accuracy.</p>
	<p>8c. Status, Trends, and Transitions in Coastal and Ocean Governance (Page 77)</p>	<p>Other environmentally-related significant goals, such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) in Singapore, SDG 15 (Life on Land) in Indonesia, and SDG 4 (Quality Education) in Vietnam, also show signs of stagnation or regression.</p>	<p>Singapore would like to request for the highlighted portion to be removed, please. Singapore supports the UN 2030 agenda and maintains a database of our progress on our SingStat webpage, which would have more relevant and recent statistics. Based on the statistics, Singapore's</p>

			SDG 12 should not be considered to be showing signs of stagnation or regression.
Timor-Leste	Effective Governance, Healthy Ocean	<p>Timor-Leste provided a brief presentation highlighting recent progress in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ocean Governance through the initiative “My Ocean, My Timor” • Blue Economy Policy under the framework of “Sustainable Development of Timor-Leste” • Coastal and Marine Conservation efforts aimed at preserving marine ecosystems and supporting community-based stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue Economy Policy (Draft) • Aquaculture Law (Draft) • Fisheries Policy (Draft) • Ministerial Diploma for Samba Sembilan MPA (Draft)
Vietnam	Effective Governance	<p>Vietnam undertook major institutional reforms in 2025, merging the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) into a new Ministry of Agriculture and Environment.</p> <p>These reforms aim to streamline state management by clarifying mandates and reducing functional overlaps across national and local levels.</p> <p>An implementation plan for the National Marine Spatial Planning and Coastal Master Plan has been issued,</p>	

		<p>although challenges persist due to limited resources and technical capacities.</p> <p>Vietnam is also in the process of amending and supplementing its law on marine and coastal resources and the environment, with work expected to continue into the following year.</p>	
	Healthy Ocean	<p>The country is actively participating in the global negotiation process for a plastics pollution agreement and has ratified the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement.</p> <p>Marine and coastal resource surveys are underway, supporting the sustainable use of ocean resources and alignment with regional and global conservation frameworks.</p>	
	Healthy Economies	<p>Vietnam is advancing its national strategy for a sustainable marine economy, with key priorities including marine tourism and services, maritime economy, oil and gas, marine minerals, aquaculture and seafood production, coastal industries, and renewable energy.</p> <p>It is pursuing offshore wind development through</p>	

		<p>research collaborations and proposals with development partners.</p> <p>Vietnam expressed strong interest in blue carbon and emphasized the need for technical support, training, and capacity building to support the development of national standards and protocols across relevant sectors.</p>	
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Annex 8.0 - Agenda 8.0 Non Country Partners Presentation

Non-Country Partner Presentations:

Organizations	Presentation Summary
NMHMS	<p>The National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS) of China presented its ongoing efforts to conserve and restore blue carbon ecosystems as a means to support climate change mitigation, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and other co-benefits. Key initiatives include large-scale restoration projects, development of technical standards for carbon stock assessment, and the launch of a Blue Carbon Monitoring Network across the East Asian region. NMHMS also collaborates internationally on ecosystem-based DRR (Eco-DRR) and is actively advancing capacity building through events and training on blue carbon monitoring technologies. Key events lined up are: An international blue carbon event at the World Coastal Forum in September 2025, and a Training to assess blue carbon with satellite and remote sensing technologies in 2026.</p> <p>NMHMS has also shared several knowledge products they have developed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1, Technical Standards for Ecosystem Status Surveys and Assessments and Technical Standards for Ecosystem-based hazard Mitigation & Restoration https://www.nmhms.org.cn/details/LFTjTCf8W.html2, International Applications of Eco-DRR - case studies (Chinese and English): https://www.nmhms.org.cn/details/6jEPOTrOT.html3, Ecological disaster reduction and restoration manuals for coastal salt marshes, sandy coasts, oyster reefs and seagrass beds (Chinese and English): https://www.nmhms.org.cn/details/pfc87OKds.html

	4, Technical criteria for on accounting and monitoring of carbon sinks of mangroves, seagrass and salt marshes (Annex 10).
ACB	The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) presented its marine conservation strategies in support of regional and global biodiversity frameworks, emphasizing interconnectivity and science-based management of marine protected areas (MPAs). Key highlights included the launch of the ASEAN Biodiversity Plan (ABP) in 2024, which commits to protecting 30% of land and ocean by 2030. The ABP emphasizes inclusive conservation, engaging indigenous peoples, women, youth, and marginalized groups. Other initiatives include the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) and ASEAN Flyway Network, strengthening marine protected area (MPA) management and transboundary cooperation, and the ASEAN ENMAPS project (2024–2028), aimed at improving ocean governance, blue economy integration, and climate resilience in large marine ecosystems. ACB also reaffirmed its partnership with PEMSEA to strengthen capacity building, policy advocacy, and knowledge sharing through platforms like the ASEAN Biodiversity Dashboard and SEAKB.
Conservation International Philippines	Conservation International (CI) shared updates on its country-based marine and blue carbon initiatives across Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, China, and Timor-Leste. In the Philippines, CI is expanding marine protected areas under the Coral Triangle Initiative, piloting biodiversity credits in the Tubbataha Reef in the Philippines, and implementing ridge-to-reef projects through the IKI- funded TRANSCEND Project. They also work on blue carbon restoration and policy reform, with projects like the Blue Carbon Plus initiative and support from the International Blue Carbon Institute. CI is exploring further engagement on small-scale fisheries and transboundary collaboration aligned with PEMSEA's SDS-SEA. They also proposed areas of collaboration through the SDS-SEA, including addressing transboundary issues around fisheries and capacity-building of small-scale fisheries.
EMECS	EMECS (International Center for Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas) shared updates on their ongoing Satoumi Creation Projects, launched in collaboration with Japan's Ministry of the

