



Ministry of Oceans
and Fisheries



PEMSEA

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

MEETING REPORT

2026 Intersessional Regional Steering Committee Meeting

2 July 2026
via Zoom

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

2026 INTERSESSIONAL REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

PEMSEA Office through Zoom | 2 July 2026

MEETING REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. The 2026 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 2 July 2026 via Zoom. The meeting was convened in line with the approved work plan of the 3rd RSC Meeting and focused on proposed changes to selected pilot project designs in the Philippines, updates on pilot project development in Timor-Leste, project staffing, and the ongoing Mid-term Evaluation.
2. The detailed designs of the pilot projects in the Philippines were agreed in October 2025 through the signing of Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) between PEMSEA and the participating local government units during the Mayors' Conference. The detailed designs were subsequently approved at the 3rd RSC Meeting on 10 December 2025, with a total PEMSEA commitment of approximately US\$1 million.
3. During the initial stage of implementation, the Regional Project Management Unit (RPMU) conducted site visits to Dipolog, Bulan, Calbayog, Daanbantayan, and Tandag to confirm readiness and advance procurement. The RPMU encountered circumstances requiring revisions to the pilot project designs and equipment specifications for Dipolog, Daanbantayan, and Tandag. These proposed changes were therefore submitted to the 2026 Intersessional RSC for review and approval.
4. The meeting also provided an opportunity to introduce the newly engaged National Project Coordinator and National Technical Advisor for Timor-Leste, acknowledge departing RPMU staff, and inform the Committee of the scope and progress of the Mid-term Evaluation.
5. The program of the meeting is attached as Annex 1.

OPENING

6. Ms. Klyra Orbien, Junior Communications Officer of the RPMU, welcomed the participants and served as the master of ceremonies. The list of participants is attached as Annex 2.
7. The Heads of Delegation of the Philippines, RO Korea, and Timor-Leste, together with the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility, delivered messages. Messages are attached as Annex 3 and the main points of the messages are summarized below.

Message

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

8. The Executive Director of the PRF welcomed the members of the RSC and thanked the participating governments and project partners for their continued cooperation. She noted that the meeting was timely because implementation of the Philippine pilot projects had entered the procurement and delivery stage, while Timor-Leste was moving forward with its pilot project concept development and national coordination arrangements.
9. She emphasized the importance of maintaining technical quality, transparency, and responsiveness to local needs during implementation. She also expressed appreciation to the outgoing RPMU staff and welcomed the newly engaged national project staff of Timor-Leste.

Message

Mr. Eddie Abugan, Division Chief, Project Management Division, FASPS, DENR, Philippines

10. Mr. Eddie Abugan of FASPS, in his capacity as Chair, welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of reviewing the proposed changes to the pilot projects before procurement and implementation proceeded. He emphasized that the proposed interventions should directly address the most urgent local waste management and marine plastics concerns while ensuring that public resources are used efficiently.
11. He acknowledged the progress made in preparing the Philippine pilot projects and encouraged the RPMU and local governments to accelerate implementation while maintaining appropriate safeguards for sustainability, operation, maintenance, and accountability.

Message

Mr. Kim Jinyong, Deputy Director, Marine Conservation Division, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, RO Korea

12. Mr. Kim Jinyong conveyed the appreciation of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries to the Philippines, Timor-Leste, PEMSEA, and the local partners for their work under the Project. He noted that the pilot projects constitute a major part of the ODA Project and that the changes in the design and equipment should be carefully reviewed to ensure technical soundness, value for money, and tangible impacts.
13. He expressed support for practical adjustments that respond to local conditions and reaffirmed the commitment of RO Korea to work with PEMSEA and the participating countries to achieve the Project's objectives.

Message

Akasio dos Santos, Director General of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry, Timor-Leste

14. Mr. Acasio dos Santos thanked the RSC and project partners for supporting the implementation of the ODA Project in Timor-Leste. He welcomed the engagement of the National Project Coordinator and National Technical Advisor and emphasized that their participation would strengthen coordination with national agencies, municipalities, Marine Environment Protector local partners, and beach monitoring institutes.
15. He also noted the planned consultation meetings at the four Timor-Leste project sites in July 2026 and expressed the Government's commitment to developing locally appropriate pilot project concepts and detailed designs for consideration by the RSC.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

16. Mr. Eddie Abugan chaired the meeting. The Chair called Dr. Won-Tae Shin, Regional Project Manager, to introduce the agenda. DENR suggested to include an information of the Special Order (SO) creating national project board of the Philippines. After review, the meeting adopted the agenda with the supplementary information agenda from DENR to include in Agenda 2.

