



Northwest Pacific Action Plan

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Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center

The Eighteenth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting
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On-line meeting

Report on the implementation of POMRAC activity “Preparation of SOMER-3“

Background.

Regular assessment of the environmental status and trends within the NOWPAP region was one of the key components in the original list of activities highlighted at the NOWPAP establishment in 1994. First “State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region” (SOMER) has been compiled by POMRAC in close cooperation with other RACs and published in 2007. The main goal of that report was to give a holistic description, analysis and overview of marine environmental problems of the NOWPAP sea area.

In accordance with decision of 16th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting, one of the NOWPAP POMRAC activities for 2012-2013 biennium was preparation of the second “State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region” (SOMER-2). The specific goals of SOMER-2 included: 1) Assessment of the state of the marine environment in the NOWPAP area, with special attention to recent changes in the environmental conditions and the impacts of human activities on the marine and coastal environment; 2) Identifying current regional concerns and emerging issues which present major challenges; 3) Presentation of actions and measures to help decision makers to address these challenges at the national and regional level. SOMER-2 was prepared with valuable help and direct participation of all RACs and has been published in 2014.

SOMER-2 identified eight major regional environmental issues:

- Fragmentation, degradation and loss of habitats;
- Chemical contamination of waters, sediments and biota resulting from pollution from land-based sources;
- High risk of oil and hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) pollution incidents in the sea;
- Eutrophication caused by the increased input of nutrients into marine waters and associated harmful algal blooms (HABs) and increased hypoxia;
- Introduction of invasive non-indigenous species;
- Marine litter pollution.

Based on the findings of SOMER-2, the following list of five Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) was suggested, discussed and reflected in NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023:

- Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure;
- Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems;
- Eutrophication adverse effects (such as loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters) are absent;
- Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health;
- Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments.

According to the NOWPAP MTS for 2018-2023, one of the major goals of NOWPAP continues to be providing the NOWPAP Member States with integrated periodic assessments of the state of the marine and coastal environment (SOMER-3). General responsibility of POMRAC for the SOMER 3 preparation was reflected in the MTS. At the same time, comprehensive and holistic nature of SOMER-3 implies that all RACs have to be involved in this activity.

Goal. The integrated assessment of environmental problems, status and trends related to existing and changing natural and socio-economical conditions in the different countries of NOWPAP region.

3. Main features of SOMER-3

3.1. Integrative nature

The broad range of ecological problems that should be reflected in SOMER-3 justifies the necessity to involve all RACs and other national and regional institutions in the development of this document. Overall activity will be implemented in close partnership between all RACs and RCU and involve inputs from various national, regional and global institutions as well as individual experts.

3.2. The compatibility with Ecological Quality Objectives

Ecological Quality Objectives developed for the NOWPAP region in 2012-2017, have been suggested from the outcomes of SOMER-2. Therefore, substantive part of SOMER-3 should be directly related to the five EcoQOs, and should allow to check the efficiency of suggested EcoQOs indicators. It does not mean that other important and emerging environmental issues (like climate change, acidification, microplastic pollution) will be ignored in SOMER-3

3.3. The aligning with SDGs

After adoption of sustainable development goals (SDGs) by the UN General Assembly in December 2015, NOWPAP activities related to the assessment of ecological quality for the northwest Pacific also have to be aligned with the SDG indicators as much as possible.

3.4. The reflecting of the visions of different NOWPAP countries on the ecological problems

SOMER-1 and SOMER-2 were "problems oriented" overview of the regionally situation in all NOWPAP countries. At the same time in each NOWPAP countries there are own official approach to the environmental problems. POMRAC suggested to compile these national visions and present this study as a first part of SOMER-3. Main reason of this comparative analysis is to enhance the possibility of the practical use of NOWPAP outcomes and recommendations by the National authorities.

The second part of SOMER-3 should reflect the regional NOWPAP visions on the major ecological problems of the region.

4. Main tasks

4.1. Preparation of the draft structure of the SOMER-3 and discussion with RACs, RCU by correspondence. First version of structure prepared by POMRAC Secretariat was presented at the 16th POMRAC FPM in 2019. Taking into account the possibility of different approaches to the SOMER-3 structure, it was suggested to have broad discussion by correspondence with RACs and RCU.

4.2. Organization of the on-line Workshop in the middle of 2020 for the final discussion and approval of SOMER-3 contents and structure. Approved structure and contents of SOMER-3 should be a major goal and outcome of this WS. Experts nomination should be based on the SOMER-3 structure approved at the workshop.

4.3. Preparation of draft chapters of SOMER-3 by the nominated experts and RACs. Discussion by correspondence and comments from RACs and RCU for all chapters should be important part of this stage of SOMER-3 preparation.

4.4. Compilation of SOMER-3

Compilation of SOMER-3 should be begun by the international consultant hired by POMRAC after finalization of the separate chapters, and according to the approved structure.

5. Expected outcomes

Elaborated and approved different chapters have to be major outcomes on the SOMER-3 activity for 2020-2021. Preparation of SOMER-3 as a whole has to be finished in 2022 and the report has to be published and disseminated. .

Activities

Possible structure of SOMER-3 has been suggested by POMRAC Secretariat and discussed with POMRAC FPs by correspondence by the March 2020. On-line Workshop was held on April 8, 2021, to discuss the structure (Annex 1) and implementation process of the SOMER-3. Meeting has agreed with POMRAC proposals in general but stressed the necessity to clarify the RACs participation mode in SOMER-3 preparation.

