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Northwest Pacific Action Plan
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The Twelfth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting
Busan, Republic of Korea, 4-5 September, 2014

REPORT OF THE 12TH NOWPAP POMRAC FOCAL POINTS MEETING

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Background

1. The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) and three Resolutions were adopted at the First Intergovernmental Meeting (Seoul, Republic of Korea, 14 September 1994). Resolution 1 identified five areas of priority for implementation of the Action Plan, one of which was NOWPAP/3: Establishment of a collaborative, regional monitoring programme.

2. Following the decision of the 3rd NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting, the responsibility for NOWPAP/3 (Regional Monitoring Programme) was jointly shared by the Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Center (CEARAC) and the Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center (POMRAC).

3. Following the results of discussions at the First NOWPAP/3 Meeting (Beijing, China, 21-22 May 2001), the 7th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (Vladivostok, 20-22 March 2002) approved the resolution 3.6, "the demarcation of the responsibilities and activities between CEARAC and POMRAC". Subsequently POMRAC was allocated with the responsibility to implement activities related to Working Group (WG) 1 "Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants" and WG 2 "River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants".

4. The Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (Toyama, Japan, 24-26 November 2005) has approved plan of future actions "New Directions for the NOWPAP RACs and RCU". Regarding POMRAC, that IGM confirmed the following for 2006 and future years: "*The Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center (POMRAC) in Vladivostok, Russia, currently has two Working Groups (WG1 on Atmospheric Input of Contaminants and WG2 on River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants). In 2005-2006, the experts of these working groups will prepare National Reports and then the Regional Overviews on these two issues. These documents might contribute to the State of Marine Environment Report in the NOWPAP Region which would be prepared in 2006-2007. Then, POMRAC might consider focusing on activities related to Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management which includes land-based sources of pollution. All activities related to land-based sources of pollution will be implemented in close collaboration with all NOWPAP RACs and with the UNEP/GPA.*"

5. The 4th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (Qingdao, China, 25-26 April 2006) decided to implement several activities related to Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management in NOWPAP Region in 2006/2007, namely:

- to create the Working Group for Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM WG),
- to organize the 1st Meeting of ICARM WG,
- to prepare National Reports and Regional Overview on ICARM.

6. During January-June 2007 the NOWPAP POMRAC Working Group for Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM WG) was created.

7. The 11th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting was held in Tianjin city, China on 9-10 October, 2013. The Meeting has reviewed and discussed major POMRAC activities in 2012-2013; discussed draft "Regional overview of persistent toxic substances (PTS) in the coastal environment of the NOWPAP region"; draft of the second "State of Marine Environmental Report" for the NOWPAP region; activities of the Working Group on Integrated Coastal and River Basin management (ICARM WG), including ICARM Guidelines; and the draft workplan and the budget of POMRAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium and planned activities of its Working Groups.

12th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting

8. The 12th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting reviewed and discussed major POMRAC activities in 2013-2014 in accordance with the decisions of the 18th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting; and discussed the list of major Ecological Quality Objectives in the NOWPAP region.

9. Focal Points and experts of the NOWPAP Members, namely Japan, Republic of Korea and Russia participated in the 12th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM. NOWPAP RCU representatives, as well as representatives of CEARAC and MERRAC, and representatives of partner organizations, such as OSPAR, PEMSEA, PICES, and YSLME, participated in the meeting. POMRAC Focal Point and Experts from China could not attend the meeting due to late submission of documents for their visas.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

10. The 12th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting was opened at 9:00 am at the Haeundae Grand Hotel in Busan, Republic of Korea, 4 September 2014 by the Director of POMRAC, Dr. Anatoly KACHUR. He greeted all meeting participants and thanked Korean colleagues and NOWPAP RCU for their assistance in smooth organization of the Meeting venue in one of the largest cities of NOWPAP region.

Agenda Item 2. Organization of the Meeting

Agenda Item 2.1: Election of the officers

11. The meeting was invited to elect the Chairperson and the Rapporteur for the 12th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting. According to NOWPAP practice, the duty of the chairpersons for FPM would be performed on a rotational basis, and this time Japanese representative should be the chairperson. However, as the Focal Point of Japan was appointed only recently, it was decided that this time the Chairperson should be a representative of Russia, namely Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, and the Rapporteur – a representative of Japan, namely Ms. Sayo MORITA. NOWPAP Coordinator, Dr. Alexander TKALIN, criticized POMRAC for breaking the rotational basis for the second time and strongly recommended that the following Focal Points Meeting should be chaired by Japanese representative.

Agenda Item 2.2: Organization of work

12. The rules of procedure of this Meeting were the same as of the UNEP Governing Council with necessary adjustments: the meeting was held in English and all decisions were made by consensus.

