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**TERMS OF REFERENCE**
**RESEARCH INTERN – ONE HEALTH AND THE EAST ASIAN SEAS REGION**

## General Information

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| **Reference:** | VA/INTERNSHIP/PRF/2026/006 |
| **Title:** | Research Intern – One Health and the East Asian Seas Region |
| **Duty Station:** | PEMSEA Resource Facility, Quezon City, Philippines |
| **Duration of Assignment:** | Eight (8) weeks, January to March 2027 |
| **Reporting to:** | Executive Director |
| **Type of Assignment:** | Internship (Research Support for the One Health Briefing Paper) |

## BACKGROUND

PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia) is a regional cooperation mechanism whose mission is to promote sustainable development of coastal and marine areas. It comprises of 11 country and 22 non country partners in the East Asian Seas region who are committed to implement a joint regional strategy called the 'Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia' (SDS-SEA). The PEMSEA Resource Facility serves as the technical and secretariat arm of the Partnership.

The East Asian Seas (EAS) region is home to high marine biodiversity, dense coastal populations, and intensive aquaculture, maritime trade and coastal urbanization. Rapid environmental degradation, climate change, marine pollution and habitat loss heighten the risk of zoonotic spillovers, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in aquatic environments, harmful algal blooms (HABs) and food-borne diseases.

Recognizing the inextricable link between ecosystem integrity and human well-being, the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan (2023–2030), structured around Effective and Transformative Governance, Healthy Ocean, Healthy People and Healthy Economies, identifies One Health as a strategic, cross-cutting priority. While One Health has gained significant global momentum (e.g., the Quadripartite Joint Plan of Action) and regional traction (e.g., the 2023 ASEAN Declaration on One Health Initiative), terrestrial animal-human interfaces often dominate policy discussions, leaving coastal and marine ecosystems underrepresented. PEMSEA's flagship Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) system, alongside Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM), provides an established, multi-sectoral, area-based governance and management mechanism capable of operationalizing One Health across the land-sea continuum.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE BRIEFING PAPER

The primary objective of this assignment is to develop a concise, evidence-based, and policy-oriented **Briefing Paper** that equips PEMSEA Country and Non-Country Partners, local governments, and regional stakeholders with a clear roadmap for integrating One Health into coastal and ocean governance. Specifically, the paper will:

1. Articulate the strategic rationale for One Health within the **SDS-SEA IP 2023–2030** framework.
2. Synthesize the global status of One Health and translate its specific implications for the EAS coastal and marine context.

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3. Map existing One Health initiatives, networks, and research programs across the EAS region to identify synergies and gaps.
4. Analyze key institutional, technical, and financial challenges and opportunities for coastal-marine One Health integration.
5. Formulate actionable recommendations for PEMSEA and its partners, explicitly demonstrating how One Health can be mainstreamed and operationalized through ICM and complementary area-based management tools.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Under the supervision and mentorship of the Executive Director, the Research Intern will carry out the following duties and responsibilities. Percentages indicate the approximate share of time over the placement:

I. **Policy Alignment Review – SDS-SEA IP 2023–2030 (15%)**

- Review the SDS-SEA IP 2023–2030 Strategic Results Framework (SRF) to document explicit links between One Health, Core Pillar 2 (Healthy Ocean), Core Pillar 3 (Healthy People) and Enabling Pillar 1 (Effective and Transformative Governance).
- Help clarify why One Health is designated as a key action point in the updated 2023–2030 Implementation Plan, and summarize its alignment with global frameworks, including the UN Decade of Ocean Science, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the SDGs.

II. **Literature Synthesis on Global Status and EAS Risks (25%)**

- **Global landscape:** Compile a summary of current global One Health governance, notably the FAO-UNEP-WHO-WOAH Quadripartite Joint Plan of Action (2022–2026, now extended to 2029) and post-pandemic global health security instruments, highlighting the growing inclusion of the environment-health interface.
- **EAS regional implications:** Conduct targeted literature searches and draft concise summaries of what global One Health shifts mean for the EAS region, covering four key risk areas: coastal and marine zoonoses (e.g., pathogens linked to marine wildlife trade, coastal wetland degradation and aquaculture); antimicrobial resistance (AMR) pathways in coastal waters, wastewater runoff and intensive mariculture; seafood safety, marine biotoxins, HABs and microplastic-pathogen interactions; and climate-induced shifts in waterborne and vector-borne diseases affecting vulnerable coastal communities.

III. **Regional Stocktaking and Initiative Mapping (20%)**

- Populate a structured Excel or database matrix mapping ongoing One Health policies, platforms and research networks in East and Southeast Asia (e.g., ASEAN One Health Joint Plan of Action, Southeast Asia One Health University Network [SEAOHUN], ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity initiatives and national One Health bodies).
- Assess the extent to which each mapped program incorporates coastal, marine and aquatic ecosystems rather than strictly terrestrial systems, and highlight two to three notable case studies or pilot research to identify synergies and gaps.

IV. **Synthesis of Challenges and Opportunities (10%)**

- **Challenges:** Categorize recurring barriers identified in policy reports and stakeholder interviews, such as governance silos between ministries of health, agriculture, fisheries and environment; fragmented surveillance data across land-sea boundaries; limited technical capacity at the local government level; and sustainable financing constraints.
- **Opportunities:** Compile examples of avenues for cross-sectoral convergence, such as leveraging blue economy investments, innovative assessment tools, integrating environmental DNA (eDNA) and water quality monitoring into early warning systems, and tapping into international climate, biodiversity and pandemic preparedness funds.