	<p>Environment. Satoumi promotes harmonious human interaction with coastal ecosystems by integrating traditional knowledge, community-based stewardship, and sustainable practices such as seaweed farming and tidal flat restoration. EMECS also supports environmental education and research through high school conservation presentations and grant programs for young and community-based researchers, and holds the Hyogo Satoyama-Satoumi Forum in September 2025 to showcase best practices and foster wider engagement.</p>
Ipieca	<p>Ipieca, through the GI SEA Project Manager, presented its work as the global oil and gas association for advancing environmental and social performance across the energy sector. The presentation highlighted ipieca's contributions to ocean governance through industry collaboration, marine biodiversity protection, and alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14. They also shared tools and partnerships that support sustainable marine and coastal management.</p> <p>GI SEA further highlighted their work in the region on marine spill preparedness, emphasizing the industry backed initiative to assist countries with enhancing their spill response capacity primarily through collaboration with IMO and other technical partners.</p> <p>Key areas of collaboration with PEMSEA and the SDS-SEA include Oil Spill Response capacity building workshops for Country Partners and Knowledge and Network building initiatives between the governments and industry.</p>
KIOST	<p>KIOST (Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology) presented its research and innovation efforts in support of sustainable ocean development, particularly in addressing climate change (i.e., coastal climate risk mapping, early warning systems, ocean-climate startup incubation), biodiversity (i.e., satellite/ eDNA MPA monitoring), fisheries (i.e., support to ROK's Fishing Village New Deal), and marine hazards. The presentation emphasized KIOST's work on marine spatial planning, blue carbon, ocean forecasting systems, and collaboration to support evidence-based policy and blue economy growth both in RO Korea and in the East Asian Seas region.</p>

	KIOST identified the following opportunities for synergy with PEMSEA: Support in the organization of Blue Carbon and MSP International Seminar in 2026; Financial support for Blue Carbon and MSP related publications.
KMI	<p>KMI (Korea Maritime Institute) shared its initiatives on advancing sustainable ocean governance and the blue economy in the region (i.e., Marine Litter Fund Forum during the EAS Congress 2024; Blue Carbon and MSP Seminar with KIOST) The presentation underscored KMI's role in policy research, regional cooperation, and capacity building, with emphasis on marine spatial planning, climate adaptation, MPA Network development, marine pollution control, marine ecosystem payment services scheme, marine plastic circular economy, marine biotechnology, citizen-centered coastal planning, and support for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in coastal and marine contexts.</p> <p>Together with KIOST, KMI will also support the organization of the Blue Carbon and MSP International Seminar in 2026, and allocate financial support on blue carbon and MSP-related publications.</p>
KOEM	<p>KOEM (Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation) presented its initiatives focused on marine environment protection and restoration, particularly in response to climate change and pollution. The presentation highlighted KOEM's efforts in marine litter management, restoration of tidal flats and coastal habitats, and advancement of marine ecological research. In particular, KOEM cited their support in the development of National GHG Inventory and Statistical System for Blue Carbon and efforts to enhance management and governance of MPAs. KOEM also emphasized its commitment to international cooperation and alignment with regional strategies like the SDS-SEA to promote a resilient and sustainable marine environment. A key collaborative initiative offered with PEMSEA is the development of joint curricula and capacity building programs.</p>
OSRL	<p>Oil Spill Response Limited (OSRL) provided an overview of its recent initiatives as the world's largest international, member-owned oil spill response cooperative. OSRL highlighted its global and regional work on oil spill preparedness and response, including support for national contingency planning, academic research sponsorships (MSc and PhD), establishment of Industry Research Advisory</p>

	Committee to support oil spill research globally, support to development of National Oil Spill Contingency Plans, development of Dispersant Usage Guidance in the Gulf of Thailand, and knowledge-sharing through its “Bridging Research to Response” program and ITAC workshops. They also emphasized new focus areas such as offshore wind decommissioning and response to non-hydrocarbon pollutants, encouraging collaboration with research institutions and stakeholders across the region.
PML	Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) shared its interdisciplinary marine research efforts focused on delivering science with societal benefit, particularly in the areas of climate change, biodiversity, and pollution. Key updates included findings on breached planetary boundaries for ocean acidification and the emerging issue of ocean darkening due to climate change and increasing sediment loads, reducing photosynthesis and productivity of marine ecosystems and subsequently affecting food security. PML also highlighted ongoing projects on climate-smart marine protected areas, decommissioning of offshore structures, and environmental assessments of floating offshore wind, all underpinned by advanced modelling and natural capital frameworks.

Annex 9. Photos from Workshop

 **Workshop**

Annex 10. NMHMS Knowledge Products

 **NMHMS Knowledge Products**