



Proceedings of the 3rd Meeting of the Blue Carbon Technical Working Group

12 September 2025
Zoom

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Introduction

- I. The PEMSEA Resource Facility organized an online meeting of the Blue Carbon Technical Working Group on 12 September 2025.
- II. Supporting documents may be found in the Annexes:
 - A. Annex 1 - Agenda Items
 - B. Annex 2 - List of Participants
 - C. Annex 3 - Photos

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1. PEMSEA Resource Facility Executive Director, Ms. Aimee Gonzales formally introduced Dr. Suk-Jae Kwon as the new Chair of the Blue Carbon Technical Working Group (BC TWG) and gratefully acknowledged Dr. Keita Furukawa, former Chair of the BC TWG, for his expertise and leadership over the past year, particularly in advancing the roadmap and the Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services Mechanism (BCESM). She welcomed Dr. Furukawa as a continuing member of the BC TWG and expressed appreciation for his contributions.
- 1.2. Dr. Suk-Jae Kwon opened the meeting by greeting members and welcoming them to the 3rd BC TWG Meeting. He recognized and sincerely thanked Dr. Furukawa for his invaluable leadership as the previous Chair, noting his technical guidance in shaping the group's direction and laying the foundation for ongoing work. Dr. Kwon then outlined the priorities of the session, focusing on revisions to the Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol, setting directions for 2025–2026, and convening the Mangrove Core Group for further discussions. He also welcomed new colleagues from Cambodia, expressed confidence in the group's collective expertise, and officially opened the 3rd BC TWG Meeting.
- 1.3. He then requested the Secretariat to present the Agenda of the meeting. With no objections, he proceeded to the next agenda item.

2. Feedback from the Partnership Council from the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting last July

- 2.1. Ms. Abigail Cruzada presented the feedback of the Partnership Council from the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting held in July.
- 2.2. She reported that KIOST reaffirmed its support for the Blue Carbon Program through technical assistance, training, and the identification of potential pilot sites in the Republic of Korea, and further expressed interest in pursuing ODA to ensure long-term investment. KMI highlighted its continuing support through workshops and by sharing insights from the World Bank report. NMHMS reiterated its commitment to provide support through training, research, and the piloting of RBCAP in collaboration with the EAS Monitoring Network and PEMSEA partners.
- 2.3. With respect to the BCESMM, KMI emphasized the importance of linking the Blue Carbon strategy with the promotion of the blue economy, while also recommending the development of a certifiable methodology for voluntary carbon markets. China underscored the need to adopt international and national standards, such as those of IUCN and IPCC, and highlighted the importance of monitoring and accreditation, conducting supply assessments, and improving understanding of carbon stocks and fluxes.
- 2.4. Specifically, on BC accounting, Dr. Allan Castillo of DENR-ERDB proposed the application of the 2017 IPCC methodologies, with particular attention to the inclusion of tidal flats in the BCESM, and encouraged collaboration with certification bodies. The Philippines recommended onsite Blue Carbon accounting and pilot testing as a means to inform both policy development and market applications.
- 2.5. Dr. Kwon thanked Ms. Cruzada for sharing updates from the Partnership Council members and requested the group for any comments or feedback.
- 2.6. **Action:** The BC TWG acknowledged the feedback and suggestions on the BCESMMs cited above.

3. Refined Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol (RBCAP)

- 3.1. Ms. Abigail Cruzada shared updates on the Refined Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol (RBCAP). She explained that the RBCAP provides a harmonized methodology for coastal blue carbon accounting across East and Southeast Asia, supporting regional

comparability, credibility, and future readiness for carbon crediting. The protocol has been developed through iterative review by the Technical Working Group (TWG), drawing from national experiences and global standards.

