



AusAid Supports Thailand's Coastal Planning

BANGKOK, THAILAND -- The Australian Government through the Australian Aid for International Development (AusAid) is committed to help Thailand in improving coastal management and to help the Andaman Coasts recover from the ravages of the December 2004 tsunami.

In line with AusAid's post-tsunami assistance to Thailand, a strategic planning workshop entitled "Securing the Economic Future for the Andaman Sea Coastal Industries and Communities" was held last November 28, 2005 in Bangkok and Phuket. The Workshop aimed at assisting the Thai Government in developing the post-tsunami planning of the coastal zones facing the Andaman Sea. In addition, the AusAid will be providing A\$400,000 for one year to support coastal planning using Geographic Information System (GIS) and community-based management of the coral reef in some of the islands near Phuket.

Around 40 participants from various line agencies of the Thai Government, universities, bilateral and multilateral coastal management programs/projects, and international organizations attended the workshop. The workshop emphasized the importance and applicability of integrated coastal management (ICM) in providing a holistic approach to the coastal use and management problems by reviewing the experience of other initiatives in East Asia, Australia and Europe. One of the presentations was delivered by PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng entitled "Reducing the Impacts of Unnatural Disasters through Integrated Management and Partnerships" focusing on the 10-point action plan on efficient coastal management and achievements of ICM in the East Asian Seas region.

The Workshop was organized in coordination with the CRC Reef Research Center of Australia and the Coastal and Marine Resources Department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MoNRE) of Thailand.

This Workshop is just one of the many Australian initiatives in Thailand. Various projects related to the post-tsunami assistance and rehabilitation included the sending of

medical teams and supplies and the deployment of an AusAID officer in the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to Thailand.



Bali Province Conducts Training on Web-based Decision-Support System

BALI, INDONESIA -- Local capacities in coastal and marine environmental planning and management in the province of Bali received a boost with the successful conduct of a Training Workshop on Web-based Integrated Information Management System (IIMS), held last 29-30 November 2005.

Over 25 participants from government offices and agencies from both the provincial and regency levels participated in the workshop, which not only provided training on the operationalization of web-based IIMS and data management, but included the development of an action plan to ensure the sustainability of the IIMS in Bali.

The participants enhanced their understanding of database management, the web-based IIMS software, the IIMS query system, and data uploading. The workshop developed an action plan that outlined the necessary activities, outputs, timetable, responsible agencies, budget and budget sources needed to ensure system sustainability. The plan will be presented to an upcoming meeting of local government agencies, which will discuss the operationalization of IIMS at various agencies and regencies in Bali.

The participants were keen on learning how to access IIMS data through the Internet, proving significant flexibility in accessing data. They likewise expressed appreciation on the importance of IIMS in integrating and sharing data among government departments and regencies and how these data can facilitate planning and decisionmaking. The training workshop was a joint effort of PEMSEA RPO and the Project Management Office of the Bali ICM Demonstration Project.

IIMS is a relational environmental database management system that handles a wide range of information on coastal and marine environmental planning, management and assessment.

IIMS was developed to provide local governments with a standardized system for data collection, collation and recording, as well as a means for adequate data analysis, interpretation and information packaging. The system was also designed to address the issue of data inaccessibility by making its results available through the Internet.



EAS Congress 2006 Takes on Coastal and Ocean Governance Issues

The future prospects, challenges and lessons learned in coastal and ocean governance both from within and outside the East Asian Seas region will be one of the key themes to be tackled during the International Conference of the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2006 to be held on 12-14 December in Haikou City, China.

The EAS Congress 2006 will delve on the various regimes, institutional arrangements/mechanisms and programmes as well as the dynamics of coastal and ocean management, all combined under the theme: Coastal and Ocean Governance.

Coastal and ocean governance workshops and seminars will focus on: Regime-building in Coastal and Ocean Governance; Approaches in Interagency Collaboration and Partnerships; Economic Contribution of the Marine Sector; Integrating Social Science Concerns into Coastal Development and Management; Advocacy and Leadership in Coastal and Ocean Management; and Integrated Coastal Management: Experiences, Lessons and Scaling-up.

The issue of coastal and ocean governance is a critical and timely one. Presently the state of the East Asian Seas is deteriorating due to the rapid urbanization and economic development of countries, putting at risk the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on the goods and services provided by the ecosystem of East Asian Seas. This continued deterioration is a clear sign that coastal and ocean management in the region needs to be more effective. Thus, country support and cooperation is of utmost importance towards the achievement of sustainable development of the East Asian Seas region.

The EAS Congress 2006 is designed to provide an important venue for the region's stakeholders to constructively address major issues in ocean and coastal management. The Congress will be attended by high-level decisionmakers and experts both from within and outside the East Asian Seas region, making it a major international event.

The International Conference will feature six other major themes, with various Workshops and Seminars focusing on related sub-topics under each theme. These themes include: Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Development; Ecosystem-Based Management;

Eco-labeling and Certification; Coastal and Maritime Safety and Security; Economics and Finance; and Management-related Science and Technology.



