Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries

PEMSEA

MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project

Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region

2nd Regional Steering Committee Meeting

17 December 2024
Park Inn Radisson North EDSA,
Quezon City, Philippines

MOF/PEMSEA ODA PROJECT ON REDUCING MARINE PLASTICS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS REGION

2nd REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Radisson Park Inn, Quezon City with Zoom | 17 December 2024

MEETING REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. The Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting is the main decision making body of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Project entitled "Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region" comprised of the donor: the Government of Republic of Korea represented by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF), and the participating countries: the Philippines, represented by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DENR) and Timor-Leste, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE) and Ministry of State Administration (MSA). The Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) of Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) serves as the Secretariat to the RSC.

2. The RSC meets at least once a year to report on the progress of the project, sets its strategic directions and guidance and approve work plan and budget for the following year's project activities. The Chair of the meeting is rotating among the participating countries. The inaugural RSC meeting in 2023 was chaired by the Government of the Philippines, represented by H.E. Undersecretary Jonas Leones of the DENR. This year, the 2nd RSC meeting was chaired by the Government of Timor-Leste, as represented by the Advisor to the Secretary of State for Fisheries, MALFF, Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral.

3. The ODA Project is comprised of the four objectives: namely: i) improving local governance on marine plastic management, ii) demonstrating best practices and innovative solutions for reducing marine plastics and marine plastic management, iii) conducting beach monitoring on marine plastics and litter, and iv) raising capacity and awareness and improve communication among stakeholders and public on the impact of marine plastics on the environment, human health, and economy.

4. The 1st RSC meeting was held via zoom platform on 12 December 2023. Due to challenges in communication and discussion through a zoom platform, it was suggested that future RSC meetings hold in-person meetings. Therefore, the 2nd RSC meeting was organized in Manila, Philippines with representatives from Timor Leste joining the Philippine counterpart and PEMSEA in a face-to-face meeting.

5. The program of the 2nd RSC meeting is attached as Annex 1.

OPENING

6. Ms. Jessie Lee, Technical Advisor of the RPMU, welcomed all the participants physically present as well as those who participated online and introduced the meeting objectives. The list of participants is attached as Annex 2.

7. The PEMSEA Executive Director, the Heads of delegation of the Philippines and Timor-Leste provided their welcome/opening remarks. Highlights of the remarks are summarized below and original messages are attached as Annex 3.

Welcome message

Ms. Aimee T. Gonzales, Executive Director, PEMSEA Resource Facility:

8. Welcomed everyone to Manila and expressed her appreciation for the participation of local governments and partners ~~as~~ observers. Ms. Gonzales emphasized that the project management structure was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of each component of the project, enabling project participants to understand how their valuable contributions fit into the overall initiative.

9. Acknowledged the challenges the project faced over the past year, but recognized the significant progress made. She encouraged all participants to adopt an "all hands-on deck" approach, calling for active engagement, feedback, and suggestions to ensure that participating towns and cities can effectively deliver on their shared commitment to combat plastic pollution.

10. Urged participants to focus on improving resource management, maintaining consistent data analytics, strengthening recycling efforts, and promoting circular economy practices. She emphasized starting with the elimination of unnecessary and harmful single-use plastics. She concluded by expressing her hopes for a productive meeting and a successful close to the second project year, encouraging participants to continue working together toward their shared goals.

Message

H.E. Jonas Leones, Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs, DENR, Philippines

11. Extended a warm welcome to the delegates from the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. Speaking on behalf of DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga, Hon. Leones conveyed gratitude to the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Ocean and Fisheries for their unwavering commitment to regional collaboration. He also acknowledged the invaluable contributions of PEMSEA and the representatives from Timor-Leste in advancing the shared goal of ocean conservation.

12. Congratulated the project on the achievements of ODA Project to reduce marine plastic in East Asian Seas. He commended the collective milestones as a testament to the strength of their partnership and shared resolve to combat marine plastic pollution. He recognized the efforts of the Regional Project Management Unit in fostering regional cooperation, implementing innovative solutions, and building local capacity to support countries like the Philippines and Timor-Leste in addressing plastic pollution effectively. Hon. Leones commended RPMU on the progress shown in the collaborative initiatives, such as beach monitoring, the marine environment protector program,

and the learning exchange program, are yielding positive outcomes. These programs are driving meaningful changes at local, national, and regional levels.

13. Looking ahead to 2025, Hon. Leones highlighted the opportunities to build on these successes. He pointed to proposed pilot projects in the Philippines, ongoing work on innovative solutions, and the expansion of capacity-building programs as avenues to deepen the impact of collective actions. He acknowledged the importance of upcoming events organized by the Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU), such as the Mayor's Conference, as critical platforms to solidify commitments at the local level and bridge global objectives with community-driven initiatives. Hon. Leones reaffirmed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) commitment to expediting the approval process for the implementation of project programs and activities. He noted that this would pave the way for the eventual signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Korea and the Philippines. On behalf of the DENR, Hon. Leones extended heartfelt appreciation to all partners, stakeholders, and communities contributing to the shared endeavor.

Message

Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral, Advisor of Secretary of State of Fisheries, MALFF, Timor-Leste

14. Expressed his warm welcome to the participants and gratitude to PEMSEA for organizing the RSC meeting in a physical format. He also extended his gratitude to the government of RO Korea for funding support to the ODA project, and all partners for their unwavering commitment to tackling marine plastic pollution, a challenge that threatens not only our environment but also the livelihoods of our coastal communities.

15. Highlighted a milestone outcome of the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Philippines and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF) emphasizing its significance for the successful implementation of key projects. He highlighted the East Asian region's potential to advance technical understanding and foster regional cooperation, particularly in addressing marine plastic pollution.

16. Underscored the importance of upcoming collaborative efforts, including the development of pilot projects across the four municipalities of Timor-Leste as a way forward. These projects are designed to serve as practical models for combating marine plastic pollution at the local level. He emphasized the timeliness and urgency of these initiatives, noting their role in demonstrating the effectiveness of localized solutions and establishing a foundation for scaling successful practices across the region.

17. Extended his gratitude to all partners and stakeholders for their dedication and collaboration, affirming that together, they could turn their vision into reality. He wished everyone a productive and successful meeting.

AGENDA 1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

18. After the Opening Messages, Ms. Jessie Lee introduced the Chair of the meeting, Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral of Timor-Leste (MALFF) and the co-chair, Director Al Orolfo from the Philippines (DENR).

19. The Chair called Ms. Lee to introduce the agenda of the meeting. In turn, Ms. Lee introduced and briefed the participants about the meeting's agenda. The Chair called for participants to review and comment on the agenda. Following no comments and requests, the Chair approved the meeting agenda.

AGENDA 2. 2024 ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

20. The Chair called Dr. Won Tae Shin to present the 2024 accomplishment report.

Actions taken for the Recommendations of the 1st RSC meeting

21. Dr. Won Tae Shin, Regional Project Manager (RPM) of Marine Plastics ODA Project, reviewed actions taken for the first-year recommendations:

- Execution of the Learning Exchange Program (LEP) and EAS Congress 2024;
- Establishment of project implementing mechanism at the Philippines and Timor-Leste;
- Organization of the Mayor's Conference.

22. Dr. Shin elaborated on the actions to resolve the challenges encountered in the project's implementation mechanism during the first year. The summary of actions included:

- The 1st Learning Exchange Program to Seoul, RO Korea was perceived as a huge success based on the participants feedbacks. The 2nd LEP is planned for April 2025 to be organized in tandem with the 10th Our Ocean Conference (OOC), Busan, RO Korea.
- An ODA Session was organized during the EAS Congress 2024 with MOU signing between PEMSEA and Timor-Leste as a highlight of the event. The participants were able to discuss about the progress of the ODA Project and learn more on other subjects offered during the Congress.
- The Executive Director and RPM visited Timor-Leste to support the organization of the first national project board meeting of Timor-Leste. During the 1st NPB TL meeting, a Terms of Reference (TOR) for NPB operation was established and agreed upon and the recruitment of a National Project Coordinator (NPC) for Timor-Leste was agreed upon, though the process remains incomplete and efforts to secure this position will continue in 2025.
- Dr. Shin emphasized the importance of nominating NPCs for both the Philippines and Timor-Leste. The RPMU issued a request letter in early January 2024 for nominations, with plans to follow up in January 2025.
- The Mayor's Conference planned for 2024 was not able to proceed due to the pending approval of the MOU in the Philippines. The Mayor's Conference is tentatively rescheduled for the third quarter of 2025, pending the finalization of the MOU between the Philippines and RO Korea. Dr. Shin expressed optimism that the conference would be held in 2025, as the MOU is currently under review by the Presidential Office.

Component 1 Accomplishments

Baseline Assessment per project site

23. Under Component 1 of the project, Dr. Shin provided the following updates:

- The baseline assessment report of the Philippines, though still in draft form, has already provided valuable data for developing pilot projects.
- The Plastics Analysis and Characterization Studies (PACS) for the 10 sites of the Project at both the Philippines and Timor-Leste were conducted to evaluate plastic waste generation at the household level among the three coastal barangays or 'sucos'.
- In the Philippines, the baseline assessment report has been completed with the findings of the PACS included in the report. The final baseline assessment report will be published in June 2025.
- For Timor-Leste, the PACS has been completed in November 2024 and the baseline assessment will be drafted by AMH Philippines, Inc with the support of the local consultant. The baseline assessment report of Timor-Leste will be finalized in May 2025 and the final report will be published in June 2025.

24. Dr. Shin noted significant differences in plastic waste profiles between the two countries, with Timor-Leste heavily reliant on plastic water bottles as sanitary water sources. He highlighted the support and collaboration of local governments and consultants in conducting these assessments, acknowledging the professional contributions of the AMH team.

