



Northwest Pacific Action Plan

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Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center

The Eighteenth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting
Vladivostok, Russia, 7-8 December 2021
On-line meeting

**Report on the implementation of activity “Development of NOWPAP
EcoQO targets aligned (where possible) with SDG indicators, phase 2”**

Background.

The 22nd NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) has approved the Programme of Work for 2018-2019 biennium, including the following POMRAC activity: “Development of regional EcoQO targets aligned (where possible) with SDG indicators, phase 1“. During the implementation of EcoQOs activity in 2016-2017, national experts agreed that the following six NOWPAP EcoQO indicators could be applied in their countries:

- Nutrients concentration in the water column (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)
- Nutrient ratios (silica, nitrogen and phosphorus)
- *Chlorophyll a* concentration in the water column (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)
- Harmful algal blooms (HABs)
- Concentration of the contaminants in sediments, water and organisms
- Trends in the amount and composition of litter washed ashore (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)

During the 2018-2019 biennium (including a regional workshop held in Vladivostok, Russia, in March 2019), nominated national experts have agreed on four EcoQO targets (see below). National experts have also agreed on the designated areas within their countries where these EcoQO targets will be tested during the second phase of this activity:

- Jiaozhou bay in China;
- Toyama bay and/or Hakata bay in Japan;
- Masan bay and coastal area near Ulsan (for trace metals only) in Korea;
- Amursky bay in Russia.

At that stage, two proxy SDG-14 indicators were related to the NOWPAP EcoQO targets: 1) *Chlorophyll a* concentrations (might be replaced after 2021 by the Index of Coastal Eutrophication Potential, ICEP); and 2) marine litter washed ashore (might be replaced after 2021 by the floating plastic debris density). Therefore, during the 2020-2021 biennium, close attention had to be paid to the development of core SDG-14 indicators and sub-indicators.

During the Workshop held in March 2019 in Vladivostok, Russia, POMRAC experts and focal points have decided that only four targets could be set (related to eutrophication, contaminants and marine litter). The following four EcoQO targets have been formulated:

Indicators	NOWPAP EcoQO targets
Nutrients concentration in the water column	<p>Nutrient concentrations in the water column within the designated area do not exceed the baseline values or existing national standards.</p> <p>Note: Baseline values could be decided by each country and will be confirmed by correspondence, taking into account past CEARAC studies on this issue to avoid unnecessary work.</p>

<p><i>Chlorophyll a</i> concentration in the water column</p>	<p><u>Chlorophyll a</u> concentrations within the designated areas do not exceed the baseline values.</p> <p>Note: Baseline values will be decided by each country and will be confirmed by correspondence, taking into account past CEARAC studies on this issue. For this particular target, <i>in situ</i> data will be used.</p>
<p>Concentration of contaminants in water and sediments</p>	<p>During the last 5 years, contaminant concentrations in water and surface sediments within the designated area do not exceed the existing national standards or baseline values.</p> <p>Note: Spatial variability in surface sediments should be taken into account. If stations of different classes exist within the designated area, certain stations could be selected for testing this particular EcoQO target.</p>
<p>Trends in the amount and composition of litter washed ashore</p>	<p>During the last 5 years, there is a decreasing trend (statistically significant) in the amount of marine litter washed ashore.</p> <p>Note: In addition to regular monitoring results, data from annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) campaigns (held in the same area every year) might be used at the initial stage. Units might differ in different countries, i.e. it could be weight/volume/number of items per square meter or per 100 meters of shore length. Decreasing trend should be confirmed by common statistical tests.</p>

Goal. The aim of this project was to test the agreed EcoQO targets within the designated areas and to consider if further adjustments in EcoQO targets are needed (including through possible alignment, to the extent possible, with the SDG-14 indicators). Implementation of this activity was expected to help NOWPAP to start reporting on progress of achieving the SDG-14.1: “By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”.

Tasks.

For each EcoQO target the following steps were expected to be taken:

- Nominated experts from each NOWPAP member state decide on baseline values for their designated areas to be used for testing agreed EcoQO targets and share their decisions with experts from all other member states (via POMRAC).
- Nominated national experts test the four agreed EcoQO targets using monitoring data within their designated areas, checking if monitoring data in their designated areas are within the agreed targets or not and if agreed EcoQO targets are feasible and easily applicable in practice.
- While discussing the EcoQO targets agreed upon earlier, nominated national experts might take into account recent developments of proxy/core SDG-14 indicators as well as recent developments in HELCOM, MAP, OSPAR, YSLME-II project and the UNEP Working Groups on indicators, including eutrophication and floating plastic debris.

In 2021, a joint regional POMRAC-CEARAC workshop was planned for the discussion by nominated experts the EcoQO targets agreed upon earlier (together with recent national monitoring data within the designated areas) and consideration of any changes in EcoQO targets (if needed).

The results of testing the agreed EcoQO targets had to be summarized in the National Inputs. The template (proposed structure) of National Inputs was prepared by POMRAC Secretariat. After that, Regional Synthesis had to be compiled by international consultant with analysis of EcoQO targets applicability in different NOWPAP countries.

Activities.

National experts have been nominated during Q2-Q3 2020 for the preparation of National Inputs, International consultant has been nominated as well. Structure of National inputs and Regional Synthesis were discussed and agreed by correspondence. Terms of References for the implementation of this activity have been prepared with expected submission of National inputs by the end of 2020 and Regional Synthesis by 31 April 2021. Unfortunately, due to delay of the contracting process in the UNEP HQ, experts have not received contracts until now (12 November 2021). In spite of that, nominated experts have submitted draft reports by 1 September 2021. All experts kindly responded to the comments made by POMRAC Secretariat and international consultant (also without contract).

During last weeks international consultant has prepared and submitted draft Regional Synthesis Report (again in kind, without contract). For the time being draft Regional Synthesis Report is under comments process by RCU, and POMRAC FPs. POMRAC Secretariat hopes that Regional Synthesis will be finalized by the end of December 2021, and will be printed by the next IGM.

2) Due to such significant delay with contracting process, POMRAC had not any possibility to arrange workshop for the discussion of baseline values online. Face-to-face meeting was not possible due to COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Expected outcomes and future direction

The regional synthesis prepared after an analysis of submitted National Inputs will be the main output of this project. This synthesis report will be reviewed by NOWPAP RACs, RCU, NFPs, and then published and circulated between relevant stakeholders.

6. Budget: US\$ 41,000

Activity	To be completed	Counterpart	Original Budget (US\$)	Expend. by 15.11.21	Planned expend. up to 30.06.22
Preparation of National Inputs	September, 2021	Expert(s) in China	4,000*	-	4,000*
		Expert(s) in Japan	4,000*	-	4,000*
		Expert(s) in Korea	4,000*	-	4,000*
		Expert(s) in Russia	4,000*	-	4,000*
Workshop to discuss possible regional targets and to finalize National Inputs	2021, March	POMRAC	18,000	10,300	7,700
Compilation of National Inputs and preparation of draft regional synthesis report	2021, September	POMRAC, hired consultant/expert	5,000*	-	5,000*
Finalization and publication of regional synthesis report	2021, November	POMRAC	2,000	2,000	-
Subtotal				12,300	28,700

* - through the direct contracts with Nairobi HQ