

Concept Note

Meeting of NEASPEC National Focal Points

6 August 2020, Virtual meeting

1. Background

Recognizing the need for a long-term and action-oriented strategy, member Governments of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) decided to formulate a long-term strategic plan of NEASPEC during the 18th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-18) in 2013. In line with the “Framework for NEASPEC”¹ and the “Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia”² adopted by member States respectively in 1996 and 2000, and following to the discussions at SOM-19 in 2014 and NEASPEC National Focal Points Meeting in 2015, member States adopted the “NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020”³ at SOM-20 in 2016.

The Strategic Plan 2016-2020 has served as a guiding document for developing and implementing NEASPEC work in five thematic areas: (a) Transboundary Air Pollution; (b) Biodiversity and Nature Conservation; (c) Marine Protected Areas, (d) Low Carbon Cities, and (e) Desertification and Land Degradation. The Strategic Plan supported strengthening and institutionalizing various cooperation platforms, namely, the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN), the North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP), and the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), which enable the NEASPEC work to move from short-term, project-based to long-term, programmatic approach. The approaches of the Strategic Plan also supported the NEASPEC work to become more strategic towards strengthening science-policy linkage, operating stakeholder platforms, sharing knowledge, and linking the work with regional and global goals. However, there are still challenges in improving the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the work and making the institutional arrangement serve better.

¹ See page 4. “Part II. Proceedings, ‘Framework for North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation’”, <http://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/SOM-3-Ulaanbaatar.pdf>

² Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia, <http://www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/4.pdf>

³ NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020, <http://www.neaspec.org/article/neaspec-strategic-plan-2016-2020>

30 July 2020

In this connection, the SOM-23 in 2019 decided to carry out an external evaluation of implementing the Strategic Plan 2016-2020, and, in parallel, develop the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The SOM-23 also recommended the evaluation to focus on the implementation of the current strategic plan, completed and ongoing projects and the institutional arrangement. The Meeting noted the views of member States on linking the next strategic plan with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The planned National Focal Point Meeting will therefore review the results of the external evaluation and discuss the draft Strategic Plan 2021-2025 focusing on the thematic areas and the overall goals and approaches of NEASPEC. The Meeting is also expected to provide member Governments an opportunity for discussion on key issues related to the developments of NEASPEC.

2. Objectives

The National Focal Points Meeting is proposed to:

- i. Review of the implementation and lessons learnt from the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020, and the preliminary results of the NEASPEC external evaluation
- ii. Prepare draft NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025 for the adoption at SOM-24
- iii. Review other matters related to the developments of NEASPEC

3. Programme

- **Date:** 14:00-18:30pm (GMT+9), 6 August 2020
- **Venue:** virtual meeting
- **Participants:** National focal points of NEASPEC

Provisional Programme

14:00 - 18:30 (GMT+9), Thursday, 6 August	
14:00 - 14:15	<p>Opening Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening remarks, <i>Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head of ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office</i> • Introduction of the meeting, <i>NEASPEC Secretariat</i>
14:15 - 16:50	<p>Session 1: Review of the implementation of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and Draft Strategic Plan 2021-2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation on the implementation of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020, <i>by Ms. Joyce Miller, independent evaluator</i> • Background and draft of Strategic Plan 2021-2025, <i>NEASPEC Secretariat</i> • Comments and suggestions by National Focal Points <p><i>This session aims to provide a stock-taking assessment on the implementation of the current strategic plan and introduce the zero draft of the next strategic plan and its related background. Two short presentations will be made on key information, followed by substantive discussions among national focal points and relevant experts/ participants nominated by member States.</i></p>
16:50 - 17:00	Break
17:00 - 18:00	<p>Session 2: Other matters</p> <p><i>This session will consider other issues for the developments of NEASPEC, including any key issues member Governments wish to discuss.</i></p>
18:00 - 18:30	Conclusions