



Ministry of Oceans
and Fisheries



MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project

Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region

MEETING REPORT

3rd Regional Steering Committee Meeting

10 December 2025
via Zoom

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

3rd REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Via Zoom | 10 December 2025

MEETING REPORT

INTRODUCTION

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). 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 review project progress, provide strategic direction and guidance, and approve the work plan and budget for the subsequent year’s project activities. The Chair of the RSC rotates 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 Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The second RSC meeting was chaired by the Government of Timor-Leste, represented by Mr. Aleixo Leonito Amaral, Advisor to the Secretary of State for Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF). For the third RSC, the meeting was chaired by the Philippines, represented by Dr. Al O. Orolfo, Director of the DENR Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS).
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 program of the 3rd RSC meeting is attached as Annex 1.

OPENING

5. Ms. Klyra Orbien, Junior Communications Officer of the RPMU welcomed the participants, and provided a background on the 3rd RSC meeting and invited members of RSC to deliver their messages.

MESSAGES

Ms. Aimee T. Gonzales, Executive Director, PEMSEA

6. Ms. Gonzales welcomed the participants of the RSC meeting and congratulated the RPMU on the hard work being done for the year. She mentioned that as a key achievement of the year, on-the-ground solutions to local plastic pollution issues in the Philippines have been identified. She also cited the institutionalization of beach monitoring activities and the conduct of community awareness initiatives, noting that these efforts are gaining visible traction.
7. Ms. Gonzales stressed that the current priority is to build on this momentum by expanding the number of committed actors and forging linkages with other like-minded initiatives. She underscored that doing so can generate a broader ripple effect and amplify impact beyond individual projects.
8. She highlighted the importance of drawing lessons from challenges already encountered by ASEAN member states, including the Philippines, in order to avoid repeating mistakes and to apply proven approaches more effectively. She expressed appreciation to the government of RO Korea for the funding support and wished a fruitful and constructive discussion.

Dr. Al O. Orolfo, Director, Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), DENR

9. Dr. Al O. Orolfo, Director of the DENR Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), welcomed distinguished representatives from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, colleagues from Timor-Leste, partners from PEMSEA and the RPMU, representatives from national government agencies, and other participants to the 3rd RSC meeting.
10. Dr. Orolfo highlighted that over the past three years, the ODA project has made significant progress from analysis and planning to concrete commitments and on-the-ground implementation, beginning with baseline assessments of marine plastics in project sites in the Philippines and Timor-Leste. He expressed deep appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its continued support, and to PEMSEA and the RPMU for their professional management of the Project.
11. He also acknowledged the constructive engagement of Timor-Leste partners in revising and signing the MOU and their commitment to advancing pilot project development and MEP implementation. He concluded by calling on members to reaffirm their shared responsibility to reduce marine plastics, protect the East Asian seas, and support coastal communities dependent on healthy marine ecosystems.

Ms. Jieon Lee, Deputy Director, Marine Conservation Division, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries

12. Representing the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Deputy Director Jieon Lee extended a warm welcome to the members of the RSC, as well as colleagues and partners from the Philippines, Timor-Leste, and PEMSEA.
13. Ms. Lee noted that the year 2025 marked a significant shift from planning to action, highlighted by the RSC's approval of pilot project designs for six sites in the Philippines, with implementation targeted for the coming years. She commended the convening of the Mayors' Conference in Manila, where local leaders signed memoranda of agreement for the implementation of the pilot projects,

as a strong indication of government readiness and commitment to addressing marine plastic pollution.

