



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Conducted online via Zoom**

**23 October 2023**



# 31<sup>st</sup> PEMSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING

23 October 2023, 2:00 PM – 4:08 PM (UTC+8) via Zoom

## PROCEEDINGS

### Introduction

- I. The 31<sup>st</sup> PEMSEA EC Meeting was conducted virtually on 23 October 2023 via Zoom. Participants of the meeting included the EC, particularly the Chair and Co-Chair, Intergovernmental Session Chair and Co-Chair, the Technical Session Chair of the EAS Partnership Council (PC), and the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF). Observers from the China PEMSEA Center and the Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Cambodia also attended the meeting. PRF served as the secretariat of the meeting.
  
- II. Supporting documents may be found in the Annexes:
  - a. Annex 1: Agenda of the meeting;
  - b. Annex 2: Links to the meeting documents, presentation, and group photo; and
  - c. Annex 3: List of Participants

### **1.0 Opening of the meeting and approval of the meeting agenda (EC/31/DOC/01b)**

- 1.1. The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm (UTC+8). The EAS PC Chair, Dr. Vann Monyneth, welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and expressed his gratitude for their continued dedication of the EC members to the objectives and mission of PEMSEA.
  
- 1.2. He emphasized the importance of the concerns to be discussed, including the East Asia Seas Congress 2024, which has been confirmed to be held in Xiamen, China; the Blue Carbon Roadmap of the nascent PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program; the assessment of two non-Country Partner applicants from China, namely the Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development and the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS); and revisiting agreements from the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting

- 1.3. The Chair encouraged the Committee to actively participate and share their recommendations for each agenda, then requested the Secretariat to present the provisional agenda for the meeting for approval of the body.
- 1.4. **Decision:** The agenda was approved.

## **2.0 Updates on the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2024 (EC/31/DOC/02; EC/31/DOC/02a)**

- 2.1. Ms. Abigail Cruzada, Secretariat Coordinator of the PRF, presented the agenda, highlighting the confirmation of China to host the 2024 EAS Congress, the proposed theme and dates of the Congress, and the key activities to be conducted.
- 2.2. China, through its Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), confirmed its willingness and capacity to host the 2024 EAS Congress through a letter addressed to the PRF on 6 September 2023 (EC/31/DOC/02a). Given concerns in optimizing available resources and streamlining the conduct of the Congress, subsequent discussions between MNR and the PRF brought up the prospect of conducting the EAS Congress as a joint event with the Xiamen World Ocean Week (XWOW), which is celebrated annually during the first half of November and hosted by Xiamen, a member of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG).
- 2.3. The XWOW, which has evolved from an annual international forum on maritime coastal cities to a week-long platform linking global ocean policies, technology, decision-making, and action, has overlapping objectives with that of the Congress. Furthermore, XWOW activities include ocean fora, ocean-themed exhibitions, and cultural activities.
- 2.4. The XWOW aims to provide a cooperation and exchange platform for the governments of coastal cities, marine science and technology circles, international and intergovernmental organizations, maritime-related enterprises, and institutions around the world. It aims to promote the sustainable utilization of marine resources and raise public awareness on the global maritime industry and the ocean through marine culture programs.

- 2.5. The 2024 EAS Congress aims to promote knowledge sharing amongst its Partners and collaborators on the various initiatives to address current and emerging issues on ocean and coastal development and management. More importantly, it serves as a platform to monitor progress, undertake collaborative planning, and build/strengthen the Partnership in support of SDS-SEA implementation.
- 2.6. The Secretariat proposed the dates **6 - 8 November 2024** for the conduct of the Congress, with the following considerations:
- a. XWOW is conducted annually during the first or second week of November;
  - b. Other relevant international events, negotiation meetings, and ocean-related conferences that PEMSEA Partner representatives may participate in:
    - World Ocean Conference 2024 – April 2024 / Barcelona, Spain
    - UNFCCC COP 29 – 11-24 November 2024 / venue TBD
    - CBD COP 16 – 21 October to 1 November 2024 / venue TBD
    - UN Plastics Treaty INC 5 – 29 Oct-1 November 2024 (tentative) / RO Korea
    - Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction – mid-October 2024 / Philippines
    - 45th ASEAN Summit Meetings – October/November 2024 / Lao PDR
    - 9th Our Ocean Conference – TBD/Greece
  - c. Key activities of the Congress, such as the International Conference, Ministerial Forum, and governance meetings of the PEMSEA Networks of Local Governments and Learning Centers, respectively, will be conducted over the course of the three day congress, to ensure comprehensive discussion and generate substantial recommendations.
- 2.7. The proposed theme for the Congress is “**Blue Solutions for a Sustainable and Resilient Ocean**” to highlight the ocean-based innovations and solutions, and at the same time, the added value of existing solutions (i.e., how they adapt to addressing new and compounding environmental challenges) that can help further address the triple planetary crisis of climate, biodiversity loss, and pollution