AGENDA 1. PILOT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

17. The Chair called Dr. Won-Tae Shin to present the status of pilot project implementation and the proposed changes for Dipolog, Daanbantayan, and Tandag, as well as updates on the Timor-Leste pilot project development.
18. Dr. Shin reported that the RPMU had undertaken readiness visits and initiated procurement process for the Philippine pilot projects. Bidding had been announced for plastic recycling equipment for Daanbantayan and Tandag, MRF construction for Bulan, and trash trap installation for Calbayog. Evergreen Labs Philippines Consulting, Inc. was identified as the winning bidder for the plastic recycling equipment, while the procurement processes for Bulan and Calbayog had been extended due to an insufficient number of bidders.

Dipolog City

19. The approved Dipolog pilot project originally consisted of installing three trash traps in Miputak River and procuring one baler. During the RPMU consultation visit in January 2026, the Mayor requested that the design be changed to address the City's more urgent need for improved household waste collection and transport to material recovery facilities and the sanitary landfill.

20. The City has ten garbage collection trucks. At the time of the consultation, only five were operational because of breakdowns, while two were undergoing repairs. The Mayor therefore requested two 20-cubic-metre, six-wheeler compactor trucks. The proposed trucks would add 40 cubic meters of compacted collection capacity per trip and an estimated 12 tons per trip cycle, serve at least 10 to 12 priority coastal barangays, and increase the operational fleet from seven to nine trucks, or by more than 28.6 percent.
21. The proposed revised pilot project, titled “Mitigating Marine Plastic Pollution through Improved Plastic Collection in the Highly Urbanized Areas of Dipolog City,” will improve collection route reliability, reduce missed collection days, increase hauling capacity, reduce fuel and disposal trips per collected volume, and help prevent plastics from accumulating in coastal barangays, drainage systems, roadsides, riverbanks, and open spaces before reaching the marine environment.
22. PEMSEA’s committed budget for the original trash trap and baler design was PHP 3.12 million. The revised design, consisting of two compactor trucks and one baler, is estimated at PHP 9.00 million, resulting in a budget deficit of PHP 5.88 million. Dipolog City committed to provide drivers, collection crews, route supervisors, fuel and lubricants, preventive and corrective maintenance, registration and insurance, route management, unloading and disposal support, monitoring records, and continued operation beyond the Project period.

Daanbantayan Municipality and Tandag City

23. The RPMU issued an invitation to bid for plastic recycling equipment in February 2026. Two bids were received from Envirotech Inc. of Davao City and Evergreen Labs Philippines Consulting, Inc. Following the panel evaluation, a facility visit was conducted on 4 May 2026 in Mactan, Cebu, with representatives of the RPMU, EMB Central Office, EMB Region V, Tandag City ENRO, Daanbantayan Municipal ENRO, and Evergreen Labs.
24. The evaluation team found the machinery in good condition and unanimously agreed to procure the recycling equipment from Evergreen Labs. The original bidding document specified six machines—a shredder, washer, dryer, extruder, press, and molder—for producing plastic lumber and bricks. Evergreen Labs proposed complete machinery packages that would enable commercial operation and the production of recycled plastic lumber, pavers, and standard 4 × 8-foot boards.
25. The complete packages were also substantially lower than the amounts committed under the MOAs. Evergreen Labs’ lumber-making package for Tandag was priced at PHP 7.11 million, while its board-making package for Daanbantayan was priced at PHP 7.16 million. The corresponding MOA commitment was PHP 16.50 million per site, or PHP 33.00 million in total. The proposed procurement therefore generated a budget surplus of PHP 18.73 million.

Overall Budget Implications for the Dipolog, Daanbantayan and Tandag

26. After applying the PHP 5.88 million deficit for Dipolog against the PHP 18.73 million surplus from Daanbantayan and Tandag, the proposed design changes for the three sites would result in an overall surplus of PHP 12.85 million compared with PEMSEA's committed budget.

Procurement of Balers and Shredders

27. Dr. Shin further proposed that the balers and shredders stipulated in the MOAs for Bulan, Calbayog, Dipolog, and Puerto Princesa be procured from Evergreen Labs together with the plastic recycling equipment for Daanbantayan and Tandag. This consolidated procurement would facilitate coordinated after-sales service and training across all ODA Project sites.

