

Strategic Direction

Key Principles

The national marine strategic direction is anchored on the principle that the policy is one that is “whole of Philippine society.” This means that the strategic policy will bring in all sectors and stakeholders, branches of government, and functional agencies based on mandate and specialization, at both national and local levels.

It also recognizes the goals of “harmony and conflict avoidance, as well as efficiency, effectiveness and outcome-orientation.” This means that the strategic direction will employ the principles of communication, cooperation, collaboration, complementation, coordination, and negotiation. Interoperability and convergence are key approaches among diverse players as the strategy emphasizes a systems thinking.

It looks forward to a strategy that promotes development and resource utilization even as the policy is balanced to make resources sustainable. In this case, strategic policies should be facilitative as much as these are accountable specifically in the aspects of management, enforcement, and oversight.

These principles serve as framework and guide of the national marine strategic direction, and are manifested across the four pillars defined in this strategy.

Pillar I. Marine Politics and Jurisdiction

Strategic Outcome

Strengthened foundations of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity by improving its territorial and maritime regimes and resolution of standing maritime boundary disputes between the Philippines and its neighboring countries, as well as boundary disputes among LGUs.

Strategies

1. Clarification of the country's territorial limits and boundaries within the framework of international norms and laws and the Philippine Constitution
 - 1.1. Define the territorial limits and jurisdictional areas in accordance with international norms and laws, specifically United Nations Convention on the Law of the SEA (UNCLOS) (Baviera 2015).
 - 1.2. Study the implications of the creation of any autonomous unit in Mindanao to maritime jurisdictional claims of the country in relation to North Borneo/Sabah and its waters.
 - 1.3. Pursue claims for an extended continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea.
 - 1.4. Delineate various maritime jurisdictions, such as internal waters, archipelagic waters, territorial sea, and exclusive economic zone.
 - 1.5. Continue delimiting our overlapping maritime zones with concerned countries.
 - 1.6. Pursue Philippine claim on the Sabah issue.
 - 1.7. Strengthen representation in international adjudication by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) through arbitration or mediation, International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), International Maritime Organization (IMO), and other relevant international bodies (Baviera 2015 Interview).
 - 1.8. Publish official charts/maps showing the countries territory and maritime jurisdictions.
2. Application of the 'building block approach' for strengthening jurisdiction and securing the country's marine interests
 - 2.1. Conduct consultation with concerned agencies to identify and develop "building block approaches" that could strengthen our territorial and jurisdictional claims.
 - 2.2. Enact Archipelagic Sea Lanes and Maritime Zones Laws to compliment the Baseline Law (RA 9522).

- 2.3. Explore the potential of Benham Rise and other areas of the country's exclusive economic zones by investing in research and development and resource exploration (UP MSI).
 - 2.4. Review current and mainstream ASEAN mechanisms and other bilateral agreements in to address transnational/transboundary issues.
 - 2.5. Continue pushing for the early adoption of the ASEAN-China Code of Conduct.
 - 2.6. Review possible roles of other non-claimant states, such as Japan and the United States, with respect to the country's territorial claims (Baviera 2015 interview).
 - 2.7. Harness the potential of the combined strength of other ASEAN members with claims in the West Philippine Sea by developing a unified approach to territorial and marine domain disputes towards developing an ASEAN-wide unified approach in the conduct of negotiations and/or arbitrations (Baviera 2015 interview).
 - 2.8. Build facilities in areas (atolls/islands) being claimed by the Philippines to make them habitable, to ensure continuous physical presence of Philippine Navy personnel, fisherfolk, and local communities in these areas.
3. Define territorial boundaries of Local Government Units in the Coastal Areas
 - 3.1. Correlate the limits of the national territory to the jurisdictional limits of the LGUs (i.e., Kalayaan Island Group).
 - 3.2. Encourage local government units to delimit their municipal water and to settle territorial disputes.
 - 3.3. Provide technical support to local government units in defining/delimiting their municipal waters.
 - 3.4. Clarify the rights and responsibilities of local government units vis-à-vis marine territory and resources under their jurisdictions.
 - 3.5. Review the Local Government Code in relation to the National Marine Policy (NMP).
 - 3.6. Cascade the National Marine Policy to coastal local government units.

