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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

Nineteenth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

22-23 September 2014

Moscow, Russian Federation

**REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

(Item 5(c) of the provisional agenda)

**Strengthening Subregional Cooperation on Marine Protected Areas**

*Note by the Secretariat*

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## I. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

1. NEASPEC had a series of consultations on its role in strengthening subregional cooperation on marine environment during the SOM-16 in September 2011, an Expert Consultation Meeting (ECM) in June 2012, SOM-17 in December 2012 and NEASPEC-NOWPAP Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservations in March 2013. In the course of these consultations, the Secretariat has prepared technical papers and draft Terms of Reference (TOR) with regard to the role of NEASPEC in marine protected areas.
2. The SOM-18 in November 2013 launched the North-East Asia Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) by adopting network's Terms of References (TOR). The TOR spells out the objectives, geographical scope, target MPAs, network membership, activity areas, organizational structure, programme operation, budget and roles of member States. In this connection, the TOR sets up the Steering Committee, which consists of one representative from each member States, to provide the policy and operational guidance for the NEAMPAN, and hold biennial meetings to plan network activities and review ongoing activities as well as network operation.
3. The first Steering Committee was held in 19-20 March 2014 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to further clarify national approaches to MPA, strategic direction of the Network, target MPAs, network membership, and organizational and managerial structures.
4. The first Steering Committee brought together members and alternate members of the Steering Committee from China, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, and international marine programmes including the Northwest of Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) of UNEP, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN), and East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP).
5. The Steering Committee agreed on the TOR of the Steering Committee, to define the role and responsibility of their own work as members of the Committee and to be submitted to the SOM-19 for endorsement, which is attached as Annex I. The proposed TOR sets out that the Steering Committee reports to SOM on its recommendations that require attention and decision of SOM. Key function of the Steering Committee includes policy and operational guidance on NEASPEC activities, as well as, planning and monitoring of NEASPEC activities. The Steering Committee will also make recommendations on new programmes and budgetary matters, if required, to SOM of NEASPEC for consideration.
6. Key outcomes of the meeting include (a) nomination of specific target MPAs by respective governments in accordance with network's thematic areas and national priorities in order for the Network to have more focused and efficient work, (b) inclusive memberships for

diverse stakeholders, (c) streamlined process for activity review and approval by the Steering Committee, (d) creation of Advisory Committee consisting of individual experts and international organizations for technical advice on activities, etc. The report of the Committee is attached as Annex I.

7. The Steering Committee also agreed to submit a small number of MPAs to the NEASPEC secretariat for compilation of MPAs list, and to seek technical advice from the Advisory Committee on activities.

## II. ACTIVITIES OF THE NEAMPAN

8. Further to the discussion of the Steering Committee on the selection of a small number of target MPAs, the Secretariat prepared a template for the section of the MPAs and circulated it to the members. The Secretariat has received submission of target MPAs from three countries at the time of drafting the current report as shown in Table 1. The Secretariat is also expected to receive detailed information from the Steering Committee of the identified MPAs, highlighting general features and the managerial or environmental challenges. Based on these nominated MPAs and associated information, the Secretariat is planning to proposal a workshop of authorities and stakeholders working on the management in 2015, in order to review specific situation of each MPAs, identify common areas of programmes, and discuss a start-up project for all nominated MPAs.

**[Table 1] Priority Target MPAs nominated by member governments**

MPA's name	Location	Protected targets	Management authority
<b>China</b>			
Nanji Islands National Marine Nature Reserve	Pingyang, Zhejiang	Marine shellfish and algae as well as their habitats	National
Shankou Mangrove National Marine Nature Reserve	Hepu, Guangxi	Mangrove ecosystem	National
Beilun Estuary National Marine Nature Reserve	Fangchenggang, Guangxi	Mangrove ecosystem	National
National Nature Reserve of Dazhou Island Marine Ecosystems	Wanning, Hainan	Swiftlet, its habitat and the marine ecological system	National
Sanya Coral Reef National Nature Reserve	Sanya, Hainan	Coral reef and the marine ecological system	National