Baseline Assessment Report of the Philippines

25. Dr. Tanchuling presented the highlights of the baseline assessment report of the Philippines which is composed of findings of the PACS, Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Survey and solid waste management situation and practices at the local sites. Major findings through the report include:

- Waste generation per person per day in coastal barangays ranged from 0.05 to 0.10 kg, which is lower than national averages. However, Dr. Tanchuling noted that the consistently lower waste generation figures suggest a need to review national data.
- Segregation compliance varied from 0% to 94%, with some municipalities showing no segregation at all, possibly due to irregular waste collection in rural areas. The coverage of waste collection ranged from 97% to 100%, with exceptions in areas like Calbayog (75%).
- According to the KAP survey, 10% to 20% of households reported that their plastic waste could be recycled. Collection services for plastic waste varied from 40% to 100%, with most households disposing their wastes in residual containment areas. Dr. Tanchuling stressed that improperly managed residual containment areas often turn into open dumpsites, posing an urgent concern.

26. She suggested that waste diversion rates are low, with insufficient infrastructure for recycling. Some areas still rely on waste burning, despite efforts to manage waste through cleanup activities, which were observed by 79% to 98% of those interviewed. The most commonly found plastics in water bodies were PET bottles, plastic bags, and sachets

27. Dr. Tanchuling outlined key challenges faced in waste management, including: minimizing plastic waste generation, which currently averages 0.05 to 0.10 kg per person per day; low compliance with waste segregation policies, especially in remote coastal areas; infrequent or inconsistent collection services, particularly in less accessible areas, possibly due to resource limitations; very low recovery rates for recyclables, despite widespread awareness of the potential economic benefits. The challenge of managing disposal sites, where residual waste is not properly contained and can leak into the waterbodies and marine environment.

28. Recommendations for improving waste management and addressing plastic waste leakage include:

- Promoting waste reduction initiatives through socio-behavioral change communication activities on waste segregation.
- Enhancing waste segregation practices and improving waste collection systems.
- Exploring localized collection systems and optimizing transportation methods, such as using more appropriate collection vehicles for narrow roads.
- Considering alternative methods for waste disposal, such as waste-to-energy solutions, especially in densely populated areas.

29. She emphasized the need to establish a sustainable waste management infrastructure, with efficient collection, recovery, and disposal systems to reduce plastic leakage. She noted that beach cleanups, while important for raising awareness, are not a viable solution for preventing plastic waste leakage. She concluded by reinforcing the importance of baseline data, which serves as the foundation for improving waste management systems in the long term.

Component 2 Accomplishments - presented by Dr. Shin

30. Component 2 focuses on the demonstration of reducing marine plastics which is to show measurable reductions in plastic waste capacity at the local level. To achieve this, pilot projects will be developed and implemented on-site in partnership with local governments.

Pilot Project Development

31. Explained that the pilot project will follow a life-cycle approach to managing marine plastics, addressing all stages: prevention, collection, transport, treatment, and recycling. In order to develop concepts for the Pilot Project at each site, local consultants were hired to conduct a baseline assessment at each project site in the Philippines in 2023, the respective site consultants together with the local governments identified the areas of concerns and their priorities. In 2024, a National Consultant for developing pilot project concepts was hired to support the development of the pilot project at the local sites. A similar process will begin in 2025 in Timor Leste.

32. Outlined the Roadmap to the Pilot Project Implementation for the Philippines sites. The local government developed the pilot project concept based on the findings from the baseline assessment. In July 2024, a consultation meeting was held to discuss the proposal, assessing whether it was viable, aligned with local priorities, and achievable. A second consultation took place in Xiamen, China during 2024 EAS Congress, where the proposal was presented, feedback was received, and local priorities were discussed. Following approval of the pilot project concept, a feasibility study (i.e., detailed project design) will be conducted in 2025 to assess the practicality and viability of the proposed projects.

33. Explained that the feasibility study (i.e., detailed project design) will include detailed project design, covering infrastructure needs, equipment requirements, operational plans, and budget breakdowns. The study will also assess financial and environmental sustainability, technical feasibility, and the operational capabilities of local governments to manage the pilot projects.

34. Informed that the final feasibility study results will be concluded by July 2025, followed by an intersession online RSC meeting to present the findings for review and decision. He mentioned that before the pilot project implementation, an MOA will be signed between PEMSEA and the local government which will include detailed roles, responsibilities, and resource allocations as well as the local government's commitment to matching funds for the pilot project.

35. Emphasized the importance of local government support in conducting the detailed project design study. He highlighted that the operational and financial commitment from local governments is crucial for the success of the pilot projects. He further stated that PEMSEA is committed to partnering with local governments in the development of these projects.

36. Proposed to discuss the details of the proposed Pilot Project Concept at the next session for the presentation by the local government partners and in-depth discussion of the meeting.

Small Grant Program (SGP)

37. As part of Component 2, the guidelines of the Small Grant Program (SGP) have been established which will support the application and implementation process of the SGP. The SGP is designed to support local plastics recycling and upcycling businesses of the Philippines and Timor-Leste. Drawing inspiration from RO Korea, where recycling and upcycling are well-developed, this program will assist local businesses in designing systems that allow recycling materials to be effectively marketed.

38. Dr. Shin mentioned that the guidelines for the program will be circulated in 2025 to identify suitable candidates for marine plastic recycling and upcycling, and repurposing. In the case that suitable candidates are identified through online bidding, the SGP will be implemented for 2 to 3 entities.

Component 3. Accomplishments - presented by Ms. Jessie Lee

2024 Beach Monitoring of Plastics and Litter

39. The objective of the beach plastic and litter monitoring which is to analyze long-term trends in marine plastics and litter occurrence to provide policy implications for developing mitigation and adaptive measures. The RPMU has requested the LGUs to recommend suitable partners for conducting beach monitoring at the local sites in 2023. The Beach Monitoring Institutes (BMI) were identified and trained on September 2024 in Bali, Indonesia. The RPMU has developed

40. RPMU has contracted the 9 Beach Monitoring Institutes (BMIs) from the Philippines and Timor-Leste comprising Universities and an NGO in Q1 2024. The BMIs have conducted beach monitoring at the designated sites in a quarterly basis, i.e., March, June, October and December. The list of Beach Monitoring Institutes is shown in table below.

Country	Region	Monitoring Institutes
Philippines	Bulan	Sorsogon State University-Bulan Campus
	Calbayog	Northwest Samar State University
	Daanbantayan	Cebu Technological University-Daanbantayan Campus
	Dipolog	DMC College Foundation Inc.
	Puerto Princesa	Palawan State University
	Tandag	North Eastern Mindanao State University (NEMSU)
Timor-Leste	Dili	UNTL
	Liquica	
	Manatuto	UNITAL
	Atauro	Roman Louan (NGO)

41. The BMIs installed the site markers prior to the monitoring activities which will prevent interference from other activities, ensure that the monitoring sites remain undisturbed, and help maintain consistency in data collection by standardizing the sampling locations. She added that the monitoring follows a standardized procedure based on the transect methodology for which a 100-meter survey line is established at each site, serving as the globally adopted baseline for monitoring activities. She mentioned that litter is collected along the designated transects, with each transect numbered for easy tracking and, then, the collected litter is then measured by weight and counted by the number of items.

2024 Monitoring Results

42. Some major findings of the 2024 beach monitoring results through the data collected from Q1 to Q3 2024.The findings are summarized below:

- In total, 25,072 items were collected, weighing 1189 kg in the monitoring sites of the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

- In terms of composition, the quantity of plastic litter (21,204 items) is higher than that of non-plastic litter (3,868 items). Regarding sources of origin, domestically generated litter (21,562 items) is more prevalent than the litter (3,510 items) originated from foreign countries.

- Regarding comparison between the Philippines and Timor-Leste, quantify of litter found in Timor-Leste (14, 121 items) is higher than that in the Philippines (10,951 items), despite the Philippines having twice the number of monitoring sites. On the other hand, the overall volume of marine litter in the Philippines(852kg) is greater than that of Timor-Leste (337kg).

- Tandag records the highest number of items and weight in the Philippines, while Atauro leads in Timor-Leste for both number of items and weight. A total of nine monitoring institutes are involved, with six in the Philippines and three in Timor-Leste, covering eighteen monitoring sites.

Component 4. Accomplishments- presented by Ms. Jessie Lee

Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program

43. The Marine Environment Protector Program is designed to enhance community awareness on severity of plastic pollution, foster community-led programs for reducing plastic waste, and promote cleaner environments. The goal is to mobilize local support for communities, improve behavior and practices and conserve coastal and marine environment through proper plastic waste management.

44. Progress in made in 2024 included the conduct of national workshop to support local partners in developing monthly plans and operational mechanisms for MEP activities in March 2024. This led to the selection of MEP partners in 4 out of the 6 sites in the Philippines. The following is summary of MEP activities at the four sites:

- The MEP activities include educational campaigns for communities and schools, river and coastal cleanups, plastic segregation, and the repurposing of waste. These initiatives also engage local communities in events promoting plastic waste management, with an emphasis on reducing marine litter.

- In conjunction with the World Ocean Day celebration in June 2024, all MEP partners invited local stakeholders from communities to participate in cleanup activities. The event included the installation of trash traps and efforts to raise awareness about plastic pollution, involving over 500 participants across 21 barangays in Dipolog.

- From June to July, over 320 participants participated in waste management activities, collecting nearly 1,200kg of waste in Daanbantayan. Educational campaigns and movie screenings were also conducted, reaching more than 380 people, including children and youth in Puerto Princesa.

- MEP partners organize monthly activities focused on local waste management practices and plastic waste segregation to promote long-term environmental awareness.

Learning Exchange Program (LEP)

45. The 1st Learning Exchange Program conducted from April 22-26 in Korea, engaged 29 participants, including central and local government representatives. LEP aims to provide learning opportunities related to plastic waste management, recycling, and circular economy practices from the Republic of Korea.