14. Ms. Lee also acknowledged the continued engagement of partner countries, reflected in the revision of MOUs and the preparation for pilot project activities across four key areas in Timor-Leste. She emphasized that these developments contribute to a balanced regional approach.
15. While recognizing the reduction in the Republic of Korea's 2026 ODA budget, she stressed that close coordination with PEMSEA has helped safeguard the core components of the project, including implementation of six pilot projects in the Philippines, development of pilot project concepts in Timor-Leste, and the continuation of MEP programs in both countries.
16. Ms. Lee expressed sincere appreciation to the governments of the Philippines and Timor-Leste, PEMSEA, and all local partners for their continued cooperation. She concluded by emphasizing that the leadership of the Regional Steering Committee will be crucial in ensuring that the marine plastic ODA projects deliver impactful and lasting outcomes.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

17. The Chair called on Dr. Won-Tae Shin to introduce the agenda of the meeting. In turn, Dr. Shin briefly introduced the meeting's agenda. With no objection, the Chair declared the agenda adopted as presented.

AGENDA 1. 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENT REPORT

Review of the Previous RSC Meeting Recommendations

Actions Taken by the RPMU in Response to the 2nd RSC Meeting (17 December 2024)

18. Dr. Shin reviewed the decisions and recommendations of the 2nd RSC meeting. For the 2nd RSC meeting recommendations, the RPMU has taken the following actions:
 - The Mayor's Conference was successfully organized in Manila, with participation from five mayors representing Philippine project sites. During the conference, the mayors signed:
 - The Mayor's Compact;
 - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PEMSEA and LGUs for ODA Project implementation; and Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) for pilot project implementation.
 - MOUs between participating governments and PEMSEA have been successfully concluded:
 - The MOU between PEMSEA and the Philippines was signed in July 2025.
 - The Government of Timor-Leste requested revisions to the MOU originally signed in November 2024. The revised MOU was signed in October 2025.

Actions Taken by the RPMU in Response to the Intersessional RSC Meeting (17 September 2025)

19. Dr. Shin explained that an Intersessional RSC was organized on 17 September 2025 to approve the detailed pilot project designs for the Philippine sites. Regarding the recommendations made during the Intersessional RSC, the RPMU has taken the following actions:

- A comprehensive implementation plan for the Philippine pilot projects was developed.
- The 2026 budget was confirmed by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) in October 2025 and 2026 work plan was developed reflecting the confirmed budget.
- The RPMU conducted a visit to MOF in November 2025 to report progress and discuss strategies for restoring reduced 2026 budget allocations in the 2027 budget request.

Component 1: Local Governance on Marine Plastics Management

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

Baseline Assessment Reports

21. The three reports of Baseline Assessment Reports on Marine Plastics for the Philippines, Timor-Leste and Regional Synthesis were published in August 2025. The assessments included:

- Plastic Analysis and Characterization Studies (PACS); and
- Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Surveys.
- Surveys covered key coastal areas across ten sites in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

22. Dr. Shin noted that the findings provide evidence-based inputs for LGUs, national agencies, and stakeholders to design targeted plastics and waste management policies. The reports can be downloaded at [the ODA microsites](#) hosted on Seaknowledgebank.net.

Mayor's Conference on Reducing Marine Plastics in the Philippines

23. Dr. Shin informed that the conference was held in Manila on 22 October 2025, with participation from five mayors and local leaders representing six coastal LGUs. The conference was organized by PEMSEA with support from the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, and the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

- Participating LGUs included Bulan, Calbayog City, Daanbantayan, Dipolog City, and Tandag City.
- Participants committed to reducing marine plastic pollution through the signing of:
 - The Mayor's Compact;
 - MOUs between PEMSEA and LGUs; and
 - MOAs for pilot project implementation

Component 2: Demonstration of Best Practices and Innovative Solutions

Pilot Project Development

24. The Senior Manager, Mr. Hunguen Kim, presented the updates under this component. He mentioned that Component 2 focuses on the demonstration of reducing marine plastics which is to

show measurable reductions in plastic waste capacity at the local level. He reported the following progress in the Philippines:

- Pilot project development commenced in September 2023 and concluded in October 2025. Project concepts were approved by the 2nd RSC Meeting, and detailed designs were approved during the Intersessional RSC Meeting. LGU administrative and financial commitments were secured through Sangguniang Bayan Resolutions and formalized via MOAs signed in October 2025.
- Six pilot projects were designed to address site-specific marine plastic challenges, aligned with national and local priorities:
 - Bulan, Sorsogon: Expansion and upgrading of the Materials Recovery Facility, including installation of a plastic shredder.
 - Calbayog City, Samar: Installation of river trash traps, deployment of eco-friendly collection vehicles, and expansion of baling capacity.
 - Daanbantayan, Cebu: Establishment of a plastic recycling facility in partnership with local resorts.
 - Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte: Installation of trash traps, a plastic collection boat, and a baling machine in Miputak Creek.
 - Puerto Princesa City: Introduction of habal-based smart waste collection and plastic shredding.
 - Tandag City, Surigao del Sur: Processing of over 1,000 kilograms of plastics daily into recycled products through establishment of a plastic recycling facility.
 - Financial commitments from PEMSEA and LGUs reflect an approximate 1:2 cost-sharing ratio.

25. Dr. Shin presented pilot projects updates in Timor-Leste:

- Following the revised MOU, pilot project concept development will begin at the four sites. The hiring of a national consultant is under evaluation by MALFF. Pilot concepts are expected by June 2026, with detailed designs targeted for approval during the 4th RSC Meeting in December 2026.

Small Grant Program (SGP)

26. The SGP aims to support innovative recycling, upcycling, and repurposing initiatives by local businesses, NGOs, and community groups. Updates from the SGP was presented by the Senior Technical Advisor, Ms. Gusung (Jessie) Lee:

- The initial RFP was released in July 2025 and closed in September 2025, receiving five submissions. All submissions were deemed ineligible due to similarity with existing MEP proposals. The SGP will be revised and re-advertised in January 2026, with two awards targeted for early 2026

Component 3: Beach Monitoring on Marine Plastics and Litter

27. The Senior Technical Advisor, Ms. Gusung (Jessie) Lee, presented the major findings of the beach monitoring program. She reported that nine monitoring institutions consistently conducted standardized quarterly beach monitoring activities throughout 2025, following agreed survey periods and methodologies to ensure data comparability across sites. The monitoring activities generated a consolidated dataset that supports the assessment of marine litter trends and informs project planning and decision-making.
28. It was reported that between Q1 and Q3 of 2025:
 - A total of 16,496 debris items were recorded.
 - Plastics accounted for 86.57% of total debris.
 - Domestic sources accounted for over 95% of litter.
29. Detailed country-level, site-level, temporal, and compositional analyses were presented for both the Philippines and Timor-Leste.
 - From 2024 to Q3 2025: a cumulative total of 45,232 debris items were recorded.
 - Plastic accounted for 85% of total litter.
30. The Q4 2025 survey is scheduled for mid-December, with consolidated analysis to be uploaded to [the EAS Marine Plastics Data Center](#).

Component 4: Capacity and Awareness Building

Learning Exchange Program (LEP)

31. The Technical Advisor, Ms. Gusung (Jessie) Lee, reported on the 2nd LEP, which was conducted in Busan, Republic of Korea, from April 28 to May 2, 2025, alongside the 10th Our Ocean Conference:
 - The 2nd LEP activities included policy discussions, site visits, technical briefings, and action planning exercises with participants identified key regional challenges and proposed strengthened awareness, innovation, and circular economy. The program included a plenary session on the Blue Economy and participation in side events, including a PEMSEA-organized workshop on establishing a Marine Protected Area Network in the East Asian Seas aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework targets. Sessions emphasized knowledge exchange, best practices, biodiversity conservation, sustainable ocean economies, and strategies to address climate change and marine pollution.
 - Field visits were conducted at Busan Resource Recycling Town, showcasing circular economy practices, recycling industries, and efficient waste management systems. Participants toured the Busan Resource Recycling Cooperation Center, including a special exhibition on marine plastic pollution and artworks created from solid waste. A visit to Saenggok Landfill highlighted effective landfill management practices, odor and toxic gas reduction measures, and strong government-supported financial and operational systems. Participants also visited F1963 to attend the exhibition “Plastic: Remaking Our World,” gaining insights into the history of plastics and emerging technologies for reuse, recycling, and upcycling. Cultural visits included Jagalchi

Market, one of Busan's most iconic seafood markets, and Gamcheon Culture Village, a revitalized hillside community known for public art and cultural heritage.