Updates on Timor-Leste Pilot Project Implementation

28. The RPMU engaged Mr. Roni Tpoi as National Consultant for pilot project concept development in January 2026, following a recommendation from the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry. The Consultant conducted desk and literature reviews, consulted relevant stakeholders, and submitted draft concepts for the four project sites.
29. In May 2026, MALFF recommended Mr. Timotio Alves as National Project Coordinator, while the Ministry of Tourism and Environment recommended Mr. Antonio Carvalho as National Technical Advisor. The RPMU contracted both national project staff to facilitate implementation and coordination in Timor-Leste.
30. The RPMU, NPC, NTA, and Consultant planned consultation meetings at the four pilot sites in July 2026. The consultations would cover Marine Environment Protector (MEP) activities and pilot project concept development. The concepts were expected to be completed by August 2026, and the detailed designs were to be developed for presentation at the 4th RSC Meeting in December 2026.

Discussion

31. The meeting discussed the urgency of Dipolog City's collection problem, the operational and maintenance commitments required from the City, and the need to ensure that the compactor trucks are fully integrated into the City's solid waste management routes and monitoring system.
32. The meeting also reviewed the proposed machinery packages for Daanbantayan and Tandag, noting that the complete packages would improve production viability while remaining below the approved budget ceilings. Members emphasized the importance of installation, operator training, warranty coverage, after-sales service, and sustained LGU operation of the equipment.

Approval

33. Following the discussion, the RSC approved the proposed revised Dipolog pilot project design, the procurement of the Evergreen Labs equipment packages for Daanbantayan and Tandag, and the procurement of balers and shredder for Bulan, Calbayog, and Dipolog from Evergreen Labs

Philippines Consulting, Inc. The procurement of a shredder for Puerto Princesa was deferred pending the signing of the MOA between PEMSEA and Puerto Princesa.

AGENDA 2. UPDATES ON PROJECT

34. The Chair called Dr. Shin to present updates on the engagement of national project staff for Timor-Leste, departing RPMU staff, and the ongoing Mid-term Evaluation as well as the Special Order of DENR.
35. Dr. Shin introduced Mr. Timotio Alves as the National Project Coordinator (NPC) of Timor-Leste. The NPC will coordinate Project activities at national and local levels, including the Marine Environment Protector Program (MEP) and beach monitoring institutes. He also introduced Mr. Antonio Carvalho as the National Technical Advisor (NTA), who will support pilot project development and implementation at the local sites.
36. The Committee was informed that Senior Manager Mr. Kim Hungeun would return to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries in September 2026 and that Program and Admin Associate Ms. Elsie Merina would resign in July 2026. Both expressed their appreciation to PEMSEA and participating countries for their support during their tenure and bid farewell to the participants. Ms. Elsie then introduced Ms. Meinette Masangcay, the new Administrative Associate. The RPMU assured the Committee that responsibilities, records, and ongoing work would be transferred to incoming staff to ensure continuity.
37. Dr. Shin reported that Romano Mendez & Company had been selected as the independent evaluator for the Mid-term Evaluation. The evaluation would include a performance assessment using the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, as recommended by the RO Korea ODA Committee; a financial evaluation in accordance with International Standards on Auditing; and stakeholder interviews in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.
38. Mr. Karlo Chanliongco of FASPS introduced the draft Special Order (SO) creating national project board of the Philippines. He elaborated the contents of the SO and informed that inter-office consultation will be held in near future. Dr. Shin informed that RPMU is supporting the board meetings in the Philippines and Timor-Leste.
39. The Committee took note of the project updates and emphasized the importance of completing the staff transition without disruption and sharing the Mid-term Evaluation findings with the RSC when available.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

40. The following are the conclusions of the Intersessional RSC Meeting:

- The RPMU has been implementing the pilot projects in the Philippines and Timor-Leste with due diligence;
- The bidding process for the plastic recycling equipment for Daanbantayan and Tandag successfully identified Evergreen Labs Philippines Consulting, Inc. as the winning bidder;
- The equipment packages offered by Evergreen Labs are comprehensive and of good quality;
- The proposed changes to the Dipolog pilot project reflect the City's urgent needs and are deemed necessary;
- The other bidding processes for Bulan and Calbayog are ongoing and will be expedited for completion in 2026;
- The development of the pilot projects in Timor-Leste is ongoing with the support of a consultant and the national project staff;
- Staff transitions are taking place within the RPMU, and responsibilities will be transferred seamlessly to the incoming staff;
- The Mid-Term Evaluation is ongoing, and the results will be shared with the RSC in due course; and
- A Special Order (SO) creating national project board in the Philippines is on-going.