46. The major activities of the 1st LEP program including visits to various recycling facilities in RO Korea to observe and learn about waste management practices, plastic recycling and upcycling technologies, and how energy is produced from waste materials, etc. The program concluded with a cultural experience day in Korea, leaving participants from the Philippines and Timor-Leste highly satisfied. The success of the 1st LEP highlights the potential for future LEP programs to include more specialized sessions focusing on specific facilities, enabling deeper engagement and knowledge exchange.

ODA Session at the EAS Congress 2024

47. The session provided an opportunity for project participants to report the outputs of the second year of the project activities during the ODA Session in EAS Congress in Xiamen. It provided a venue for presenting findings and discussing innovative solutions to reduce marine plastics with more than 50 participants attended the workshop for sharing the activities and impact of ODA project implementation at the local level.

48. One of the outputs of the session was the signing of the MOU on ODA Project implementation between PEMSEA and Timor-Leste government officially endorsing the Marine Plastics ODA Project in Timor-Leste.

Project Governance

49. The 1st meeting of National Project Board (NPB) of Timor-Leste was convened in February 2024 with the support of the RPMU to adopt the Terms of Reference (TOR) for NPB operations and the National Project Coordinator in Timor Leste.

RPMU

in 2024 the project successfully engaged approximately 110 participants across various activities and initiatives, reflecting the ongoing commitment to tackling marine plastic pollution through capacity building, local engagement, and regional /international collaboration.

2024 Financial Report as presented by Dr. Shin

50. The budget for 2023, as outlined in the project document, has not been altered since it is still under government consultation for the MOU signing. Therefore, the financial details presented align with the initial project document.

51. The following table shows the status of project budget as of December 1, 2024.

Account Item	Amount (US$)	Note
2023 Budget:	753,951	
2023 Expenditure:	609,491	81%
2023 Balance:	**144,460**	(1)
2023 Replenishment from MOF:	931,355	EX Rate 1,288
2023 Reserve (2023 Replenishment – 2023 Budget):	**177,404**	(2)
Total carried-over fund from 2023 ((1)+(2)):	**321,864**	(3)
2024 Budget:	1,043,741	
2024 Expenditure (As of 1 Dec 2024):	788,233	76% (4)
2024 Replenishment from MOF:	878,413	EX rate 1,366 (5)
Total remaining fund 2024 (as of 1 December 2024):	**412,044**	(3)+(5)-(4)

- As of December 1, 2024, USD 788,000 has been spent, which accounts for about 76% of the total budget. This figure does not yet include the expenses related to the November EAS Congress 2024, RSC meeting, PACS Timor-Leste and consultancy payments. By December 31, 2024, it is expected that 96% of the budget will be spent. As of December 1, 2024, there is USD 412,000 remaining. After completing 96% of expenditures, it is anticipated that approximately USD 300,000 will remain.

- The budget for other activities has been spent at approximately 98%, with 32% of the expenditure related to contracts and services, including the EAS Congress and consultancy services. The remaining funds for MEP and monitoring institutes will be disbursed upon the submission of their final reports.

52. Dr. Shin concluded by acknowledging that 2024 has been a busy year preparing various components of the project. In 2025, the project will implement full-fledged activities, ensuring the full utilization of the budget. Dr. Shin requested the meeting of the RSC to review the Accomplishment Report, provide comments, and endorse it.

Discussions and Comments

53. Regarding the development of Pilot Projects, the Co-chair Director Al O. Orolfo emphasized the importance of understanding household profiles, noting that different behaviors in these areas must be accounted for in the project's planning. He highlighted that the island and mainland settings are distinct, necessitating specific approaches, especially in areas with river systems. Director Orolfo recommended that the project be integrated with larger, targeted initiatives, such as existing projects related to land and resources. He pointed out the intersectionality of some areas, where seasonal factors like the monsoon and summer seasons, as well as the movement of outlet systems, can influence project outcomes. He also noted that the integration of river systems into

the project is crucial, especially given the impact of hydrography and the need for floating power devices in certain areas.

54. The Co-chair also commended the effective management of project's budget. Additionally, he noted that the regulations for procurement system in the Philippines is quite complex. Therefore, the RPMU should familiarize itself with the procurement process in advance to facilitate the implementation of pilot projects.

55. Mr. Jaehyun Bae, Assistant Director of MOF, RO Korea emphasized the need to strengthen the connection between the baseline assessment and the pilot project. Furthermore, he recommended the development of a more detailed feasibility study plan including objectives, scope of study to provide clear guidelines for the planning and operation of the pilot projects. He commented that the necessity of a feasibility study is unclear. He asked to clarify the specific characteristics and scope of the feasibility study as there are concerns regarding the necessity of this approach.

56. Dr. Shin addressed the comments by stating that the pilot project proposals will be reviewed in detail during the next session. He emphasized that the proposals are fully linked to the baseline assessment, ensuring alignment with the overall project goals. Regarding the necessity of a feasibility study, he clarified that a detailed project design is required for the implementation of the pilot project. To develop a comprehensive project design, more specific information is required, as the project cannot be implemented in its current form. These details should be clearly outlined and provided to contractors for proper execution. Dr. Shin noted that this is a crucial step for next year and urged the local LGUs to support the development of detailed project design in 2025 to ensure timely implementation of the pilot projects.

57. Ms. Aimee Gonzales commented that the term "feasibility study" may be misleading as the term connotes large scale solutions and resources available for the project. Similarly, the term "project document" might not accurately reflect the intentions, and using "project proposal" would be more appropriate to manage expectations. Furthermore, actions should be directed towards the local government officials to report to their respective Mayor on the necessity of feasibility study for their pilot project

58. Mr. Conrad Bravante Jr of FASPS recommended that a project performance evaluation or tracking tool be developed to help provide information on the progress of the project in terms of percentage accomplishment. This will also help in analyzing project efficiency. He recommended that FASPS could provide assistance in developing said performance tracking tool.

Endorsement of 2024 Accomplishment Report

59. With questions and comments discussed and clarified, the RSC endorsed the2024 Accomplishment report as presented.

AGENDA 3. DRAFT PILOT PROJECT CONCEPTS FOR THE PHILIPPINES SITES

60. Dr. Shin discussed the developments made over the year. He clarified that the pilot project proposals are a collective effort involving the LGUs, the RPMU, and support from a national consultant. He noted that six project documents had been developed and prepared by the LGUs with the support from the National Consultant and shared ahead of the meeting. The Pilot Project Concepts are attached as a separate reference to this report.

61. He emphasized the importance of local ownership in the success of pilot projects, highlighting that projects often fail when ownership is absent and merely handed over to local stakeholders. To ensure sustainability, the pilot project proposals were developed with a strong emphasis on local ownership. He explained the connection between the pilot project proposals and the baseline assessment, stressing that the proposals follow a life-cycle approach.

62. Dr. Shin mentioned that all the necessary details for crafting these proposals were drawn from the baseline assessment report including the PACS, which provided crucial data from local sites. Without this report, the proposals would lack the necessary foundation, as national-level data alone is insufficient. He further noted that while LGUs may have 10-year solid waste management plans, these often lack specific data on plastics, making the baseline assessment a vital resource for proposal development.

63. The following is a major discussion points for each pilot project proposal.

Bulan, Sorsogon
Pilot project title: Scaling Waste Solutions: Upgrading MRF for Improved Waste Management and Recycling
Presenter: Ms. Kelly Tan, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer

64. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Bulan Municipality:

- The existing MRF covers an area of approximately 420 square meters and is equipped with donated machinery. Bulan municipality's MRF serves as a collection hub for nonbiodegradable wastes including plastic materials but lacks adequate space and facilities to process them into other products effectively. The baseline assessment, as detailed in its executive summary, recommended investments in upgrading MRFs to improve recovery and processing of recyclables.

- The donated machinery is a complete set of plastic recycling equipment, including shredder, washer, dryer, extruder, hydraulic presser, and molds for producing plastic chairs and other materials. Despite this, the MRF faces limitations due to insufficient space, preventing full utilization of its capacity.

- Personnel of the Office of the MENRO have already undergone training to manufacture plastic chairs for donation or exchange. However, the facility is overcrowded, and additional storage and processing spaces are needed. Therefore, Bulan municipality is proposing to expand its MRF

with an additional 400 square meters of available space. The expansion would include a storage area and facilities for processing hard plastics, increasing the MRF's processing capacity.

- The pilot project aims to increase the diversion rate from the current 2.48% to approximately 20% and enhance resource conservation, create jobs, involve stakeholders, and contribute to disaster relief efforts.

- The facility's equipment, including a shredder for plastic, has a capacity of only 187.50 kilograms per day for a 22-day operation per month, which translates to managing merely 2.48% of the total plastic waste generated monthly. The MRF disposes of recyclable waste to downtown markets, generating an average income of Php 4,000 per week.

- To address these limitations, Bulan municipality proposes expanding the MRF by an additional 400 square meters, allocating 300 square meters for waste storage. This expansion would increase storage capacity by 750 cubic meters, enabling the facility to handle up to 75 tons of waste—an increase of 347%. Expanded space would also improve collection efficiency, allowing for 7 tons of waste to be collected per day.

- The pilot project includes acquiring a new shredder with a capacity of 350 kilograms per hour, operating for 5 hours daily. This would generate an additional 1,500 kilograms of shredded plastic daily—an 800% increase in waste diversion, raising the rate from 2.48% to 19.87%. Higher collection rates for recyclables could increase the average income to approximately Php 10,000 per week.

- The project, estimated to cost around Php 8 million, includes provisions for advanced equipment and the production of new materials such as fillers, pellets, and RDF. These developments aim to expand MRF capacity, improve waste collection efficiency, and significantly reduce plastic waste processing time.