- On the final day, participants conducted regional assessments and group discussions to develop action plans for improved plastic waste management and marine plastic reduction. Proposed responses focused on strengthening education and awareness campaigns, scaling up best practices, preventing plastic leakage into the ocean, and promoting circular economy approaches through Expanded Producer Responsibility (EPR) and recycling/upcycling initiatives.

Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program – Philippines

32. Mr. John Christian Castillo reported on the implementation and progress of the Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program, with emphasis on its second year of operation in the Philippines. He explained that the program continued to strengthen community-based responses to marine plastic pollution by adopting a more inclusive and structured implementation approach across all MEP sites. He explained that the focus remained on building local capacity, fostering collaboration among LGUs, CENROs/MENROs, civil society organizations, and community groups, and aligning local actions with broader national and regional marine environmental objectives.
33. Mr. Castillo also reported on the MEP workshop held on March 18–19, 2025, and organized by the RPMU with participation from 11 representatives of LGUs and local NGOs.
 - Objectives included reviewing 2024 implementation, developing 2025 workplans, and sharing best practices.
 - A knowledge-sharing session featured the Aling Tindera Program, focusing on community-based plastic pollution reduction.
 - One additional MEP partner from Bulan (SorSU-Bulan Campus) was accepted for 2025.
34. Mr. Castillo noted that MEP activities in 2025 centered on four core components: capacity-building and information, education and communication (IEC) initiatives; coordinated coastal cleanup activities; the conduct of baseline behavior change surveys; and the publication of MEP Stories.
 - Training and IEC drives were delivered to youth groups, fisherfolk organizations, and coastal communities to raise awareness of the impacts of marine plastic pollution and promote responsible waste management practices.
 - As of November 19, 2025:
 - 13 IEC activities were conducted
 - 3,404 individuals were engaged across five sites
 - Capacity-building efforts emphasized recycling and proper plastic waste management.
35. Coastal cleanups conducted during World Ocean Day and International Coastal Cleanup Day served both as environmental interventions and as platforms for community mobilization and multi-stakeholder engagement:
 - All MEP partners conducted two major cleanups in 2025 during World Ocean Day (June 8) and International Coastal Cleanup Day (September 20).

- Total participation reached 3,401 volunteers, collecting 2,386.04 kg of waste across five sites. Plastic beverage bottles were the most frequently collected item, followed by food wrappers, bottle caps, plastic cups and plates, and take-out containers.
- A Coastal Cleanup Card was introduced to standardize waste documentation.

36. Mr. Castillo also highlighted the role of the two MEP Stories in documenting and communicating local initiatives, partnerships, and on-the-ground experiences, which helped enhance program visibility and encourage knowledge sharing among sites.

37. Mr. Castillo summarized that a total of 9,036 individuals were engaged in MEP activities, exceeding 2024 participation. Increased engagement was attributed to:

- Addition of new MEP partners
- More structured workplans
- Strong involvement of CENROs/MENROS
- Program achievements included expanded publications and exploration of broadcast platforms for outreach.

Marine Environment Protector (MEP) Program – Timor Leste

38. Ms. Klyra Orbien reported on the progress of the Marine Environmental Protector (MEP) Program in Timor-Leste, outlining the preparatory steps undertaken in 2025 to establish a strong foundation for program implementation.

