ADB launches $6 Billion push for healthier seas and coastal economies

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ADBâ??s $6 billion blue-economy push aims to protect fisheries, strengthen coastal economies and mobilise private investment across Southeast Asia

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) today announced it will mobilize up to $6 billion through 2030 to confront the mounting threats facing Southeast Asia's seas and strengthen the blue economy that the region's food supplies, jobs, and trade depend on.

“The ocean is not just an environmental priority; it is the economic foundation of Southeast Asia,” said ADB President Masato Kanda. “When marine ecosystems degrade, the damage reaches the fishing net, the family table, and the flooded doorstep. We will put up to $6 billion behind the work of restoring fisheries, building resilient coastal infrastructure, and stopping waste before it reaches the water.”

Kanda announced the ASEAN Blue Economy Initiative at the 58th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Ministers' Meeting in Metro Manila, chaired by Philippine Secretary of Trade and Industry Cristina Roque. The initiative runs from 2026 to 2030, and forms part of the $30 billion ADB pledged in May to mobilize for ASEAN priorities by 2030, delivered in its role as the region's main bank.

Southeast Asia produces about one-fifth of the world's fisheries and aquaculture output, and its ports, coastal logistics, and tourism sustain trade, jobs, and local income. However, this natural capital is eroding as ecosystems degrade, plastic waste accumulates, and fishing pressure mounts. Modeled estimates put expected coastal flood damage across the region at about $11.5 billion a year.

The initiative supports the ASEAN Blue Economy Framework and its Implementation Plan (2026–2030). Under the initiative, ADB's support will focus on three areas: strengthening the policy, institutional, and data foundations that credible investment depends on; scaling investment in ASEAN's priority blue sectors, including fisheries, aquaculture, coastal resilience, and port-linked value chains; and reducing marine pollution through circular economy solutions and innovative finance that brings in private capital. Because much marine pollution begins inland, the initiative will also improve water and solid-waste systems upstream.

ADB has served as ASEAN's long-standing development finance partner and advisor. ADB is providing a comprehensive package of support to help the Philippines deliver regional outcomes during its 2026 ASEAN chairship.

ADB is a leading multilateral development bank supporting sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth across Asia and the Pacific. Working with its members and partners to solve complex challenges together, ADB harnesses innovative financial tools and strategic partnerships to transform lives, build quality infrastructure, and safeguard our planet. Founded in 1966, ADB is owned by 69 members—50 from the region.