65. After presentation of Ms. Tan, question and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions.

- Co-chair Al Orolfo inquired whether the proposed area expansion is located on an area part of the LGU's property or asset. Dr. Shin confirmed that the property is part of the Bulan municipality's assets and is a space attached to the existing facility. He explained that the expansion would utilize currently vacant space within the property, which meets the primary requirement for the project.

- Director Orolfo asked on how many green jobs the project will create. Ms. Tans answered that the project is expected to have a 68% increase in green jobs.

- Ms. Juvinia Serafin of EMB inquired on how to achieve the significant increase in collection efficiency, from the current two tons per day to the projected seven tons per day. The question sought clarification on whether there would be an expansion in collection facilities, such as additional trucks, and how the increased plastic collection would be distributed across the 50 barangays. The question also addressed the population size targeted in the barangays to

accommodate the anticipated rise in collected plastics. Ms. Tan explained that the improvement to a 7 metric-ton collection per day is achievable due to two primary methods implemented during Bulan's transition period. Currently, the 50 barangays are in the process of adapting to a new policy that involves the strict collection of non-biodegradable waste only hence the collected volume is still small but already huge enough for the current space of the MRF for a few days period. She added that the increase in efficiency is attributed to the availability of six garbage collection trucks and 19 modified tricycles provided to the barangays under clustering approach by the LGU in 2021, servicing 49 out of the 50 barangays. With these resources, a collection rate of 7 metric tons of wastes, three times a week, is a realistic target.

- Mr. Hunguen Kim inquired of the discrepancies between the pilot project proposal which identified a 12 % of recyclable plastic waste, and the baseline assessment report which identified 5 % of recyclable plastic waste and 9 % including residual for recycling. He also inquired about any existing or planned strategies that the Bulan municipality may employ to recycle such residuals with potential for recycling, given that it is currently non-recyclable. Ms. Haidee Piniero noted that materials with potential for recycling are currently categorized as "residual," but future classifications will redefine them as "Potential for Recycling." Ms. Tan highlighted that Bulan lacks sanitary landfills but has MRF and RCA facilities, with a private entity responsible for processing wastes of the remaining 13 barangays. When asked about segregation practices in Bulan, Ms. Tan explained that the municipality employs separate collection schedules for biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes, followed by manual final sorting.

- Director Orolfo inquired about the possibility of investing in machine-based sorting systems. Dr. Shin responded that the current approach aims to increase the rate from 3% to 20%, which is achievable through manual sorting methods. For significantly higher increases, such as a thousand percent, the introduction of mechanical systems may be considered. However, based on the current assessment, manual sorting remains effective and practical and expanding to mechanical systems may be explored as part of future plans.

- Ms. Serafin sought clarification on whether the projected diversion of 1,500 kilograms per day, totaling 396,000 kilograms annually, includes materials ready for sale to junk shops, residual waste for further processing, or items that could be converted into alternative products such as bricks. The inquiry also questioned whether these projections are achievable with PEMSEA's planned intervention. Ms. Tan answered that based on the PACS results, it was noted that 12% of the plastics are recyclable, amounting to 2.7 tons. The target, however, is set at 1.5 tons. In response to a question about whether the 1,500 kilograms of the projection would include not only recyclable waste but also receivable waste that can be processed, such as single-use plastics or plastic labo, it was confirmed that the projection does include waste with potential for recycling. These materials are considered part of the intervention that will be directed to the market for further processing.

- Director Orolfo emphasized that the term "scaling up" should encompass broader waste management practices, such as waste collection, awareness campaigns and other initiatives.

Calbayog City, Samar
Pilot Project title: One Shield Blocking Plastics with Trash Traps, Baling Solutions and Green Transport
Presenter: Ms. Jannett Cabujat, City Solid Waste Management Officer

66. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Calbayog City:

- Calbayog City, with a projected population of 211,334, comprises 157 barangays, including 40 coastal barangays and 12 along the Calbayog River. Currently, the city collects 38.26 tons of waste per day.
- The pilot project aims to combat the growing issue of plastic pollution in Calbayog's waterways and oceans. Key interventions include:
    - Installing trash traps in strategic locations along the Calbayog River to prevent plastic waste from entering the sea.
    - Acquiring small green vehicles to improve waste collection in areas with narrow roads. Purchasing a baling machine to compact waste into transportable bundles, improving storage efficiency.
    - Expanding the city's recycling capabilities and reducing the burden on the sanitary landfill, which is approaching full capacity with only a two-year lifespan left.
- The pilot project focuses on prevention, collection, and transport within the plastic waste management cycle. Its aim is to significantly reduce the amount of waste entering the waterways and improve waste collection and processing systems. The acquisition of two small vehicles is planned to transport the collected waste from the traps to the recycling area. The purchase of a baling machine is to wrap waste into one-ton bundles, making it easier to sell to junk shops. For municipalities without recycling facilities, baling offers a viable solution for processing plastic waste.
- The connection between the baseline assessment and the pilot project lies in addressing the shortage of collection vehicles, which affects the efficiency of waste management in the area. To improve this, the pilot project seeks to enhance waste collection by providing additional vehicles to transport waste from collection points to the MRF. The PACS and Baseline Assessment indicate that a significant volume of marine plastic waste originates from land-based sources, flowing through the Calbayog River into the sea. Installing trash traps in the river is a logical solution to capture these pollutants before they reach the ocean. The city's narrow roads prevent garbage trucks from accessing certain areas, causing residents in underserved communities to dump waste along roadsides, which then accumulates in waterways. The installation of trash traps, paired with flat boats for waste collection, will address this challenge and prevent plastic waste from entering the sea.
- With PEMSEA's intervention, Calbayog aims to increase its collection efficiency by 32.78%. The city's daily plastic waste generation is currently 10.33 tons, with plastic waste making up 39.88% of the total waste. The intervention is expected to increase plastic waste diversion by 10%.

- Calbayog has implemented several manual diversion processes, such as producing key chains, wallets, gowns, dresses, and Christmas ornaments from plastics. The city also sells these products, particularly Christmas bottles made from recycled plastics. Waste collection occurs across 147 barangays equipped with Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), with additional facilities like the pilot MRF and three central MRFs.

- This comprehensive approach aims to extend the landfill's lifespan by an additional year, improve waste management, and reduce the environmental impacts of plastic pollution. Calbayog's plan includes proactive measures to tackle plastic waste. These measures focus on preventing plastic leakage into the ocean, improving waste collection and processing systems, enhancing recycling efforts, and reducing landfill waste. By integrating trash traps, small green vehicles, and a baling machine, the city expects to create a more sustainable and efficient waste management framework. This project will help protect marine ecosystems, enhance collection and processing systems, and extend the lifespan of the sanitary landfill.

67. After presentation of Ms. Cabujat, questions and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions.

- Director Orolfo asked to specify Calbayog River's classification. It was found that Calbayog River is class C. The project aims to enhance waste collection in coastal barangays and surrounding areas, with specific project sites located in barangays Payahan, Balud, Obreros, and Central. These sites will benefit from improved collection efforts, particularly focusing on plastic waste.

- Director Orolfo questioned whether the project focus is on the river system rather than the coastal areas. Ms. Cabujat answered that the focus is on waste collection using green transport, but specifically, the Calbayog River will be a key area for intervention. Collection efforts will target plastics in the river, particularly in the barangays of Central, Obrero, Payahan, and Balud, where waste will be trapped by the trash traps installed in these areas.

- Concerns about informal settlements along Calbayog River were raised. Ms. Cabujat answered that the city has an existing ordinance, City Ordinance 2011-33-06-64, which prohibits littering in all areas, particularly in rivers and oceans. Strict enforcement of this ordinance will be ensured, with monitoring and enforcement personnel in place to prevent littering along the river system.

- Director Orolfo noted that policy enforcement is a crucial component, and integrating Korean technology into the waste management system could further enhance the effectiveness of the program. The technology could be beneficial in improving waste collection and management in the community. Dr. Shin emphasized that Korean technology comes at an expense. That is why they need to do further studies and detailed design of the project. With further studies, they will come up with practical solutions.

- Ms. Jessie Lee, sought clarification on the baseline assessment research and its relevance to the proposed installation of trash traps in the Calbayog River. The question raises concerns about whether the baseline assessment, which focuses on coastal areas, adequately identifies Calbayog River as a major source of plastic waste entering the ocean. She is asking for

justification or clarification on whether the data from the baseline assessment aligns with this understanding or if it is consistent with the information. Ms. Lee asked for further justification and statistical data to determine if Calbayog River is a source of pollution and necessity to install trash traps for preventing waste leakage into ocean. Ms. Cabujat confirmed that they have the supporting data and they could provide it. She also confirmed that they have data to support that trash trapping is a relevant issue in Calbayog River and that they are able to present it. It is recommended that Calbayog should provide more statistical data and justification regarding the situation of the river for ensuring their pilot project proposal.

- Ms. Serafin noticed from the photos of Calbayog City's waste collection system that waste is not properly segregated and is being mixed during collection. She suggested that, for the project's implementation, it would be beneficial to integrate programs focused on waste avoidance, reduction, and proper segregation. The focus should not only be on biodegradables or recyclables but also on segregating specific waste types, such as:
    - Biowaste and biodegradables, which should go to composting;
    - Recyclables, which should go to recovery facilities;
    - Residual waste, which should go to sanitary landfills.
- Ms. Serafin clarified that the data in the proposal refers to waste collection, not generation, and emphasized that the waste collected from the trash traps should undergo further processing at the facility instead of just being disposed of or stored. Proper processing and careful management of waste would extend the lifespan of the sanitary landfill, leading to a more sustainable outcome for the project.
- Mr. Hungeun Kim pointed out that the recommendations for each city/municipality in the baseline assessment prepared by the AMH Philippines, Inc. are general and broad in nature so that it is hard to judge whether the proposed pilot project concepts are within the priority list of the city/municipality. In line with Mr. Kim’s recommendation, it is recommended that the baseline assessment may strengthen to include priority issues of the city/municipality.

Daanbantayan, Cebu
Pilot Project title: Scaling Up Plastic Waste Processing to Combat Marine Pollution in Daanbantayan Coastal Areas
Presenter: Mr. Mamerto Rodrigo, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer

68. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Daanbantayan Municipality:

- Daanbantayan is located at the northernmost tip of the province of Cebu and is one of the prime tourist destinations. This initiative is expected to foster local economic growth by creating new revenue streams through the sale of recycled plastic products, which will also contribute to environmental sustainability. The LGU will support the pilot project by providing facilities, manpower, and funding through the municipal law, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the recycling program.

- Daanbantayan is proposing the installation of a complete plastic recycling facility, similar to that of Bulan, with the aim of producing plastic chairs and material blocks. This initiative is closely related to segregation, collection, and effective perforation of plastics. With the proposed facility, Daanbantayan aims to enhance their plastic recovery rate by producing chairs and blocks. As part of the pilot project, they plan to purchase equipment including plastic extruder, plastic molder (Arm chair), hydraulic press, and other related machinery.

- The baseline study suggests that investing in the upgrade of the supporting MRF for recovery and processing, particularly with recycling capabilities, would improve the recovery rate. Currently, the MRF houses five types of plastics.

- The pilot project's impact will include an increase in plastic waste collection, diversion of plastic waste, the creation of green jobs, enhanced plastic recycling efforts, and the involvement of stakeholders in encouraging responsible behaviors and fostering responsible communities. Additional benefits include resource conservation, pollution prevention, public health improvement, and product diversion. The local government's commitment to co-financing includes the provision of a building for the facility, which is currently under construction.

- A budget of Php 10 million pesos has been allocated, along with manpower for the facility's operations. The local government, under municipal ordinance, is institutionalizing an allocation of at least Php 12.5 million annually. The commitment also extends to providing technical support for equipment maintenance, which is part of the organizational structure of the MENRO office. Furthermore, the provision of solar energy for the central material recovery facility and RCA is included in the co-financing commitment.

- The proposed system is similar to Bulan's, but the facility will be much larger. They are situated within a closed perimeter of nearly half a hectare. Currently, Daanbantayan has almost 200 square meters designated for warehousing, and plan to construct an additional 200 square meters specifically for the facility.

69. After presentation of Mr. Rodrigo, questions and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions

- Director Orolfo asked about the location of Barangays Maya and Aguho. Mr. Rodrigo answered that the plastic analysis and characterization were conducted in the Barangays of Maya and Aguho. However, the municipality of Daanbantayan consists of a total of 20 barangays, two of which are island tourist destinations. Thirteen of the remaining barangays are coastal areas along the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape, a designated protected area. The northern portion of the municipality borders the Visayan Sea, while the eastern portion is situated along the Camotes Sea. The majority of plastics collected and generated in Daanbantayan originate from the coastal barangays. This is why the local government is strongly appealing to PEMSEA to approve their request, aiming to address the management of residual plastics and other marine litter.

- Director Orolfo suggested that the Tañon Protected Seascape should be considered in addressing marine litter in the area, as it has an impact on the protected seascape. Given that some parts of the barangays are coastal areas within the protected seascape, he recommended seeking support from the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape Board. He also proposed the possibility of having representation on the board to ensure that the board is informed about the program or project. Drawing from the experience in Bulan, Director Orolfo emphasized the importance of establishing specific partnerships with tourism establishments. He believes that strong support from these stakeholders, who frequently use plastics, is crucial for containing and managing the plastics generated by tourists. Mr. Rodrigo explained that the management of waste, including residual waste, on Malapascua Island is already part of their regular program. The island collaborates with several partners, including the NGO, People and the Sea and the Malapascua Business Sectors Association. These organizations are regular contributors, providing funds and personnel for waste collection and transportation. The local government also plays a role by sponsoring personnel on the island who issue transport permits. Once collected, the waste is transported to the mainland, where it is regularly processed at the roll-on, roll-off port, typically every other day. Malapascua Island ranks as one of the top waste generators in the area, likely second or third in terms of waste volume.

- Director Orolfo raised an inquiry about how the facility could generate income for the LGU while simultaneously involving more resource collectors. Mr. Rodrigo answered that in terms of recyclables, the facilities generate a small amount of tax revenue; however, they primarily rely on operating expenses. As outlined in the ecological solid waste management plan, a minimum of Php 12.5 million is allocated annually for solid waste management operations. This funding comes from various sources, including collections from environmental fees, tourists visiting the municipality of Daanbantayan, and garbage collection fees. The sustainability of the operations is assured, as it has already been institutionalized.

- Ms. Serafin inquired about the distance of Daanbantayan to Consolacion, Cebu stating that it already has a dedicated facility that has segmentation of high-quality plastic materials before building it. Mr. Rodrigo answered that the distance to Consolation is 115 kilometers, which takes approximately three to four hours to travel, depending on traffic conditions. The municipality of Daanbantayan has already approved a 10-year solid waste management plan. Currently, the main issue is final disposal. Recently, the municipality acquired property for the construction of the landfill and held a meeting with the technical team and the DENR to finalize plans for construction. The aim is to have it operational by next year. The primary challenge now is the diversion of all plastics, which holds significant potential.

- Director Orolfo asked if Daanbantayan as there is no landfill currently engaged with agreements with other LGUs. Mr. Rodrigo answered that the municipality currently does not have agreements with other LGUs, as it has its own approved solid waste management plan. The future landfill will be for local use only and will not accept waste from other municipalities. At present, the municipality has met the parameters for the Seal of Good Local Governance, but it was given a conditional status due to the lack of a final landfill. However, it is hopeful that the

landfill will be operational next year. To prevent overwhelming the landfill's capacity in the future, the municipality is focusing on the diversion of residual and marine litter plastics.

Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte
Pilot Project title: Mitigating Plastic Pollution through Trash Trapping in Miputak Creek
Presenter: Atty. Gratian Paul Tidor, City Environment and Natural Resources Officer

70. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Dipolog City:

- The pilot project aims to prevent ocean-bound waste from entering water bodies by installing trash barriers at strategic points in Miputak Creek. The initiative includes the installation of three trash barriers, a manual waste lifter, one collection boat, and three sets of operational tools. By capturing debris, particularly plastics, the pilot project is expected to significantly reduce the amount of waste entering the ocean. It aims to improve the efficiency of waste collection and management, contributing to a cleaner and more sustainable environment in the area.

- The Miputak Creek has been identified as one of the most polluted creeks in Dipolog, primarily due to the presence of informal settlers along its banks. Dumping of garbage in the creek is a major source of marine litter in Dipolog City, with plastics predominantly originating from inland sources. The primary objective of this initiative is to prevent ocean-bound plastics from reaching the coasts, especially along Dipolog Boulevard, a key tourist hub and attraction in the city.

- The expected benefits of the pilot project are multifaceted: i) it aims to prevent ocean-bound plastics from reaching the coast and reduce flooding, particularly in areas along Santa Isabel, which are prone to flooding, ii) it will promote more efficient waste collection by replacing the current improvised trash traps with more durable and efficient trash booms, waste lifters, collection boats, and operational tools.

- The pilot project will be implemented at three sites, with varying lengths: Site 1 (12 meters), Site 2 (24 meters), and Site 3 (18 meters), totaling 54 meters. The estimated cost for the pilot project is Php 1.3 million, with the city government committing to co-financing by covering the maintenance, operation, and sustainability of the trash traps, boat, and other tools.

- The system currently in place includes trash booms, waste sorting, recycling, repurposing, and co-processing, which will be improved under this pilot project. The goal is to increase plastic waste diversion by 20.26% based on current collection rates, equating to approximately 2.10 tons per day or 766.5 tons annually.

71. After presentation of Atty. Tidor, questions and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions

- For more efficient way of waste collection, Director Orolfo suggested integrating pontoons in the project proposal.

- Ms. Serafin asked if Dipolog City has partnered with co-processing facilities for their residual waste. Atty Tidor answered that Dipolog City entered a partnership in September 2023,

specifically for the co-processing of their residual waste, particularly those which cannot be recycled such as single use plastics.

- Ms. Serafin further noted that the waste diverted from the trash traps, specifically the residual waste, is sent to co-processing facilities. However, there is a question regarding the recyclable waste collected from the trash traps whether this waste is also processed through co-processing, or there is a separate recovery system in place for it. Atty. Tidor answered that currently, the process involves collecting trash from the trash booms with the assistance of personnel. However, once the project is implemented, the plan is to involve the community and the barangay in the waste collection process. The collected waste will then be sorted at the sanitary landfill, with recyclable or repurposable materials being separated for further processing.

- Mr. Conrad Bravante Jr. asked why they chose the Miputak River as a priority for the project. Atty. Tidor answered that the initial plan was to install trash traps along the Dipolog River, the main river in the city. However, the issue with the Dipolog River is that it primarily contains logs, driftwood, and other debris, rather than plastics, and is frequently navigated by boats. As a result, Miputak Creek was identified as a more viable site for the project. This creek has become a major dumping area in the city, particularly evident during the recent storm surges earlier this year. Plastics are heavily concentrated in the waterways, especially Miputak Creek. To address this growing issue, Miputak Creek was chosen as the location for the installation of the trash booms.

