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Moscow, Russian Federation

REVIEW AND PLANNING OF THE CORE AND PROJECT-BASED FUND

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the Secretariat

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I. THE STATUS OF THE CORE FUND

1. As of 31 December 2025, the balance of the NEASPEC Core Fund stood at **US\$ 672,173**. During 2025, China and the Republic of Korea contributed **US\$ 45,000** and **US\$ 100,845**, respectively, bringing the total contributions received to **US\$ 145,845**. In 2026, total contributions received amounted to **US\$ 128,668**, consisting of **US\$ 45,000** from China and **US\$ 83,668** from the Republic of Korea.
2. As of 30 September 2026, the balance of the NEASPEC Core Fund was **US\$ 688,869**, while the projected expenditures for the remainder of 2026 are estimated at around **US\$ 41,000**, resulting in an expected year-end balance of approximately **US\$ 647,869**.
3. The table below presents a preliminary financial summary of the NEASPEC Core Fund as of 30 September 2026, followed by a summary of planned expenditures for the remainder of 2026.

Table 1. NEASPEC Core Fund – Preliminary Financial Summary

As of 30 September 2026

	<i>(Amount in USD)</i>	
	2026	2025
Beginning Fund Balance	672,173	733,389
<u>Income</u>		
Contributions Received ^{1/}	128,668	145,845
Interest Income	12,173	31,835
Sub-total	813,014	911,069
<u>Less:</u> Expenditures and commitments	(124,145)	(238,896)
Ending Fund Balance at the end of period	688,869	672,173

4. From 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2026, the expenses incurred can be categorized into two main components: (1) programme planning and management, and (2) activity implementation under each thematic work programme. The details of the budget expenditures, categorized by thematic work programme, are provided below.

4.1 Programme planning and management (US\$123,406)

- US\$ 90,262 for staff costs to support the secretariat operation, covering the salary of one local staff member (15 work-months)
- US\$ 11,928 for hiring a contractor to support the secretariat during the temporary vacancy of the professional staff position (8 work-months)

- US\$ 15,945 for the organization of the 28th Senior Officials Meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (21-25 September 2025)
- US\$ 1,121 for printing the NEASPEC brochure
- US\$ 4,150 for maintaining the NEASPEC website

4.2 Air Pollution (US\$55,535)

- US\$ 10,356 for organizing the NEACAP Seventh Meeting of the Science and Policy Committee and Technical Centers in Incheon, Republic of Korea (14-15 July 2025)
- US\$ 9,191 for organizing the NEACAP Symposium on Integrated Management of Air Pollution to Respond to Climate Change in Goyang City, Republic of Korea (4 September 2025)
- US\$ 13,657 for organizing the NEACAP Second Policy Dialogue and the NEACAP National Workshop on Air Quality Management in Mongolia: Developments and Prospects in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (23-24 September 2025)
- US\$ 18,965 for organizing the NEACAP Side Event and the Eighth Meeting of the Science and Policy Committee and Technical Centers of NEACAP in Bangkok, Thailand (2-3 July 2026)
- US\$3,366 for organizing the 2026 Blue Sky Symposium in Seoul, Republic of Korea (7 September 2026)

4.3 Low Carbon City Platform (US\$ 12,409)

- US\$ 11,796 for organizing the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities in Bangkok, Thailand (25-27 August 2025)
- US\$ 613 for publishing the booklet on LCC networks “Advancing Urban Decarbonization Through Low Carbon City Networks”

4.4 Desertification and Land Degradation (US\$5,996)

- US\$ 1,743 for organizing the International Forum to Combat Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (DLDD) in North-East Asia and the Capacity-Building Workshop on Addressing Desertification and Land Degradation in North-East Asia in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (24-26 September 2025)
- US\$ 2,253 for organizing the Side Event at UNCCD COP17, “From Commitments to Action: Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation for Sand and Dust Storms in North-East Asia” in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (25 August 2026)
- US\$ 2,000 for engaging consultancy services for the drafting of policy paper on DLD with a focus on available options to address challenges from desertification and land degradation in North-East Asia

4.5 Biodiversity and Nature Conservation (US\$23,487)

- US\$ 5,433 for the Technical Review Meeting on the Draft Revised International Single Species Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbill, Incheon, Republic of Korea (8-9 September 2025) and the Consultation Meeting on the Project “Connectivity Conservation for Habitats of Flagship Migratory Birds in North-East Asia” in Incheon, Republic of Korea (10 September 2025)
- US\$ 8,218 for organizing the Workshop on the Establishment of the Big Cat Network and Transboundary Conservation of Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard, and Snow Leopard in North-East Asia in Vladivostok, Russian Federation (21-22 May 2026).
- US\$ 8,580 for engaging consultancy services to work on the revision of the Black-faced Spoonbill International Single Species Action Plan
- US\$ 1,256 for the printing of meeting materials

4.6 Marine Protected Areas (US\$26,182)

- US\$ 419 for staff missions to Gochang (22-23 October 2025) and to Yeosu (4-7 November 2025)
- US\$ 6,503 for organizing the Expert Group Meeting on Advancing Marine Mammal Conservation in North-East Asia in Incheon, Republic of Korea (11 September 2025)
- US\$ 16,054 for organizing the NEAMPAN Workshop on Marine and Coastal OECMs in North-East Asia in Busan, Republic of Korea (24-25 June 2026)
- US\$ 3,206 for the layout and design of MPA reports and printing of meeting materials

4.7 Programme Support Cost (US\$ 32,785):

- US\$ 32,785 to cover indirect management and administrative costs associated with the implementation and delivery of programme activities

- 5 By the end of 2026, total expenditures of the Core Fund are projected to reach **US\$ 174,245**.
- 6 In response to the budget constraints in recent years, the secretariat has been (1) postponing the recruitment of a professional staff member to be funded by the NEASPEC Core Fund, (2) utilizing other funding sources of the ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, where possible, and (3) reducing the cost of activities by organizing meetings back-to-back with other events, reducing the number of travels, and saving other costs.
- 7 Table 2 presents the financial status of the NEASPEC Core Fund against the approved budget for the 2026-2030 period, categorized by the nature of expenditures. As of 30 September 2026, the secretariat spent **US\$ 124,145**, representing 41% of the allocated budget. The secretariat has planned its expenditure based on actual funds available rather than the full approved budget.