- In March 2025, the Government of Timor-Leste formally recommended a group of organizations for consideration as MEP partners. These organizations submitted the required documentation to the Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU), which conducted a comprehensive review to assess their institutional capacity, community reach, and alignment with the objectives of the MEP Program.
- Following the review process, four organizations were identified as recommended MEP partners: Finartil Foundation from Dili, Fundasaun Nova Esperança Timor-Leste (F.NETIL) from Liquica, TAES (Tane As Interesse Sosiedade) from Manatuto, and Foundation SIAO from Atauro. Ms. Orbien explained that each organization demonstrated a strong track record in community-based environmental protection, sustainable development, and social empowerment.
- An MEP orientation workshop was conducted in June 2025 in Dili, Timor-Leste to share experience and success stories of MEP Philippines. Discussions during the workshop emphasized the importance of sound fund management, transparency, and accountability, with particular focus on ensuring that MEP resources are directed toward core implementation activities such as plastic collection, community outreach, and education campaigns.

39. Ms. Orbien informed that, as of September 2025, the recommended organizations had completed their initial workplans for 2026 activities and draft Letter of Agreements have been prepared by the

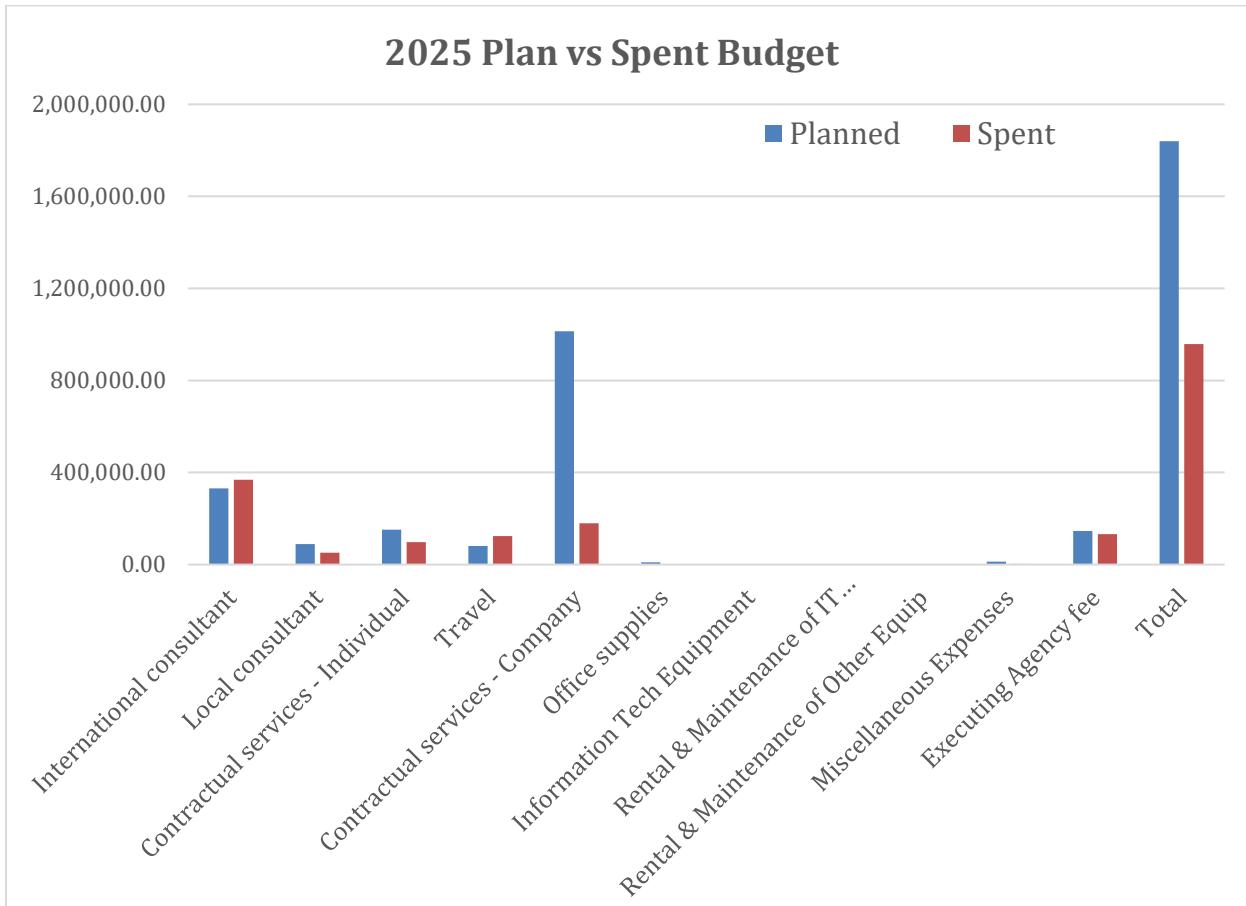
RPMU, and the MEP Program in Timor-Leste is scheduled to formally commence implementation in 2026.

Social Media Engagements

40. Ms. Klyra Orbien reported that the Project's Facebook page demonstrated a marked increase in content output, visibility, and audience engagement in 2025. A total of 28 posts related to the Project were published throughout the year, reaching 59,714 unique users. Reach reflects the number of individual users who saw the content at least once and indicates the breadth of the audience exposed to the Project's messaging. She added that audience interaction remained strong, generating 2,445 reactions, 176 comments, and 469 shares. Reactions provided insight into users' emotional responses, while comments reflected deeper engagement through feedback, questions, and expressions of support.
41. Ms. Orbien mentioned that overall data from 2023 to 2025 show a sustained and accelerating rise in visibility and engagement. Reach increased by 146.8% from 2023 to 2024 and surged by 605% from 2024 to 2025, resulting in a cumulative growth of 1,641% over the three-year period. She added that engagement followed a similar trajectory, rising by 47% from 2023 to 2024 and by 555% from 2024 to 2025, for a total increase of 863%. Viewership expanded dramatically, climbing from 2,468 views in 2024 to 123,179 views in 2025, while total clicks rose by 1,813% over the same period.

Financial Report

42. Dr. Shin reported on the 2025 Financial Report, outlining the approved budget, funding inflows, expenditure status, and carry-over balance. He stated that the approved budget for 2025 amounted to USD 1,839,652, as endorsed during the 2nd RSC meeting and as reflected in the Project Document. This was complemented by a carried-over balance of USD 210,351.21 from 2024. He further reported that a replenishment from the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) totaling USD 1,656,739.06 was received in late April 2025. Taken together, these resulted in an actual budget for 2025 of USD 1,867,090.27, which is USD 27,438.27 higher than the originally approved amount.
43. Dr. Shin explained that as of the reporting period, approximately 52 percent of the 2025 budget had been utilized. He attributed the relatively low expenditure rate primarily due to delays in the completion of detailed designs for the pilot projects, which were affected by the late receipt of MOF replenishment funds. He also noted that the approval processes and the signing of Memoranda of Agreement for the pilot projects were only completed in September and October 2025, further constraining disbursement within the year.



44. He added that expenditures under the category of contractual services for companies accounted for approximately 17 percent of total spending, largely because the pilot projects had not yet moved into the implementation phase.
45. Dr. Shin concluded by reporting a projected carry-over balance of USD 909,116.24 from the total 2025 budget of USD 1,867,090.27, which will support the continued implementation of project activities moving into the succeeding period.

Discussions

46. Ms. Gonzales thanked the Chair and commended the team for efforts in the ODA project, highlighting work in the Philippines and Timor-Leste. She expressed concern regarding the temporary pause of the beach monitoring program due to reduced ODA project fund in 2026, noting its potential for generating actionable data to inform government and community interventions. Ms. Gonzales suggested consolidating results of similar projects (e.g., KOICA beach monitoring initiatives) to compare methodologies and results, enabling broader analysis of domestic sources, types, and trends of marine plastics.
47. Ms. Gonzales also highlighted the importance of community stories and integrating lessons from multiple projects to amplify impact and inform a compendium on plastic pollution mitigation. She

raised questions on social media engagement metrics and methods to convert analytics into measurable actions, such as tracking e-poster downloads and shares.