Changyi National Marine Ecology Special Protected Area	Changyi, Shandong	<i>Tamarix chinensis</i> , marine organisms and coastal wetland ecosystems	National
<b>Republic of Korea</b>			
Mun-Sum(Is.) and Neighboring Water Marine Ecosystem Protected Area	Jeju-do (Province)	Coral Habitat, <i>Alcyonium gracillimum</i> , and a colony of various seaweed	National
Suncheon Bay Wetland Protected Area	Suncheon-si, Jeollanam-do	Hooded Crane, <i>phragmites communis</i> community	National
<b>Russian Federation</b>			
Far-Eastern State Marine Biosphere Reserve (FEMBR)	Vladivostok	Conservation of marine ecosystems and support for marine biological research	National
Sikhote-Alin State Natural Biosphere Reserve	Primorsky	Conservation and study of the natural functioning of natural complexes in totality	National

9. The Secretariat received a project proposal from Russian Federation “Strengthening the subregional cooperation for the development of the marine and coastal specially protected areas network”. The proposal suggests carrying out study and analysis on the state of marine biodiversity in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region. The project will adapt the scientific criteria on identification of ecologically and/or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection to the marine and coastal areas based on the decisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Eventually the project envisages developing recommendations on improvement of the environmental management system in near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones considering the transboundary context.

10. As the Advisory Committee is yet to be established, the Secretariat circulated the proposal to the member of Steering Committee in June 2014 for their review and comment. So far the Secretariat has received comment from China, which was supportive of the proposal in general as relevant to NEAMPAN objectives and on-going research programmes in the country, while suggesting to provide more technical and methodological details of proposed activities.

11. The Secretariat has prepared a list of international organizations and programmes to serve as Advisory Committee members and circulated to Steering Committee members for their review and decision. The Secretariat has also sought for the nomination of individual experts from the Steering Committee members, and wishes to finalize the process by end of 2014.

### III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

12. The Meeting may wish to review and approve the Report of the first Steering Committee Meeting, as well as Terms of References (TOR) of the Steering Committee.
13. The Meeting may wish to request member States to submit complete MPA profiles to the Secretariat.
14. The Meeting may wish to review the project proposal by the Russian Federation and consider allocating additional funds from NEASPEC core fund to support this project, subject to the approval of the proposal by the Steering Committee.
15. The Meeting may wish to request member States to express its interest in hosting the first meeting of authorities and stakeholders for the nominated MPAs in 2015.
16. The Meeting may wish to invite member States to provide further guidance on NEAMPAN activities and the involvement of national agencies, through Steering Committee members nominated by the respective government.

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## [Annex I]



# **First Steering Committee Meeting of North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN)**

**19-20 March 2014, Incheon, Republic of Korea**

## **Report of the Steering Committee**

1. NEASPEC organized the first meeting of Steering Committee of North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) on 19-20 March 2014 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, to facilitate planning of the Network activities by discussing programme details and organizational matters.
2. The Meeting brought together members and alternate members of the Steering Committee from China, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, and international marine programmes including the Northwest of Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) of UNEP, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), and Mediterranean Network of Marine Protected Areas (MedPAN), and East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP).
3. The Secretariat introduced the background paper, providing background of the network and identifying some of the issues to be discussed by the Committee.
4. The Meeting invited other MPA networks and subregional marine programmes to share their experiences and relevant programmes/activities in order to draw lessons for NEAMPAN. Subsequently, the Steering Committee members presented information on the details of the national MPA policies and arrangements, including MPA status, relevant legislations, challenges and suggestions for the Network. Based on the information provided by the Steering Committee members and the experiences of other MPA networks, the Meeting discussed the similarities and differences of scope and definition of target MPAs in member States, selection criteria of target MPAs, potential priority activities, process of project proposal, review and approval, organizational matters including the Network and Steering/Advisory Committee membership, and budgetary matters.
5. The Steering Committee endorsed the Terms of Reference of the Committee (Annex) prepared by the Secretariat, and adopted the following conclusions:

- a. Target MPAs:** The Meeting has agreed to start with a smaller number of MPAs and target MPAs will be nominated by respective governments through Steering Committee members. When selecting MPAs, Steering Committee members can refer to national priorities, NEAMPAN's thematic areas, key sites identified by EAAFP and MPAs of other networks. A profile of each selected MPA will be provided by Steering Committee members, containing information on: area, geographic location, biodiversity, areas of concern, institutional arrangement, managerial issues, purposes and reasons of nominating the particular MPA, etc. Steering Committee will provide profiles of selected MPAs by end of May.
- b. NEAMPAN members:** The Meeting has agreed that NEAMPAN will have memberships without differentiation. The Steering Committee will extend invitation to national members. As for international agencies and associations, the Secretariat will circulate a list of suggested members to Steering Committee for comments and approval for extending invitation.
- c. Steering Committee:** The Terms of Reference of Steering Committee has been accepted by the Steering Committee for submission to the SOM, with the correction that formal meetings of the Steering Committee will take place biennially and informal meetings may take place whenever deemed appropriate.
- d. Process of project proposal, review and approval:** The Steering Committee has agreed that proposals will be provided to the Advisory Committee for technical comments and be submitted to the Steering Committee for final decision. Steering Committee members will be required to provide views on proposed activities within the specified deadline, otherwise the absence of a response will be considered as a 'no-objection'.
- e. Advisory Committee:** The Meeting has decided that: (1) Advisory Committee will provide technical advice to the Steering Committee, e.g. for proposal approval; (2) Advisory Committee will serve a 4-year term and be renewed upon review of the Steering Committee; (3) there is no fixed number of Advisory Committee members; and (4) Advisory Committee members will consist of individual experts nominated by the Steering Committee and international agencies or programs proposed by the Secretariat and approved by the Steering Committee.
- f. Budgetary matters:** The Steering Committee will make recommendations to the SOM on the matters related to the additional allocation of the Core Fund for proposed network activities.
6. The Steering Committee members agreed to select MPAs and provide information on MPAs including some stress/ managerial issues related to each MPA, identification of stakeholders. Secretariat is requested to provide a template for submission of information.

## Annex

### **Terms of Reference of Steering Committee**

#### **1. Membership**

The Committee consists of one member and one alternate member each nominated by the respective government.

#### **2. Frequency of meetings**

The Committee meetings are convened bi-annually to plan activities of the NEAMPAN.

#### **3. Reporting mechanism**

The Committee reports to the Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC on its recommendations and matters that require attention / decision of the SOM.

#### **4. Function of the Committee**

- Provides the policy and operational guidance for the NEAMPAN within the current programme agreed by SOM of NEASPEC
- Plans activities of the NEAMPAN
- Reviews and provides guidance on new activities proposed by the NEAMPAN members, in light of the current framework of programme and budget
- Make recommendations on new programmes and budgetary matters, if required, to SOM of NEASPEC for consideration
- Monitors and reviews ongoing activities as well as network operation
- Establish an Advisory Committee by nominating its members

#### **5. Responsibility of Committee Members**

Liaise with relevant offices of the national government as well as target MPAs selected to participate in NEAMPAN activities.

## [Annex II]

### **Project proposal for cooperation within the frameworks of NEASPEC**

#### **Project name:**

Strengthening the subregional cooperation for the development of the marine and coastal specially protected areas network

#### **Project duration:**

Commencement: January 2014

Completion: June 2015

#### **Total project cost:**

US\$ 120,000

#### **Major project goal:**

Strengthening of the marine and coastal specially protected areas role in the marine biodiversity conservation to achieve the ecologically coherent, adequately presented and interlinked network of duly managed marine and coastal specially protected areas, which could become the model for further utilization.

#### **Major implementing institutions in the Russian Federation:**

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation;
- Pacific Institute of Geography of the FEB RAS;
- Institute of Marine Biology of the FEB RAS;
- ANO "Centre for International Projects".

#### **Background**

The North-East of Asia is currently facing the various environmental challenges resulted from the rapid economic growth. The majority of these challenges is of the transboundary nature, and thus is indicating of the need for the cooperation among all countries in the region. At this, the subregional countries and their respective governmental institutions and agencies responsible for environmental management and relevant studies do not provide for the adequate level of knowledge and expertise of the wider spectrum of issues that require attention. To decrease the shortcomings and fill the gaps existing in different areas the new frameworks for cooperation in the subregion are proposed.

At the 16th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-16) held in September 2011 in Seoul, the Government of Republic of Korea presented a project proposal on “Strengthening Subregional Cooperation to Address Environmental Challenges related to Transboundary Marine Pollution”, which recommended a new framework of cooperation in the subregion to address challenges in protecting marine environment. This new framework would entail the sharing of information and knowledge on issues and policies regarding transboundary marine pollution.

An Expert Consultation Meeting (ECM) was organized in June 2012 in Seoul in accordance with the decision of the SOM-16 that supported the proposal of convening an ECM to further elaborate the proposal for the decision of SOM-17. The meeting was attended by national experts from China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation, and resource persons from the intergovernmental organizations and programmes, like NOWPAP of UNEP and UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project (YSLME).