- Mr. Hungeun Kim made an inquiry whether there is data available regarding the amount of waste entering the ocean from the river. He also asked about the contamination levels of the collected waste and whether Dipolog City possesses any technologies capable of recycling contaminated plastic waste, noting that such waste is typically non-recyclable since plastic wastes collected using trash trap are generally contaminated. Tidor answered that there is no concrete data yet on how much plastic waste actually ends up in the ocean and level of contamination. However, based on the current setup, around 20 kilograms of plastic are being collected from the improvised trash traps. While this is a start, it is not enough to capture all the waste along the creek, especially since there are no plastic boats available for collection. He added that with the proposed project, more sites will be covered, making the system more efficient in collecting plastic waste. Therefore, a significant increase in the amount of waste collected is expected. He further elaborated that in terms of recycling, the existing equipment includes a plastic shredder and plastic molder, primarily used for Styrofoam. However, these products have proven to be inefficient, not durable, and not easily sellable, so improvements are needed. Efforts are underway to enhance the quality of the plastic pavers. For other recyclable materials, there is a partnership with nine registered junk shops in the city, where recyclables are sent. The remaining waste is directed toward co-processing.

Puerto Princesa City
Pilot Project title: HABAL: Smart Waste Collection in Congested Barangays to Prevent Ocean Pollution
Presenter: Mr. Alonzo Peralta, Technical staff, City Environment and Natural Resources Office

72. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Puerto Princesa City:

- The proposed project focuses on acquiring small vehicles for waste collection in Puerto Princesa, a city three times larger than Seoul, RO Korea, and three times larger than the size of Singapore. Waste collection in the city is managed by the Office of the City Mayor through the Solid Waste Management Program, which serves all 66 barangays. Currently, Puerto Princesa generates 95 tons of waste per day (34,675 tons annually), with plastic waste generated for 29.5 tons per day (10,767.5 tons annually).

- The baseline assessment revealed that Puerto Princesa currently has a 0% response rate for waste segregation practices, emphasizing the need for improvement.

- The pilot project aims to enhance waste segregation and collection services by acquiring small-scale vehicles capable of navigating narrow streets and roads. Six small collection vehicles will be purchased and deployed in target areas. These agile vehicles are expected to effectively address collection issues while ensuring proper segregation at the source. The deployment of these vehicles will improve the efficiency of waste collection in areas with limited access, helping to streamline the overall waste management process.

- In urban barangays, waste is collected via door-to-door services and mobile bins, with 34 out of 35 barangays covered by a three-shift system. In contrast, rural barangays rely on barangay officials for informal, less frequent waste collection depending on the volume of waste generated. Despite the city's efforts, challenges remain, particularly in areas inaccessible to regular collection trucks, where waste is improperly disposed of and often ends up in water bodies.

- Through this project, the city aims to increase plastic waste diversion by 6.7%, raising the diversion rate from 13.5% to 20.2%. The long-term goal is to achieve 87% waste diversion at source from major sources such as households.

- The project will provide services such as plastic waste collection at the household level and promote waste segregation awareness, particularly through barangay enforcers. The project aims to reduce marine plastic pollution and create a cleaner, greener environment for the city’s residents.

73. After presentation of Mr. Peralta, questions and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions

- Ms. Serafin suggested that the project integrates advocacy components in relation to engaging the community and behavior changes.

- Mr. Hungeun Kim pointed out the data discrepancy between the baseline assessment and pilot project proposal. The National Consultant Ms. Haidee Piniero responded that the data in the pilot project proposal will be updated to reflect the most recent information provided by the local government.

- Dr. Shin inquired if Puerto Princesa City has partnered with an NGO for solid waste management. Mr. Peralta answered that the city has partnered with an NGO, Project Zaccheus. They have resource collectors from the local community, and they will be tapping this NGO to implement the pilot project effectively.

Tandag City, Surigao del Sur
Pilot Project title: Boosting Plastic Waste Diversion
Presenter: Mr. Edwin Ajos, City Environment and Natural Resources Officer

74. Major outline of the pilot project concept of Tandag City:

- Tandag City faces a significant challenge due to its geographical constraints, being surrounded by the Tandag River and the sea. The city lacks the land necessary for an additional sanitary landfill, emphasizing the need to optimize its existing waste management system to reduce dependency on landfill space. Currently, the city's Solid Waste Management System includes segregation at source, waste avoidance programs, a segregated collection system, waste diversion initiatives, and the operation of a sanitary landfill. However, despite these efforts, the landfill's operational lifespan, designed for ten years, is at risk of being reduced to just five years due to the current disposal rate and the continued accumulation of plastic waste.

- In 2023, the city generated 9.2 tons of mixed waste per day (2.8 tons per year), of which plastic waste accounted for 0.714 tons per day (625.79 tons per year). Presently, only 0.15 tons of plastic waste per day (39.3 tons per year) are diverted, resulting in a diversion rate of just 8.75%. With the implementation of a complete plastic processing facility, the city could divert 1.15 tons of plastic waste per day (301.3 tons per year), increasing the diversion rate to 58.34%.

- The project aims to increase the city's waste diversion rate by improving its plastic waste management system. This includes the establishment of a Plastic Waste Processing Facility, which will involve the purchase and installation of necessary equipment. Through enhancing the LGU's ability to process recyclable plastics, the project is expected to significantly reduce ocean-bound plastic waste and expand the city's waste diversion capacity.

- The absence of a plastic processing facility presents a critical gap in the city's waste management efforts. Establishing such a facility would maximize plastic waste diversion, extend the landfill's lifespan, and address marine plastic pollution more effectively. Furthermore, Tandag City aspires to establish an eco-industrial park with a comprehensive processing facility, aiming to become a model for sustainable development in Surigao del Sur.

75. After presentation of Mr. Ajos, questions and answer session followed. The following is a summary of the discussions

- Director Orolfo noted that Tandag City still requires a more targeted ordinance on plastics and suggested that one of the best supports for this program are more specific ordinances. He further suggests that a fundamental component of this program is also the push for strengthened LGU institutional enforcement. Mr. Ajos answered that Tandag City has an existing ordinance, Ordinance No. 01, Series of 2020, focused on ecological solid waste management. Section 19 of this ordinance specifically addresses the banning of single-use plastics. This year, the city plans to enforce the ban more strictly. Monitoring efforts began last year, targeting business establishments to ensure compliance with the single-use plastic ban. Director Orolfo suggested revisiting the definition of marine litter, which extends beyond plastics. He suggested revisiting the study conducted by the consultants for a more focused program to address the marine litter problem in the city effectively.

- Mr. Hungeun Kim pointed out that the most marketable plastic is PET but there are no junk shops in Tandag that buys PET. Ms. Piniero answered that interviews with local junk shop owners revealed that PET plastics are not being purchased due to their low market value. During a visit to the RCA facility, it was observed that various types of plastics were already segregated. However, PET plastics were notably absent from the segregation process. When questioned, it was explained that PET plastics are stored at the facility until a significant volume is accumulated, after which a buyer from another city collects them. This practice is necessary to optimize transportation costs, as junk shop owners find it economically unviable to purchase PET plastics due to their low price. This is the current approach being taken by the city to manage PET plastics. The estimates for the project were based on the existing equipment, but there is a recognized need for larger and more functional machines. During a visit to manufacturers, options for equipment were discussed.

- Ms. Gonzales highlighted challenges in finding reliable, integrated machinery models for waste processing, based on past experiences with donor-funded projects. She mentioned that ensuring the reliability and functionality of the equipment is a priority to avoid past issues encountered with government-provided machines. It was emphasized that the project must prioritize purchasing dependable equipment, as unreliable machinery could undermine its success.

- Ms. Gonzales raised a question about the availability of next-generation facilities, their replication, and the sustainability of their markets, including potential buyers like governments, schools, and churches. She emphasized the need for careful study of actual demand and supply forecasting, as well as strategic planning prior to undertaking similar projects to avoid repeating past issues. Ms. Serafin mentioned that at least one or two sites in the region's 16 operational areas have demonstrated functional equipment. As part of the regional office's program for this year, training sessions and site visits to operational facilities are planned to encourage LGUs to activate their equipment. However, several challenges have been identified including: not only the quality of the equipment but also technical issues such as electricity requirements. Some units require conversion from single-phase to three-phase electricity, posing significant hurdles. Many LGUs were unprepared to accept the equipment due to a lack of infrastructure, such as sheds, and insufficient manpower. Coordination with the supplier has also been problematic,

leading to complaints from multiple regions about inadequate support. To address these issues, a strategy was implemented to establish a group chat involving the supplier and regional offices. This has proven effective in streamlining communication for about 100% of equipment users. Looking ahead, regional offices have suggested conducting another round of training sessions next year, featuring different suppliers and resource persons. The new training will explore alternative equipment models, including designs originating from Mindanao. These models aim to address operational gaps and enhance usability for LGUs, particularly in producing functional items such as chairs. The initiative seeks to provide practical and sustainable solutions while fostering uniform standards and improving LGU readiness for equipment utilization.

- Director Orolfo emphasized the implications of the upcoming 2025 elections which may pose risks to the project. Dr. Shin answered that the projects are well aware of the risk, that is why many activities relating to the pilot project will be implemented in the latter part of the year: Q3 and Q4. This will allow the new leaders to acclimate to their roles, ensuring that they are prepared to oversee the pilot projects effectively.

Endorsement of the draft Pilot Project Concepts

76. The Chair commended the presenters for comprehensive pilot project proposals and participants for active discussion. With the consent of the participants, the Chair endorsed the Pilot Project Concepts to further develop into detailed project design phase in 2025. He expected that the detailed project designs will be presented in July 2025 during the intersessional RSC meeting.

