



Ministry of Oceans
and Fisheries



PEMSEA

MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project
Reducing Marine Plastics in the
East Asian Seas Region

Intersessional Regional Steering Committee Meeting

17 September 2025
Quezon City, Philippines via Zoom

INTERSESSIONAL REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

Quezon City through Zoom | 17 September 2025

MEETING REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. The Intersessional Regional Steering Committee (RSC) Meeting of the MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project on Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region was held on 17 September 2025 via Zoom, in line with the agreements made during the 2nd RSC Meeting in December 2024. The primary objective of this session was to review and endorse the detailed designs of pilot projects in the six Philippine project sites: Bulan, Calbayog, Daanbantayan, Dipolog, Puerto Princesa, and Tandag.
2. These pilot projects form part of Component 2 of the ODA Project, which focuses on demonstrating best practices and locally adapted solutions for marine plastics reduction. Designed to respond directly to site-specific challenges identified during the baseline assessments, the pilot projects aim to improve local plastics and waste management systems, enhance community engagement, and reduce the leakage of plastic waste into coastal and marine environments. The interventions are aligned with national and local priorities.
3. During the 2nd RSC meeting in 2024, the pilot project concepts for the Philippine sites were approved. Subsequently, the detailed designs of the pilot projects have been developed by the consulting firm, EECL, Inc., in close collaboration with local government units (LGUs) in 2025. These designs reflect the insights, technical inputs, feasibilities and on-ground realities gathered through extensive stakeholder consultations.
4. The Intersessional RSC meeting was an essential step to ensure that the proposed interventions are sound, feasible, and ready for implementation. The outcomes will not only guide the pilot project implementation but also reinforce the collective commitment of project partners to achieve measurable impacts in reducing marine plastics in the Philippines.
5. The meeting was organized in hybrid format: at the conference room of the office of Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones and through Zoom for the online participants. The program of the Intersessional RSC meeting is attached as Annex 1.

OPENING

6. Ms. Klyra Orbien, Junior Communications Officer of the Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) of PEMSEA, welcomed all the participants physically present as well as those who participated online. The list of participants is attached as Annex 2.
7. The Heads of Delegation of the Philippines, Timor-Leste and RO Korea delivered their remarks for this important event. PEMSEA Executive Director attended the meeting through Zoom but was not

able to deliver her remarks due to interruption of internet connection in Jakarta, Indonesia. Highlights of the remarks are summarized below.

Message

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

8. Undersecretary Jonas Leones, in his capacity as Chair, formally welcomed the participants to the Intersessional Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee. He underscored the importance of the gathering, highlighting that it was convened to review and approve the detailed designs of six pilot projects in the Philippines. These projects, he noted, embody the collective commitment of the region to combat marine plastic pollution through innovative, community-driven approaches.
9. Speaking on behalf of the Government of the Philippines and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Usec. Leones extended appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its steadfast support, and to PEMSEA and the partner local governments for their dedication in advancing the work of the project. He emphasized that the pilot projects go beyond technical interventions, serving as concrete demonstrations of how local action, regional cooperation, and shared responsibility can safeguard marine ecosystems and build stronger community resilience.
10. Usec. Leones expressed optimism for the discussions ahead and looked forward to the Committee's collective endorsement of the pilot projects, paving the way for their effective implementation and eventual replication across the region.

Message

Ms. Alda Sousa Rousa, Chief of Staff of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry (MALFF), Timor-Leste

11. Ms. Alda Sousa Rousa, conveyed Timor-Leste's appreciation for being part of the regional initiative and commended the Philippines for the progress achieved in developing detailed designs for locally appropriate pilot projects. She highlighted that these ongoing efforts provide valuable insights and practical examples that will guide Timor-Leste as it prepares to develop its own pilot projects under the ODA project.
12. Ms. Rousa emphasized the importance of drawing lessons from the Philippine experience, particularly in engaging local governments and communities and in ensuring that solutions are grounded in scientific evidence. She extended Timor-Leste's gratitude to PEMSEA, the Government of the Republic of Korea, and other partners for their continued support and collaboration.
13. In closing, she reiterated Timor-Leste's commitment to work closely with regional partners to reduce marine plastics and safeguard coastal and marine resources for the benefit of future generations.