The ECM facilitated exchange of views and ideas among national experts and other involved stakeholders on the scope of the project, modality of its implementation and required partnerships with relevant organizations working in the field of transboundary marine pollution in North-East Asia.

In particular, participants discussed and exchanged ideas and views on existing gaps in multilateral cooperation in North-East Asia and identified the following possible areas for joint subregional activities within the framework of NEASPEC:

- Marine litter;
- Marine Protected Areas (MPA);
- Influence of chemicals;
- Ecosystem assessment;
- Climate change.

Considering the existing programmes, scientific capacity and subregional needs for each topic, it was generally perceived that the facilitation of cooperation among MPAs could be the main focus of NEASPEC.

Following the ECM, the Secretariat conducted research on the situations of MPAs in the subregion as well as potentials of establishing a MPA network. Key points of the research are as follows.

MPAs are beneficial to both environment and economy. MPAs increase biodiversity, supporting the protection of species and ecosystems as well as the preservation of habitats and preventing outside activities from harming the ecosystem. Economically, MPAs stabilize fish populations in aggregated catch levels, providing a platform for job creation for instance through non-consumptive measures such as tourism.

In North-East Asia, a variety of MPAs can be identified. Considering only those MPAs that are located at the national level, in China as of 2011 there were 33 Marine Nature Reserves

and 21 Marine Special Protected Areas; in Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 3 out of 81 natural parks and 10 out of total 74 reserves for protection of plant, animals or migratory birds have a character of marine protected areas; in Japan, 91 Marine Park Zones in National and Quasi-National Parks as well as 1 Marine Nature Conservation Area exist; in the Republic of Korea, there were 16 MPAs in 2011 of which 12 were Wetland Reserves and 4 were Marine Ecological Reserves; and the Russian Federation in 2011 had 35 national Marine and Coastal Protected Areas.

The MPAs in North-East Asia show, however, some severe limitations: (a) they all have a very short history of existence, most of them having been designed only within the last decade. In general, the protection of ecosystems and designated areas in North-East Asia is mostly concentrated in terrestrial but not marine areas, making MPAs a relatively new concept in the region; (b) another problem derives from the fact that the definition of MPAs differs concerning characteristics, purposes and regulations. Comparing the MPAs in the subregion, one can find examples of no-take marine nature reserves, national parks, wildlife reserves, wetland reserves, ecosystem reserves or habitat reserves. Along with this, there are also institutional differences in the management structure of the MPAs; (c) furthermore, statistical problems have surfaced concerning the actual amount of MPAs in the subregion. In comparison, national statistics tend to vary immensely from those conducted by international organizations and research institutes; (d) lastly, while there have been some attempts on the creation of national MPA networks, these remain limited due to the borderless character of the marine environment per se. International cooperation remains small and is focused only on a few areas such as monitoring.

Considering the transboundary character of marine ecosystems, it is proposed to establish the North-East Asian MPAs Network as the most effective way to further improve the management of various MPAs in the subregion. Benefits of such a network are manifold. Not only can it help protect biodiversity in marine and coastal areas more efficiently, it can also bring along sharing of information and experiences, collective training in various aspects and common guidelines for a more effective management.

Research on the global status of MPA networks shows various benefits of the regional networks for the conservation of biodiversity, a common and improved management of the areas, information and technology sharing, capacity building, efficient use of resources, as well as dialogue between stakeholders. A variety of international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 support the creation of MPA networks.

This activity could result in joint utilization of knowledge and information on various environmental issues, including the experience from ecosystem approach use in the NEASPEC countries, related to operation of the marine and coastal specially protected aquatic and land areas in the North-Eastern Asia, as well as provide for the ground for possible further measures in the form of a set of concrete activities.

Following the initiative made by the NEASPEC Secretariat and aimed at its further development the Russian party has developed the current project proposal taking into account the previously implemented activity and proposals made by the other parties.

### **Main project objectives**

1. General analysis of state of biodiversity in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region (at both the national and the regional levels, including the transboundary).
2. Analysis of the dynamics in the state of biodiversity in connection with the climate changes and growth of economic activity in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region, correspondence of the existing ICARM (ICZM-IRBM) system to the biodiversity management tasks.
3. Adaptation of the scientific criteria on identification of ecologically and/or biologically significant marine areas in need of protection to the marine and coastal areas based on the CBD COP decisions.
4. Programme for monitoring of the vegetation, representatives of the animal world of marine and coastal natural complexes of the marine and coastal specially protected areas, including studying of the processes and mechanisms of their biota adaptation to climate changes.
5. Development of the recommendations on improvement of the environmental management system in near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones considering the transboundary context.