Pillar II. Marine Regulation and Enforcement

Strategic Outcome

A proactive, responsive, transparent, and predictable marine regulatory framework and enforcement mechanisms

Strategies

1. Interoperability, convergence, and complementation of organizations, agencies, and institutions
 - 1.1. Rationalize and streamline the functions and responsibilities of government agencies with ocean-/marine-related mandates through the creation of an institutional leader in marine resources management and development.¹
 - 1.1.1. Jointly formulate policies clarifying agency mandates of concerned agencies and institutions. These may take the form of the promulgation and issuance of joint administrative orders, which has been the practice to increase collaboration between and among government agencies with similar mandates.
 - 1.1.2. Modify the NEDA Board Inter-agency Committees to include a committee on Marine and Ocean Affairs so as to ensure that marine and ocean related concerns are integrated in the national and subnational level plans. Similarly, the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) must also have a sub-committee on marine and ocean affairs to ensure that the institutional restructuring initiatives are done within the context of a broad, comprehensive, and holistic reform in the governance of ocean and marine environment.
 - 1.1.3. The Supreme Court to designate select trial courts as Maritime Courts that will have jurisdiction over all cases arising out of acts of maritime commerce, transportation, and traffic occurring in Philippine waters. In addition, the Supreme Court shall promulgate rules and procedures for marine-related cases to enhance the mechanisms for settling maritime controversies.

¹ For the detailed discussion of the identified institutional options, see Appendix 8: Proposed Institutional Arrangements for Ocean and Marine Governance

- 1.1.3.1. Provide operational support to law enforcement personnel involved in the settlement of marine related cases.
 - 1.1.4. In the long term, establish a high-level integrated and strengthened decision-making and implementation mechanism within the context of a decentralized system of governance to provide an institutional focus for the leadership and management of the multiple uses of ocean and marine resources (For the detailed discussion of the identified institutional options, see Annex I: Proposed Institutional Arrangements for Ocean and Marine Governance).
 - 1.1.4.1. Option A: Strengthening and broadening the institutional base of the Current National Coast Watch System through the creation of the National Ocean and Marine System
 - 1.1.4.2. Option B: Creation of the Commission for Ocean and Marine Affairs
 - 1.1.4.3. Option C: Creation of the Department of Marine Affairs
 - 1.1.5. Strengthen and realize an inter-LGU arrangement that allows effective enforcement of existing maritime laws, harmonization and coordination in the use of maritime space and resources, encouragement of sustainable resource utilization, and institutionalized evaluation and monitoring and reporting of vital maritime information. Such arrangement must provide for a consultative mechanism to strengthen participation in the national and local level (Trillanes 2016 interview).
 - 1.1.6. Establish a 24/7 maritime hotline.
 - 1.1.7. Create a database of Filipino fishermen akin to a National ID system.
 - 1.2. Professionalization of human resources involved in marine environment through continuous capacity and knowledge building interventions towards improving their technical, technological, managerial, and leadership competencies.
 - 1.2.1. Conduct an inventory and assessment of human resources and their competencies and needs, and matching the technical expertise requirements with marine resources development plan.
 - 1.2.2. Capacitate law enforcers (including local/community organizations such as Bantay Dagat) to respond and conduct