- 2.8. The proposed theme was developed based on four factors:
- a. Previous EAS Congress themes, which are anchored to the key components of the SDS-SEA, international agreements that was/were relevant to PEMSEA’s mission and vision, alongside the interest and commitment of PEMSEA Partners;
  - b. Keywords from previous Congress activities, such as collaboration, global ocean agenda, blue economy, sustainable development, and the key components of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027, namely Effective Governance, Healthy Oceans, People and Economies (HOPE);
  - c. PEMSEA’s priorities underlined in the roadmap to 2030, which includes climate related threats and increasing coastal resilience of the region; and,
  - d. Recent multilateral environmental agreements and negotiations, i.e., Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the legally-binding Plastics Treaty, the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development calling for actions and solutions.
- 2.9. “Blue Solutions” highlight how existing approaches and solutions need to adapt to emerging environmental issues. The age of modern science and new technology is opening opportunities for new discoveries and exploring untapped resources from both global and local communities.
- 2.10. Furthermore, the proposed themes build on the 2021 EAS Congress theme “Charting a Decade of New HOPE (Healthy Ocean, People, and Economies). Having charted the course towards the 2030 target in 2021, the 2024 Congress can serve as an avenue to showcase how the region is moving towards achieving the 2030 targets and in addressing the triple planetary crisis under the framework of the SDS-SEA IP.
- 2.11. “Solutions” can range from institutional strengthening, capacity development, innovative financing, knowledge management as enabling mechanisms for the implementation of management programs addressing climate change, pollution reduction, biodiversity conservation under the purview of the respective commitments of the countries in relevant multilateral environmental agreements.
- 2.12. The theme likewise emphasizes how sustainable management of ocean resources is pivotal in maintaining inclusive growth and development across the globe (Sustainable Ocean).

- 2.13. The concept of resilience covers two ends:
- a. Ocean as the biggest ally in the climate crisis – helping the planet absorb and store carbon; providing frontline protection and buffer to coastal communities, potential source of renewable energy, prospects of green shipping, etc.
  - b. Ocean taking the brunt of the climate crisis – from sea temperature rise to ocean acidification to coastal and marine ecosystem damage sustained due to extreme weather events – these climate-induced threats affect ocean biodiversity. A healthy ocean is necessary so that our coastal and marine habitats can provide the maximum potential benefits of its ecosystem services.
- 2.14. Key activities to be conducted in Xiamen include the
- a. Ministerial Forum, which will provide policy directions and commitments for improving and strengthening the implementation of the SDS-SEA as embodied in a Ministerial Declaration
  - b. International Conference, which will be open to stakeholders both within and outside the region, and will feature major themes that cover essential aspects of sustainable coastal and ocean governance and development (e.g., blue economy, access to financing mechanisms, biodiversity, ocean and climate nexus, ocean agenda).
  - c. Exhibitions
  - d. PNLG and PNLC general assemblies, and
  - e. Senior Government Official’s Meeting (SGOM)
- 2.15. In consideration of the need to streamline the structure of the Congress due to its integration with the XWOW, other Congress-related activities (e.g., 16<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting, EAS Youth Forum, and EAS Ocean Round Table Dialogues) will be conducted as pre-Congress events prior to November.
- 2.16. Ms. Chen, as the representative of MNR, China, clarified that while China affirmed their capacity to host the EAS Congress 2024 through MNR, a fixed budget has not yet been confirmed. To ensure the successful conduct of the event, and recognizing the similar priorities of the XWOW and EAS Congress, MNR suggested that Xiamen co-finance the Congress by integrating the budget and resources of the two events.

- 2.17. As there are intricacies involved to integrating the two events, Ms. Chen requested the EC to provide them with more time to iron out the details of the theme and structure of the EAS Congress.
- 2.18. The other members of the Executive Committee commended China for hosting the 2024 EAS Congress and agreed to provide more time for MNR and PRF to thoroughly discuss the theme and structure of the joint event.
- 2.19. **Conclusion:** The EC expressed their appreciation to China for confirming to host the 2024 EAS Congress through the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Xiamen Municipal People’s Government. They unanimously supported the proposed theme, “Blue Solutions for a Sustainable and Resilient Ocean” and the proposed date of 6-8 November 2024, as presented by the Secretariat. Furthermore, they shared their concurrence to the simultaneous conduct and integration of the EASC 2024 with the Xiamen World Ocean Week 2024 (XWOW 2024) to optimize and streamline resources and enhance engagement with various stakeholders both within and outside the EAS region.
- 2.20. **Recommendations:**
- 2.21. Given the intricacies of aligning the objectives and integrate the activities of the EAS Congress with the World Ocean Week, the EC suggested that the PRF Secretariat thoroughly discuss the program and structure of the Congress with MNR and Xiamen thoroughly to ensure its relevance and to promote active participation from PEMSEA Partners and collaborators.
- 2.22. The Committee recommended that the PRF, together with MNR and Xiamen, should consider how to maximize and ensure the participation of the Ministers participating in the event.
- 2.23. The EC supported the theme of “Blue Solutions for a Sustainable and Resilient Ocean”, as the keyword “Solutions” represent a more specific and actionable function, which aligns with the scaling up of SDS-SEA Implementation.
- 2.24. The EC reminded the PRF Secretariat to confirm the date and them in the soonest time possible and to relay the “save the date” information to PEMSEA’s partners and collaborator to provide

Country and Non-Country Partners with adequate time to secure their attendance to the Congress.