Message

Mr. Kim Jinyong, Assistant Director, Marine Conservation Division, Marine Environment Policy Bureau, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, RO Korea

14. Mr. Kim Jinyong expressed his appreciation to the participants for their active involvement. He extended his gratitude to Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones of the DENR, Ms. Alda Sousa Rousa of Timor-Leste, and Ms. Aimee Gonzales, Executive Director of PEMSEA, as well as all government officials from national and local levels who have contributed to the process. He underscored that the pilot projects constitute a core component of the Marine Plastics ODA Project, involving significant budgetary resources and requiring the active engagement of local governments. For this reason, he stressed the importance of thoroughly reviewing both the technical designs and feasibility results before proceeding to full-scale implementation.
15. Mr. Kim emphasized that the Republic of Korea expected the Committee's discussions to be both comprehensive and constructive, ultimately leading to the endorsement of the proposed pilot projects. He expressed confidence that the projects would effectively reflect local realities while integrating innovative ideas and solutions for long-term success. He further affirmed that the Korean government would continue to work closely with PEMSEA to provide the necessary support to ensure sustainable operations once the projects are implemented.
16. Looking ahead, Mr. Kim highlighted that the lessons and experiences gained in the Philippines would be invaluable as Timor-Leste prepares to commence its own pilot project development under the ODA project next year. In closing, he expressed appreciation to PEMSEA, EECI and the Philippine local governments for their dedication in developing the detailed designs and feasibility assessments that made the meeting's deliberations possible.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

17. Usec. Jonas Leones chaired the meeting. The Chair called the Regional Project Manager, Dr. Won-Tae Shin, to introduce the meeting agenda. After reviewing the agenda, the Chair adopted the meeting agenda.

AGENDA 1. DETAILED DESIGNS OF PILOT PROJECTS

18. The Chair called Dr. Won Tae Shin to present the detailed designs of pilot projects.
19. Dr. Won-Tae Shin, Regional Project Manager, presented the detailed designs of the six pilot projects in the Philippines under the Marine Plastics ODA Project. He emphasized that each site design is grounded in baseline studies, feasibility assessments, and strong local consultations, ensuring that the interventions respond directly to community needs while aligning with national and regional policy frameworks. The presentation highlighted the issues faced by each locality, the interventions being proposed, the expected outputs and outcomes, and the financial commitments from both PEMSEA and the respective LGUs. The following is a summary of major contents of each pilot project.

Bulan Municipality, Sorsogon Province

20. Bulan Municipality currently faces significant challenges in managing its growing volume of solid waste, particularly plastics. The existing Material Recovery Facility (MRF) is already at full capacity, congested with equipment, and unable to keep pace with the waste generated by its 49 barangays.

As a result, plastics that could otherwise be recycled or repurposed are left unmanaged, raising the risk of leakage into nearby rivers and coastal waters. This not only threatens the municipality's marine environment but also undermines the progress of its local solid waste management programs. Without additional infrastructure and upgraded equipment, the LGU may remain unable to meet its recycling targets or comply with national waste management standards.

21. The project will expand the existing facility by constructing a 400 m² MRF extension and providing a high-capacity shredder with a processing rate of 1,000 kg/day. A detailed waste collection plan has also been developed, ensuring that plastic waste from non-Población barangays is collected and consolidated for processing. The expanded facility will process around 3,220 kg of plastic waste per day, with a more efficient clustering and transport schedule. The outcome is a fully functional recycling chain that minimizes underfilling of trucks, prevents plastic leakage, and builds stronger LGU waste management systems.
22. The intervention will be supported by a budget of ₱6.84 million from PEMSEA, while the local government has committed an additional ₱1.36 million to cover counterpart costs, bringing the total project allocation in Bulan to about ₱8.2 million.

Calbayog City, Samar Province

23. Calbayog City is confronted with the persistent issue of plastic leakage into the Calbayog River, one of the city's major waterways that drains directly into the sea. Despite local efforts to manage waste at the barangay level, the absence of interception infrastructure means that plastics continue to enter the river unchecked, contributing to downstream marine pollution. Compounding this problem is the lack of a structured system for retrieval and transport of collected waste, leaving the city with limited capacity to prevent plastics from reaching coastal areas. A comprehensive approach is essential for Calbayog to protect its river system and demonstrate effective city-level solutions for marine plastic reduction.
24. The project will introduce trash traps in the Calbayog River, supported by flatbottom boats for retrieval and transport, two eco-vehicles for collection, and a baling machine for compaction and recycling preparation. This combination addresses both interception and downstream logistics. The system will capture floating plastics before they enter marine ecosystems, ensure efficient collection and transport, and strengthen Calbayog's capacity to manage its river system sustainably. The long-term outcome is a measurable reduction in plastic leakage into coastal waters and a model that can be replicated in other secondary cities.
25. PEMSEA is allocating approximately ₱5.28 million for equipment, vehicles, and traps, while the city government will contribute around ₱44.5 million. The total investment for Calbayog is valued at ₱49.78 million.

Daanbantayan Municipality, Cebu Province

26. Daanbantayan faces mounting volumes of unprocessed plastic waste at its central MRF, a problem that has steadily worsened due to population growth, tourism activities, and rising consumption of

plastic-based products. With no advanced recycling facility in place, plastics are stockpiled in open areas, creating environmental and health hazards while increasing the likelihood of leakage into nearby coastal waters. The absence of a structured system for converting waste into reusable products means that valuable materials are being wasted, and opportunities for livelihood creation are missed. Therefore, the necessity of this project is rooted in transforming the municipality's approach from basic waste collection to circular economy practices.

27. The project will establish a plastic recycling and product manufacturing facility equipped with a shredder/crusher, washer, dryer, extruder, hydraulic press, and molds. This facility will convert plastics into value-added products, primarily school chairs. With a projected processing capacity of 25,850 kg of plastic per month, the facility will produce around 1,100 chairs per month, generating potential revenue of ₱400,000–₱500,000 monthly. This not only reduces plastic leakage but also supports the local economy, providing livelihood opportunities and contributing to the education sector.
28. The local government has committed more than ₱26.1 million for facility construction and operations, while PEMSEA will provide equipment support valued at about ₱16.5 million. The combined investment in Daanbantayan reaches ₱42.6 million.

Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte Province

29. Dipolog City is grappling with the problem of plastic waste flowing unchecked through Miputak Creek, which acts as a direct conduit to the sea. The creek collects waste from surrounding communities that lack proper segregation and collection systems, resulting in constant inflows of unmanaged plastics into coastal areas. Without intervention, this situation threatens marine biodiversity, fisheries resources, and the overall ecological health of the city's coastal waters. Compounding the issue is the absence of infrastructure to intercept, transport, and process the waste in an organized manner. Breaking this cycle will provide the city with the means to capture and process plastics before they reach the sea.
30. The project proposes the installation of trash traps in Miputak Creek, combined with a system of collection and transport via flatboats and lifting devices, and processing at the central MRF using a baling machine. The intervention will reduce the daily volume of plastics discharged from the creek into the sea and enhance the LGU's capacity for sustained interception and recycling. The outcome is improved creek and coastal water quality, alongside institutional learning on low-cost interception solutions.
31. PEMSEA is contributing around ₱3.12 million for the traps, balers, and transport equipment, while the LGU has committed ₱6.44 million in local resources. The total value of the Dipolog project stands at ₱9.56 million.

Puerto Princesa City, Palawan Province

32. Puerto Princesa, as a growing urban center and key tourism destination, faces unique challenges in managing its solid waste. The city's waste collection system is hindered by logistical inefficiencies,

with gaps in routing and scheduling resulting in inconsistent coverage across its wide geographical area. These inefficiencies lead to unmanaged plastics accumulating in waterways, eventually leaking into rivers and the marine environment, which threatens both local livelihoods and the city's reputation as a leading eco-tourism hub. Strengthening collection logistics is therefore essential to protecting the city's marine environment while reinforcing its image as a champion of sustainable urban development.

