



History of China's Engagement in the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia

1993	China actively participated in the establishment of a regional GEF/UNDP/IMO project on Marine Pollution Prevention in the East Asian Seas (MPP-EAS) alongside representatives from IMO, UNDP, Cambodia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, the agreement of which was signed in Xiamen, China.
1994	Xiamen (China) and Batangas (Philippines) were the pilot sites of the first National Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Demonstration Project.
1995	First Regional Training Course on the Application of ICM System in Marine Pollution Prevention and Management were held in China, the Philippines and Singapore
1997	Sea Use Zoning Plan was adopted by the Municipal Government of Xiamen.
2000	Continuation of the regional GEF/UNDP/IMO MPP-EAS phase 2, which saw additional countries joining namely, Singapore, DPR Korea and Ro Korea.
2001	PEMSEA established the Regional Network of Local Governments implementing ICM.
2002	Based on the successful experience in Xiamen, China issued a national decree to ensure implementation of ICM across China.
2003	China participated in the inaugural East Asian Seas Congress hosted by the government of Malaysia along with other country partners, which adopted the Putrajaya Declaration of Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia. It also endorsed the shared regional framework called the 'Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia'.
2005	Xiamen International Forum for Coastal Cities was conducted, hosted by the Xiamen Municipal Government, together with UNDP, State Oceanic Administration of China (SOA) and PEMSEA. This adopted the "Xiamen Declaration on Coastal Cities - Global Cooperation for Sustainable Development and was later transformed into the annual Xiamen World Ocean Week (XWOW).
2006	The second EAS Congress held in Haikou, China, was hosted by the Haikou City Government, Hainan Province of China and the State Oceanic Administration of China. Eleven country partners signed the Haikou Declaration, which transformed the governing body from a Project Steering Committee into a Partnership Council. Li Haiqing, Director General SOA was a member of the Executive Committee. PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) Charter was signed by 18 local governments led by Xiamen. Xiamen Ocean and Fisheries Bureau agreed to host the PNLG Secretariat.
2009	Third EAS Congress held in Manila where China along with 10 other countries in the region committed to strengthen the implementation of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Adaptation in the Seas of East Asia.
2011	The 10th PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Forum, held in Dongying, China adopted the Dongying Declaration on Building a Blue Economy through ICM.
2012	Dr. Zhang Zhanghai, Director General of SOA became a member of the Executive Committee.

2014	China joined the multi-year seven country GEF/UNDP Scaling up SDS-SEA implementation, which aimed to catalyze actions and investments at the regional, national and local levels to rehabilitate and sustain coastal and marine ecosystem services and build a sustainable coastal and ocean-based economy in the East Asian region.
2015	China PEMSEA Sustainable Coastal Management Cooperation Center was established as the implementing arm of SOA on the SDS-SEA Scaling up implementation in China. Xiamen, Dongying, Lianyungang, Haikou, Quanzhou and Fangchenggang received their first ICM certification, which recognizes their best environmental practices and provide assurance to businesses and investors of proper governance, and therefore reduced risk. China issued a law which mandates the collection and utilization of sea-use payment and the establishment of a sea area functional zoning system and the ecological red line system. Under these systems, ecological restoration projects were launched nationwide through the 'Blue Bay', Ecological Islands and the 'Planting of Mangroves in the South and Tamarisks in the North.' China joined 10 other countries in signing the 2015 SDS-SEA framework, which is a package of applicable principles, relevant existing regional and international action programs, agreements, and instruments, as well as implementation approaches to achieving sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia. It offers a regional framework for the interested countries and other stakeholders to implement, in an integrated or holistic manner, the commitments they made without assuming new legal obligations. The SDS-SEA embodies the shared vision of the countries and other stakeholders for the Seas of East Asia, and the ways by which they will achieve that shared vision. China signed the Da Nang Compact, which reaffirms the regional coastal and marine strategy, the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), and lays down the post-2015 Strategic Targets of PEMSEA. The Compact is the region's support to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant international and regional commitments related to coasts and oceans. Dr. Zhang Haiwen, Director General of SOA became the Chair of the Intergovernmental Session of the Partnership Council and a member of the Executive Committee.
2017	The Master Plan of Guangdong province on coastal integrated protection and utilization was issued by SOA, together with the province of Guangdong, marking the first ever provincial ICM master plan in China. The Bay Chief System was also introduced, which centered on clarifying the responsibilities of local governments on every level of marine environmental protection. The Bay Chief System is being implemented in Lianyungang City. China began its government wide office restructuring where SOA will be merged with the Ministry of Natural Resources.
2018	China signed the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration, which commits to pursue PEMSEA's self-sustainability post 2019 and endorsed the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022, which is composed of 3 Priority Management Programs and 3 Governance Programs to operationalize the SDS-SEA regional framework and align the region to international commitments such as the UN SDGs, UNFCCC and CBD Aichi Biodiversity targets. The Priority Management Programs include: a) Biodiversity Conservation and Management; b) Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; and c) Pollution Reduction and Waste Management. The cross-cutting Governance Programs include: a) Ocean Governance and Strategic Partnerships; b) Knowledge Management and Capacity Development; and c) Blue Economy Investment and Sustainable Financing.
2019	Mme Chen Yue, Acting Director General of the International Cooperation Division of MNR, was appointed as Intergovernmental Session Vice Chair of PEMSEA's Partnership Council. Renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement between MNR and PEMSEA regarding the role and functions of the China PEMSEA Center at the XWOW 2019, Xiamen. Approval of the cost sharing arrangement between MNR and PEMSEA for 1M RMB. Executive Committee Meeting, Manila, Philippines, October 17-18, 2019.
2020	In 2020, China expanded ICM coverage to 10,457.49 km (58.1% of its coastline), backed by strong national policies and the continued operation of the China PEMSEA Sustainable Coastal Management Cooperation Center (CPC). Major highlights included wetland restoration, strengthened MPA management, ecosystem-based fisheries in Haizhou Bay, and blue economy initiatives such as ecological GDP accounting in Sanya. China actively participated in the Final Project Steering Committee Meeting held virtually on December 18, 2020, and the national end-of-project forum in September, where stakeholders shared best practices and reaffirmed their support for SDS-SEA. China hosted the 2020 PNLG Annual Forum in Xiamen, highlighting its leadership in regional ocean governance despite COVID-19 restrictions. China received a highly satisfactory rating in the project's terminal evaluation and reaffirmed its long-term commitment to PEMSEA and SDS-SEA implementation.
2021	In 2021, China participated in the 7th EAS Ministerial Forum , reaffirming its high-level commitment to regional ocean sustainability under the SDS-SEA. The Ministry of Natural Resources issued the <i>Technical Guidelines for Marine Ecological Restoration</i> , a landmark document standardizing ecosystem rehabilitation efforts nationwide, with pilot tests in Dongying and Qingdao. China contributed to the EU-GIZ "Rethinking Plastics" project , advancing circular economy solutions to reduce marine litter. It also launched the UN Decade-endorsed regional program led by Xiamen University to integrate science, management, and society for sustainable coastal zones under climate change and human pressure.

China actively shared PEMSEA recommendations on ocean governance and regional cooperation in key platforms, including the **China-ASEAN Marine Cooperation Forum**, **Philippines-China Think-Tank Dialogue**, and the **Guiyang International Forum on Ecological Civilization**.

2022

Mme. CHEN Danhong, Director General for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Natural Resources, China, becomes Intergovernmental Session Chair of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council.

The National Ocean Technology Center (NOTC) of the Ministry of Natural Resources, China becomes an associate member of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments, and commits to provide technical support for local governments on marine spatial planning and marine functional zoning, marine renewable energy technology, and marine resources investigation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Dr. FANG Qinhu, Deputy Director of the Coastal and Ocean Management Institute, Xiamen University, China is elected as the Vice President of the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers

2023

China through the Xiamen Municipal People's Government hosts the 2023 PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Annual Forum.

China develops the China Actions Framework for the UN Ocean Decade, 14th Five-Year Plans for the Protection and Utilization of Natural Resources, Development of the Marine Economy, Marine Ecological Environmental Protection, Modern Energy System, and Development of Renewable Energy, signifying scaled up action towards addressing the triple planetary crisis.

2024

China, through its Ministry of Natural Resources and the Xiamen Municipal People's Government, hosts the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress, with the theme Blue Synergy for a Shared Future: One Sustainable and Resilient Ocean, gather more than 800 stakeholders from various sectors.

The National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service of the Ministry of Natural Resources becomes a PEMSEA Non-Country Partner. China signs the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, which outlines 10 synergistic actions to promote effective ocean governance, healthy and resilient oceans, a sustainable blue economy, and healthy people through integrated management, science-based planning, and innovative solutions. Key actions include ecosystem-based approaches, blue carbon and financing strategies, improved data systems, and mainstreaming blue food systems into development planning to support climate goals, coastal resilience, and sustainable livelihoods.

Changyi City, Shandong Province and Quanzhou City, Fujian Province are awarded ICM Level 1 and 2 certifications, respectively, highlighting their commitment to the ecological protection and restoration of coastal areas and the construction of protected areas.

Dongying Huanhai Institute of Marine Conservation and Development and Yancheng City, China become members of the PNLC. Guangdong Ocean University (China) becomes a member of the PNLC.

The Xiamen Municipal People's Government, which hosts the PNLC Secretariat, was recognized at the EAS Congress 2024 for their significant contribution to regional collaboration and sustainable development. Their initiative in bridging local governance and academic expertise were highlighted as models for scaling up ICM implementation.

2025

Fujian Institute for Sustainable Oceans (FISO) – Xiamen University, in collaboration with the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC) and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), hosts the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Application in the Scaling-up of Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) training on 20–26 April 2025 in Xiamen, China, which aims to train PNLC members on the concept, principles, and framework of ICM and MSP, develop a standard ICM-MSP course, and form a regional team of ICM and MSP trainers.

PEMSEA, together with The National Marine Hazard Mitigation Service of MNR, China and the Hainan International Blue Carbon Center, hosts the 2nd PEMSEA Blue Carbon Technical Working Group Meeting on 6-7 June 2025 in Haikou, Hainan, China, which aimed to advance the development of a Blue Carbon Ecosystem Services (BCES) Management Mechanism for the East Asian Seas, promoting collaborative action for climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods.



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