Innovative Research in Marine Pollution in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, CHINA -- Scientific outputs and research work on marine pollution assessment and monitoring undertaken by the Center for Marine Environmental Research and Innovative Technology (MERIT) of the City University in Hong Kong were recognized during the 2nd Meeting of the International Advisory Committee held last 2 December 2005.

The Meeting was a scientific symposium that saw the presentation of more than 50 research topics. These research works or studies were reviewed and assessed by the Advisory Committee Members based on quality and scientific merits, progress made in terms of timeline and outputs, synergies and collaboration, as well as the management of the research programme. After thorough assessment, the Committee applauded MERIT for coming up with very impressive outputs of international standards. The Advisory Committee is comprised of international and regional experts from Canada, USA, United Kingdom and PEMSEA.

MERIT's research designs, tools, facilities, and methodologies for assessment, monitoring, and control of impacts of marine pollution were found to be innovative and considered to be worth promoting internationally. To further promote the initiatives and outputs of the Centre, Committee members recommended that MERIT establish linkages with the government and stakeholders by conducting periodic dialogues with them. It was also recommended that the Center be developed into an internationally recognized research institution and play a stronger role in contributing to the development of the environment of Hong Kong and the region.

MERIT was established in early 2004 after being awarded with HK\$45 million under the University Grants Committee's third round of Areas of Excellence scheme. The proposal to establish the centre was spearheaded by a team of experts of the Hong Kong City University led by Professor Rudolf Wu. The focus of MERIT is to address marine pollution issues and to create innovative technologies to protect the marine environment. The MERIT project is implemented by a team of multidisciplinary researchers from Hong Kong local universities and overseas scientists.



New PEMSEA Partnership to Enhance Environmental Investments for Philippine Coastal Communities

MANILA, PHILIPPINES -- PEMSEA and the League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to share experiences and knowledge in integrated coastal and marine management and sustainable financing mechanisms to enhance investments in environmental infrastructure in coastal communities of the Philippines.

Under the MOU, LCP and PEMSEA mutually agree to exchange information on the respective programmes including linking websites; build awareness and develop initiatives to strengthen capacities of LCP member cities in integrated coastal and marine planning and management; and co-organizing conferences, site visits, seminars and workshops for City Mayors and senior managers on public-private partnerships in environmental infrastructure projects, sustainable financing mechanisms, technologies and practices for pollution reduction and in the sustainable use and management of marine and coastal areas.

The MOU was signed by PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng and LCP National Chair and Focal Mayor for the Environment Unit, Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn.

The LCP is a non-profit organization of cities created to help coordinate efforts to improve governance and local autonomy and address issues such as preserving the environment and improving public works. LCP provides services to its member-cities in the areas of environmental policy development and advocacy, research and training, technical assistance and information management.

The new partnership is seen as a step forward in PEMSEA's efforts in creating investment opportunities and mechanisms for environmental improvement and sustainable resource use throughout the East Asian Seas region.



Partnerships at Work in Oil Spill Preparedness and Response

SIHANOUKVILLE, CAMBODIA -- Cambodia's capacity to respond to oil spill emergencies was heightened with the successful conduct of the Training Course on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC) for Supervisors and On-Scene Commanders, held last 13-16 December 2005. The course was organized and conducted through a partnership between PEMSEA, the Marine Department of Thailand, Industry Environmental Support Group (IESG) - Thailand, and East Asia Response Limited (EARL).

The 28 course participants, representing various government agencies and private oil companies, were all personnel holding significant responsibilities under Cambodia's newly developed national oil spill contingency plan. The training enhanced the participant's knowledge and skills in contingency planning and response, and improved their abilities in delivering timely, organized and effective response in the event of oil pollution emergencies.

The training course was supplemented by a tabletop exercise wherein participants were grouped according to highlighted responsibilities under the national oil spill contingency plan of Cambodia. The exercise provided the participants with the opportunity to examine the existing structures, systems and capabilities of respective organizations and identify areas that could be improved to support the national plan.

This partnership is part of PEMSEA's objective of promoting cross-boundary, multi-sector, multi-agency cooperation in the Gulf of Thailand. Building on the IMO OPRC model course, with technical support from EARL and practical experiences from Thailand's Marine Department and IESG, the OPRC training was made more relevant and responsive to the training needs of the participants.