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- immediate administrative and para-legal procedures to intruders and violators and improve crime laboratories and investigation facilities in strategic locations within the marine biogeographic regions (Rosales 2016 interview).
- 1.2.3. Capacitate enforcers on how to conduct monitoring and assessment of various programs and projects to help them and the community improve programs and projects addressing environmental issues and challenges.
 - 1.2.4. Package a comprehensive and coherent information and educational campaign and extension programs for different agencies (DOT, BFAR, DA, DENR, DILG) to achieve synergy.
 - 1.2.5. Increase the number of marine science scholarship programs (Alcala 2015 interview).
 - 1.2.6. Ensure there is an archipelagic consciousness in the curriculum from basic to tertiary education.
 - 1.2.7. Establish training centers and knowledge hubs for marine policy implementation.
 - 1.2.8. Intensify education, information, and communication campaigns on ocean and marine environment (Guidote 2016 Interview) using tri-media and other internet-based portals.
- 1.3. Establish available and accessible sustainable financing mechanisms.
 - 1.3.1. Establish financing schemes and funding sources other than government budget allocation.
 - 1.3.2. Encourage the participation of the private sector by providing a conducive environment for investment through a package of fiscal incentives.
 - 1.3.3. Reorient regulatory and enforcement support services involving incentives and disincentives both to local and foreign users of the coastal and marine environment.
 - 1.3.4. Explore the feasibility of adopting and implementing payment for environment services.
 - 1.4. Establish a functioning monitoring and evaluation system.
 - 1.4.1. Maintain the continuous monitoring, assessment, and possible expansion of specific marine programs and projects (Menez 2015 interview).
2. Reconciliation and harmonization of ocean and marine statutes, rules, and regulations

- 2.1. Fill in the regulatory gaps in areas where there are deficiencies and inadequacies in statutes, rules, and regulations.
 - 2.1.1. Enactment of a law declaring the country's maritime zones (territorial sea, contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone) to secure Philippine marine interests. Such legislation shall clarify the country's internal waters and archipelagic waters and specify the breadth of its territorial sea.
 - 2.1.2. Enactment of Philippine Maritime Code (with the following provisions: Admiralty Court, Ship Mortgage, Incentives, Philippine Overseas Shipping Act, Amendments to CHED and PRC laws, STCW 2013 Act/Seafarer's Act (including MLC, SID), Seafarer's Welfare Fund, and Collaterals (MARPOL Bills).
- 2.2. Review and enhance existing statutory and regulatory measures for purposes of revising, supplementing, and consolidating provisions for a more responsive set of marine-related laws.
 - 2.2.1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation and performance of existing marine-related statutes, rules, and regulations (e.g., Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, laws related to marine pollution, wildlife-related laws, etc.) and identify gaps towards improving its consistency, responsiveness to the dynamic marine environment, and compliance to international laws and norms (e.g., waste management laws vis-à-vis London Convention).
 - 2.2.2. Review the system of incentives, disincentives, and penalties (e.g., Water Code, Republic Act No. 9295, and Executive Order No. 226 among others) based on scientific and economic value of marine habitat and resources (Rosales 2016 interview).

Pillar III. Marine Development and Conservation

Strategic Outcome

Sustainable management of the coastal and marine environment and resources and continued harnessing of benefits and interactions from ecosystem services, balancing economic and social development, resource needs, and environmental conservation through a more comprehensive ecosystem-based approach

Strategies

1. Protection and Conservation: Improvement of the quality and health of ocean and marine ecosystems
 - 1.1. Strengthen marine research, development, and extension systems that merges science-based decision making and local/traditional/indigenous knowledge and practices with active cooperation of non-state actors, technology transfers, commercialization, and establishment of strong networks of marine-based research, development, and education (RDE) institutions towards realizing a paradigm shift from terrestrial to marine.
 - 1.1.1. Development of an accessible, updated, and shared² database and management information system on marine-related information, knowledge, and technology to support research, policy formulation and implementation/enforcement, public education, and communication on marine resources management, utilization, and conservation.
 - 1.1.2. Formulation and implementation of a National Marine RDE Agenda that will unify and coordinate all state and non-state actors' research, development, and extension activities related to ocean and marine resources.
 - 1.1.3. Secure appropriate adequate funding for research and development to encourage more marine scientists to remain in the Philippines and work with government agencies with marine research and development mandates (Alcala 2015 interview).
 - 1.1.4. Establish marine research stations in critical research areas within each marine bio-geographic region (e.g., Apo Island, Verde Island Passage) as well as in areas that are unexplored (e.g., Kalayaan Islands Group).
 - 1.1.5. Intensify the conduct of resource assessments both in terms of living and nonliving ocean and marine resources as well as oceanographic research (Batongbacal 2016 and UP MSI).
 - 1.2. Scale up marine protected areas (MPA) to become MPA networks and apply appropriate management models such as the designation of MPAs along marine corridors³ and seascapes. Ensure best-practice management and science are applied.