48. The Chair recommended showcasing results in the FASPS DRIP series to stimulate discussion among participants and partners.

Response from RPMU

49. Dr. Shin informed the meeting that while beach monitoring is temporarily on hold for 2026 due to reduced ODA budget for 2026, the data from 2024–2025 monitoring will be consolidated and compared with Korea’s 20-year dataset and the KOICA Manila Bay monitoring for comparison with pilot sites in the Philippines. He mentioned that seasonal variations in plastic waste collection will be analyzed, including monsoon effects from July–December.
50. Dr. Shin mentioned that the project activities for 2026 will be focused on Component 2: pilot project implementation in the Philippines and development in Timor-Leste. He also mentioned that the MEP program activities will be continued selectively in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.

AGENDA 2. 2026 WORKPLAN AND BUDGET

51. Dr. Shin presented the proposed 2026 Work Plan and Budget, outlining the financial outlook, staffing implications, and priority activities for the coming year in light of the reduced overall budget.
52. He reported that the projected funding for 2026 consists of a Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) replenishment of USD 700,000 (exchange rate of 1,420), combined with a carried-over balance of USD 909,116.24 from the 2025 budget, resulting in a total available budget of USD 1,609,116.24. After accounting for the PEMSEA execution fee of USD 56,000, the remaining operational balance stands at USD 1,553,116.24. Of this amount, USD 1,000,000 has been earmarked for the implementation of pilot projects in the Philippines, leaving an estimated balance of USD 553,116.24.

Budget Item	Amount	Balance
2026 MOF replenishment	700,000.00	
2025 Carried-over budget	909,116.24	1,609,116.24
PEMSEA Execution Fee	56,000.00	1,553,116.24
Philippines pilot projects	1,000,000.00	553,116.24

53. Dr. Shin noted that the RPMU will request early replenishment from the Republic of Korea as early as January 2026 and will utilize the 2025 carried-over funds to support pilot project implementation in the Philippines and Timor-Leste during the first and second quarters of 2026.
54. Turning to the RPMU Operational Plan for 2026, Dr. Shin explained that staffing will be reduced in response to budget constraints. The RPMU will maintain five (5) core staff until September 2026 and four (4) thereafter.
55. Dr. Shin outlined that the 2026 Work Plan will focus primarily on Component 2 (Demonstration or Pilot Projects) and Component 4 (Awareness and Capacity), given the financial limitations. No

activities are planned under the governance and monitoring components. Under Component 2, regional activities will include site support mission trips, while in the Philippines, six pilot projects will be implemented.

Component	Regional Activity	Philippines Activity	Timor-Leste Activity
Com1. Governance	None	None	None
Com2. Pilot Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site support mission trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Pilot projects implementation • 2 SGP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot project concept development • Detailed Design of pilot project
Com3. Monitoring	None	None	None
Com4. Awareness and Capacity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 MEPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 MEPs
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th RSC meeting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Project Coordinator • National Technical Advisor

56. Dr. Shin further detailed that pilot project implementation in the Philippines will commence in January 2026 and will cover procurement of equipment, training of operators, consultations, site ground truthing, and ceremonial activities such as ground-breaking and installations. For Timor-Leste, a local consultant will be engaged from January to June 2026 to develop pilot project concepts, which will be reviewed and approved during an intersessional RSC meeting in July 2026. Detailed designs will be prepared from August to December 2026 and reported to the 4th RSC meeting.
57. Dr. Shin also reported that the Small Grant Program will be launched in January 2026 through a request for proposals, with two awardees to be selected by a designated committee. For the MEP Program, an evaluation of existing Philippine MEP partners will be conducted, after which three partners will be selected to support pilot project implementation.
58. Dr. Shin noted that four MEP partners in Timor-Leste were already identified and trained in 2025, providing a strong foundation for program rollout. In accordance with the revised MOU for Timor-Leste, the RPMU will hire a National Project Coordinator and a National Technical Advisor to support in-country implementation.