- 2.25. The EC emphasized the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders to foster more substantial discussions and subsequent collaboration and action. They suggested assessing the possibility to conduct Congress-related workshops or sessions through a hybrid format to ensure participation from stakeholders who are unable to participate in person.
- 2.26. To ensure mutual cooperation between the EAS Congress and the Xiamen World Ocean Week, the EC recommended that participants of the EAS Congress should be given the opportunity to be exposed to the activities of the XWOW, and vice versa.
- 2.27. **Decision:** The PRF Secretariat will finalize the theme and dates in consultation with MNR and Xiamen within the next 2-3 weeks and inform the EC of the final theme, date, and structure of the 2024 EAS Congress via email. The Secretariat shall likewise inform the PC and PEMSEA collaborators to save the date of the Congress as soon as possible.

### **3.0 Updates on the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program (EC/31/DOC/03; EC/31/DOC/03a)**

- 3.1. Ms. Aguinaldo apprised the Executive Committee on the current progress in developing the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program, which was approved during the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting in July in Hanoi, Viet Nam.
- 3.2. The initiative to develop a PEMSEA Blue Carbon program is grounded on
  - a. Recognizing the EAS region as a global hotspot for blue carbon systems (e.g., mangroves, seagrasses, tidal marshes), whose coastal communities are most affected by climate change and declining coastal ecosystem services;
  - b. Blue Carbon (BC) Ecosystems carries significant potential in contributing to addressing the climate crisis with their capacity to sequester huge amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but are increasingly degraded by the conversion of land due to human



activities and exacerbated by rising sea temperatures and extreme weather events brought about by climate change;

- c. Increasing interest in BC Ecosystems' climate mitigation potential and the co-benefits it provides in terms of biodiversity restoration and climate adaptation has spurred a number of reforestation and conservation projects across the region;

3.3. The PEMSEA Blue Carbon program, which looks into accounting blue carbon in the region has two objectives:

- a. To support the conservation and improvement of coastal blue carbon ecosystems and optimize its contributions to the reduction of greenhouse gases and carbon sequestration – which will contribute to coastal resilience and habitat restoration, and
- b. To Improve the local government and community's access to supporting financial mechanisms which can contribute to the scaling up the management of BC Ecosystems.

3.4. Activities conducted over the course of the year to develop the program include:

- a. A public Learning Exchange on blue carbon assessment initiatives in the EAS region and a closed round table dialogue with select PNLC members to identify the various methodologies for Blue Carbon Accounting in the region, and determine the feasibility of a Blue Carbon Certification program (June 2023);
- b. Collation of BC methodologies from participating PNLC members from China, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines
- c. Small group meetings to discuss progress and ways forward of the program activities
- d. Comparative review of BCE accounting methodologies

3.5. The PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program Roadmap was developed after the first small group meeting with select PNLC members, who identified the potential roles that PEMSEA could play in Blue Carbon efforts. The program outlines the immediate, mid-term and long-term strategies of PEMSEA in terms of four aspects: the development of a standardized BC accounting methodology for the region, meeting the supply and demand vis-à-vis blue carbon in the EAS region, and the development and implementation of a BC certification system.

3.6. **Table 1. PEMSEA Blue Carbon Roadmap**

	BC Standardized Accounting Methodology	Supply	Demand	Certification System
Immediate (2023-2024)	Target: Standard BC accounting methodology developed	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseline survey of BCEs in (#) sites (inventory)</li> <li>• BCE accounting done in (#) sites using standards</li> </ul>	Target: Policy and market research conducted	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business plan developed</li> <li>• Core team trained (assessment, certification, management)</li> </ul>
Medium-term (2025-2028)	Target: Approved BC Accounting Standards used in sites	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCE accounting done in at least (#) sites using BC Accounting Standards</li> <li>• Models for co-benefits arrangements</li> </ul>	Target: Partnerships with private sector and sites forged/projects developed	Target: Certification system established
Long-term (2029-2033)	Target: PEMSEA BC Accounting Standards recognized/accredited as voluntary standard in (#) countries	Targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BCE Accounting done in (#%) of PEMSEA sites</li> <li>• (#) PEMSEA sites in registry</li> </ul>	Target: (#) private sector partners in registry	Target: PEMSEA Certification System operational

3.7. In line with the roadmap, the next steps will be taken by the PRF, together with its partner PNLC members:

- a. The conduct of regular small group meetings with various stakeholders to define steps and come up with standardized concepts, methods, modules and approaches;
- b. Compilation of case study materials and brainstorming sessions to move program forward
- c. The conduct of training workshops together with COMI of China the IPB University of Indonesia and other learning centers on blue carbon accounting approaches, trading and certification for East Asia; and
- d. Setting of targets for certification and capacity-building (for carbon assessors, managers) to develop strategies for carbon assessment, trading and management

3.8. **Conclusion:** The EC expressed its appreciation for the PRF's efforts in developing the Blue Carbon program, citing its potential to support the achievement of emission reduction targets of countries in the region and the co-benefits it will provide to biodiversity conservation and protection of ecosystem services as well as a potential revenue source for PEMSEA.