² This addresses the concern raised in part 2 of the report which stated that the research is being done but dissemination of research is lacking. Likewise, part 2 of the report identified the lack of information sharing, transfers, and collaboration as a major gap in the NMP implementation.

³ E.g., the corridors identified in the PDP 2011-2016 namely: Babuyan Corridor, Mindoro-Calavite Tablas Triangle, Balabac Strait Corridor, Sibutu Passage-Sulu Archipelago Corridor, Ticao Pass-San Bernardino

- 1.2.1. Assess all MPAs to ensure that those included utilize best-practice management from science and consensus building perspectives.
- 1.2.2. Apply multiple-use zones approach to properly manage competing uses of marine environment.⁴
- 1.2.3. Provide financial and economic support to communities within and around MPAs.
- 1.2.4. Provide financial and economic support to LGUs with MPAs.
- 1.2.5. Factor in MPAs in the computation of the internal revenue allotment (IRA).
- 1.3. Improve the status of coastal and marine biodiversity by safeguarding and further researching marine ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity.
 - 1.3.1. Create a comprehensive baseline study of all marine resources.
 - 1.3.2. Conduct a census of migratory and endangered species (Alcala 2015).
 - 1.3.3. Utilize the work done by NGOs, academe, and other research institutions to develop comprehensive valuation techniques and data of marine assets/resources.
 - 1.3.4. Use appropriate valuation techniques that are based on ecosystem services and socio-economic values. This shall be the basis for the computation of damages on the ocean and marine environment (Rosales 2016).
 - 1.3.5. Create a database to present the collated results and developments on the valuation process.
 - 1.3.6. Conduct a comprehensive vulnerability assessment for climate change adaptation.
 - 1.3.7. Implement seasonal protection strategies for species that enter and follow a distinct migration pattern within Philippine waters (Alcala 2015).
- 1.4. Establish Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for SCREMP and other related programs.
 - 1.4.1. Identify the parameters which shall serve as basis for the establishment of monitoring and evaluation framework for SCREMP and other related programs.
 - 1.4.2. Make use of existing baseline studies on SCREMP in developing the M&E framework for SCREMP.
- 1.5. Restore and rehabilitate coastal and marine environment and resources destroyed by human activities.

Strait- Samar Sea Corridor, Panay Gulf Guimaras Strait Corridor, Philippine Sea Corridor and Tapiantana Corridor

⁴An example of this is the Benham Rise where future energy efforts will not be in dispute with the MPA.

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- 1.5.1. Undertake mangrove reforestation activities.
 - 1.5.2. Conduct regular coastal clean up.
 - 1.6. Establish institutional mechanism for disaster preparedness and response to deal with events such as oil spills and ship groundings.
 - 1.6.1. Put up a quick response team among the Philippine Navy, Philippine Coast Guard, and the PNP-Maritime Group to deal with oil spills and ship groundings.
 - 1.6.2. Mandate the shipping companies and other related industry players to establish their own quick response teams to support their operations.
 - 1.6.3. Create a Marine Environmental Protection Fund from the environmental protection fees of marine industry players to support the environmental protection operation and activities of relevant government agencies.
2. Management and utilization of marine assets and resources through bio-geographic and seascape approach to planning and by implementing an integrative and inclusive development programs.
 - 2.1. Develop and implement a national integrated coastal and marine management plan in line with the ridge-to-reef concept.
 - 2.1.1. Establish national programs for assessing and monitoring coastal and marine ecosystems.
 - 2.1.2. Integrate coastal and marine water use plans into the comprehensive land use and forest land use plans of LGUs.
 - 2.1.3. Apply the ecosystem-based approach to the management of fisheries and other marine resources.
 - 2.1.4. Adopt a transboundary policy and regulatory approach to compliment the ecosystem-based approach to the management of fisheries and other marine resources.
 - 2.1.5. Prioritize the protection and management of mangroves, sea grasses, coral reefs, and beaches as a management unit to derive maximum benefits resulting in synergistic interactions of these four ecosystems that enhance marine productivity (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 2.1.6. Implement relevant action plans, including, but not limited to, the Coral Triangle Initiative National Plan of Action and the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) Conservation Plan which includes designating priority seascapes across the Coral Triangle as geographic focus of sustainable management (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 2.1.7. Pursue the passage of the National Land Use and Water Act.

- 2.2. Complete the delineation of municipal waters for better fishery and other marine resources management using the archipelagic principle (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 2.2.1. Incentivize local government units to enact local ordinances delineating municipal waters (as stipulated under the Fisheries Code).
 - 2.2.2. Provide technical assistance through DILG, NAMRIA, and relevant agencies in delineating and validating municipal waters, especially among municipalities with territorial conflicts.
 - 2.2.3. Ensure fishing interests are considered throughout the delineation process.
3. Development and sustainability of marine and other allied industries
 - 3.1. Develop a safe, secure, efficient, viable, competitive, dependable, integrated, environmentally sustainable, and people-oriented marine transport system.
 - 3.1.1. Ensure all ships are registered with MARINA, particularly inter-island and small community boats (*banca*).
 - 3.1.2. Strengthen and modernize the Philippine registration of fishing fleets, seafarers, and shipyards.
 - 3.1.3. Improvement of inter-island connectivity through the development of a nautical highway system and roll-on roll-off (ro-ro) terminal system linking the entire country, while ensuring habitat protection (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 3.1.3.1. Review the mandate of the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), as well as its performance, and study the feasibility of allowing LGUs to develop their own ports to speed up port infrastructure development.
 - 3.1.3.2. Increase the number of ro-ro-enabled ports and ro-ro ferry routes to augment the capacity of existing port infrastructure to carry traffic (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 3.1.3.3. Develop modernization port facilities through PPPs to cater to cruise tourism, both servicing inter-island and international cruise vessels, including the potential establishment of an ASEAN RORO Network (PDP 2011-2016).
 - 3.1.3.4. Enhancement of the one-town one-product program (OTOP) to be authentic and of world-class quality so tourists, visitors, and

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- passengers of cruise ships will purchase Philippine products.
 - 3.1.4. Sustain the development of globally competitive marine manpower.
 - 3.1.4.1. Review and upgrade current standards for maritime education and training.
 - 3.1.4.2. Provide incentives to top maritime schools.
 - 3.1.4.3. Modernize and streamline procedures for registration, licensing, certification, etc. (Marina 2013).
 - 3.1.4.4. Modernize the practice marine engineering with highest quality and globally competitive standard of professional practice and service.
 - 3.1.4.5. Provide incentives to universities to offer naval architecture and other marine-related engineering courses.
 - 3.1.5. The Philippines as a major center for shipbuilding and repair.
 - 3.1.5.1. Conduct a policy needs assessment to support the shipbuilding industry.
- 3.2. Develop a competitive, sustainable, and technology-based fisheries sector
 - 3.2.1. Eradicate poverty among coastal and marine communities by raising productivity, efficiency, and incomes of fishery-based households and enterprises to achieve food security.
 - 3.2.1.1. Review the supply and value chains and logistics systems to determine effective points of interventions to make enhancements and eliminate deficiencies.
 - 3.2.1.2. Develop and adopt modern, appropriate, and cost-effective and environmentally-safe fisheries machinery and equipment.
 - 3.2.1.3. Improve access to credit (e.g., strengthen the AFMA-mandated Agro-Industry Modernization Credit Financing Program; PDP 2011-2016).
 - 3.2.1.4. Conduct inventory of foreshore lands to identify, clarify, and mitigate impacts of privatization and commercialization to the environment and the fishing communities.
 - 3.2.2. Develop alternative livelihoods for coastal communities to provide substitute or supplemental income sources.
 - 3.2.2.1. Assess each marine bio-geographic region and its suitability for specific livelihood projects (e.g., commercial fishing, fisherfolk

community cooperatives, aquaculture, organic vegetable farming, seaweed farming, processing facilities, fish preservation, etc. (Rosales 2015).

- 3.2.2.2. Formulate and implement a holistic and citizen welfare-based national plan for the fisheries sector (Rosales 2015).
- 3.3. Facilitate the establishment of sustainable offshore extraction facilities for energy supply and economic opportunities (Bito-onon 2015).
 - 3.3.1. Promote the development of and reliance for alternative energy sources using the marine environment, such as ocean current, solar, etc.
 - 3.3.2. Harness the potential of public-private partnerships in the development of sustainable offshore extraction facilities.
 - 3.3.3. Harness the economic potential of both environmentally-sound and supply-sustainable offshore mineral extraction.
 - 3.3.4. Explore seascapes, such as Benham Rise, with potential oil and gas deposits (Rosales 2015).

Pillar IV: Marine Security

Strategic Outcome

Enhanced security of the country's different marine assets and zones to protect the integrity of the Philippines as a nation from all threats either external or internal

Strategies

1. Reinforce and heighten defense against external armed threats and internal insurgencies by upgrading air and maritime capability.
 - 1.1. Modernize the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other law enforcement agencies, concentrating on the strengthening of the navy and the air force (Kraft et al. 2015) through proper investments in floating assets and air assets, technology, and equipment, and monitoring technology and increasing qualified personnel and resources for the Philippine Navy and the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine National Police-Maritime Group.
 - 1.2. Develop a self-reliant defense industrial base, or enter into a partnership with friendly countries in the development of one (Kraft et al. 2015).

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- 1.3. Explore and create opportunities for an ASEAN peacekeeping effort, such as through the establishment of a peaceful eco-tourism operation within the KIG (Bito-onon) and the conduct of regular border patrol efforts among the Philippines and its neighboring states (Ong 2016 Interview).
 - 1.4. Strengthen civilian control and oversight of the security sector through reforms in the defense and law enforcement agencies (National Security Policy 2011-2016).
 - 1.5. Enhance the oversight function of the legislative branch, and capacitate the civilians in government and civil society organizations to oversee the security sector (National Security Policy 2011-2016).
2. Promote safety of life and property at sea within the maritime jurisdiction of the Philippines.
 - 2.1. Invest in capability improvement to ensure safe navigation through suitable aids to navigation, vessel traffic system, and maritime communications (e.g., construction of light houses, provision of radio and other modern communication systems).
 - 2.2. Put in place proactive efforts to effectively mitigate the consequences to people, environment, and the economy of marine casualties and disastrous events.
 - 2.3. Establish an integrated maritime border surveillance and management to prevent illegal movement of goods and people.
 - 2.4. Develop common operating protocol among law enforcement agencies/units of LGUs/NGAs, and ensure interoperability between LEA and the AFP through regular conduct of peacetime mobilization exercises.
 - 2.5. Capitalize on existing relations with the United States and Australia in developing maritime capabilities through equipment upgrade and regular bilateral exercises.
 - 2.6. Strengthen border patrol arrangements with Indonesia, and replicate or explore similar arrangements with other neighboring countries with overlapping EEZs with the Philippines.
 - 2.7. Equip fisherfolk organizations with boats that could navigate the high seas and sophisticated communication equipment and integrate them into the communication network of LEAs and the AFP.

Crosscutting Policies

Strategic Outcome

Resilient marine ecosystems and adaptable coastal communities through research-based and properly implemented programs and tools

Strategies

1. Implement programs and tools to support and respond to climate change and disaster risk incidents especially for fishers and marine businesses/enterprises.
 - 1.1. Implement easements and ecological buffer zones as a strategy in managing risks. Mandatory statutory easements can be extended depending on the extent and magnitude of hazards due to climate change and disasters.
 - 1.2. Rehabilitate wetlands and mangrove areas.
 - 1.3. Establish early warning systems and contingency plans for coastal-related hazards (i.e., coastal flooding and storm surges).
2. Address pressures on marine ecosystems to build resilience to climate change and disaster risks.
3. Conduct continuing studies on indicator marine species as well as on coral reefs, mangroves, and sea grass habitats at the community and/or local level.
4. Develop an up-to-date knowledge and information hub on climate change impacts and disaster risks that combines science-based knowledge and traditional/local knowledge.
5. Utilize new generation ecosystem models for the determination of multiple climate change and disaster risk pressures towards an integrated ecosystem-based management of marine ecosystem.