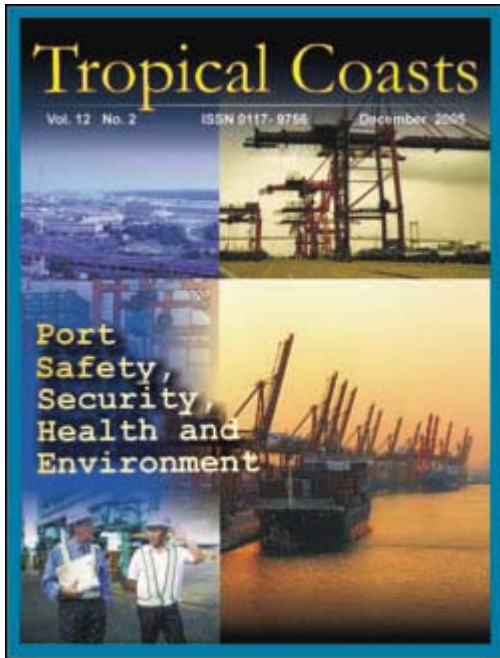
Puerto Galera Shows Keen Interest in Public-Private Partnerships

PUERTO GALERA, PHILIPPINES -- An exploratory site visit by PEMSEA on 5-6 December 2005 to the resort municipality of Puerto Galera confirmed a strong interest among local stakeholders in the application of public-private partnerships (PPP) to address local environmental issues.

PEMSEA Technical Officer Maria Corazon Ebarvia and PEMSEA Investment Specialist Rodolfo Pantillano met with local government officials, tourist resort owners and other stakeholders and provided a briefing on the objectives, process and expected outputs of a successful PPP initiative. The mission informed the local officials of PEMSEA's willingness to provide technical assistance to help develop local capacity in developing and implementing environmental investment projects, and conduct a pre-feasibility study, willingness-to-pay survey and investors' roundtable to assist the local government in selecting the appropriate partner, as well as partnership and financing arrangements. Puerto Galera Mayor, Hon. Aristeo Atienza welcomed the mission and signified his commitment and support for the PPP project and process.

Puerto Galera in Mindoro Island is a major tourist spot known for its white beaches and coral reefs. The municipality received 3.5 million tourists for the first half of 2005 alone. The municipality however is facing environmental problems particularly the lack of sewage treatment facilities, which leads to the pollution of coastal waters. Poor water quality in the bathing waters of Puerto Galera can affect the municipality's image as well as the tourism industry that provides employment to many of the local citizens.

With local support and commitment confirmed, PEMSEA is now in the process of initiating steps towards assisting the municipality in its PPP initiative.



Latest Tropical Coasts Issue Examines Sustainable Port Practices

Port Safety, Security, Health and Environment is the theme for the latest issue of Tropical Coasts Magazine, focusing various port management practices, systems and approaches that have been applied as a consequence of increasing pressures and challenges related to regulatory compliance, safety concerns, security, health of port workers and environment, and enhancing port efficiency.

The East Asian Seas region has been a center of considerable economic growth for the past two decades. Fueling this growth is a dynamic and fast-growing maritime industry, which has made the East Asian Seas one of the busiest in terms of maritime shipping and port development. Along with this development comes an increasing concern among port authorities and port operators on achieving and demonstrating sound quality, safety, security and improved environmental performance. The December 2005 Tropical Coasts Issue explores efforts in developing a systematic and strategic management framework that would enable the adoption and effective implementation of various international instruments that can put in place good port operation practices.

The issue also has a special feature titled: “PEMSEA PSHEMS Recognition Process.” The feature discusses the process by which ports can attain recognition under PEMSEA’s Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management Code (PSHEM), a code aimed at providing port authorities with a standard by which to measure performance with regard to quality, safety and health of port workers and environment.

Tropical Coasts is a bi-annual publication of PEMSEA, Sida Marine Science Programme, the Coastal Management Center, and the United Nations Environment Programme-Global Programme of Action. It is geared towards stimulating an exchange of

information and sharing of experiences and ideas with respect to environmental protection and the management of coastal and marine areas.

Past issues can be downloaded at <http://pemsea.org>



Three Nations Sign Partnership Statement to Combat Marine Pollution in Gulf of Thailand

HANOI, VIETNAM -- The countries of Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam joined hands in a committed partnership to protect the coastal and marine environment of the Gulf of Thailand with the landmark signing of the Joint Statement of Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam on Partnerships in Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in the Gulf of Thailand held on 12 January 2006.

The Joint Statement contains a tripartite intergovernmental agreement on combating oil spills, and endorses a Framework Programme for Joint Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in the Gulf of Thailand. The event marked a significant milestone for the three countries and of the PEMSEA-supported Gulf of Thailand Environmental Management Project.

The mission of the partnership is to enhance national and regional capabilities concerning oil pollution prevention, preparedness and response through a Gulf-wide exchange of information, joint research and development projects, training, oil spill response exercises, and mutual assistance in response, collaborative arrangements, partnership building and implementation.

Senior government officials signing the Joint Statement included Ministry of Environment Director General, H.E. Dr. Lonh Heal of Cambodia; Ministry of Transport Marine Department Director General, Mr. Tawalyarat Onsira of Thailand; and National Committee for Search and Rescue Vice Permanent President, Mr. Nguyen Duc Soat of Vietnam. Serving as witnesses to event were Cambodia Senior Minister and Minister of Environment, H.E. Dr. Mok Mareth; Vietnam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Vice Minister, H.E. Mr. Nguyen Cong Thanh; and PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng.