



**Northwest
Pacific
Action Plan**

Distr.: RESTRICTED

UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/
FPM 15/Inf. 6

01 June 2018

Original: English

Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center

The Fifteenth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting
Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 4-5 July, 2018

- Discussion paper –

**Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan
for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region**

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1. Background

In 2011, NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2012-2017 (MTS 2012-2017) was approved by the NOWPAP member states. In the MTS 2012-2017, marine and coastal biodiversity is one of the important issues which NOWPAP should tackle with. So, Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region (RAP BIO) was planned to be developed; however, it was not realized during the period of 2012-2017. In the new NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 (MTS 2018-2023), development of RAP BIO is again stated as one of major outputs of the MTS. RAP BIO will be developed by RCU with CEARAC leading and other RACs contributing.

CEARAC has implemented various activities on marine biodiversity in the past decade. CEARAC Focal Points (FPs) requested that the CEARAC Secretariat should show a common future vision and a goal for marine biodiversity conservation to the four member states. Then, CEARAC plans to develop the Medium-term Strategy on marine biodiversity conservation (CEARAC MTS) in order to clearly establish CEARAC's future vision and direction on marine biodiversity activity in the 2018-2019 biennium and beyond. Taking note of potential overlapped elements between RAP BIO and CEARAC MTS, RCU asked CEARAC to lead discussion for developing RAP BIO. Based on the request from RCU, CEARAC proposed one activity to be implemented in the 2018-2019 biennium, "Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region" to the 22nd NOWPAP IGM (December 2017). This activity aims at developing a common understanding among RACs and RCU on their respective roles and future strategic focus in the development and implementation of RAP BIO. This project was approved at the IGM as part of NOWPAP Programme of Work 2018-2019 and started in early 2018.

2. Discussions

2-1. Discussion at the 16th CEARAC FPM

[Option A: from CEARAC]

CEARAC is proposing to implement activity “Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region (RAP BIO)” in a similar way as NOWPAP developed RAP MALI (2008): development of a project in the same manner as NOWPAP Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) project with its main outcome is the development of NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI). It took several years from starting MALITA implementation in 2005 and the approval of RAP MALI in 2008.

So, CEARAC’s plan is as follows:

First step (2018-2019): preparation of a project document of Marine Biodiversity Activity

Second step (2020-2021): implementation of Marine Biodiversity Activity

Third step (2022-2023): proposing the draft RAP BIO to the NOWPAP IGM.

Therefore, the output of 2018-2019 biennium is a draft proposal of Marine Biodiversity Activity, 2020-2021 is the implementation of Marine Biodiversity Activity, and development and adoption of RAP BIO in 2022-2023 follows.

[Option B: from RCU]

At the 16th CEARAC FPM, RCU proposed that Development of a roadmap of RAP BIO should start from the development of criteria for compiling NOWPAP list of threatened/declining species in the NOWPAP region. RCU proposed this based on the experience of other Regional Seas such as OSPAR and HELCOM. Such lists are the backbone of biodiversity action plans/activities being implemented by these regional seas. Similarly, compilation for such a List for NOWPAP would become a backbone of the NOWPAP future RAP BIO.

RCU supported the proposed plan of CEARAC Secretariat of developing project activity on marine biodiversity that would result in drafting RAP BIO. RCU also considered favorably the proposed by the CEARAC Secretariat timeline as presented in Option A. However, RCU raised several concerns on the proposed by CEARAC activities in 2018-2019 and recommended to consult with all RAC FPMs before approving the final list of activities for the CEARAC project “Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region”.

Specific proposals from RCU for the development of this project are as follows:

- In the next biennium (2018-2019) CEARAC focuses on the development of criteria for NOWPAP list of species and habitats (subject to discussion by CEARAC experts, but it seems possible that CEARAC uses IUCN Red List of Species and Criteria and adopt them for NOWPAP);

- CEARAC and RCU engage in the discussion with other RAC FPs on the best way how to develop specific focus of RACs in marine and coastal biodiversity that would become integrated into the future RAP BIO;

- RCU made specific suggestions how ongoing RAC activities could contribute to the development of RAP BIO project, including

 - for DINRAC: DINRAC special project 3rd Phase of Red List of Species (this project should provide information for the NOWPAP Red List of Species), also consider including biodiversity related criteria in the identification of sea reclamation sites project (as a contribution to the NOWPAP List of habitats);

 - for MERRAC: consider updating the existing NOWPAP list of non-indigenous species (2013);

For POMRAC: work closely with CEARAC and other RACs in ensuring that EQOs indicators (POMRAC project on the alignment of EQOs indicators with SDG indicators) addressing marine biodiversity (EQO 1: Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure; EQO 2: Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems, EQO 3: Eutrophication adverse effects (such as loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters) are absent (only related to HABs), and EQO 5: Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments (only related to impacts of marine litter on marine life) are supported by information and data that would be used for the NOWPAP list of species and habitats.