V. **Operationalizing One Health through ICM and Area-based Management (20%)**

- **Methodological linkages:** Review PEMSEA's ICM framework and process (e.g., inter-agency coordinating committees, strategic planning, coastal use zoning, risk assessment and management, State of Coasts and State of River Basin reporting, and the integrated environmental monitoring program [IEMP]), alongside MSP, IRBM and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), to document how they can serve as a delivery vehicle for One Health at the national and sub-national levels.
- **Recommendations:** Help compile inputs for tiered recommendations for the PEMSEA Resource Facility (e.g., knowledge products, integration of One Health indicators into SOC and State of River Basin reporting, updating environmental risk assessment and IEMP tools, regional partnership brokering with WHO, FAO and UNEP regional offices and SEAOHUN, and joint capacity building with the PNLC and partner agencies) and for national and local governments (e.g., pilot-testing "One Health-informed ICM" in selected PEMSEA Network of Local Governments [PNLG] sites and embedding public health and veterinary agencies and research institutions into local ICM coordinating councils).
- Draft initial text sections, tables and presentation slides for review and refinement by the PRF Technical Team.

VI. **Consultation and Key Informant Interview Support (10%)**

- Assist the supervisor in scheduling six to ten virtual Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with representatives of PRF, selected PNLG sites, regional One Health networks (e.g., SEAOHUN, ACB) and technical experts in marine epidemiology and aquaculture; prepare background briefs on interviewees, take detailed verbatim or summary notes, and organize qualitative feedback.
- Help consolidate feedback from the PRF Technical Team and designated reviewers during iterative drafting and peer review.

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**Expected Deliverables**

| Target Timeline | Deliverables |
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| **Week 1** | **Annotated Workplan and Literature List:** Refined research schedule, preliminary bibliography of key policy and scientific sources, draft list of KII targets and KII tracking sheet, and inputs to the refined table of contents of the Briefing Paper |
| **Week 4** | **Regional Mapping Matrix and Draft Section Inputs:** Populated Excel inventory of EAS One Health initiatives, plus draft text inputs covering all five sections of the Briefing Paper and draft visual diagrams linking One Health to the ICM cycle |
| **Week 6** | **Validation Presentation Support:** Slide deck of key findings and recommendations for presentation to PRF and invited technical reviewers, and summary notes of their feedback |
| **Week 8** | **Finalized Text Inputs and Policy Brief Draft:** Revised section inputs incorporating PRF Technical Team and reviewer feedback, formatted tables and charts, and a draft two-page executive policy brief for the Executive Committee (EC) and Partnership Council (PC) |

**Internship Arrangements**

- **Supervision:** Weekly check-ins with the executive Director to review research outlines, refine analytical framing and receive feedback on policy writing; a mid-term review and an end-of-placement assessment. A workplan will break down the tasks in this TOR into manageable portions.
- **Research approach:** Guided desk review of PEMSEA strategic documents (SDS-SEA IP 2023–2030, ICM manuals, SOC reports, environmental risk assessment reports), Quadripartite guidelines, ASEAN declarations and peer-reviewed literature on marine and coastal One Health in East Asia, with guided exposure to KIIs and the stakeholder validation presentation.
- **Orientation:** Integrated coastal management (ICM), source-to-sea governance and code of conduct, followed by role-specific learning.
- **Support:** Stipend or cost-of-living allowance and work-related travel and subsistence where applicable. Interns are expected to use their own laptop.
- **Conditions:** Code of conduct, data privacy and consent, publication clearance, intellectual property and systems access rules; safeguarding and grievance procedures apply. All intellectual property rights, datasets and written outputs generated during the internship shall rest solely with PEMSEA.
- **Completion:** Review of outputs against deliverables, organized files, process documentation, data and product handover, an exit interview, and a certificate of completion.

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## QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

**Eligibility:** Filipino citizen, aged 18 to 30, and available for the full eight (8)-week placement.

**Education:** Undergraduate or Master's degree in Marine Science, Environmental Management, Public Health, Veterinary Epidemiology, Public Policy, or a related interdisciplinary field.

**Experience:** Minimum of 3 years of professional experience in coastal/ocean governance, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), or One Health policy and research in the East Asian Seas region.

- Academic research experience, including thesis work, internships, research assistantships or volunteer work, involving literature review and data organization.
- Proven track record of authoring high-level policy briefs, synthesis reports, or technical guidance documents for intergovernmental or multilateral organizations.

**Technical Skills:**

- Strong academic literature review, data organization and synthesis skills.
- Foundational knowledge of coastal and ocean governance, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), aquaculture or One Health concepts in the Southeast and East Asian context. Familiarity with PEMSEA, the SDS-SEA, ASEAN regional mechanisms and area-based management approaches (ICM, MSP, IRBM) is an advantage.
- Ability to take accurate interview notes and organize qualitative feedback.
- Detail-oriented and a proactive learner.
- Able to work collaboratively in a multicultural, hybrid office environment.

**Language Requirement:** Fluency in English, with clear, structured writing skills and the ability to distill technical papers into concise summaries and clean presentation slides.

**Technological Skills:** Proficiency in MS Office or Google Workspace, particularly Excel/Google Sheets and PowerPoint/Slides, and online meeting platforms such as Zoom.

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**SELECTION PROCESS**

Applications are first screened for eligibility and completeness. Eligible applicants are then assessed by a panel of PEMSEA representatives on motivation, subject foundation, research and writing skills, and communication, followed by an interview of shortlisted applicants.

Applicants are requested to submit a cover letter with statement of availability and CV with names and contact details of two (2) references, via email to recruitment@pemsea.org. Kindly indicate the vacancy reference number and title in the subject line: VA/INTERNSHIP/PRF/2026/006– Research Intern – One Health and the East Asian Seas Region.

Deadline of application is on December 10, 2026. Only shortlisted candidates will be notified. For more information on PEMSEA, please visit www.pemsea.org.