- 3.2. She also presented feedback from the TWG during its June 2025 meeting. Members recommended clarifying eligible activities by shifting from rigid “project types” to more flexible “activity types.” They further stressed the importance of strengthening long-term sustainability checks by considering the duration of MRV, permanence, and risks of ecosystem loss. To enhance usability, the protocol should be presented in a more practitioner-friendly format, with clear definitions, diagrams, and step-by-step methods. Finally, the scope of RBCAP should be expanded to include greenhouse gas accounting contributions from additional blue carbon ecosystems and organisms, such as tidal flats, seaweeds, and molluscs.
- 3.3. She then turned the floor over to Ms. Kristina Di Ticman, PEMSEA Consultant, who presented updates on the new format of the Refined Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol (RBCAP). She explained that the main text has been streamlined and reorganized into two sections: (i) general guidance covering project boundaries, baseline and project scenarios, tiering systems, MRV, permanence, and verification; and (ii) annexes containing ecosystem-specific methodologies for mangroves, seagrass, salt marshes, and BCE mapping.
- 3.4. Ms. Di Ticman shared progress and next steps on RBCAP finalization, noting that TWG feedback has been incorporated into the reorganized protocol. Drafts of the main text, mangrove, and seagrass annexes have been prepared, while the salt marsh and BCE mapping modules are in progress. The next phase will involve circulating drafts for detailed review and inviting TWG contributions to new modules, such as tidal flats, seaweeds, and flux measurements.
- 3.5. **Discussion:**
- 3.6. Dr. Keita Furukawa commented on the main text and draft annex for mangroves, stressing the importance of clearly defining carbon capture and carbon sequestration, particularly if the scope is expanded to include seaweeds and tidal flats. He noted that mangroves remain the most straightforward ecosystem to account for at this stage.
- 3.7. Dr. Laura David agreed, emphasizing that mangroves should be prioritized first, while other ecosystems—still under development and with many uncertainties—may be

mentioned in the manual as potential blue carbon ecosystems, but not yet integrated into the current methodology.

- 3.8. Mr. Masanori raised questions regarding mangrove accounting and its linkages with Article 6.2 and 6.4 of the Paris Agreement, as well as UN trading schemes still under discussion. He asked how blue carbon accounting would align with international carbon markets and stakeholder groups, including capacity building through international carbon training.
- 3.9. Ms. Aimee Gonzales clarified that the objective of the RBCAP is to support both NDC fulfillment and potential market applications. She stressed the importance of a stepwise approach, starting with a harmonized regional protocol for mangroves to guide certification and trading of carbon credits across countries, while allowing national protocols to be used for domestic purposes. Countries without established protocols are encouraged to adopt the regional framework. She further noted that biodiversity credits would be taken up in subsequent discussions.
- 3.10. Dr. McGlone echoed Dr. Furukawa's points, highlighting the need for more case studies on carbon sequestration, such as JBLUE, to strengthen the protocol.
- 3.11. In closing, Dr. Furukawa expressed support for the proposed stepwise approach, commended the quality of the main text, and recommended refining the annexes on seagrass and salt marshes before integrating them into the accounting protocol. Ms. Kristina Di Ticman also called on partners to contribute case studies and literature, particularly for seagrass and salt marshes, given the limited published data currently available.
- 3.12. **Decision:** The BC TWG approved the Main Manual, while the Annexes remain subject to approval.

4. Blue Carbon Program and Activities (2025-2026)

- 4.1. Dr. Kwon turned the floor over to Dr. Yeajin Jung of KMI to present the upcoming Blue Carbon Seminar next year which will be held in April and is open to all BC TWG Members.
- 4.2. Ms. Cruzada then announced the schedule of the upcoming BC TWG and Core Group meetings. The next Blue Carbon TWG meeting is set for 4 November, while the Core Group meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Core Group: Discussion on the BC Concept Note – 2 October
- Seagrass Core Group: Review of the Seagrass Annex – 25–26 September
- Salt Marshes Core Group: Review of the Salt Marsh Annex – 23–24 October

4.3. **Discussion:**

4.4. Members provided holidays that the secretariat must note for rescheduling. In particular, October 1-15 is a long holiday week for China, and October 3-9 is the Chuseok Holidays in RO Korea. Additionally, October 31 - November 2 is a long holiday for the Philippines.

4.5. The Secretariat informed the TWG that revised schedules for the ecosystem core groups will be sent via email to the respective group members.

5. Closing of the BC TWG Meeting

5.1. The Chair expressed sincere appreciation to the members for their active participation and thoughtful contributions. He noted that the discussions reflected both the depth of expertise within the group and the shared commitment to advancing the Blue Carbon agenda.

5.2. Dr. Kwon emphasized that the agreed directions and next steps would serve as a guide in the months ahead and further strengthen collaboration in positioning blue carbon as a vital nature-based solution for the region. He looked forward to building on the outcomes of the meeting together with the members.

5.3. With this, the Chair officially closed the 3rd Blue Carbon Technical Working Group Plenary Meeting and turned over the floor to the Secretariat to proceed with the next part of the program.

5.4. The Meeting adjourned at 15:00

Annex 1: BC TWG Meeting Agenda


Agenda 1.0 Feedback from the Partnership Council from the 17th East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting last July

Agenda 2.0 Refined Regional Blue Carbon Accounting Protocol (RBCAP)

Agenda 3.0 Blue Carbon Programs and Activities (2025-2026)

Agenda 4.0 Any Other Business

Annex 2: List of Participants

 List of Participants

Annex 3: Photos

 Photos