

Regional Cooperation in Ecosystem-based Management in the Seas of East Asia: The Partnership Approach

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What is PEMSEA?

PEMSEA is a regional project of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and executed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The project focuses on environmental management for the Seas of East Asia which is composed of six large marine ecosystems (LMEs), viz. the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea, Sulu-Celebes Sea, Indonesian Seas and Gulf of Thailand. It has major river systems draining into the regional seas with a combined watershed of 6.25 million km² (Fig. 1 A).

PEMSEA evolved as a regional project (1994–1999) on marine pollution prevention and management under the GEF pilot phase with the participation of 11 countries in the region and a budget of US\$8 million. Its second phase (1999–2006), now with 12 member countries, focused on building intergovernmental, interagency and multisectoral partnerships in environmental management for the seas of East Asia. It has a total GEF contribution of US\$16.2 million. Towards the end of the 2nd phase, the countries of Myanmar, Lao PDR and Timor-Leste joined PEMSEA, making a total membership of 15, viz. China, DPR Korea, Japan and RO Korea in the north and the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) and Timor-Leste in the south, covering a total sea area of 7 million km² and a total coastline of 234,000 km.

Building upon its current structure, PEMSEA is in the process of transforming into a longer term regional arrangement to implement a regional marine strategy, the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), with GEF financial support and significant co-financing from the participating countries beginning 2007.

The Challenges

The East Asian Seas Region, like many regional seas in other parts of the world, faces the following challenges:

First, governance issues confronting the sustainable use of goods and services and environmental sustainability in the seas of East Asia are very complex due to the very high population pressure (with 1 billion people living near the coasts), the wide range of economic activities in the coastal

and marine areas, the changing use and consumption patterns, the uneven economic development among countries (the region is host to developed, developing and least developed countries), and socioeconomic, political, cultural, religious complexities, albeit with a strong traditional connectivity. Most governments still maintain a “development first” policy or attitude. Management measures remain weak.

Second, capacity and economic disparity among countries in East Asia pose a major challenge to regional cooperation in achieving sustainable coastal and ocean development due to the wide financial and technical capacity gaps between the developed, developing and least developed nations. The vast capacity gaps have made it difficult for countries in the region to effectively address severe environmental threats which include destruction of habitats, loss of marine biodiversity, deteriorating water quality, alteration of coastlines, depleted marine resources, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing (IUU), and many more. Many of these threats are transboundary in nature, requiring cooperation among the affected countries.

Third, the lack of national and regional coordinating mechanisms or the institutional “home base” for coastal and ocean de

Overarching Goal Operational Definition of Sustainable Development	Integrated Coastal Management
Fundamental Approaches	Integration and interrelationship principles Adaptive management Ecosystem-based approach Environmental protection Sustainable livelihood Vulnerability/Resilience thinking
Operational Strategies	Effective governance Institutional arrangements Multi-stakeholders participation Functional partnerships/Networking Knowledge management Capacity development Financing arrangements Monitoring and evaluation Scaling up
Tools and Instruments	Coastal strategy and implementation Governance analysis Coordinating mechanisms Risk assessment Environmental Impact Assessment Stakeholder analysis Cost-benefit analysis Participatory tools (negotiation, conflict resolution, arbitration) Legal/regulatory instruments (land- and sea-use planning, marine resource allocation, codes, standards, etc) Economic instruments (charges, subsidies, quotas, fines, incentives, etc)

Table 1. Application of the Hierarchical Principles to the ICM Practices.

Partnerships at the Local Level

PEMSEA has set up a series of integrated coastal management (ICM) demonstration sites to serve as working models for ICM application. Achievements in local actions such as conflict resolution, improvement of coastal landscapes, effective waste management, clean beaches and

and an annual event, the International Forum

A New Paradigm for Regional Cooperation — A Process- and Partnership-oriented Regional Mechanism

Although PEMSEA has been operating smoothly and successfully over the last 12 years, it is still project-oriented even with its programme focus. Institutionally, it is functioning under a UN (IMO) umbrella and lacks a legal personality of its own. It has become apparent that structural change to transform PEMSEA into a more permanent regional mechanism is a necessity for the following reasons:

- a) Implementation of the SDS-SEA to achieve the shared vision requires a dynamic and stable institutional arrang

intergovernmental session where only government representatives attend and the technical session where all partners participate. Decisions are based on consensus rather than voting.

- b) A gradually country-owned PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) which provides both secretariat services for the regional cooperation and technical services for the implementation of SDS-SEA related projects. Governments provide financial support to sustain the operation of the Secretariat Services while the Technical Services shall be self-sustained through resources derived from project implementation.
- c) A Ministerial Forum which takes place triennially to renew political commitment and provide new policy direction for SDS-SEA implementation;
- d) A Regional Pa

PEMSEA in Transformation

The Regional Programme Office (RPO) is now undergoing transformation to institutionalize its current project-based operation into a longer-term PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) which provides secretariat and technical services to the participating countries. China, Japan and RO Korea will provide annual cash contributions while the Philippines will continue to host the regional office, providing additional office space and facilities. By the end of 2006, the Second Ministerial Forum would have endorsed the Partnership Agreement and a group of partnering organizations signed the Partnership Operating Arrangement as founding members. The first Partnership Council will be held to officially establish the new regional ocean regime.

The timeline for PEMSEA's transformation reflects a lengthy operational process: from project to programme focus, from intergovernmental cooperation to multi-stakeholder partnership, from a project office to a regional institutional structure and from being donor-driven to government and stakeholder-ownership. After 12 full years of operation (1994–2006), PEMSEA is entering into a critical phase of transformation during which the government and the partnering stakeholders will take the driver's seat and propel the region towards achieving the vision of the SDS-SEA.

Reference

PEMSEA (Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia) 2003. Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia: Regional Implementation of the World Summit for Sustainable Development Requirements for the A5Re/372cc38awA5Re/37 s

Figure 1: A) The Seas of East Asia
B) Philippine Archipelago
C) Manila Bay
D) Manila Bay Watershed

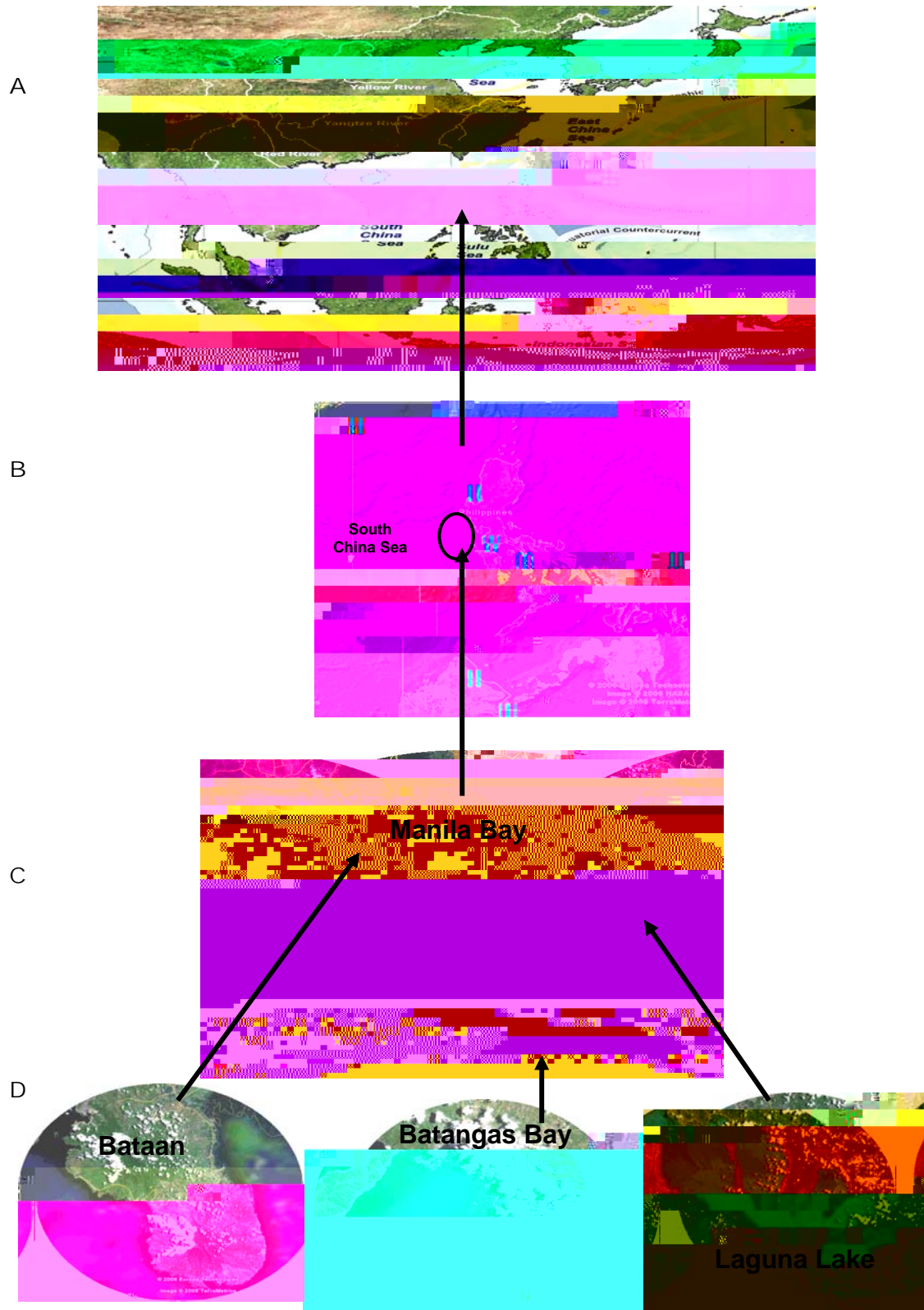


Fig. 2. *PEMSEA ICM Demonstration and Parallel Sites and Subregional Hotspots in the Seas of East Asia.*



Fig. 3. A New Paradigm for Regional Cooperation.



**Process- and Partnership-Oriented Regional Mechanism
for the Seas of East Asia**

- Regional coordination
- Policy and functional integration
- Results focus: Effectiveness
- Partnership Agreements
- Subregional Agreements
- Subnational Agreements