Discussion

59. The Chair acknowledged reduced 2026 budget and expressed appreciation for Korea's continued funding support despite the changes in government leadership in 2025. He hoped that the ODA fund will be restored in 2027 budget.
60. The Chair stressed the importance of consulting local and national government agencies in Timor-Leste to develop context-appropriate pilot project solutions. He also recommended that procurement be conducted with due diligence, competitive bidding, and leveraging existing training programs to avoid duplication.
61. Ms. Gonzales suggested clarification to the SGP program applicants and ensuring transparency and opportunity for resubmission, as well as communicating with beach monitoring partners and project teams on temporary halt of the beach monitoring program in 2026.

Approval of 2026 Work Plan & Budget

62. The Chair expressed his satisfaction with the comprehensive work plan and budget for 2026. With the consent of the participants, the Chair approved the work plan and budget for 2026 as presented.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

63. The Chair summarized the meeting as follows:
 - The RPMU has implemented the 2025 work plan and budget with due diligence and maintained sound budget management;
 - The 2025 Accomplishment Report demonstrates substantial progress in strengthening local governance, including the signing of MOUs/MOAs and the Mayors' Compact with Philippine LGUs;
 - The detailed designs of six pilot projects in the Philippines have been completed and endorsed, with clear LGU co-financing commitments for implementation starting 2026;
 - Beach monitoring on marine plastics and litter in ten sites in the Philippines and Timor-Leste continues to generate valuable scientific data on types, sources and trends of marine plastics and litter;
 - The Marine Environmental Protector (MEP) activities in the Philippines have expanded significantly and demonstrated strong impact on awareness and community engagement, and groundwork for MEPs in Timor-Leste has been laid for implementation in 2026; and
 - The 2nd Learning Exchange Program and enhanced communication and outreach activities have effectively shared best practices and raised the visibility of the ODA Project at national and regional levels.

Recommendations

64. The Chair recommended the following:

- The meeting endorsed the 2025 Accomplishment Report of the ODA Project;
- The meeting approved the proposed 2026 Work Plan and Budget, taking into account the reduction in the ODA budget allocation by the Korean government;
- The meeting requests the RPMU and Philippine partners to prioritize and fast-track the implementation of the six approved pilot projects beginning in early 2026, making full use of the ODA funds and LGU co-financing;
- The meeting requests the RPMU and Timor-Leste to complete the pilot project concepts by June 2026 and the detailed designs by December 2026 for consideration at the 4th RSC meeting; and
- The meeting requests the RPMU to optimize the use of project resources, expedite budget execution for pilot implementation, and support the Government of the Republic of Korea in justifying restoration of the original budget level in the 2027 planning cycle.

CLOSING

65. The Chair congratulated on the achievements of the RPMU on the work of 2025 and expressed his expectation that the good work will continue in 2026. He wished a happy year's end and New year.
66. The Chair closed the meeting at 11:30.

ANNEX 1. PROGRAM

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

3rd REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

10 December 2025 Via Zoom at PEMSEA Office

Provisional Program

MC: Ms. Klyra Orbien, PEMSEA

Time	Activity	Note
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:20	Messages <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Opening remarks● Message● Message● Message	
09:20-09:30	Adoption of agenda	Chairperson
09:30-10:30	Agenda 1. 2025 Accomplishment Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review of previous RSC decisions and recommendations- Component 1- Component 2- Component 3- Component 4- 2025 Financial Report	RPMU
10:30-11:00	Agenda 2. 2026 Work plan and budget	Dr. Won-Tae Shin
11:00-11:20	Conclusions and recommendations	Chairperson
11:20-11:30	Closing message	Chairperson

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

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

Ms. Elsie Merina, Admin Officer, PEMSEA

Mr. Arsenio Dacaymat Jr.
IT Administrator

ANNEX 3. PHOTO DOCUMENTATION

Please click on the link below to access all photos:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/13M1eleW41fJvLS Ct9oHZqt8eJKSyOgfY>