3.9. **Recommendations:**

- 3.10. The EC reminded the PRF to consider that the program not only emphasize the objective of mitigating carbon emissions through blue carbon ecosystem sequestration, but also consider its co-benefits in biodiversity conservation and protection of ecosystem services as well as its socio-economic benefits and impacts to coastal communities.
- 3.11. The EC raised the importance of determining sustainable financial and operational mechanisms to support the implementation of the BC program in the medium to long-term. This includes exploring various channels to receive financial support such as engagement with the private sector who is interested in a BC credit market, engaging with interested country and non-country partners, and other relevant non-government organizations who may have similar BC initiatives.
- 3.12. The EC recommended considering the engagement of multiple stakeholders (e.g., youth, private sector, academe) in the working consultations to develop the program, particularly those who have significant involvement in the implementation of carbon sequestration and BC ecosystem conservation and restoration studies or initiatives.
- 3.13. The EC suggested utilizing and building upon the progress of Country Partners in terms of BC exploration (i.e., carbon assessment and monitoring) and engaging with experts in the region to participate in the development of the program and share information and best practices.
- 3.14. In China's case, Ms. Chen raised that they will recommend local experts, NGOs and foundations that could support PEMSEA's Blue Carbon program.
- 3.15. **Decision:** The PRF to revise the contents of the Blue Carbon concept note and roadmap based on the recommendations received and submit an updated version to the EC for approval via email.

#### **4.0 Evaluation of Non-Country Partner Applicants for CY 2023 (EC/31/DOC/04)**

- 4.1. Ms. Cruzada presented the summary report of the Secretariat on two Non-Country Partner Applicants from China - the Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development and the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS).

- 4.2. The summary report (EC/31/DOC/04) reviewed the Expressions of Interest (EOIs) of the two applicants based on their eligibility<sup>1</sup> and the minimum qualifications of a non-Country Partner:
- a. That the organization is duly organized and validly existing under relevant laws, international conventions, and agreements, and provided further, that it is a not-for-profit entity;
  - b. That the organization has worked with PEMSEA or any of its non-Country Partners relating to SDS-SEA Implementation; and
  - c. That the organization has current projects, plans and programs in the region that contribute to the implementation of the SDS-SEA.
- 4.3. The report likewise reviewed the completeness of documents submitted to the PEMSEA Secretariat, which includes:
- a. Copy of constitutive documents or any documents proving the stakeholder organization's valid existence and that it is a non-profit entity;
  - b. Statement of Declaration stating that the organization
    - Adheres to the Haikou Partnership Agreement, the Haikou Partnership Operating Agreements and other PEMSEA Documents;
    - Has regional coverage, objectives, and capacities;
    - Supports the efforts of PEMSEA in implementing the SDS-SEA;
    - Commits to ensuring that the organization's programs and actions contribute to SDS-SEA Implementation; and
    - That the organization is willing to enter into a MOA with PEMSEA on a project implementing SDS-SEA.
- 4.4. The summary report outlined the initial findings and recommendations of the PEMSEA Secretariat on the applicants' capacities to be admitted as a non-Country Partner.
- 4.5. **Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development**
- a. The Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development was established in January 2023 as a non-governmental and non-profit entity. It is guided by the Dongying

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<sup>1</sup> Annex 1, Section 3.1 of the PEMSEA Rules of Governance

Municipal Bureau of Marine Development and Fisheries, and is headed by Mr. Liu Pei as Executive Director and Mr. ZHANG Zhaohui as Management Committee Chair.

- b. The Institute provides technical support in marine and coastal sustainable development, particularly on marine ecological protection, ecological restoration, and disaster prevention and mitigation in China.
- c. Its cooperative partners include the First Ocean Institute, Institute of Oceanology, National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS), Ocean University of China, and China PEMSEA Center – of which, many have close ties with PEMSEA’s operations.
- d. Its current programs include
  - Technical support and scientific research on marine ecological protections and restoration in Dongying City (salt marsh and oyster reef restoration);
  - Restoration projects of marine biological resources in oilfields;
  - Educational awareness of marine conservation and development in schools.
- e. Potential support of the Institute to SDS-SEA Implementation include
  - Facilitation of SDS-SEA Implementation in Dongying City
  - Sharing of best practices of coastal/river management and oil field restoration to PEMSEA partners
  - Strengthening cooperation with PEMSEA on biodiversity cooperation, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, habitat restoration, and environmental public education for coastal governments

4.6. **National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service (NMHMS)**

- a. The NMHMS is a non-profit research and academic institution mandated to provide technical support to business planning, management system development, standardization, and conduct scientific and technological research on marine disaster mitigation and ecological early warning and monitoring. It serves as the operational arm of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) to undertake bilateral and regional projects in the area of marine disaster reduction funded by various sources operated by Chinese government agencies.
- b. Its current efforts that align with SDS-SEA Implementation include
  - The development of the national marine disaster risk inventory, which surveyed 11 coastal provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities on their vulnerability to storm surges, waves, tsunamis, sea ice and sea level rise;

- The preparation of marine disaster-related standards, among which is the nation standard for assessing the vulnerability of marine disaster recipients;
  - Establishment of a preliminary index system on ecology, environmental resources and health;
  - Coastal zone surveys, and
  - Technical regulations on blue carbon assessment and monitoring
- c. Among the components of the SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027, the NMHMS has identified the preparation of Regional and National State of the Oceans and Coasts (R/NSOCs), the conduct of knowledge sharing events, capacity development on ICM and targeted research on marine disasters, and knowledge management and climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction as points for collaboration with PEMSEA.