National experts for the preparation of national inputs for the first part of SOMER 3 and participation in the second have been nominated. Due to impossibility to spend money allocated to POMRAC in PGI FEBRAS for the payment to the persons abroad, contracts for experts from China, Korea and Russia were arranged through the UNEP HQ with kind and great support of RCU. Even with all efforts of RCU contracting process is delayed, and experts have not received contracts until now (15 October 2021). In spite of that, nominated experts have kindly submitted draft reports by 15 September 2021. CEARAC kindly agree to sign contract with expert nominated from Japan for the preparation of National input. For the time being POMRAC has received draft Japanese National input reflecting the features of the vision on the major ecological problems in marine and coastal areas.

4. Expected outcomes and future direction

The submitted and commented National inputs reflected the vision of NOWPAP countries on the major ecological problems will be the main output of this project for 2020-2021. These inputs will be compiled and accompanied by short synthesis part, reflecting their similarities and differences. It will be a first part of SOMER-3 that will be reviewed by NOWPAP RACs, RCU, NFPs.

The necessity of a joint analysis of national approaches is determined by the significant progress in the environmental planning in the NOWPAP Member States (e.g. Basic Ocean Plans in Japan or Comprehensive Plans for Marine Environment in Korea). National visions have some features which will be useful to take into account at further regional cooperation. The main reason for such a comparative analysis is to enhance the practical use of NOWPAP outcomes and recommendations by the national authorities.

The second chapter of SOMER-3 should reflect the regional NOWPAP visions on the region's major ecological problems. Therefore, it will have five subchapters aligned with five Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) related to the groups of major ecological problems outlined by the NOWPAP RACs activities earlier. Subchapters of this part are supposed to be based on the published outcomes and achievements of NOWPAP RACs. Therefore, RACs will be invited to provide extended summaries of their outcomes to the relevant issues and participate in the preparation of subchapters.

Chapter 3 “**Aligning of the NOWPAP activities with implementation of SDGs in the region**” will describe the relationship of NOWPAP activities and outcomes with arrangement of the execution and achievements of SDG14 in the region. Obviously, that preparation of this chapter is postponed for the next biennium. POMRAC believes International consultant will be needed for this job.

Chapter 4 “**EBM, ICZM & MSP as a way for achieving of SDGs**” is closely related to the Chapter 3, because SDG14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” could be implemented and reached only through the ecosystem based management (EBM) with integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), and marine spatial planning (MSP) as the components. The same international expert could analyze the positive examples, if any, in SDG14 achieving and the role of EBM, ICZM and MSP in this process. Preparation of chapter 4 is also postponed for the next biennium.

SOMER 3: Regional Outlook from NOWPAP countries

Executive summary

Introduction

Chapter 1. NOWPAP states vision of the most important marine environmental problems*

(Korean expert (Dr. Khim), Japanese expert (Dr. Imai), Chinese expert (Dr. Lan), Russian expert)

China (based on China Marine Ecological Environment Bulletin)

Japan (from Basic Ocean Plans and relevant Ministries legislation)

Korea (from Comprehensive Plans of Marine Environment)

Russia (from Strategy on ecological safety of Russia 2025 and National Project “Ecology”)

Chapter 2. Current status and EcoQOs for the marine and coastal ecosystems within

NOWPAP region** (all RACs)

EcoQO 1: Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure*** (CEARAC)

EcoQO 2: Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems (DINRAC, POMRAC)

EcoQO 3: Eutrophication adverse effects (loss of BD, ecosystem degradation, HABs, oxygen deficiency) are absent (CEARAC, POMRAC)

EcoQO 4: Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health (MERRAC, POMRAC)

EcoQO 5: Marine litter** does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments** (DINRAC, POMRAC)

Chapter 3. Aligning of the NOWPAP activities with implementation of SDGs in the region

(Intrn. Consultant)

Chapter 4. EBM, ICZM & MSP as a way for achieving of SDGs (Intrn. Consultant)

Conclusions

* Chapter 1 has to be concluded by analysis of the similarity and difference of the approaches

** all parts of Chapter 2 will include description of the controlling natural and socio-economic factors (e.g. population distribution and dynamics, economic activities, diverse inputs of contaminants);

** * including possible influence of climate changes;**** including microplastic

Updated schedule for the preparation of SOMER 3

Time		Actions	Main Body
2021	Q1	Discussion by correspondence of the SOMER 3 structure, and nomination of experts	POMRAC
	Q2	On-line Workshop for the discussion and approval of the SOMER 3 structure. Hiring of experts for the preparation of SOMER3	POMRAC and FPs
	Q2-Q3	Preparation of the drafts for chapter 1 of SOMER-3	Experts
2022	Q1-Q2	Review and finalization of the chapter 1 of SOMER-3 Nomination and hiring of international consultant for the preparation of chapter 3 and chapter 4 of SOMER 3	POMRAC, FPs and RACs
	Q1-Q2	Preparation of the drafts for chapter 2 of SOMER-3	POMRAC, and experts/RACs
	Q3-Q4	Preparation of chapter 3 and 4 and Compilation of SOMER-3	International consultant

Updated Budget for the preparation of SOMER 3 for 2021

Contract	To be completed	Counterpart	Original Budget (US\$)	Expenditure by 15.11.21	Planned expenditure up to 30.06.22
Workshop on SOMER-3 structure	2021 Q2	Experts, RACs, RCU and relevant organizations	16,000	11,500	4,500
Preparation of the chapter 1 of SOMER-3	2021 Q3	POMRAC experts	16,000*	0	16,000*
Finalization of chapter 1 of SOMER 3	2021 Q3-Q4	POMRAC	2,000	2,000	0
Preparation of the chapter 2 of SOMER-3	2022 Q1-Q2	CEARAC, DINRAC, MERRAC, POMRAC,	14,000*	0	14,000*
Total			48,000		

*- through the ToRs with UNEP HQ under RCU supervision