Recommendations

41. The following are the recommendations of the Intersessional RSC Meeting:

- The meeting approved the proposed Dipolog pilot project design involving the procurement of two compactor trucks, in response to the Mayor's request to address the City's urgent waste collection needs;
- The meeting approved the procurement of plastic recycling equipment packages for Daanbantayan and Tandag from Evergreen Labs Philippines Consulting, Inc., reflecting the proposed changes in equipment types and functions;
- The meeting approved the procurement of balers and shredders for Bulan, Dipolog, and Calbayog from Evergreen Labs Philippines Consulting, Inc. to facilitate coordinated after-sales service and training across the ODA Project sites;
- The meeting requested the RPMU to expedite the implementation of the pilot projects in Bulan, Calbayog, and Puerto Princesa;
- The meeting requested the RPMU and the Timor-Leste team, comprising the NPC, NTA, and Consultant, to complete the pilot project concepts by August 2026 and the detailed designs by December 2026 for consideration at the 4th RSC Meeting;
- The meeting requested the RPMU to ensure the seamless continuation of operations during the staff transition; and

- The meeting requested that the results of the Mid-Term Evaluation be shared with the RSC once they become available.

CLOSING

42. The Chair thanked the members of the RSC, government representatives, local partners, RPMU staff, and project consultants for their active participation and constructive contributions. He emphasized that the approvals made during the meeting would allow the RPMU to proceed with implementation while responding to local priorities and ensuring efficient use of the Project budget.
43. The Chair encouraged the RPMU and partner governments to expedite the remaining procurement and consultation activities, maintain close coordination during the staff transition, and ensure that the results of the Mid-term Evaluation are reported to the Committee.
44. The Chair declared the meeting closed at 11am.

ANNEX 1. PROGRAM

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

INTERSESSIONAL REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 2026

2 July 2026 at 9AM Manila Time via Zoom

Provisional Program

Time	Activity	Note
09:00-09:10	Messages Welcome remarks	PEMSEA
09:10-09:20	Adoption of agenda	Chairperson
09:20-10:00	- Changes in Pilot Project implementation - Daanbantayan: change in equipment from block-making machine to panel-making machine - Dipolog: change in design from trash-trap installation to procurement of two compactor trucks) - Procurement of balers and shredders - Timor-Leste development updates - Updates on Project - Engagement of national project staff of Timor-Leste - National Project Coordinator - National Technical Advisor - Departing RPMU staff - Senior Manager - Program and Admin Associate - On-going Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the ODA Project	Dr. Won-Tae Shin, Regional Project Manager, RPMU With assistance from LGU focal points NPC and NTA of Timor- Leste Senior Manager and Program and Admin Associate
10:00-10:30	Discussion	Chairperson
10:30-10:40	Conclusions and recommendations	Chairperson
10:40-10:50	Closing message	Chairperson

ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PHILIPPINES

Eddie Abugan

Division Chief, PMD, FASPS
Department of Environment and Natural
Resources

Karlo Chanliongco

Project Management Division
Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Services
Department of Environment and Natural
Resources

Bhona May Oñate

Staff, Solid Waste Management
Environmental Management Bureau
Department of Environment and Natural
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RO KOREA

Kim Jinyong

Deputy Director
Marine Conservation Division
Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries

TIMOR-LESTE

Acasio dos Santos

Director General of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and
Forestry

Timotio Alves

Technical Staff of Fisheries
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and
Forestry

Antonio Carvalho

National Technical Advisor
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Roni Tpoi

National Consultant
Pilot Project Concept Development

PEMSEA Resource Facility

Aimee Gonzales

Executive Director
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Won-Tae Shin

Regional Project Manager
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Hunguen Kim

Senior Manager
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John Christian Castillo

Visual Communications Specialist
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Klyra Orbien

Junior Communications Officer
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Elsie Merina

Program and Admin Associate
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Ms. Meinette Masangcay

Administrative Associate
MOF/PEMSEA Marine Plastics ODA Project

Evergreen Labs Consulting Inc.