4.7. Based on the summary report of the Secretariat, the following conclusions and recommendations were raised:

- a. While the Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development is eligible based on the criteria outlined in the PEMSEA Rules of Governance, its current programs do not represent a clear view of the Institute's regional capacity, objectives and coverage. The Secretariat recommended two options to the EC: (1) to request for further review of the Institute upon their submission of more substantial documents to prove their regional capacity and objectives, or (2) to endorse the Institute to the PNLG Executive Committee as a potential associate member of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments.
- b. The NMHMS 's submitted documents reflect their nationwide scope and ambitions to work regionally, based on their current programs and suggested points for cooperation. The Secretariat proposed the admission of the NMHMS as a Non-Country Partner to PEMSEA.

4.8. Ms. Chen, as the Intergovernmental Session Chair, expressed her support t the proposal to admit the NMHMS as a Non-Country Partner of PEMSEA, given their national capacity in providing guidance on marine hazard mitigation, marine ecological monitoring, repair and rehabilitation. She added that the MNHMS can also provide support to climate change adaptation efforts in the region. On behalf of the Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development, Ms. Chen relayed that the former is amenable to becoming an associate member of the PNLG.

- 4.9. Undersecretary Jonas Leones, the EAS PC Co-Chair, expressed his support for the endorsement of both NMHMS and Dongying Huanhai Institute to become non-country partners given that their respective expertise can contribute to the diversification of perspectives and new dimensions of the Partnership Council.
- 4.10. Mr. Le Dai Thang, the Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair, likewise supported the admission of both applicants as NCPs, and further suggested that Dongying Huanhai Institute could submit more substantial documents to reflect their regional capacity and objectives.
- 4.11. On the other hand, Dr. Keita Furukawa, as the Technical Session Chair, opined that new Partners are welcome in the PC, as they can contribute to fostering discussions of new and emerging issues in the region. He suggested that the Dongying Huanhai Institute can be initially recommended to become an associate member of the PNLG, with the stipulation they can be provided an observational opportunity to join the Technical Session to develop their capacity and reapply to become an NCP in the future.
- 4.12. **Conclusion:** The EC reviewed the summary report presented by the PRF Secretariat on two Non-Country Partner Applicants – The Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development and the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service. The Executive Committee welcomed the applications, citing that their potential partnership with PEMSEA can foster more discussions and collaborations that support the implementation of the SDS-SEA in the region, and provide diversity and fresh perspectives to emerging issues in the region, particularly on marine disaster reduction and biodiversity conservation and rehabilitation. However, the modality of the engagement of each applicant with the Partnership will depend on their scope and capacity to conduct initiatives at the regional scale.
- 4.13. **Recommendations:** The Executive Committee recommended the admission of the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service as a Non-Country Partner to the Partnership Council, given their national scope in providing guidance on marine hazard mitigation and their capacity and plans to

expand their provision of technical support and capacity building on climate change adaptation in the EAS region.

- 4.14. The EC also recommended that the Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development be reclassified as a PNLG associate member, subject to their concurrence. EC instructed PRF to invite them to EAS PC Council and Technical sessions and other regional activities as observers to familiarize and expose them to the regional nature of PEMSEA's work. At present, the Institute lacks the regional coverage and capacity that is required for a non-Country Partner. However, the Executive Committee recommended that the Institute be given the opportunity to develop their capacity by inviting them to participate in the Technical Session as an observer and to reapply in the future as a non-Country Partner.
- 4.15. **Decision:** The EC endorsed the National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service for admission as a Non-Country Partner to the EAS PC. The Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development will be endorsed as an associate member of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments, subject to the concurrence of the former. PRF will also invite them to observe EAS PC Council and Technical Sessions.

## **5.0 Optimization of the EAS Partnership Council Technical Session (EC/31/DOC/05)**

- 5.1. Ms. Aimee Gonzales presented options on the optimizing of the conduct of the Technical Session of the EAS PC, which was raised during the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting in Hanoi, Viet Nam.
- 5.2. The Technical Session, which is composed of designated representatives of all Partners, discusses solutions or options to address current scientific, legal, technical and financial issues related to SDS-SEA Implementation, partnership opportunities, and collaborative research, capacity building and knowledge sharing.<sup>2</sup>
- 5.3. During the past PC meetings, Technical Session discussions have revolved around the development, review, update, refinement and/or reporting on progress in implementing the SDS-

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<sup>2</sup> PEMSEA Rules of Governance Rule 6, Section 3b



SEA. The sessions are usually held for half a day or a whole day depending on the nature of the session. On instances where the Technical Session agenda includes progress reporting on SDS-SEA Implementation, time is consumed by presentations of Partners, resulting in limited engagement and discussion amongst the PC members.

- 5.4. Furthermore, discussion on emerging issues and scientific matters for potential collaboration and regional cooperation are not discussed thoroughly in PC meetings due to time constraints. Alternative formats to discuss specific themes/topics have been employed by the Secretariat, engaging technical partners as resource speakers or co-convenors.