### **Project implementation stages**

1. Formation of the Project Work Group.
2. Analysis of the current biodiversity state, identification of trends related to both the global climate changes, and the alteration of anthropogenic stress in the North-Eastern Asian region (NEASPEC-NOWPAP area). That includes assessment of resilience of marine and coastal-marine ecosystems to the global climate changes and anthropogenic activity.
3. Identification of problems and environmental hot spots in the region, including the prioritization of problems at the national and international levels.
4. Assessment of effectiveness of the modern marine and coastal specially protected areas network (national and regional), its ability and possibility to address identified problems.
5. Development of recommendations on improvement of the environmental management system in the near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones considering the transboundary context in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region, and proposals on interaction with other intergovernmental organizations in this area области (GEF, UNESCO/IOC, UNEP, CBD, IUCN, UNESCO/MAB, etc.).

6. Development of the draft (strategic) Action Plan for the development of the subregional network of the marine specially protected areas, including the coastal areas.

### **Project implementation outcomes**

1. Review of the current state of biodiversity, including the trends connected with both the global climate changes, and the alteration of anthropogenic stress in the in the North-Eastern Asian region (NEASPEC-NOWPAP area), including the assessment of resilience of marine and coastal-marine ecosystems to the global climate changes and anthropogenic activity.
2. Recommendations on improvement of the environmental management system in the near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones considering the transboundary context in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region, and proposals on interaction with other intergovernmental organizations in this area области (GEF, UNESCO/IOC, UNEP, CBD, IUCN, UNESCO/MAB etc.).
3. Draft (strategic) Action Plan for the development of the subregional network of the marine specially protected areas, including the coastal areas.

### **Proposed project progress**

There are meetings and/or workshops of expert groups, including the video-conferences, to take place on the main issues aimed at the development of common approaches, formats, as well as assistance in sharing knowledge and information among the countries.

To avoid duplication and to use the positive experience gained under the project there will be discussions of the project materials with both the experts in the countries and national focal points for this activity, and the relevant institutions performing its activities in this field.

The case study areas could be selected in each country, where the work methods, formats for provided materials, and concrete recommendations are suggested to be elaborated.

The joint studies could take place under the NEASPEC with the assistance from its Secretariat to eliminate informational gaps, as well as promotion to the cooperation with the relevant national organizations of the region and international partners, such as UNESCO/IOC, UNEP, CBD, IUCN, UNESCO/MAB, etc.

Moreover, if there will be aspects identified in the course of the project that were not initially envisaged for the achievement of the major goal of this project the participants in the work could supplement the project with new directions considering their endorsement by the NEASPEC Secretariat and national focal points for this activity.

[Brief presentation of the project work schedule and cost estimates]

№	Activities	Implementation period	USD
1	Development of the review of the current state of biodiversity, including the trends connected with both the global climate changes, and the alteration of anthropogenic stress in the in the North-Eastern Asian region (NEASPEC-NOWPAP area), including the assessment of resilience of marine and coastal-marine ecosystems to the global climate changes and anthropogenic activity	February – June 2014	25.000
2	Development of the 2.Recommendations on improvement of the system of nature use and environmental management in the near-border areas, basins and coastal marine zones considering the transboundary context in the NEASPEC-NOWPAP region, and proposals on interaction with other intergovernmental organizations in this area области (GEF, UNESCO/IOC, UNEP, CBD, IUCN, UNESCO/MAB etc.)	September – December 2014	20.000
3	Holding of the work main subregional stakeholders meeting to develop the draft (strategic) Action Plan in the field of biodiversity restoration and protection, including in the form of the development of the subregional marine and coastal specially protected areas network	October 2014	13.000
4	Development of the programme for monitoring of the vegetation, representatives of the animal world of marine and coastal natural complexes of the marine and coastal specially protected areas, including studying of the processes and mechanisms of their biota adaptation to climate changes	October 2014 – February 2015	10.000
5	Development of the draft (strategic) Action Plan in the field of biodiversity restoration and protection, including in the form of the development of the subregional marine and coastal specially protected areas network	November 2014 – April 2015	40.000
6	Reporting	Entire project	5.000
7	Translation of reporting materials (if necessary)	Entire project	5.000
8	Communication	Entire project	2.000
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>120.000</b>