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the Agenda

13. The Chairperson gave the floor to Director of POMRAC. Dr. Kachur presented the Provisional Agenda with the Annotated Provisional Agenda. The meeting unanimously adopted the agenda.

Agenda Item 4. Overview of the progress made during the intersessional period after the Eleventh NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM)**Agenda Item 4.1. Report of NOWPAP RCU representative on implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan activities after the 11th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting**

14. Dr. Tkalin reported to the meeting on the progress of the entire NOWPAP activities during the intersessional period including the 18th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 12/5). Dr. Tkalin expressed gratitude to NOWPAP member states for their contributions into NOWPAP trust fund allowing to nearly achieve the target amount of 500,000 USD. In his speech he also raised concern with reducing number of employees in the NOWPAP RCU offices which might undermine their effective operation.

Agenda Item 4.2. Report on the activities of NOWPAP Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center (POMRAC) in 2013/2014

15. Director of POMRAC reported on the implementation of POMRAC activities in 2013/2014 (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 12/5). The report covered such issues as setting Environmental Quality Objectives in the NOWPAP Region, ICARM activities, RAP MALI activities, as well as finalization and publishing of the report on Persistent Toxic Substances in the NOWPAP Region and the Second State of the Marine Environment Report (SOMER-2). The meeting was invited to hold a general discussion after the presentation.

16. Dr. Seong-Gil KANG, the Director of MERRAC, wondered if there is any possibility to include the data from the SOMER-2 into the World Ocean Assessment Report (WOA), as the SOMER-2 was prepared in compliance with the UN Regular Process.

17. Mr. Gert VERREET, the Deputy Secretary of the OSPAR Commission, said that similar issue was raised by OSPAR in relation to the UN Regular Process, but the WOA contributions were made through national experts, and there is no direct link between OSPAR and UN Regular Process.

18. Dr. Tkalin mentioned that World Ocean Assessment took a lot of time and the structure became less specific. Also he said that many regions implement regional assessments, and

there is a disconnection between the WOA and regional assessments.

Agenda Item 5. Discussion of the workplan for 2014/2015 and future activities of POMRAC for the achievement of Ecological Quality Objectives in the NOWPAP Region

19. Dr. Shulkin presented the document modified in accordance with the comments made during the Regional Workshop “Setting Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP Region” (Annex 2) to the meeting participants and they were invited to make further comments.

20. Dr. Kang said that it is required to review the existing EcoQO activity depending on its applicability in the NOWPAP region, and then to organize expert groups to deal with certain operational objectives. Dr. Shulkin commented that the following meetings (FPM and IGM) will provide more details on operational objectives. But at the initial stage, no final decision on operational objectives and expert groups can be made. Dr. Kachur agreed with Dr. Kang that it is an integrated project. He said that collaboration among expert groups and RACs should be very close.

21. Dr. Takafumi YOSHIDA, the representative of CEARAC, asked if the money from POMRAC budget will be spent for expert inputs or meetings. Dr. Tkalin said that preliminarily there will be five EcoQOs and the number of experts involved in each expert group will depend on the amount of work to be done. No meetings are expected.

22. Dr. Kang asked about the volume of expert inputs to be prepared. Dr. Shulkin answered that it might take about ten pages for each EcoQO; each chapter will include review of international expertise and some national approaches. Dr. Kachur added that the expert inputs might contain as much as 50 pages, but the final document for the IGM should be short and simple.

23. Dr. Yoshida expressed his concern that experts will have to make a significant amount of work and the funds indicated in the budget for this activity are not enough to pay for their work. He offered to reduce the number of expert groups. Dr. Shulkin answered that the maximum number of expert groups might be 5, but it is possible to merge some of them, forming more generalized groups.

24. Dr. Won-Keun CHANG, POMRAC Focal Point from Korea, was worried about possible addition of new ecological quality objectives within the same budget.

25. Dr. Kachur commented on concerns by Dr. Yoshida and Dr. Chang saying that the goal in this biennium is to define the list of EcoQOs. If this list will be approved by the 20th IGM of NOWPAP, this activity could be continued in 2016/2017.

26. Dr. Chul-Hwan KOH, the representative of PEMSEA, asked Dr. Shulkin to include PEMSEA into the expert groups for EcoQOs on eutrophication and marine litter.

27. Ms. Sayo MORITA, the Focal Point of Japan, said that Japan would like to have an internal consultation on the EcoQOs.

28. Dr. Chang said that Korea also needs more time to discuss the workplan of the EcoQO activity..

29. After a detailed discussion it was agreed that the member states would make final decision on the list of the EcoQOs after internal consultations.

30. POMRAC secretariat promised to submit the revised workplan of EcoQOs activity within a week after the meeting, taking into account comments of this meeting for the procedure for setting the list of the EcoQOs for the Focal Points to review by the end of September 2014.