**Table 1. Alternative formats to discuss scientific matters**

Nature of events	Topics	Outputs/outcomes
<b>EAS PC TWG</b>	Creating of SDS-SEA IP Review of SDS-SEA IP	SDS-SEA IP SDS-SEA IP M&E plan
<b>Half day Annual Ocean Roundtable Dialogues (back-to-back with EAS PC or conducted separately on June 8 World Ocean Day celebration)</b>	Blue economy, post Covid recovery plans, Ocean & Climate, ICM, marine plastics and INC negotiations, blue carbon	Reports, project proposal
<b>1.5 to 3 days Project technical workshops</b>	IRBM, marine plastics monitoring, state of river basin, maritime transport decarbonization investment landscape	Reports, recommendations to countries
<b>3–5-hour EAS Congress cohorts</b>	Depends on the Congress themes but would tackle issues on climate change, pollution reduction and biodiversity conservation and habitat restoration	Help shape joint regional strategy, funding proposal forge partnerships
<b>PNLC working groups meeting during intersessional periods (to be proposed)</b>	Blue carbon ICM IRBM	Learning exchange

- 5.5. To identify common trends across the region that may be taken up for discussion in future sessions, the Secretariat summarized the following table based on the reports submitted by Country and Non-Country Partners on operationalizing the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027.

**Table 2. Common themes vis-à-vis SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 components**

SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 Components	Common themes raised in CP and NCP programs/policies
Effective Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ocean policies (Japan and Timor-Leste)</li> <li>• Long-term strategies (Lao PDR, Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam)</li> <li>• Medium-term plans (China and Viet Nam) and legislations (Viet Nam)</li> <li>• Institutional and coordinating arrangements on coastal and ocean development</li> <li>• Capacity development, research, and knowledge management (China, Indonesia, Japan, KMI, OPRI-SPF, OSRL, PML, PNLG)</li> </ul>
Healthy Ocean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Microplastics (Indonesia)</li> <li>• Pollution reduction and waste management (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Singapore, IUCN, PML)</li> <li>• ICM Implementation and Scaling Up (Indonesia, Singapore)</li> <li>• Marine Ecological restoration and rehabilitation (China, Indonesia, Japan)</li> <li>• Fishery Resources Management (Japan)</li> <li>• Water resource utilization and management (Lao PDR)</li> <li>• Marine biodiversity conservation and marine protected areas (IUCN, ACB)</li> <li>• Blue carbon (KMI, China, Japan)</li> <li>• Oil spill preparedness and response (Viet Nam, KEI, OSRL)</li> <li>• Coastal green infrastructures (KMI)</li> </ul>
Healthy People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder engagement (with local community, indigenous peoples) (OPRI-SPF)</li> <li>• Post-2020 Green and blue economic recovery efforts (Philippines)</li> </ul>
Healthy Economies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private-public partnership in infrastructure development (Philippines)</li> <li>• Financial mechanisms and scaling up access (Viet Nam)</li> <li>• Engagement of the private sector</li> <li>• Blue economy co-benefits and synergies (OPRI-SPF)</li> </ul>

- 5.6. The Secretariat put forth the following recommendations to optimize the Technical Session:
- a. Capitalize on face-to-face modality for PC meetings (encourage Country Partners to host);
  - b. Encourage Partners to co-convene learning events, focus discussions or capacity building workshops as back-to-back sessions with PC meetings;

- c. Explore alternative structures for conducting the Technical Session proceedings (i.e., workshop format, breakout sessions with thematic discussions); and
- d. Creating ad-hoc committees to discuss emerging issues or specific matters of interest

5.7. **Conclusion:** The Executive Committee welcomed the initiative of the PRF Secretariat to optimize the conduct of the Technical Session. The EC welcomed the exploration of alternative formats to conducting the Technical Session that will ensure that all Partners have a substantial amount of time to discuss their initiatives. Dr. Furukawa, as the Chair of the Technical Session, emphasized the need for mutual understanding of the respective advocacies and thrusts of each country and non-country partner as a starting point to develop a firm foundation to optimize the Technical Session.

5.8. **Recommendations:**

5.9. The EC recommends the arrangement of pre-meetings or workshops on priority themes prior to the conduct of the EAS PC meeting to facilitate more interactive and productive exchanges among the Partners.

5.10. The EC emphasized that the time allotment for each PEMSEA partner to share their respective progress and initiatives in relation to SDS-SEA Implementation should be adequate to give others a comprehensive outlook of their organization/government's priorities and current programs.

5.11. To ensure a firm foundation of mutual understanding of each Partner's advocacies and capacities, the EC suggested having each Partner craft recorded introductions which can be uploaded to the PEMSEA website and shared to the PC.

5.12. On the recommendation to identify common topics of interest and emerging issues in the region, the EC recommended to include ocean acidification as a theme for discussion, as a critical emerging issue that will pose a bigger risk to the region in the coming years.

## **6.0 Updates on PEMSEA's Sustainability Plan (EC/31/DOC/06)**

6.1. Ms. Gonzales presented the updates to the recommendations raised from the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan during the 15<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting on 26-27 July 2023 in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

6.2. Key elements of the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan include

- a. The recently adopted [SDS-SEA 2023-2027 Implementation Plan](#) with [M&E plan](#) ;
- b. PEMSEA’s institutional strengthening plan, which includes
  - Continuous updating of PEMSEA’s Quality Management Standards to ensure that it is at par with UN/WB global standards
  - Building the next generation of coastal and marine managers in the region through the implementation of the Training and Capacity Development Plan of PEMSEA; incorporation of ICM training courses in license renewal of urban and rural planners and integration of ICM in urban and rural planning curriculum courses<sup>3</sup>.
  - Development of a PEMSEA Resource Facility transition plan (4-5 years) to recruit potential leaders in key management positions in the Secretariat such as Technical Officers, Finance and Administrative Officer; and a new Executive Director.

6.3. Financial sustainability status

- a. PEMSEA and the Secretariat have funds to sustain its programs and operations in the next five years through
  - voluntary country contributions (on the assumption of continuous and regular contributions)

**Table 3. Voluntary Country Contributions as of 2023**

Country	Contribution (2023)
China	70,483.75
Cambodia	
Indonesia <sup>4</sup>	
Japan	125,000.00 <sup>5</sup>
Lao PDR	
Philippines	215,000.00 <sup>6</sup>
RoKorea	151,942.69
Singapore	20,000.00
Timor Leste	50,000.00
Vietnam <sup>7</sup>	
<b>TOTAL (USD)</b>	<b>632,426.44</b>

- UNDP-GEF projects, World Bank, and bilateral funds from RoKorea, and, potentially Germany.

<sup>3</sup> More discussions b/w PRF and PNLC and the Philippine government will take place in the coming months

<sup>4</sup> Under discussion with MOEF to provide contributions to fund PNLC secretariat operations in IPB University based in Bogor, Indonesia, rather than to PRF

<sup>5</sup> Including cost recovery by UNDP of indirect general management costs.

<sup>6</sup> For provision of office space; janitorial & security services, and light & water

<sup>7</sup> Vietnam commits to provide their country contribution starting in 2024

**Table 4. Project Funds**

Title of project	Donors/Partners	Participating countries	Amount (USD)	Duration
<b>Integrated River Basin Management</b>	UNDP/GEF/ASEAN	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam	8,479,123.00	2023-2027
<b>Arafura Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Plan 2</b>	UNDP/GEF	Indonesia, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Australia	4,445,662.00	2019-2024
<b>Glofouling Partnerships Project</b>	UNEP/GEF/IMO	ASEAN/EAS	192,000.00	2019-2024
<b>Marine Plastics Project</b>	RoKorea	Philippines, Timor Leste	9,000,000.00	2023-2028
<b>Southeast Asia- Marine Pollution (SEA-MaP) regional project</b>	WB/UNOPS/ASEAN <i>PRF is the technical advisory organization to the project</i>	ASEAN countries	230,000.00	2023-2026
<b>Ecological Solid Waste Management Project</b>	Coca-Cola Foundation	Philippines	23,500.00	2023
<b>TOTAL</b>			22,370,285.00	

6.4 Beyond the next five years, PEMSEA is working on securing other sources of financial sustainability in order for the Partnership to secure its mission. Experience has shown that multi-year, multi-country projects take 4-5 years to prepare, develop, and finalize for approval. Hence, PEMSEA Resource Facility is also looking at other potential ways to market its services to continue generating its own unrestricted funds which can be used to help develop further research and provide technical services, explore more strategic partnerships, and mobilize additional resources.

**Table 5. PEMSEA projects/services in the pipeline**

Projects	Partners	Role of PEMSEA	Expected amount	Status
<b>Blue Solutions to reduce GHG emissions in</b>	IKI/IMO	Co-implementing agency	15 mln euros	Under review by IKI

<b>maritime transport in ASEAN</b>				
<b>ASEAN Norway building local capacity in local governments in combatting marine litter in ASEAN (ASEANo Phase 2</b>	NORAD/ASEAN/NIVA/CSEAS	Third party contractor (Philippine)	3mln USD	Under review by NORAD
<b>Arafura Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Plan- 3</b>	UNDP/GEF	Executing agency)	15Mln USD	PIF under development by UNDP
<b>Building effective ecological networks of Marine Protected Areas in Large Marine Ecosystems</b>	UNDP/GEF/ACB	Third party contractor	12 Mln USD	Pro doc under review by UNDP/GEF
<b>Blue Action Fund MPA strengthening in Cagayancillo/ Tubbataha Reef</b>	WWF	Third party contractor		Concept note submitted to donor
<b>GEF awarded project -Philippine Rise Integrated Conservation for Enduring Legacies through Ecosystem Support Services (PRICELESS)</b>	Conservation International DENR, Philippines with RARE, Haribon Foundation and DENR national and regional offices	Fund manager	3.6 mln USD	PRF reviewing the project document and due diligence requirements
<b>Blue Carbon Program (certification- see draft roadmap for discussion and review in Agenda item 3.0)</b>	Select PNLC members	Regional Hub		Concept under development and discussion within PEMSEA and potential partners
<b>ICM/Port certification services</b>		Service provider		Ongoing service but needs more marketing and upscaling

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**Monitoring and evaluation**

Service provider

Ongoing service, but needs more marketing and upscaling

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- 6.5 For the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2023 up to 2024, the PRF will conduct the following actions aligned to the Sustainability Plan:
- Development of a five-year projection plan to quantify costs and benefits of the existing PEMSEA Sustainability Plan;
  - Continuation of negotiations on projects in the pipeline (see Table 5);
  - Continue discussion and exploration for direct fund transfer from Japan country partner to PRF, instead of going through UNDP Philippines and eliminate transaction costs;
  - Continue discussion with MOEF Indonesia on funding PNLC secretariat based in IPB University as part of Indonesia’s country contribution from 2023 onwards;
  - Explore how PRF can avail of Green Climate Fund for national and regional activities in Cambodia, Lao PDR and other interested PEMSEA country partners;
  - Work with PNLC (and relevant NCPs and CPs) to develop an institutional/training and capacity development plan for the next generation of coastal and marine managers in the region;
  - Assess and refine the PEMSEA blue carbon program;
  - Strengthen technical and management (and) capacity of existing PRF staff; and
  - Continue to provide updates to EC on the progress and further refinements of the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan
- 6.6 **Conclusion:** The Executive Committee reconfirmed their support to the recommendations to the PEMSEA Sustainability plan that were raised by the Secretariat. They supported the efforts of the PRF in promoting and initiating activities that will raise operational funds for PEMSEA.
- 6.7 **Recommendations:** The EC advised to consider revisiting discussions of inviting other non-formal Country Partners (ex. Thailand and Malaysia) in the region to join PEMSEA.

## 7.0 Other business

- 7.1. **Conclusion:** The PRF Secretariat presented the proposed schedules and venues for the governance meetings to be conducted in 2024 as follows:

Date	Activity	Location
3 <sup>rd</sup> week of March 2024 (tentatively 19-20 March 2024)	32 <sup>nd</sup> EC Meeting	Beijing, China

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3 <sup>rd</sup> week of July (16-18 July/ 23-25 July)	16 <sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting	Puerto Palawan, Philippines	Princesa,
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- 7.2. On behalf of China, Ms. Chen deferred the hosting of the 32<sup>nd</sup> EC meeting and advised the Committee of the possibility of MNR's capacity to host an EC meeting around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024 instead.
- 7.3. **Recommendations:** The PRF Secretariat was instructed to review other options for the 32<sup>nd</sup> EC meeting. The Executive Committee was requested to provide the Secretariat with their preferred dates for the conduct of the governance meetings via email.

## 8.0 Closing of the Meeting

- 8.1. The EAS PC Co-Chair provided a summary of the key decisions made and delivered his closing remarks.
- 8.2. The meeting was adjourned at 16:08 (UTC+8).



## ANNEX 1. Agenda of the meeting

Item	Agenda	Speaker/Presenter	Document
1	Opening of the meeting and approval of the meeting agenda  Group photo	Dr. Vann Monyneath  Chair, East Asian Seas Partnership Council (EAS PC)	EC/31/DOC/01b
2	Updates on the 2024 EAS Congress	Ms. Abigail Cruzada Secretariat Coordinator, PRF	EC/31/DOC/02
3	PEMSEA Blue Carbon Program	Ms. Maida Aguinaldo Capacity Development and Training Manager, PRF	EC/31/DOC/03 EC/31/DOC/03a
4	Evaluation of Non-Country Partner Applicants	Ms. Abigail Cruzada Secretariat Coordinator, PRF	EC/31/DOC/04
5	Optimization of the Technical Session	Ms. Aimee Gonzales Executive Director, PRF	EC/31/DOC/05
6	Updates on the Recommendations of the PEMSEA Sustainability Plan	Ms. Aimee Gonzales Executive Director, PRF	EC/31/DOC/06
7	Other business	Usec. Jonas Leones  Co-Chair, EAS Partnership Council	
8	Closing of the meeting	Usec. Jonas Leones Co-Chair, EAS Partnership Council	

## **Annex 2. Meeting documents, presentation and group photo**

Meeting Documents: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-31-Meeting-documents-Final>

Presentation: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-31-presentation>

Group Photo: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-31-photos>

### ANNEX 3. List of Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
<b>EAS PC Officers and Co-Chairs</b>	
<i>Dr. Vann Monyneath</i>	EAS PC Chair
<i>Usec. Jonas Leones</i>	EAS PC Co-Chair
<i>Ms. Chen Danhong</i>	Intergovernmental Session Chair
<i>Dr. Keita Furukawa</i>	Technical Session Chair
<i>Mr. Le Dai Thang</i>	Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair
<b>PEMSEA Resource Facility</b>	
<i>Ms. Aimee Gonzales</i>	Executive Director
<i>Ms. Shinji Kim</i>	Head of Planning and Partnership Development
<i>Ms. Nancy Bermas</i>	Regional Project Manager, IRBM
<i>Ms. Abi Cruzada</i>	Secretariat Coordinator
<i>Ms. Maida Aguinaldo</i>	Training and Capacity Development Officer
<i>Mr. Renato Cardinal</i>	QMS Consultant
<i>Ms. Daisy Padayao</i>	Project Manager
<i>Mr. Arsenio Dacaymat, Jr.</i>	IT Assistant
<i>Mr. Rod Corpuz</i>	IT Specialist
<i>Mr. Thomas Bell</i>	Program Manager
<b>Observers</b>	
<i>Mr. Roath Sith</i>	Deputy Director-General, General Directorate of Environmental Protection, MoE, Cambodia
<i>Ms. Ky Channimol</i>	Staff, National Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
<i>Ms. Jeslina Gorospe</i>	Chief, Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), DENR
<i>Dr. Wang Shouqiang</i>	Program Director, China PEMSEA Center
<i>Ms. Zhu Xiaotong</i>	Project Assistant, China PEMSEA Center