 - for CEARAC: after regional criteria for species and habitats are developed and adopted, CEARAC should focus on compiling existing information about threatened or declining habitats (partially, this information already exists in various NOWPAP reports, including recent regional report of CEARAC on pressures to marine and coastal biodiversity and others);

 - In implementing this activity (i.e., development of RAP BIO project), RCU suggested reducing the number of expert meeting but instead use these funds to support one biodiversity expert for each RAC (4 experts) that would work on the selected issues and serve as liaison persons between CEARAC and other RACs as well as be responsible for the development of RAP BIO project. RCU could provide funds to hire international consultant to support this work.

At the 16th CEARAC FPM held on 10-11 May 2018, the meeting pointed out there were some unclear points on option A:

- What is an outcome of this project?
- How to integrate other RACs' suggestions/requests to this project, and so on.

The meeting approved the CEARAC's workplan in principle; however, asked the Secretariat to modify the activities (series of meetings) and budget based on the discussion with other RACs, if necessary. The participants of CEARAC FPM16 (mainly CEARAC FPs) had difficulty in how to deal with RCU's proposal (Option B) because detailed workplan including a budget table was not shown before/during the meeting.

2-2. Discussion at the RCU/RAC Meeting

After the 16th CEARAC FPM, representatives of RACs and RCU and some relevant experts gathered and discussed this matter. Followings are suggestions provided from RACs and experts;

- For policy makers, data themselves are not so important in terms of their practical use. Knowledge (interpretation of data/assessment) is more useful for them to take actions. In order to conserve marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region and to support policy making in each NOWPAP member state, accumulation of knowledge should be conducted. The developed Regional Action Plan should include such information.

- Each RAC has some experiences and knowledge on marine biodiversity through their past activities. It may be possible to make suggestion papers (to CEARAC) based on their activities.

- 'Habitat' includes various kinds of biological habitats. The definition of the term may be different by member states, and there are some difficulties to set common criteria/standards for 'habitat' in the NOWPAP region.

- It may be difficult to summarize ideas/suggestions from RACs into one common direction for marine biodiversity conservation in the NOWPAP region.

- Strong coordination by RCU is essential to implement this project (on development of NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation).

CEARAC asked other RACs to add one agenda in their respective FPMs (to be held within the next few months) on Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region and discuss with their FPs how to collaborate with other RACs in the future.

The meeting agreed to have one additional agenda in each RAC FPM and asked the CEARAC Secretariat and RCU to explain this activity during their meetings.

2. Objective of discussion on Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal conservation in the NOWPAP region

While taking relevant NOWPAP and individual RAC activities on marine and coastal biodiversity conservation into consideration, FPM participants are invited to discuss how to collaborate among RACs and to provide practical/feasible suggestions/ideas to the project “Development of a roadmap for Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation in the NOWPAP region”.

Past and current NOWPAP activities on marine biodiversity

[CEARAC]

CEARAC MTS on marine biodiversity

Seagrass mapping using remote sensing techniques and cloud computing techniques

Publication of “Monitoring and management of MPAs in the NOWPAP region”

Assessment of major pressures, eutrophication, NIS and habitat alteration on marine biodiversity

Assessment of eutrophication status

HAB Integrated Report and database

[DINRAC]

List of marine protected areas (MPAs)

Atlas of marine invasive species

List of Endangered species, Red List in the NOWPAP region

[MERRAC]

No specific activity on marine biodiversity except for work on oiled wildlife

[POMRAC]

Integrated coastal and river basin management

Ecological Quality Objectives

[Points of discussion at each RAC FPM]

- Do you have any ideas/suggestions to development of RAP BIO project? Where do you see specific role of your RAC?
- Recognizing that RAP BIO project preparation (2018-2019) and its further implementation (2020-2021) should ultimately result into the adoption of NOWPAP RAP BIO, what additional activities (compared to the ones you already approved) should be implemented by your RAC to support RAP BIO project development?
- What do you think of developing the list of species and habitats and approving its regional criteria? Do you have any idea how to develop the list and criteria?
- What could be expected/acceptable role of your RAC in the future RAP BIO?
- How are suggestions from other RACs summarized into one common direction for marine biodiversity conservation in the NOWPAP region?
- Is it suitable/necessary to establish an expert group or nomination of biodiversity FPs for activities on marine and coastal marine conservation in the NOWPAP region?