Erica Cardoso

Managing Director
Evergreen Labs Philippines

ANNEX 3. MESSAGES

MESSAGE

Aimee T. Gonzales, Executive Director, PEMSEA Resource Facility

Mr. Kim Jinyong, the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Eddie Abugan, DENR, Mr. Akasio dos Santos, DG of Fisheries, MALFF, local government partners, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the 2026 Intersessional Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the MOF/PEMSEA ODA Project on Reducing Marine Plastics in the East Asian Seas Region.

On behalf of the PEMSEA Resource Facility, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its continued financial and technical support. I also thank our national and local government partners, the members of the Regional Steering Committee, the Regional Project Management Unit, and all implementing partners for their commitment to advancing the Project.

Today's meeting is particularly important as the Project moves further into the implementation of its pilot projects. In the Philippines, procurement and construction activities have commenced in 4 sites. These investments are intended to strengthen local solid waste management systems, improve plastic waste collection and recycling, and prevent plastic leakage into rivers, coastal areas, and the marine environment.

As implementation proceeds, the Project must remain responsive to changing local conditions and the operational priorities of participating local governments. As you will hear, the proposed changes aim to improve the relevance, functionality, and cost-effectiveness of the investments while remaining within the overall committed project budget.

We are also pleased to report progress in Timor-Leste. The engagement of the National Project Coordinator and National Technical Advisor will strengthen coordination with the national government and the four project sites. The planned consultations in July will be essential in refining the pilot project concepts and ensuring that the proposed interventions respond to the actual needs and capacities of local stakeholders.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Kim Hungeun, Senior Manager, for his valuable contribution to the Project and to the partnership between MOF and PEMSEA. We wish him continued success upon his return to the Ministry. I also express our profound appreciation to Ms. Elsie Merina for more than 22 years of dedicated service to PEMSEA. Her professionalism, institutional knowledge, and commitment have greatly contributed to the work of the organization.

As we move forward, our focus must remain on delivering pilot project implementation that are technically appropriate, effectively operated, maintained by local governments, and capable of generating sustainable and replicable results. Equipment and infrastructure alone will not solve marine

plastic pollution. I encourage all members to support the efforts of the project at local level and participate actively on delivering the desired changes.

Through collective leadership and partnership, we can ensure that the Project delivers lasting benefits for coastal communities and contributes meaningfully to cleaner and healthier seas in the East Asian Seas region.

Thank you, and I wish everyone a productive meeting.

MESSAGE

Eddie Abugan, FASPS, DENR

Mr. Kim Jinyong, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Akasio dos Santos, Timor-Leste, PEMSEA colleagues, local government partners, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning.

On behalf of the Government of the Philippines, I am pleased to attend this important meeting of the Steering Committee. We extend our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its continued support to the Philippines and the region. We also thank PEMSEA, the Regional Project Management Unit, the participating local government units, and all project partners for their sustained efforts in advancing the Project.

We are encouraged by the progress in implementing the pilot projects in the Philippines, following the approval of the detailed designs and the signing of Memoranda of Agreement with the participating local governments, the Project has moved from planning into procurement, construction, and operational preparation.

The Government of the Philippines recognizes that successful pilot implementation requires more than the procurement of equipment and construction of facilities. It also requires proper site preparation, trained personnel, clear operating procedures, adequate budgets, regular maintenance, effective waste collection and segregation systems, and continued cooperation among national and local institutions.

We understand that, during implementation, certain adjustments to the approved pilot project designs may become necessary because of changing local priorities, updated technical assessments, actual site conditions, and operational requirements. The proposed changes for Dipolog, Daanbantayan, and Tandag have therefore been tabled for the consideration of the Regional Steering Committee. We trust that the Committee will carefully review these proposals and provide guidance that will enable the Project to proceed in a timely, technically sound, and cost-effective manner.

The Philippine local government partners have demonstrated their commitment to the sustainability of the pilot investments. Through the signed Memoranda of Agreement, the LGUs have committed to operate and maintain the equipment and facilities using their own personnel and resources after the Project ends. This local ownership will be critical in ensuring that the investments continue to deliver environmental and social benefits over the long term.

We also welcome the ongoing Mid-Term Evaluation of the Project. The evaluation provides an opportunity to assess achievements, identify implementation gaps, document lessons, and strengthen the Project during its remaining years. The Philippines remains committed to participating fully in the evaluation and to considering its recommendations in future planning and implementation.

As host country of the PEMSEA Resource Facility and as a participating country in this regional project, the Philippines remains committed to strengthening cooperation with the Republic of Korea, Timor-Leste, PEMSEA, and other regional partners. We believe that the experiences and lessons generated by

the ODA project can provide practical and replicable approaches for other coastal communities facing similar marine plastic pollution challenges.

I encourage all members of the Regional Steering Committee to engage actively and constructively in today's discussions. Thank you, and I wish everyone a productive and successful meeting.

MESSAGE

Mr. Kim Jinyong

MINISTRY OF OCEANS AND FISHERIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Mr. Akasio dos Santos, Director General of Fisheries, Timor-Leste, Mr. Eddie Abugan, DENR, distinguished members of the Regional Steering Committee, representatives of the Governments of the Philippines and Timor-Leste, PEMSEA colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, I am pleased to join the 2026 Intersessional Regional Steering Committee Meeting of the ODA Project.

I am also very pleased to see the ODA Project has made significant progress toward the implementation of the pilot project. I sincerely appreciate the continued commitment of PEMSEA, the participating national and local governments, the Regional Project Management Unit, and all implementing partners.

Today's meeting comes at an important stage, as the Project moves from planning and design to the delivery of tangible pilot investments. The Ministry hopes that the Committee will carefully review the proposed changes and support solutions that are technically sound, financially responsible, and capable of delivering measurable reductions in plastic leakage into the marine environment. We are also encouraged by the progress made in Timor-Leste. The appointment of the National Project Coordinator and National Technical Advisor provides an important foundation for accelerating project implementation.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr. Kim Hungeun, Senior Manager, for his dedicated service to the Project and PEMSEA over the past three years. His contribution has been valuable in strengthening cooperation between MOF, PEMSEA, and the participating countries.

As the donor government, the Republic of Korea remains committed to supporting regional and national efforts to prevent and reduce marine plastic pollution. We believe that the success of this Project will depend not only on the delivery of equipment and facilities, but also on strong local ownership, effective operation and maintenance, continued public participation, and the integration of project activities into government programs and budgets.

I encourage all members to engage actively and constructively in today's discussions.

Welcome and good morning!

MESSAGE

Akasio dos Santos, Director General of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Forestry, Timor-Leste

Mr. Kim Jinyong, Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Eddie Abugan, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Philippines, PEMSEA colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, Good morning.

On behalf of the Government of Timor-Leste, I am pleased to participate in the 2026 Intersessional Regional Steering Committee Meeting. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea for its generous support and to PEMSEA for its continued technical assistance and coordination.

We are pleased to see the project activities are well underway in Timor-Leste through the signing of MOU in October 2025 and a Project Launch in February 2026. Now, the engagement of Mr. Timotio Alves as National Project Coordinator and Mr. Antonio Carvalho as National Technical Advisor will strengthen coordination between the Project, the national government, municipalities, and local stakeholders. We welcome their appointment and look forward to their active contribution to the Project.

We also acknowledge the work of the National Consultant, Mr. Roni Tpoi, in preparing the initial pilot project concepts for Dili, Liquica, Manatuto, and Atauro. The planned site consultations in July 2026 will provide an important opportunity to verify local conditions, identify the most urgent needs, and refine the proposed interventions through direct engagement with municipal authorities, communities, and other stakeholders.

In addition to the development of the pilot projects, Marine Environmental Protection, or MEP, activities are planned for Timor-Leste this year. These activities will support public awareness and education on marine plastic pollution, proper waste segregation and disposal, and the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems. They will also encourage the participation of schools, youth, fishing communities, women's groups, municipal authorities, and other local stakeholders in practical actions such as coastal clean-ups, awareness campaigns, and community-based initiatives to prevent plastic waste from reaching the sea.

As the Project moves forward, Timor-Leste will continue to support the establishment of sustainable arrangements for implementation. This includes facilitating stakeholder participation, strengthening local ownership, providing available government support, and encouraging the integration of successful project activities into national and municipal programs.

We look forward to presenting the finalized pilot project concepts and detailed designs at the Fourth Regional Steering Committee Meeting in December 2026. We also welcome the lessons emerging from

the pilot projects in the Philippines, which can help Timor-Leste develop practical and effective approaches suited to our own national and local circumstances.

I encourage all members of the Committee to continue supporting Timor-Leste as we advance from project preparation to implementation. Through partnership, shared learning, and sustained commitment, we can reduce marine plastic pollution and protect the coastal and marine resources upon which our people and communities depend.

Thank you, and I wish everyone a productive meeting.
