

MEPSEAS

MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION OF THE SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SEAS



WHAT IS THE MEPSEAS PROJECT?

The MEPSEAS or Marine Environment Protection of the Southeast Asian Seas (MEPSEAS) Project is a 4-year follow-up phase (2018-2021) to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – Norwegian Agency for the Development Cooperation Project on Assistance to East Asian Countries in Ratifying and Implementing IMO Instruments for the

Protection of the Marine Environment (IMO – NORAD Project) Phase 1. It focuses on the effective implementation of selected high-priority IMO environmental Conventions in beneficiary countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Myanmar is the latest beneficiary country to join the second phase.

PROJECT GOAL:

The overall goal of the MEPSEAS project is to reduce the risks and impacts of environmental issues related to maritime transport in the ASEAN region and to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG14 – “conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”.

OBJECTIVE:

The key objective of this Project is to assist vulnerable states of the ASEAN Region to complete the process of Legal, Policy and Institutional Reforms (LPIR) which was initiated by the foundation project and to effectively start implementing the high priority instruments related to environmental protection.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT:

The three key outcomes expected from the project are as follows:

- 1.** National and regional governance and advisory mechanisms established and regional cooperation increased;
- 2.** Capacities built and National Action Plan (NAP) developed in all lead partnering countries for implementation of the high-priority Conventions selected under foundation project, along with institutional arrangements agreed for implementation; and
- 3.** Specialized needs expressed by countries to support implementation are met.





HOW WILL THE PHILIPPINES BENEFIT FROM THE PROJECT?


Being part of the said project, the Philippines has enhanced its capacity to effectively ratify and implement priority marine environment conventions and all other international maritime instruments that will be beneficial to the country. The project likewise strengthens the national capabilities, legal and regulatory framework of the Philippines.



WHAT ARE THE TWO (2) PRIORITY MARITIME CONVENTIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES THAT ARE UNDER THE MEPSEAS PROJECT?

1 **The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention)**, which was adopted on 05 October 2001, will prohibit the use of harmful organotin compounds in anti-fouling paints used on ships and will establish a mechanism to prevent the potential future use of other harmful substances in anti-fouling systems. The said Convention entered into force globally on 17 September 2008.

2 **The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 or the Ballast Water Management Convention (BWM Convention)** is a treaty adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in order to help prevent the spread of potentially harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships' ballast water. The said Convention entered into force globally on 08 September 2017.



WHAT HAS THE PHILIPPINE MARITIME ADMINISTRATION DONE IN FAST-TRACKING AND IMPLEMENTING THE MEPSEAS PROJECT?

The Philippines, as a lead partnering country for MEPSEAS Project, has undertaken several activities for the ratification and implementation of the priority maritime conventions under the MEPSEAS Project.

The Philippine maritime administration had identified the Inter-agency Coordinating Committee on the Ratification and Implementation of Maritime Conventions (ICCRIMC) as the National Task Force of the MEPSEAS Project.

The said Maritime Administration also appointed the countries' representatives for the MEPSEAS Project:

- MARINA Administrator as the National Focal Point;
- Overseas Shipping Service Director as the Alternate National Focal Point and;
- Director of MARINA Region VII as the Project Coordinator.

The Philippines selected the two National Consultants for MEPSEAS Project and established the MEPSEAS Correspondence Group and Technical Working Group (TWG) to facilitate consultation, monitoring and reporting of progress in the implementation process.

Several ICCRIMC meetings involving the Philippine maritime administration were conducted to present, review and finalize the proposed National Work Plan (NWP) on MEPSEAS, National Strategic Action Plans (NSAP) for Ballast Water Management (BWM) and Anti-Fouling Systems (AFS) Conventions and draft Executive Order to institutionalize the ICCRIMC.

The final draft of the proposed Executive Order had been endorsed to the Department of Transportation (DOTr) for further transmittal to the Office of the President.

The Philippine maritime administration is continuously working on the drafting of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRRs) and proposed legislation for the BWM and AFS Conventions to ensure its full and effective implementation.

It has also been active in participating in different capacity-building activities supporting the MEPSEAS Project.



WHAT IS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF CONDUCTING HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL MEETINGS?

The High-Level Regional Meeting is a strategic gathering of high-level decision makers from the participating countries in the region to endorse their respective National Work Plan (NWP) as well as the roadmap for the Project.



WHEN DID THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL MEETING OCCUR?

The First High-Level Regional Meeting was held from 25 to 27 June 2018 in Bali, Kuta, Indonesia. It was attended by key decision makers of the maritime administrations from the beneficiary countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam).

During the First High-Level Regional Meeting, delegates from the Philippines reiterated the request for the establishment of the Maritime Knowledge Center; the green ships, green ports, green shipyards project; and, the conduct of Port Biological Baselines Survey as additional activities for the Project.

Moreover, the Philippine delegates presented the updates on the ratification and implementation of the AFS and BWM Conventions as well as the National Work Plan for the implementation of the MEPSEAS Project.

An aerial photograph of a tropical coastline. The left side of the image is covered by a dark blue vertical overlay. On this overlay, the text 'HOW DID THE PHILIPPINES PREPARE FOR THE HOSTING OF THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL MEETING?' is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The right side of the image shows a clear blue sky, a distant island, and a vast expanse of turquoise and deep blue ocean. Several traditional Filipino outrigger boats (bangkas) are visible on the water. The bottom right corner features a white page number '9' followed by a horizontal line.

HOW DID THE PHILIPPINES PREPARE FOR THE HOSTING OF THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL MEETING?



When the International Maritime Organization (IMO) requested the Philippines to host the Second High Level Regional Meeting, the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) requested approval regarding this matter from the Department of Transportation (DOTr) on 10 September 2018. The DOTr approved the request on 21 September 2018.

The Second High-Level Regional Meeting was conducted on 27 to 29 August 2019 which was attended by representatives of the maritime administration from seven (7) participating Member States, strategic partners, among others, to discuss the progress in the implementation of the project activities in their National Action Plans.



*Maritime Industry Authority
A. Bonifacio Avenue corner 20th Street
South Harbor, Port Area, Manila
Website: marina.gov.ph*