33. The project will procure six eco-vehicles and optimize their operations using a mapped routing system and an operations plan. It will monitor vehicle performance and collection efficiency, ensuring plastics are systematically diverted to the city's MRF. The intervention is expected to streamline citywide waste collection, improve coverage, and reduce unmanaged plastics entering marine ecosystems. Over time, it will contribute to systemic efficiency in urban waste logistics and help Puerto Princesa set a benchmark for integrated waste collection.
34. PEMSEA is investing ₱3.68 million for eco-vehicles and supporting systems, while the city government has pledged ₱3.71 million to sustain and expand collection efforts. The total budget for Puerto Princesa amounts to ₱7.39 million.

Tandag City, Surigao del Sur Province

35. Tandag City is facing growing plastic waste accumulation within its ecological park, where existing facilities are insufficient to recycle or repurpose the volume of waste being generated. The lack of adequate equipment means that plastics are often left unmanaged or disposed of in ways that provide little to no environmental benefit. This situation not only poses a pollution risk but also represents a lost opportunity to convert plastic into useful products and create local economic activity. By establishing a full-scale recycling and repurposing facility that can transform plastic waste into durable, marketable items for community use, the city will gain the capacity to significantly increase its diversion rates, reduce the environmental footprint of its waste, and create livelihood opportunities.
36. The project will build a plastic processing and repurposing facility equipped with shredders, washers, dryers, extruders, hydraulic presses, and molds. This will allow plastics to be repurposed into community-use products, reducing disposal and creating livelihood opportunities. The facility will increase plastic diversion rates, foster local enterprise through plastic repurposing, and reduce environmental pollution. The outcome is a replicable, community-based circular economy model for other small coastal cities.
37. The LGU has committed ₱16.39 million in local funds, complemented by PEMSEA's ₱16.5 million allocation for equipment and technical support. Together, these contributions bring the total investment in Tandag to ₱32.89 million.

Overall Budget Summary

38. Dr. Shin summarized committed budget for the pilot projects across the six Philippine sites. He presented that PEMSEA's allocation totals ₱51.92 million, with a 20% contingency margin bringing

the final estimate to ₱62.3 million (approx. US\$1.11 million). Local governments collectively committed nearly twice PEMSEA's share, bringing the overall PEMSEA: LGU funding ratio to 1:1.89. This strong co-financing demonstrates LGU ownership and ensures that the interventions will have financial sustainability beyond the life of the project.

Discussions

39. Usec. Leones noted that the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between PEMSEA and the mayors should be supported by a local ordinance through the Sangguniang Bayan (City/Municipal Council). This was suggested to provide a more stable legal basis and ensure continuity even with changes in local leadership. He stressed the need for legal and institutional safeguards for project continuity, given that local government leadership changes every three years. In this line, he directed the LGUs to get the necessary internal approvals for the MOA before the signing ceremony, which he announced was scheduled for October 22 at a mayor's conference.
40. Usec. Leones also stressed that projects should be branded properly to reflect government ownership and alignment with national priorities (logos of PEMSEA, DENR, Bagong Pilipinas). He noted that beyond pilot implementation, projects must be positioned as government-led initiatives for long-term legitimacy and replication and produce cascading efforts through the Office of the President to reinforce government support and visibility.
41. Usec. Leones encouraged LGUs to maximize the pilot, stressing they are "lucky and fortunate" beneficiaries and called on them to make the projects successful so they could serve as models for replication nationwide.
42. Dr. Al Orolfo, Director of FASPS, raised the importance of site security and sustainability of infrastructure, especially boats, noting past issues in ODA projects where LGUs failed to safeguard docking areas for boats and equipment during typhoons. He also called for LGU commitment in financing and maintenance of facilities to prevent wastage of investments and supported Usec. Leones' points, reinforcing that sustainability and LGU ownership are key to long-term project success.

Approval of the Detailed Designs of Pilot Projects

43. With comments and discussions, the RSC approved the detailed designs of pilot projects to be implemented at the six sites in the Philippines.

AGENDA 2. UPDATES ON THE ODA PROJECT

44. The chair requested RO Korea update on the ODA budget projection for 2026.
45. Mr. Kim Jinyong of MOF provided an update on the 2026 budget for the Marine Plastics ODA Project. He reported that due to shifts in national policy priorities and measures to stimulate the domestic economy, the overall ODA budget of the Korean government for 2026 has been reduced. Consequently, the allocation for the Marine Plastics ODA Project has also been affected.

46. He noted that the final budget figures will be confirmed upon approval by the National Assembly in December, after which the updated allocation will be formally communicated to the Philippines and Timor-Leste. Despite the reduction, he assured the Committee that the Government of Korea and the PEMSEA ODA Project Team remain committed to implementing the planned activities without disruption.
47. The Chair requested Timor-Leste on the updates on the MOU revision and signing for the ODA Project implementation in Timor-Leste.
48. Ms. Alda Sousa Rousa of MALFF explained that she was not in a position to provide details on the status of the MOU revision, as this matter is being handled by the Principal Advisor to the Minister. Dr. Shin clarified that he has been in discussion with the Principal Advisor.
49. Dr. Shin reported to the Committee that interministerial consultations on the revision of the MOU within the Government of Timor-Leste, involving the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and the Ministry of Finance, were completed in August 2025. He further reported that the revised MOU is expected to be signed during the visit of the Minister of MALFF to Manila in the last week of September, on the occasion of the ASEAN meeting.
50. The Chair requested the Secretariat to make note on the updates concerning the ODA project and suggested that appropriate follow-ups be taken and reported in the forthcoming meetings.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

51. The following are the recommendations of the Intersessional RSC meeting:
 - The RPMU successfully documented the detailed designs of pilot projects at six Philippine sites, in collaboration with a consulting firm and the respective LGUs;
 - The detailed designs of pilot projects are well prepared and sound, ready to be implemented;
 - LGUs have shown the ownership of the pilot project at their respective sites through the two-years of development process;
 - The meeting acknowledged the ODA budget projection for 2026; and
 - The revision of the MOU for ODA implementation in Timor-Leste has been concluded and the MOU is ready to be signed.

Recommendations

52. The following are the recommendations of the Intersessional RSC meeting:
 - The meeting approved the six detailed designs of pilot projects for implementation at the Philippine sites, considering the suggestions and recommendations made at this meeting;
 - The RPMU will pay due diligence in implementing the pilot projects through frequent site visits and close consultation with the LGUs and the EMB Regional Offices;
 - The RPMU will develop and implement an effective monitoring and evaluation program for the pilot projects implementation;
 - The RPMU will design the work plan and budget for 2026 ODA implementation considering the projected budget for 2026;

- The RPMU will implement the ODA Project in Timor-Leste considering the budget projection for 2026 and beyond; and
- The meeting requests the government of RO Korea to make efforts to restore the ODA budget to a committed level in the coming budget process.

CLOSING

53. The Chair expressed his sincere appreciation to the members of the Regional Steering Committee for their active participation and constructive contributions, noting that these had been instrumental in ensuring the successful conduct of the meeting. He also extended thanks to the local partners who were present and who have demonstrated strong support for their respective pilot projects. The Chair underscored that the visible sense of ownership among the LGUs is a crucial factor for the successful implementation of the pilot projects. He concluded by stating that the Committee looks forward to witnessing the outcomes of these pilot projects' implementation, which will be shared and further discussed in the upcoming RSC meetings.
54. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 11:00.

ANNEX 1. PROGRAM

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

INTERSESSIONAL REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

17 September 2025

Quezon City through Zoom

Program

Chair: Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones, DENR, Philippines

MC: Ms. Klyra Orbien, PEMSEA

Time	Activity	Note
09:00-09:30	Messages <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opening remarks• message• message• message	PEMSEA Philippines Timor-Leste RO Korea
09:30-09:40	Adoption of agenda	Chairperson
09:40-10:00	Agenda 1. Detailed designs of pilot projects of the Philippine sites <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bulan- Calbayog- Daanbantayan- Dipolog- Puerto Princesa- Tandag	Dr. Won-Tae Shin, Regional Project Manager, RPMU Assisted by the focal points of the Philippine sites
10:00-11:00	Discussion	Chairperson
11:00-11:20	Agenda 2. Updates on the ODA Project <ul style="list-style-type: none">- RO Korea: 2026 ODA Budget- Timor-Leste: MOU revision for the ODA Project Implementation	Chairperson
11:20-11:40	Conclusions and recommendations	Chairperson
11:30-11:40	Closing message	Chairperson

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ANNEX 3. PHOTOS