Agenda Item 6. Review of workplan and budget of POMRAC activities for the 2014/2015 biennium

31. Director of POMRAC presented to the meeting the Workplan and Budget for POMRAC in 2014/2015 biennium as approved by the 18th NOWPAP IGM. The meeting was invited to discuss the document.

32. Dr. Tkalin wondered why the 13th POMRAC FPM is planned late in the year, very close to the 20th NOWPAP IGM. He said it might complicate the procedure of preparation for the IGM. Dr. Kachur responded that many activities planned for 2014 were delayed due to the fact that POMRAC started its work only in May 2014 because 2014 budget was approved by member states in April 2014.

33. Dr. Chang asked who will attend training course on Integrated Coastal Planning/Management in 2015. Dr. Kachur answered that one scientist and one governmental official from each member state will be invited to take part in the training course. Dr. Tkalin suggested to make a corresponding footnote in the budget table.

34. POMRAC secretariat will circulate within two weeks after the meeting revised workplan with quarterly milestones for Focal Points to review by the end of September 2014.

35. Due to the absence of Focal Point and experts from China, it was decided that Chinese delegation would be invited to provide their comments via e-mail correspondence after the Meeting.

Agenda Item 7. Arrangements for the 13th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM

36. The meeting was invited to discuss the place and date of the Thirteenth NOWPAP POMRAC FPM. It was decided that the meeting will take place in Toyama, Japan or other city in the NOWPAP Region, pending confirmation from Japan within two months. The meeting will be tentatively held in September 2015.

Agenda Item 8. Other matters

37. The meeting was invited to raise any other issues relevant to POMRAC activities. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 9. Closure of the meeting.

38. After discussion and adoption of the meeting report, the meeting was closed at 11.40 a.m. on 5 September 2014.

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2014-2015 Workplan of POMRAC activity Development of the Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region

1. Background

During the NOWPAP establishment in 1994, the overall goal of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan was defined as “the wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment so as to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region, while protecting human health, ecological integrity and the region’s sustainability for future generations”. Three complementary goals were also defined as follows:

- i) The control, halting and prevention of any further degradation and deterioration of the coastal and marine environment and its resources;
- ii) The recovery and rehabilitation of coastal and marine environments that have been degraded and which still have the potential for such a recovery;
- iii) The long-term sustainability of coastal and marine environmental quality and resources as assets for the present and future human populations of the region.

Taking into account emerging marine environmental problems in the NOWPAP region as well as the original Action Plan adopted in 1994, the following thematic elements for the 2012-2017 NOWPAP Medium-term strategy (MTS) were adopted after the 16th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting held in 2011:

- Integrated coastal and river basin management;
- Regular assessments of the state of the marine environment;
- Pollution prevention and reduction, including harmful substances, hazardous waste and marine litter;
- Biodiversity conservation (including alien invasive species);
- Climate change impacts.

For the Theme 1 (Integrated coastal and river basin management, ICARM), one of the suggested activities was “Setting Ecological Quality Objectives for marine and coastal environment based on the regular assessments”.

The 11th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (Tianjin, China, 9-10 October 2013) discussed and agreed that the development of the Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) for the NOWPAP region should be included into POMRAC workplan for the 2014-2015 biennium. It was also agreed that POMRAC in 2014-2015 should focus on the following new issue, “Joint Activity for WG1, WG2 and ICARM WG with cooperation with RACs, RCU and relevant organizations (PEMSEA, COBSEA, WESTPAC and others): Development of the Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region with regional workshop combined with the 12th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM”.

The 18th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (Toyama, Japan, 4-6 December 2013) discussed the NOWPAP Programme of Work and budget for 2014-2015. The IGM approved the budget for NOWPAP POMRAC for the 2014-2015 biennium as US\$ 125,000, including the Development of the Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region with regional workshop combined with the 12th POMRAC FPM.

2. Development of Ecological Quality Objectives and further steps

The Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) are usually based on the **vision** reflecting the common broadly accepted description of ecological status of the region. Vision for the NOWPAP region is suggested as follows: **“Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems in the NOWPAP region that are productive and biologically diverse and can continue to support sustainable use of marine resources for the benefit of present and future generations”**.

Several steps are suggested for the development of Ecological Quality Objectives. These steps include:

- preparation, discussion and approval of the set of EcoQOs;
- elaboration of the Operational Objectives for each EcoQO;
- agreement on indicators and targets for each Operational Objective.

During the 2014-2015 biennium, preparation, discussion and approval of the list of EcoQOs are suggested. Experience of some individual Regional Seas programmes (such as HELCOM, MAP and OSPAR) as well as relevant international organizations and projects (such as PEMSEA, PICES, WESTPAC and YSLME) will be taken into account.

