

Experts Meet in Chengdu for SDS-SEA Implementation

CHENGDU, PR CHINA -- International experts meeting in Chengdu decided on major lines and fields of action for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), during the Preparatory Meeting for the Working Group on the Implementation of the SDS-SEA held from 29 March to 1 April.

The meeting brainstormed on the SDS-SEA implementation, including targets, approaches, modalities and funding implications, taking into account the specific national and local conditions. The meeting also produced a conceptual framework for the implementation of the SDS-SEA. The Chengdu meeting is considered a milestone in that it marks the concrete steps leading to on-the-ground implementation of the SDS-SEA, which was adopted by PEMSEA-participating countries last December in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The lines of action proposed include mainstreaming of coasts and oceans into national policy, the scaling up of integrated coastal management programs, enhancing the use of the region's intellectual capital, and capacity-building. Scientific and technical support, knowledge management and financing mechanisms were identified as critical fields of action. The draft conceptual framework will be refined and presented at a Working Group meeting to be held in August.

Participants in the preparatory meeting were experts with extensive knowledge and experiences in the field of ocean-related policy and program development, both at the national and international levels, many of whom were involved in the development of the SDS-SEA. The meeting was organized by the PEMSEA Regional Programme Office and was hosted by the State Oceanic Administration of the People's Republic of China.

The SDS-SEA is considered necessary and timely in addressing cross-sectoral concerns, as it employs an integrated approach, mirroring the interconnectivity of the sea. It is a platform for addressing the sustainable ocean development issues in the region and serves as an umbrella for the efforts of other regional programs, agencies and other stakeholders.

San Fernando City to Develop Integrated Solid Waste Management System

MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES -- Managing large quantities of waste generated everyday can be turned into investment opportunities creating income, employment and livelihood and at the same time improve the environment. The City of San Fernando in Pampanga Province, represented by Mayor Jesus Reynaldo B. Aquino, and private sector partner, Pro-Environment Consortium, represented by its Chairman and President, Mr. Jose Luis U. Yulo, Jr., signed a Memorandum of Agreement for the development and implementation of an integrated solid waste management system for the city on 16 April 2004.

Over the past three years, PEMSEA has been assisting national and local governments with the development, adoption and implementation of a coastal strategy for Manila Bay. One important aspect of the strategy is focused on making affordable environmental facilities and services available to communities in the area. Recognizing the financial and technical limitations of many local governments, PEMSEA started working with local stakeholders to put together environmental investment projects. The packaging of these projects is aimed at engaging the private sector as investors and partners in the provision of required environmental facilities and services.

Together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and various stakeholders in the Manila Bay Area, the integrated solid waste management (SWM) system being proposed for the City of San Fernando was selected as one of the projects to be developed and implemented using the public-private partnership (PPP) approach. The SWM Project aims to provide improved sanitary services to all sectors, including poor communities. It involves the collection of waste from households and commercial and industrial establishments, closure of the open dumpsite, development and operation of a materials recovery facility (MRF) and composting center, and the baling/storage of residual waste in a sanitary landfill, in concert with a social development program. Since the Investors Roundtable, which was held on 6 May 2003, the City has evaluated Expressions of Interest, Partnership Proposals and oral presentations from several private sector companies. Eventually, Pro-Environment Consortium (PEC) was selected as its partner. PEC has proven technical and managerial expertise in solid waste management.

The City of San Fernando, which is the home of the country's biggest and most artistic Christmas lanterns and dramatic Holy Week celebrations, is the first local government in the Philippines that has taken the initiative towards the full implementation of R.A. 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act using the PPP approach. PPP is an alternative delivery mechanism for creating and implementing financially viable and affordable investment projects among local governments. This project serves as an example for other LGUs in the country that are faced with similar challenges. Thus, the signing of their Memorandum of Agreement is a milestone event in the country's vision of a clean, green and healthy environment.

The MOA signing was witnessed by DENR Secretary Elisea G. Gozun, the German Ambassador Hon. Herbert Jess, UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Deborah Landey, PEMSEA Regional Programme Director Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, and the Vice-Mayor of San Fernando Hon. Eligio H. Lagman.

Xiamen Achieving Millennium Development Goals through ICM

XIAMEN, PR CHINA -- Xiamen is successfully addressing Millennium Development Goals (MDG) such as environmental sustainability, poverty reduction, private sector involvement and policy reforms through integrated coastal management (ICM). This according to UNDP Manila Resident Representative, Ms. Deborah Landey, who went to Xiamen on 13 April for an orientation visit.

Accompanied by PEMSEA Regional Programme Director Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Ms. Landey was impressed with the outcome of the ICM project in Xiamen and the seriousness of the local governments in integrating environmental concerns with economic development. Ms. Landey noted the evident social, economic and ecological benefits brought about by ICM in Xiamen.

The visit included a cruise on the West Channel and a visit to ISO 14000-certified Gulangyu Island. Ms. Landey also held discussions with the staff of the Xiamen International Center for Coastal Sustainable Development, which is considered a key training center for ICM in the East Asian region. Ms. Landey and Dr. Chua were likewise interviewed by a crew from Masan MBC, a Korean TV company working on a documentary of Xiamen's ICM experiences (see related story).

Ms. Landey suggested organizing a study tour for Philippine policymakers to visit Xiamen, including chairs from the Senate and Congress, the Secretary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and undersecretaries or assistant secretaries from key government line agencies.

PEMSEA to Build Regional Capacity in IEIA

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- In partnership with the Coastal Management Center (CMC), and the City University of Hong Kong (CUHK), PEMSEA has recently published a training manual on integrated environmental impact assessment (IEIA) and will hold an IEIA training workshop from 29 November to 4 December. Both efforts are part of PEMSEA's aim of building regional capacity in IEIA.

The IEIA manual underwent extensive development, which included a series of brainstorming workshops organized by CUHK, CMC, PEMSEA, and the Swedish International Development Agency for Research Cooperation.

The training course will be held in CUHK, PR China. The course aims to enhance knowledge and skills of participants in the conduct, methodology, multidisciplinary approach and benefits of IEIA and promote the integrated nature of IEIA in the development planning schemes of the participants' respective countries.

The training will include: lectures and case studies on the basic concepts of IEIA, data gathering and analysis; exercises on tools used in baseline data gathering and methodologies used in data analyses in IEIA; and field studies on development projects in Hong Kong and their impacts on the environment. Participants will be taken through a simulated field situation and will be required to prepare an IEIA and participate in role-play exercises.

Environmental impact assessments (EIA) determine ecological and social impacts or consequences of proposed development plans in many East Asian countries. EIAs however require voluminous databases on ecological, economic, social and political information. In many instances, database gathering is repeated for each EIA of a development project, proving prohibitive in both cost and time.

IEIA considers the combined impacts of various development projects on a defined area and provides a clearer appreciation and comprehension of cumulative, synergistic, and conflicting impacts not easily seen in individual and separate project-based EIAs. IEIA avoids repeated data gathering for individual development projects.

RO Korea Celebrates National Ocean Day with Special TV Feature of Xiamen ICM Experiences

XIAMEN, PR CHINA -- As the Republic of Korea gears up for this year's National Ocean Day in late May, it will include in its celebrations the airing of a special TV feature on Xiamen's integrated coastal management (ICM) experiences and lessons learned. The production is the first collaborative effort between PEMSEA, the Xiamen Municipal Government and Masan MBC, a major Korean TV broadcasting company.

The special TV feature will highlight Xiamen's ICM program, particularly their success in balancing economic development with environmental protection, a subject seen to be of great interest for Korean viewers. The feature will also offer a glimpse of the leadership and political support of the Xiamen Municipal Government in its ICM efforts, giving viewers a contrasting look at how Xiamen's local government involves itself in implementing ICM.

The Masan MBC production team visited Xiamen from 12-16 April and was impressed by Xiamen's efforts in attaining the goal of sustainable development. Mr. Kim Chang-Hwan, Chief Producer at Masan MBC, expressed his appreciation to the Xiamen Municipal Government for allowing the TV production in Xiamen and providing all the necessary logistics. He thanked the PEMSEA Regional Programme Office for providing technical assistance and facilitating logistics, as well as the Xiamen TV station for providing existing film footages.

With increasing Korean investments in PR China, it is also expected that the TV program on Xiamen would promote Korean interest in investment opportunities participation for the improvement of Maluan Bay, an enclosed body of water located in the northwest of Xiamen's Western Sea area. The bay is facing environmental challenges that include ill-placed aquaculture farms, deteriorating water quality and heavy siltation.

Danang Finds IIMS Software Useful and User-Friendly

DANANG, VIETNAM -- Representatives from various government agencies in Vietnam participated in a PEMSEA Training Workshop on Integrated Information Management System (IIMS) and found IIMS to be both user-friendly and very useful in integrated coastal management (ICM).

The 19 participants enhanced their understanding of database management, the IIMS software, the IIMS query system and the linkage between IIMS and Geographic Information System (GIS). The training workshop was held on 12-17 March 2004 in coordination with the Project Management Office of the Danang ICM Demonstration Project.

During the training workshop, Department of Science and Technology Deputy Director, Dr. Mai Duc Loc, encouraged the participants to learn as much as they can and reiterated the importance of IIMS in coastal management. He also challenged the participants to apply what they learned and hoped that IIMS be used not only for ICM but also in other offices.

The participants also discussed the sustainability of IIMS. One of the measures identified to sustain IIMS was to include it in the Computerization of Danang City Project, which will be completed and operational in 2005.

A participant from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment commented that IIMS will be useful in organizing their data, since at the moment their data is only stored in hard copies.

IIMS is a relational environmental database management system that handles a wide range of information on coastal and marine environmental planning, management and assessment. When linked with GIS or Model Data, it may be used as a decision-support system for policymakers, planners and managers.

PEMSEA ICM Efforts Recognized at Cebu Conference

CEBU, PHILIPPINES -- PEMSEA's efforts in integrated coastal management (ICM) was cited during the Coastal Zone Philippines 2004 Conference held last 17-19 March, as having made a major influence in the advancement of ICM in the Philippines and in the region.

Over 200 participants representing several government agencies, local government units (LGUs), the academe, international/regional organizations, non-government organizations and people's organizations attended the conference to develop a consolidated report on the state of ICM in the Philippines. The conference, with the theme "Integrated Coastal Management in the Philippines: 20 Years of Experience," was the first in bringing together ICM practitioners at the national level to discuss coastal management issues, trends, and concerns.

PEMSEA Senior Programme Officer, Dr. Huming Yu, presented a paper sharing PEMSEA's practices and experience in developing ICM. PEMSEA's experiences showed that once established, ICM could be sustained and expanded as evidenced by its ICM demonstration sites in Batangas, Philippines and Xiamen, PR China. Dr. Yu cited that at its current stage, PEMSEA is focusing on the integrated management of watersheds, estuaries and associated seas and that PEMSEA's ICM approach differs from general coastal and marine environment or resource management in that it focuses on the transboundary problems, which require interagency, cross-sector, multidisciplinary and multisectoral stakeholder interventions.

Discussions among the participants proved lively and the conference was able to develop a preliminary report on the state of ICM initiatives in the Philippines. The conference was recognized as an effective venue not only for sharing experiences in ICM but also in strengthening collaboration among the ICM practitioners in the country. The findings of the conference will contribute to a country paper to be presented in the forthcoming Coastal Zone Asia Pacific Conference to be held in Brisbane, Australia in September.

PEMSEA Welcomes New Staff

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- PEMSEA welcomes Ms. Anna Rita Cano, Mr. Jose Luis Alvin Catalan, Ms. Yolwinda Macabeo, Ms. Elsie Merina, and Mr. Jose Villamor, as new staff.

Ms. Anna Rita G. Cano is Communications Assistant. Gitz will be involved in the production of PEMSEA multimedia and related programme information materials. Gitz earned a degree in Communication Arts from the University of the Philippines in Los Banos. She has extensive experience in writing, editing and publishing gained from various publishing firms.

Mr. Jose Luis Alvin Catalan is Technical Assistant (Research Component). Alvin will focus on research work particularly on the tradeoff between economic development and ecological benefits and the transboundary impacts of national economic activities. Alvin earned his Masters degree in Economics from De La Salle University. He has previously worked on several projects related to coastal management. He held a full-time teaching job at the University of Perpetual Help Delta System prior to joining PEMSEA.

Ms. Yolwinda Macabeo is Receptionist/Clerk. Wendy will ensure that all visitors and callers are extended the proper protocols, in accordance with the established office procedures, and handle various clerical tasks. Wendy worked for the South Center Tower Condominium Corporation as Building Receptionist/Admin Assistant. Wendy graduated from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines with a BS in Secondary Education.

Ms. Elsie Merina is Secretary. Elsie will provide effective support services in terms of correspondence writing, records management, engagements and travel coordination, office housekeeping and such other administrative support services for PEMSEA's Ocean and Coastal Governance Service. Prior to PEMSEA, Elsie worked as Administrative Officer for the Intellectual Property Rights Group of EGTA/Development Alternative, a USAID-funded project. She also worked for Societe Generale Manila Offshore Branch as Senior Admin Assistant. Elsie has a degree in Management from the Silliman University.

Mr. Jose Villamor is RPO's Driver. Joey will be responsible for the driving and maintenance of all PEMSEA vehicles ensuring safe and prompt transport of passengers and cargos. Joey has 24 years of driving experience and used to drive his own taxicab for 4 years. Joey has a degree in Marine Transportation from the Philippine Merchant Marine School. He also finished a short course on electronics.