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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Strengthening Subregional Cooperation on Marine Protected Areas

Note by the Secretariat

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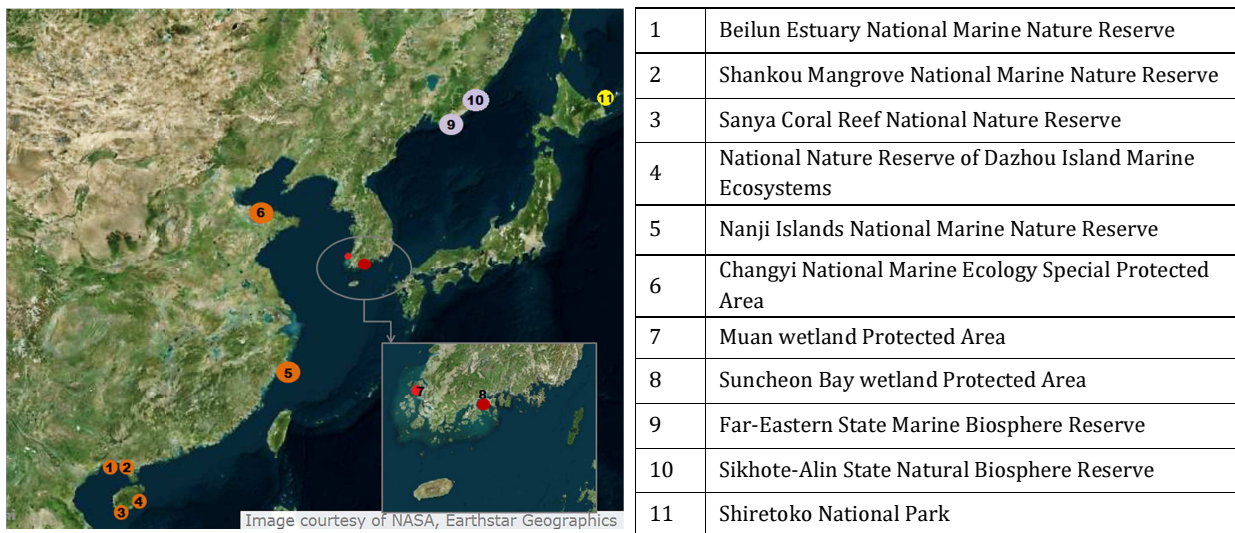
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I. OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS

1. NEASPEC SOM-18 in November 2013 launched the North-East Asia Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) after a series of formal and informal consultations for strengthening subregional cooperation on marine environment. The Terms of Reference (TOR) adopted spell out the objectives, geographical scope, target MPAs, network membership, activity areas, organizational structure, programme operation, budget and roles of member States. The Steering Committee, formed according to the TOR, provides policy and operational guidance for NEAMPAN, and proposes biennial meetings to plan network activities and review ongoing activities as well as network operation.
2. The first Steering Committee meeting held in March 2014 in Incheon, Republic of Korea (ROK) further clarified national approaches to MPA, strategic direction of the Network, target MPAs, network membership, as well as organizational and managerial structures. The Meeting also agreed on the TOR of the Steering Committee, which was endorsed by SOM-19 in 2014. In addition to policy and operational guidance, and planning and monitoring on NEAMPAN activities, the Steering Committee also makes recommendations on new programmes and budgetary matters, if required, to SOM for consideration.
3. Currently member States have nominated a total of eleven sites as NEAMPAN member sites, including six sites from China, one from Japan, two from ROK, and two from the Russian Federation as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 NEAMPAN Sites



4. **NEAMPAN Workshop:** The Secretariat, in collaboration with Suncheon City, Republic of Korea, organized the first North-East Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) Workshop on 15-16 June 2016 in Suncheon. The Workshop brought together Steering Committee members, managers of 8 NEAMPAN sites, as well as experts from international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

5. This Workshop facilitated (1) sharing experiences of MPA management; (2) sharing experiences in partnership and networking among MPAs; and (3) exchanging views on common concerns and interests of the NEAMPAN members. Discussions included the following points:

- Most of the NEAMPAN sites have **key protected species**, which are used as symbol of conservation in the respective areas for raising awareness, making it as part of attraction for eco-tourism and monitoring of species. Key species include *tamarisk* in Changyi National Marine Ecology Special Protected Area, *coral reef* in Sanya Coral Reef National Nature Reserve, *swiftlet* in National Nature Reserve of Dazhou Island Marine Ecosystems, *Dugong* and *black-faced spoonbill*, in Shankou Mangrove Nature Reserve, *keimafuri (spectacled guillemot)*, seabirds in Shiretoko National Park, *Far eastern curlew* and *sand crab* in Muan Wetland Protected Area, *Hooded crane* and *red-clawed crabs* in Suncheon Bay, and *Chinese egrets* and *black-faced spoonbill* in Far Eastern Marine Biosphere Reserve (FEMBR).
- Many MPAs face challenge of **insufficient funding**, which limits the capacity to effectively manage the MPAs, For instance, the lack of funds limit the ability to effectively protect the sites from poachers who has modern equipment.
- Many MPAs engaged in **eco-tourism**. Management of tourism, balancing the conservation (including awareness building, education) and socio-economic needs (including income generation for local communities) is one of the challenges many MPAs face.
- The Workshop facilitated representatives of MPAs to indicate areas they wish to learn from other MPAs and areas they can share own experiences with others. The areas are summarized in the Table 1.

Table 1 Areas of Potential Collaborative Activities

Interested to know	Interested to share
<p>[TOURISM]</p> <p>China: Eco-tourism Russia: Tourism infrastructure</p>	<p>Japan: Sustainable tourism ROK: Eco-tour guide programme</p>
<p>[MANAGEMENT]</p> <p>China: Co-management with community Japan: Integrated coastal management (Sea-land interaction) Russia: Territory patrolling</p>	<p>China: Eco-aquaculture Japan: (1) Integrated management from the perspective of ecosystem approach; (2) Conflict resolution using scientific information</p>
<p>[RESEARCH]</p> <p>Japan: Evaluating and increasing the value of MPA ecosystem services ROK: Scientific monitoring programme Russia: Natural characteristic and rare species</p>	<p>ROK: (1) Marine spatial planning within urban planning; (2) Increasing biodiversity Russia: (1) Ecological monitoring and scientific researches; (2) Climate change</p>
<p>[EDUCATION/TRAINING PROGRAMME]</p> <p>ROK: (1) Local income support, stakeholder training; (2) Marketing strategy Russia: Application for international funding</p>	<p>China: (1) Student education; (2) Public awareness ROK: Citizen monitoring programme</p>

6. **Steering Committee:** The 2nd Steering Committee meeting was held on 16 June 2016 back-to-back with the NEAMPAN workshop in Suncheon. The Committee reviewed the project proposal by the Russian Federation, which is elaborated in Section II, and the arrangement of the Advisory Committee and network activities. With regard to the Advisory Committee, the Steering Committee requested all members to nominate national experts who could provide technical advice on NEAMPAN's works. In terms of network activities, the Committee noted an annual national workshop of Chinese MPA managers and concluded that NEAMPAN would support the workshop and other information exchange and collaboration among MPAs as well as national partners.

7. **Other activities:** Following up on the discussion of the meeting, NEAMPAN, as a co-organizer, supported the **China National MPAs Management Training Workshop** organized by the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) on 24-28 October 2016, in Zhoushan, China. NEAMPAN facilitated the participation of two experts from the Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), and WWF Hong Kong Office who shared experiences of management of the Suncheon Bay Tidal flat Wetland Protected Area and Hong Kong Mai Po Nature Reserve, respectively. Further to discussions with Chinese MPA

managers, the two experts made a number of recommendations to NEAMPAN which include strengthening MPA management capacity through sharing of experience and information, cooperation to utilize existing expertise in North East Asia, and more communications among MPA managers.

8. As reported during SOM-20, the Secretariat took initiative in preparing the profile of each nominated MPA, highlighting general features and managerial or environmental challenges. The profile was revised and shared with Steering Committee members and managers of NEAMPAN sites for their review and comments. The draft profile includes (1) General information (country, name of the MPA, local name, location, site area, marine components, year of establishment, geographic and habitat classification, physical features, conservation status) (2) Regulatory frameworks (administration, management, legal framework, monitoring and research, key stress / managerial issues, key stakeholders involved in management, relevant network) (3) Reference in MPA database (NOWPAP database, Protected planet, MPA global, and Others), (4) Contact point for NEAMPAN. The profile also includes a brief analysis of naturalness, biogeographic importance, ecological importance, economic importance, social importance, scientific importance, international or national significance, and practicality/feasibility. The draft profile is attached as Annex III.

II. NEAMPAN ACTIVITIES

9. **NEAMPAN Project proposed by the Russian Federation:** SOM-19 reviewed the Russian proposal on “Strengthening the Subregional Cooperation for the Development of the Marine and Coastal Specially Protected Areas Network”. As the proposed objectives and activities are beyond the plan of NEAMPAN, SOM-19 requested revision of the proposal to focus on the identified target MPAs and activities. In response to SOM-19’s request, the proposal was revised and submitted to SOM-20. The SOM-20 generally supported the proposal while it requested further revision of the proposal as it is desirable for NEAMPAN to carry out joint research focusing on the identified target MPAs. The Meeting also noted the need of further discussions on financial resources of the Project. In response, the proposal was further revised and reviewed at the second NEAMPAN Steering Committee. The Committee suggested to (1) narrow down the scope and prioritize activities of the proposal, considering the budget size; (2) adjust to a more realistic timeframe; and (3) emphasize the importance of sharing each country’s inputs/expertise.

10. The further revision incorporated those comments, and shared with the Steering Committee members prior to the SOM-21. Having incorporated the minor modifications

suggested by the Committee members, the revised project proposal is submitted as Annex I for the consideration of SOM-21.

11. The latest proposal of the project, “Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of MPAs”, proposes the following components: (1) Review of the management plans and strategies of selected NEAMPAN sites; (2) Review and analysis of methodologies applied in the respective MPAs for monitoring and assessment of the current status, and assessment of environment and socio-economic pressures, and sustainable management of marine resources; (3) Case studies of monitoring and assessment results and corresponding measures in the selected MPAs; and (4) Recommendations on monitoring and assessment strategies and plans for sustainable MPAs. Thus, project implementation would involve research and analysis, expert group meetings, side visits and knowledge sharing workshop, and dissemination of studies and recommendations.

12. The project aims to support the goals of NEAMPAN as well as the Strategic Plan of NEASPEC 2016-2020 adopted at SOM-20, which spells out the NEASPEC programmatic areas and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including Marine Protected Areas and SDG Goal 14 (Life below water). The Plan set objectives and activities of Marine Protected Areas as follows.

Objectives:

- By 2020, fully operationalize NEAMPAN to support partnerships among target MPAs and stakeholders, and enhance capacity to achieve, inter alia, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner.

Activities:

- Facilitate the sharing and exchange of knowledge, information, experiences and practices with regard to strengthen MPA management effectiveness;
- Cooperate with existing partnerships that can provide targeted capacity-building and technical assistance in support of on-the-ground implementation priorities;
- Enhance interactive communication among policy makers, scientific community and local stakeholders in NEASPEC in light of ecological network of MPAs;
- Facilitate multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder communication network at national and sub-regional/regional levels and across subregion/region
- Share experiences in achieving a balance between the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, and promoting flexible and diverse approaches towards this end

13. **Financing and sustainable tourism in MPAs:** As described above, the participants of the first NEAMPAN workshop in 2016 indicated their challenges in financial resources

as well as interest in eco-tourism in MPAs. By definition, human activities in MPAs are more strictly controlled than non-MPA sites. Nonetheless, while conservation is a key objective of MPA, many MPAs face the lack of resources which hamper effective management and conservation of MPAs.

14. A study on annual expenditure on MPAs found that, for the 83 MPAs worldwide surveyed, the majority reported insufficient funding for effective conservation. According to the study, on average, current income meets only half of the estimated amounts required. It also found that the running costs per unit area is higher in MPAs that were smaller, closer to coasts, and in high-cost, developed countries¹. In general, sources of funding for MPAs include direct financial support through subsidies, grants, donation from public or private sources, as well as market-based revenue such as tourist charges, etc².

15. Sustainable tourism has potential to generate revenue for MPAs while serving conservation objectives inherent to national parks. Challenges of MPAs to go beyond financial sustainability to cover the cost of MPA management, as effective management also requires balancing conservation and economic activities to support local communities. Thus prospect of employment and income generation and development of long-term sustainable economic activity through sustainable tourism could, in turn, reduce harmful economic activities and promote sustainability of local communities' livelihood around the protected areas.

16. Sustainable tourism for protected areas requires involvement of local communities and other stakeholders with varying objectives, ranging from conservation to economic, social and cultural objectives. Planning of sustainable tourism will involve effective communication and engagement of stakeholders, technical assessments of ecological and economic viabilities of tourism development on the sites (e.g., ecological impacts, tourists markets), in addition to discussion on modalities (type of tourism activities, areas to be opened for tourists, monitoring system, etc)³.

17. Sustainable tourism is also viewed as an opportunity to contribute to development, and to implementation of Sustainable Development Goals. Incidentally the United Nations

¹ Balmford, A. et al (2004), "The worldwide costs of marine protected areas", PNAS June 29, 2004 vol. 101 no. 26

² See for example, IUCN (2001) Guidelines for Financing Protected Areas in East Asia, World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Emerton, L., Bishop, J. and Thomas, L. (2006). *Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas: A global review of challenges and options*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK.

³ IUCN (2001) Guidelines for tourism in parks and protected areas of East Asia
(<https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/7934>)

70th General Assembly has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development ([A/RES/70/193](#)). There have been various initiatives in developing guidelines and sharing experiences in protected areas or sustainable tourism by international organizations⁴. MPA networks in other region such as MedPAN in Mediterranean also undertake activities to promote exchange experiences in sustainable tourism⁵.

18. The first NEAMPAN workshop saw potential match of interest in sharing experiences in sustainable tourism, as the current NEAMPAN sites, though small in numbers, have experiences to share on one hand, and interest to learn others' experiences on the other. Thus, NEAMPAN could support sharing experience and best practices through NEAMPAN workshops as well as direct networking among individual MPAs.

19. **The Ocean Conference:** The conference, formally entitled "the high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" will be convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5-9 June 2017, coinciding with World Oceans Day. The Conference aims to identify ways and means to support SDG 14, stimulate innovative and concrete new partnerships, and share the experiences gained at the national, regional and international levels.

20. The Conference consists of plenary meeting, partnership dialogue, side events and is open to all relevant stakeholders including governments, scientific community and civil society organizations. Thus, NEASPEC member States could utilize this opportunity to showcase the contributions of national policies on marine resources to the SDG 14. It will be also a good opportunity for national MPA agencies and NEAMPAN partners to link their respective work with SDG 14, in particular, SDG 14.2 on marine and coastal ecosystems and SDG 14.5 on the 10% goal of protected areas. Thus, NEASPEC member Governments and MPA stakeholders could actively participate in the Ocean Conference, and consider holding a NEAMPAN side event in collaboration with other regional MPA networks.

⁴ IUCN (2001) *Guidelines for Protected Areas in East Asia*, in English, Chinese, Japanese and Korean (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/taxonomy/term/35766>), and UNWTO (2012) *Compendium of Best Practices and Recommendations for Ecotourism in Asia and the Pacific* (<http://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284414260>).

⁵ MedPAN Sustainable tourism in Mediterranean MPAs <http://www.medpan.org/en/sustainable-tourism>

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

21. In reference to the recommendation by the NEAMPAN Steering Committee, the Meeting may wish to review the project proposal initiated by Russian Federation and consider approving the project.

22. The Meeting may wish to request member States to consider proposing and hosting a NEAMPAN workshop to facilitate further exchange of experiences of NEAMPAN site, on such topic as sustainable tourism in MPAs.

23. The Meeting may wish to request member States to share views on Advisory Committee, the profile of NEAMPAN sites, the involvement of national agencies through Steering Committee, and the Ocean Conference.

24. The Meeting may wish to invite member States to propose NEAMPAN activities which are in line with the activity scope of the Network, as contained in the Terms of Reference, and to provide financial/in-kind contributions to activities.

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