The initial elaboration of operational objectives could be also started for some EcoQOs in 2014-2015 biennium, pending reaching consensus among national experts, NOWPAP RACs and regional partners of NOWPAP working on similar issues, but the main activity on Operational Objectives will start in 2016-2017 biennium, after approval of the NOWPAP Programme of Work by the 20th IGM.

The main work on indicators and targets could start only after approval of Operational Objectives, i.e. in the 2016-2017 biennium and beyond, though preliminary outline of possible indicators and targets could begin in 2014-2015 biennium.

After completing the steps outlined above, the following steps could be taken, depending on political will of NOWPAP member states:

- analysis and recommendation for revision (if necessary) of existing monitoring programs;
- continuous assessment of the state of the marine and coastal environment using agreed indicators and targets;
- development and review of relevant action plans and programs (e.g., on marine litter, eutrophication, etc.).

3. Suggested Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region

Taking into account the analysis of current environmental situation in the NOWPAP region and considering successful work on EcoQOs by several leading Regional Seas programmes (such as MAP, HELCOM, and OSPAR for example), and discussion during regional workshop held on 3 September 2014, the suggested Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region are as follows:

- 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.

4. Suggested procedure for the elaboration of EcoQOs

POMRAC Secretariat will ask POMRAC Focal points and other RACs to nominate experts for each EcoQO listed above by the end of November 2014. One expert could work on more than one EcoQOs, if considered qualified. Nominated experts, along with NOWPAP RACs, RCU and representatives of relevant international organizations will be organized into expert groups. Nomination of experts and arrangement of their work will be carried out by correspondence. All expert groups will also work by correspondence.

As this activity will require involvement of all NOWPAP RACs, it is suggested to nominate a "leading RAC" for each EcoQOs (under overall coordination of POMRAC). For example, CEARAC will be asked to be a leading RAC for the development of EcoQOs related to biodiversity and eutrophication. DINRAC will be asked to be a leading RAC for the development of EcoQO related to alien species. MERRAC will be asked to be a leading RAC for the EcoQOs related to contaminants (including oil and HNS spills) and marine litter. Of course, it does not exclude any RAC from working on any other EcoQOs.

Leading RACs will arrange payments to the nominated experts through the MoUs. The funds from POMRAC budget will be transferred to leading RACs through small-scale funding agreements (SSFAs), under the coordination of NOWPAP RCU. POMRAC, in close coordination and consultations with other RACs, will provide the draft MoUs with nominated experts for the approval by leading RACs.

The careful review of each suggested EcoQO (listed above) should be the main output of this stage of work (4Q 2014-3Q 2015). Detailed review of each EcoQO should include: 1) Review of the experience of other international organizations and projects; 2) Analysis of national approaches (features); 3) Preliminary description of operational objectives and possible indicators.

Review of the international experience on the EcoQOs should include description (definition), operational objectives, indicators and targets, advantages and limitations, success stories (if any) and regional features using the knowledge of OSPAR, HELCOM, MAP, MSFD, PEMSEA and others.

Analysis of national approaches/features relevant to each EcoQO should include the review of national policies (if any) or experience of using marine and coastal resources in the NOWPAP member states. The experience of regional organizations such as PICES, YSLME, PEMSEA and WESTPAC should be considered as well.

Based on the review of international experience and taking into account features of national approaches, preliminary outline of the operational objectives and possible indicators could be suggested for each EcoQO.

5. Implementation Plan (suggested leading RACs are underlined)

EcoQOs	RACs and partners involved	Timing	Budget (US\$)
Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure	National experts, <u>CEARAC</u> , DINRAC, WESTPAC, PICES, PEMSEA, YSLME	Nomination of members for BD expert group – 4Q 2014 Review of EcoQO – 1-2Q 2015 Compilation of review for FPM and IGM – 3Q 2015	8,000
Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems	National experts, <u>DINRAC</u> , MERRAC, WESTPAC, PICES	Nomination of members for alien species expert group – 4Q 2014 Review of EcoQO – 1-2Q 2015 Compilation of review for FPM and IGM – 3Q 2015	5,000
Eutrophication adverse effects (such as loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters) are absent	National experts, <u>CEARAC</u> , POMRAC, YSLME, PICES, WESTPAC	Nomination of members for eutrophication expert group – 4Q 2014 Review of EcoQO – 1-2Q 2015 Compilation of review for FPM and IGM – 3Q 2015	8,000
Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health	National experts, <u>MERRAC</u> , POMRAC, PICES, PEMSEA	Nomination of members for contaminants expert group – 4Q 2014 Review of EcoQO – 1-2Q 2015 Compilation of review for FPM and IGM – 3Q 2015	8,000
Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments	National experts, ML FPs, <u>CEARAC</u> , <u>MERRAC</u>	Nomination of members for marine litter expert group – 4Q 2014 Review of EcoQO – 1-2Q 2015 Compilation of review for FPM and IGM – 3Q 2015	5,000
		Total:	34,000