AGENDA 4. 2025 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

77. Dr. Shin presented the 2025 work plan and budget. He reiterated that the 2025 work plan and budget presented follows the Project Document. The following is the summary of the presentation:

Component 1 Local Governance on Marine Plastics Management

- Baseline Assessment
    - The baseline assessment of the Philippines will be finalized by AMH Philippines, Inc. by May 2025.
    - As PACS Timor-Leste completed in December 2024, the baseline assessment of Timor-Leste will be completed by May 2025 by AMH Philippines, Inc. with the support of National Consultant of Timor-Leste.
    - Two national baseline assessment reports and a regional synthesis report will be published by July 2025.
- Mayor's Conference
    - To secure local government's support for the pilot projects, a Mayors' Conference is proposed for the third quarter, allowing time for newly elected mayors to assume their

roles following the elections in May. Commitments will be formalized through a Mayors Compact during the conference.

Component 2: Demonstration of Innovative Solutions and Good Practices

- Pilot Project Development and Implementation
    - Philippines: The detailed project design phase will be initiated for the six pilot project proposals from the Philippines sites. A competent consulting firm will be hired for the study in January 2025. The resulting detailed designs will be presented during the Intersessional RSC meeting in July 2025. Approved pilot projects will be implemented during Q3-Q4 2025.
    - Timor-Leste: Pilot project concept development process will be initiated in 2025. A national consultant (Timorese) will be hired to support the local governments at the sites. A consultation meeting will be organized in August 2025 to review the pilot project proposals of Timor-Leste.
- Small Grant Program (SGP)
    - Local businesses on plastics recycling, upcycling and repurposing will be identified during the Q1 and Q3 2025.
    - The guidelines for application for the SGP will be circulated to the identified businesses at the local sites. Qualified and successful applicants will be awarded for scaling up of their business.

Component 3: Beach Monitoring of Marine Plastics and Litter

- Regional Synthesis Report of 2024 Monitoring
    - Beach monitoring activities for 2024 will be synthesized into a report outlining successes, challenges, and results.
- Quarterly monitoring
    - Beach monitoring institutes (BMI) at the 10 sites will continue beach monitoring at the designated sites in 2025. BMI will be contracted for 2025 activities through the signing the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in February 2025.
- Monitoring Data Management
    - Currently, beach monitoring data are uploaded and serviced to public at PEMSEA's Sea Knowledge Bank (seaknowledgebank.net). The Marine Plastics Data Center will be revamped and improve the data service and public access.

Component 4: Capacity Building and Learning Exchanges

- 2nd Learning Exchange Program (LEP)

- In tandem with the Our Ocean Conference in Busan, RO Korea, in April 2025, the 2nd LEP will be conducted. Invitations will be sent to partners and participants from local sites and national project boards.

- Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program
    - In 2024, four MEPs conducted education and awareness activities in the Philippine project sites. In 2025, the MEP program will expand to include two additional sites in the Philippine sites and four project sites of Timor-Leste.
    - A regional workshop is planned for March to share experiences and develop a specific work plan for each local site.

- Internship Program
    - To enhance the capacity of officials of the project sites, the ODA Internship Program (OIP) will be initiated in 2025. The first batch of five Interns will be invited from Timor-Leste for learning marine plastics management and ICM and collecting data and information for drafting 10-year marine plastic management strategy.
    - The 2025 OIP will be implemented for 6 weeks during July-August 2025.

Project Management

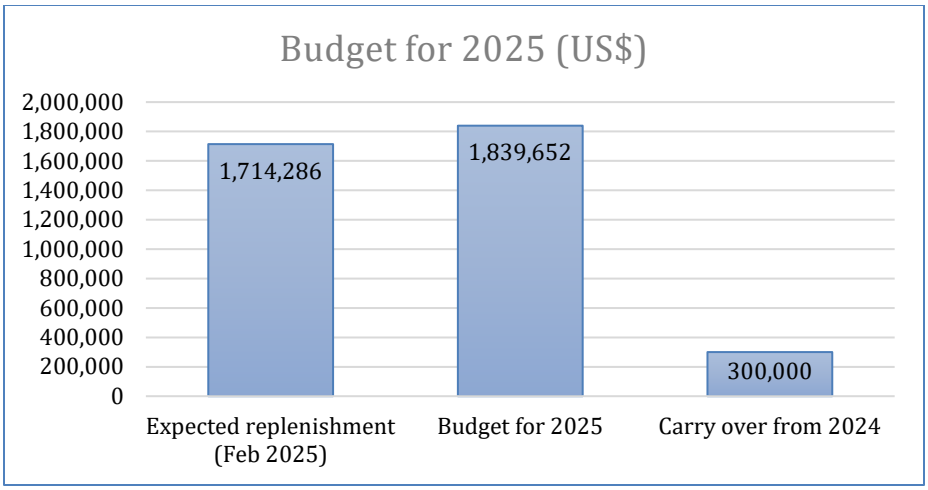
- The 3rd Regional Steering Committee meeting is planned to be organized in December 2025 as a physical meeting. The venue will be Manila, Philippines.

2025 Budget

78. Dr. Shin presented the budget for 2025. The following is a summary of his presentation:

- According to the Project Cooperating Agreement between Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) of RO Korea and PEMSEA, the funding for 2025 is slated to KRW 2,400,000,000. When converted to US$, it would be about US$1,714,285 at the Exchange Rate of 1,400/USD.

- The budget in the Project Document is proposed at US$1,839,652 which is the proposed budget for 2025. Although the exchange rate is projected to be weak in Q1 of 2025, the proposed budget is within the range of available fund with more than US$300,000 carried over from 2024 to 2025.



- Notable expenditure in 2025 is 'Contractual Services – Company' for US$1.01M. This budget is to cover the cost of the three pilot projects among the Philippines sites, beach monitoring institutes and MEP partners. Budget for pilot projects is US$600,000 for 2025. The pilot projects will be implemented in the following schedule: 3 pilot projects in 2025, 4 pilot projects in 2026, 3 pilot projects in 2027.

79. After Dr. Shin's presentation, comments and questions were followed. Below is a summary of discussion:

- Mr. Bravante Jr. inquired who will be conducting the detailed project design study and if there is already a work plan. Dr. Shin answered that a competent consultant or consulting firm will be hired. The RPMU has already developed the Terms of Reference (TOR), and in January 2025, the TOR will be circulated for the solicitation of a consultant. A very detailed work plan, specifications, TOR, and Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will be developed through the consultancy. Dr. Shin requested the local partners, specifically the Philippine sites, to be prepared for the development of a detailed policy design study at their respective site.

- Dr. Shin requested the National Project Boards of the Philippines and Timor-Leste to recommend a National Project Coordinator for each country, who will support the development and implementation of the pilot project as well as other project activities.

- Ms. Gonzales inquired if detailed project design study for the pilot projects can proceed pending the approval of Special Presidential Authority (SPA) from the Presidential Office of the Philippines. Mr. Bravante Jr. affirmed that the preparation of the detailed project design study is undertaken in the context of preparing the pilot projects, hence they can already be developed. He also mentioned that FASPS is hopeful that the SPA can be secured during the Q1 of 2025.

Approval of the 2025 Work Plan and Budget

80. The Chair expressed his satisfaction to the comprehensive work plan and budget for 2025. With the consent of the participants, the Chair approved the work plan and budget for 2025 as presented.

AGENDA 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

81. The Chair requested that participants review the draft conclusions prepared by the RPMU. In response to the feedback received, the Chair provided a summary of the 2nd RSC meeting, outlining the following conclusions:

- The RPMU has implemented the work plan and budget for 2024 as planned with due diligence and proper budget management.
- The PACS and Baseline Assessment produced valuable information on marine plastics at the project sites at both the Philippines and Timor-Leste.
- Pilot project proposals for the Philippines are well developed with close consultations with local project sites and will be further developed through detailed project design studies for final selection in 2025.
- Beach monitoring program on marine plastics and litter have produced valuable scientific data through nine local institutes of the Philippines and Timor-Leste, which will continue in 2025.
- The activities of Marine Environment Protectors (MEPs) of the Philippines created significant impact on awareness on marine plastics at the four project sites of the Philippines.
- The 1st Learning Exchange Program (LEP) to Seoul was a success and benefit many participants from the Philippines and Timor-Leste in learning advanced marine plastics management practices and the LEP will continue in 2025.
- The MOU between PEMSEA PRF and MALFF of Timor-Leste in 2024 has laid an important foundation for the effective implementation of the Project in Timor-Leste and has significantly contributed to enhancement of project governance.

Recommendations

82. The Chair requested that participants review the draft recommendations prepared by the RPMU. In response to the comments received, the Chair summarized the recommendations of the second RSC Meeting as follows:

- The meeting endorsed the accomplishment report 2024;
- The meeting approved the proposed 2025 budget of US$1,839,652.
- The meeting approved work plan for 2025 as presented.
- The integration of source-level management and community involvement should be applied to the development process of detailed project design of pilot projects;

- The meeting requests the RPMU to develop concrete pilot projects tailored to particular local contexts and final draft should be discussed within the project governance structure including local governments.

- The meeting supports the organization of the Mayor's Conference and requests Mayors to attend and commit the reduction of the marine plastics for supporting the ODA project through the Mayor's Compact.

- The meeting requests the government of the Philippines to expedite the process of securing the formal project implementing arrangement, i.e., Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the government of the Philippines and the government of RO Korea.

CLOSING

83. The Chair invited Ms. Yeji Kang of Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries to make her remarks. The following is Ms. Kang's remarks:

- Expressed her gratitude to all the distinguished delegates from the Philippines and Timor-Leste, as well as the representatives from PEMSEA for their support of the team.

- Thanked everyone for organizing the meeting, noting that the second year of the project has marked significant progress for the Philippines. The baseline assessments have paved the way for the introduction of pilot solutions. For Timor-Leste, the signing of the MOU this year has been a major milestone.

- Look forward to the upcoming national baseline studies, which will guide the next steps. She emphasizes that these important tasks cannot be accomplished without the continued leadership and support from both the Philippine and Timor-Leste governments. She also extends her appreciation to PEMSEA for their ongoing efforts and strong coordination, which will help move the project forward.

- The second RSC meeting has provided a valuable platform for exchanging ideas and gathering diverse perspectives, which will further strengthen the project. Looking ahead, she is eager for even closer collaboration to ensure the success of the project.

- Once again thanked everyone for their active participation and dedication, hoping that the meeting's discussions will inspire a shared commitment as the work progresses.

84. The Chair thanked all the participants for their active participation and extend year-end holiday wishes. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 15:30pm.

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ANNEX 1. PROGRAM

MOF/PEMSEA ODA PROJECT
REDUCING MARINE PLASTICS IN THE EAST ASIAN SEAS REGION

2nd REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
17 December 2024
Park Inn Radisson Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines with Zoom

Provisional Program

Chair: Timor-Leste, Co-chair: the Philippines
MC: Ms. Jessie Lee, PEMSEA

Time	Activity	Note
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:20	Messages • Welcome message • Message • Message • Message	 Ms. Aimee Gonzales, Executive Director Hon. Jonas Leones, Undersecretary, DENR, Philippines Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral, Advisor of Secretary of State for Fisheries, MALFF, Timor-Leste Ms. Yeji Kang, MOF, RO Korea
09:20-09:30	Adoption of agenda	Chairperson
09:30-10:30	2024 Accomplishment Report - Introduction including review of the 1st RSC meeting decisions and recommendations - Baseline Assessment Reports of the Philippines - Beach Monitoring Results	Regional Project Management Unit

	- Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program outputs - Financial report 2024	
10:30-11:00	Coffee break	
11:00-12:00	Draft Innovative Solutions for the Philippines sites Philippine project site presentation: 1.) Bulan 2.) Calbayog 3.) Daanbantayan 4.) Dipolog 5.) Puerto Princesa 6.) Tandag	Dr. Won-Tae Shin/Haidee Piniero
12:00-13:30	Lunch break	
13:30-14:00	2025 Work plan and budget	Dr. Won-Tae Shin
14:00-14:50	Conclusions and recommendations	Chairperson
14:50-15:00	Closing message	Chairperson

Join the Meeting through zoom:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88019949662?pwd=BS3r7E4BbE118Lw1bXOShT1yJQOQ84.1

Meeting ID: 880 1994 9662
Passcode: 746941

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

TIMOR-LESTE

Aleixo Leonito Amaral
Advisor of Secretary of State for Fisheries,
MALFF, Timor-Leste

Akasio Dos Santos
MALFF, Timor-Leste

PHILIPPINES

Al Orolfo
Director
Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS)
Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Conrad A. Bravante Jr.
Chief, Project Preparation Division
Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS)
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Marilou T. Calado
PPD staff
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Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)
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Dean, College of Engineering, University of the Philippines

Ezra Osorio
Project Lead
AMH Philippines, Inc.

PEMSEA Resource Facility

Aimee Gonzales
Executive Director

Won-Tae Shin
Regional Project Manager
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Hunguen Kim
Senior Manager
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Gusung (Jessie) Lee
Technical Advisor
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

John Christian Castillo
Visual Communications Officer
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Arsenio Dacaymat Jr.
IT Administrator

Klyra Orbien
Junior Communications Officer
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Haidee Piniero
Innovative Solutions Consultant
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Ma Concepcion Nepomuceno
Office assistant

ANNEX 3 MESSAGES

Welcome Message

by Ms. Aimee Gonzales, the Executive Director of PEMSEA

Good morning, everyone. I joined Jesse in extending my warmest welcome, particularly to our colleagues from Timor Leste. Welcome to Manila. Welcome to the Philippines, and also to the country partner, representatives from R.O Korea, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and of course, those attending online from the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

This is the second Regional Steering Committee meeting, and I am pleased that we also have representatives of our local partner communities as observers to this regional steering committee. The project management unit designed this meeting as such that everyone has a full understanding and appreciation of each and every component of this project and see clearly where they're contributing and where they fit into the overall project.

Now, the project has done much despite the challenges and constraints it faced over the past year, and it definitely can do better. And for this, we request that all of you to be all hands-on deck. We need your actions, your engagement, your feedback, comments suggestions, to ensure that our towns and cities deliver on our shared commitment and objectives on the fight against plastic pollution.

You probably are aware that the global negotiations on plastic treaty failed to reach an agreement in early December. But despite this sad situation, we are hopeful that we, at the local level as well as the national level, can still do our part, especially at the local level, because there are many good practices that we can learn from and possibly adapt in our vital signs, in the same manner our pilot sites and hopefully also teach a lesson to other LGU's. So let us continue to push each other to improve and maintain consistent data analytics, strengthen our recycling, upcycling efforts and encourage our communities to practice circular economy, starting, for example, with removing unnecessary and harmful single-use plastics.

The Undersecretary of DENR of the Philippines and his delegation, I understand, are in Japan at the moment negotiating Waste to Energy Project, so, perhaps, when they come back, we can also share what the achievements were and what the mission was about on Waste to Energy, but also perhaps be accommodated, adapted to this project, if the solution could be suitable or appropriate to the local communities.

With that, I wish all of us a productive end of the year and end of the second project here.

Thank you

Message

by Undersecretary Atty. Jonas R. Leones

Good morning, everyone.

My apologies for not being able to join you in person today as I am currently on a mission with our Secretary as part of the strengthening of our cooperation with the government of Japan with regard to waste management and environmental protection.

Nevertheless, I would like to express our warm welcome to the delegates from our partners from Timor-Leste.

Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral, Advisor To The Secretary Of State Of Fisheries;

Mr. Akasio Dos Santos, National Director Of Malff;

From The Republic of Korea, Ms. Kang Yeji, Deputy Director, Marine Environment Pollution Division, Ministry Of Oceans And Fisheries;

To The Executive Director Of PEMSEA, Ms. Aimee Gonzales;

The Assistant Secretary for Environment and EMB Director, Jacqueline Caancan;

The Assistant Director of The Environmental Management Bureau, Engr. Esperanza Sajul;

The Director of the Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service Of DENR, Dir. Al Orolfo;

Dr. Won Tae Shin, Our Regional Project Manager;

Esteemed colleagues from DENR and the partner Local Government Units;

Fellow stewards of our environment, good morning.

It is a privilege to address you today at the 2nd Regional Steering Committee meeting for the ODA project on Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region. This gathering represents our collective determination to confront one of the most pressing challenges of our time—marine plastic pollution.

On behalf of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for their unwavering support and commitment to this ODA project. I also commend PEMSEA for its leadership in ensuring the effective implementation of this project, which has already demonstrated significant progress in addressing marine plastics across the region, despite of certain delays from our part in securing the necessary authority to allow our Secretary to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for this project. Nevertheless, we are confident that said authority will be issued in due course.

Today, as we reflect on our 2024 accomplishments, I am proud of the collaborative efforts that have yielded impactful results. from baseline assessments and beach monitoring to the marine environment protector program and learning exchange program, these initiatives are driving the change we need at local, national, and regional levels, and certainly are in support to the Extended Producers Responsibility

Act and the National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Reduction and Management of Marine Litter (NPOA-ML) in the country.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are presented with a renewed opportunity to amplify our actions. The proposed pilot projects for the Philippines, the continued work on innovative solutions, and the expansion of capacity-building programs promise to deepen the impacts of our collective efforts.

Moreover, the upcoming events to be presented by the RPMU such as Mayor's Conference will serve as a critical platform to solidify commitments at the local level, bridging global objectives with community-driven actions.

Let us remain steadfast in our mission, guided by science, collaboration, and a shared vision for a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable East Asian Seas Region. Together, we can turn the tide against marine plastic pollution and leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

Thank you, and I look forward to fruitful discussions and meaningful outcomes in today's meeting.

Mabuhay!

Message

by Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral, Advisor of Secretary of State for Fisheries, MALFF, Timor-Leste

Your Excellency Undersecretary Jonas Leones, DENR, the Philippines,

Director of the EMB, Ms. Jacqueline Caancan,

Assistant Director of EMB, Engineer Esperanza Sajul,

Director of the Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service of DENR, Director Al Orolfo,

Executive Director of PEMSEA, Ms. Aimee Gonzales,

Distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends, good morning!

It is a great honor to address you today at the 2nd Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project, focusing on reducing marine plastics in the East Asian Seas region.

On behalf of Timor-Leste, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the government of RO Korea for funding support to the ODA project, and PEMSEA and all partners for their unwavering commitment to tackling marine plastic pollution, a challenge that threatens not only our environment but also the livelihoods of our coastal communities.

Allow me to begin by celebrating a significant milestone—the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PEMSEA and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Forestry (MALFF) of Timor-Leste during the EAS Congress 2024 in Xiamen, China. This formal agreement has paved the way for the full implementation of the ODA Project in Timor-Leste. This collaboration represents a crucial step forward in building sustainable waste management systems and enhancing regional cooperation in environmental protection.

Looking ahead, I am pleased to highlight the 2025 work program, which includes the development of pilot projects for four municipalities in Timor-Leste. These pilot projects are designed to serve as practical models for addressing marine plastic pollution at the local level. The pilot project is timely and urgently needed initiative, which will not only demonstrate the viability of localized solutions but also create a foundation for scaling up successful practices across Timor-Leste and beyond.

As we move forward, let us remain steadfast in our collective efforts. The work we accomplish through this partnership will have far-reaching impacts, ensuring cleaner seas, healthier ecosystems, and resilient communities.

I extend my gratitude to all partners and stakeholders for their dedication and collaboration. Together, we can turn our vision into reality, protecting the East Asian Seas for generations to come.

Thank you, and I wish us all a productive and successful meeting.

ANNEX 4. PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

Please click on the link below to access all photos:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1u6w5Mk6QO7IpBHBOl_Q3EUhbxKXCGFFq?usp=drive_link

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