Table 2. Status of NEASPEC Project Budget (for the period of 2026-2030)*As of 30 September 2026**(Amount in USD)*

Descriptions	Total Budget from 2026 to 2030 (A)	Allocated Budget for 2026 (B)	Commitments & Expenses As of 30 Sep 2026 (C)	Balance (5-year Budget-Exp.) (A) - (C)	Balance (Allocated Budget-Exp) (B) - (C)
Staff and other personnel costs	865,750	170,150	52,130	813,620	118,020
Contractual services	150,000	27,837	14,216	135,784	13,621
Operating expenses	25,000	5,000	1,284	23,716	3,716
Supplies and materials	1,200	-	-	1,200	-
Equipment and furniture	5,000	-	-	5,000	-
Transfer and grants	100,000	-	-	100,000	-
Travel	450,000	62,500	42,232	407,768	-
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>1,596,950</i>	<i>265,487</i>	<i>109,861</i>	<i>1,487,089</i>	<i>135,357</i>
Programme support costs (13%)	207,604	34,513	14,284	193,320	20,229
Grand Total	1,804,554	300,000	124,145	1,680,409	155,587

* Operating expenses include courier service fee, rental of meeting facilities and equipment, online meeting facilitation services, bank fees, and other miscellaneous operating costs.

- 8 Although the secretariat has continued to manage expenditures prudently to maintain the efficiency of the NEASPEC programme and has utilized other budget sources where applicable, the balance of the NEASPEC Core Fund has significantly declined from **US\$ 733,389** in January 2025 to **US\$ 688,869** as of 30 September 2026. As reported at SOM-28, without increased contributions from member States and other donors, the Core Fund balance will be insufficient to sustain secretariat operations beyond 2027.
- 9 To ensure the sustainability of NEASPEC's cooperation activities and maintain its capacity to respond to emerging environmental challenges in North-East Asia, additional contributions from member States are essential.

II. THE STATUS OF THE PROJECT-BASED FUND

- 10 In addition to the activities funded by the Core Fund, NEASPEC operates project-based funds with contributions from member States for specific activities.

Project on “Connectivity Conservation for Habitats of Flagship Migratory Birds in North-East Asia (Black-Faced Spoonbills, Hooded Cranes, and White-Nape Cranes)

- 11 The project on connectivity conservation for the habitats of flagship migratory birds in North-East Asia is funded by the Russian Federation, with a total project budget of **US\$ 299,789** for the implementation period from May 2024 to April 2027. The project focuses on: (1) analyzing the demographic trends of the three flagship species and the impacts of environmental, social

and economic factors influencing their habitats; (2) identifying good practices and recommendations for the subregion through analytical assessments on the impacts of agricultural activities, energy infrastructure construction (such as solar and wind facilities), and other emerging challenges; and (3) implementing capacity-building activities among stakeholders, especially empowering youth and women.

- 12 From 17 May 2024 to 30 September 2026, a total of **US\$ 212,851** was spent, representing a delivery rate of 71%. Table 3 shows the interim financial statement as of 30 September 2026.

Table 3: Preliminary Financial Statements
For the period of 17 May 2024 to 30 September 2026

	2026 as of 30 Sept	2025	2024
Beginning Fund Balance	209,447	300,563	-
<u>Income</u>			
Contributions Received*	-	-	299,789
Interest Income	3,702	12,220	9,634
Sub-total	213,149	312,783	309,423
<u>Less: Expenditures and commitments</u>	<u>(100,655)</u>	<u>(103,336)</u>	<u>(8,861)</u>
Ending Fund Balance at the end of period *	<u>112,494</u>	<u>209,447</u>	<u>300,563</u>

*Remarks: Fund balance is inclusive of interest income.

Table 4: Budget and Preliminary Expenses and Outstanding Commitments
For the period of 17 May 2024 to 30 September 2026

Descriptions	Total Budget 2024-2027 (A)	Allocated Budget as of 30 Sept 2026 (B)	Commitments & Expenses As of 30 Sep 2026 (C)	Balance (A) - (C)
Staff and other personnel costs	30,300	30,300	30,150	150
Contractual services	30,000	30,000	24,445	5,555
Operating expenses	25,000	25,000	594	24,406
Supplies and materials		-		-
Equipment and furniture		-		-
Transfer and grants	90,000	90,000	74,450	15,550
Travel	90,000	90,000	58,725	31,275
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>265,300</i>	<i>265,300</i>	<i>188,364</i>	<i>76,936</i>
Programme support costs (13%)	34,489	34,489	24,487	10,002
Grand Total	299,789	299,789	212,851	86,938

*Remarks: The balance of the budget US\$86,938 excludes the interest earned

13 Total expenses from 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2026 are **US\$ 131,592** for the implementation of the following project activities:

- US\$ 9,814 for the organization of the Training Workshop for Young Crane Researchers in North-East Asia in Khurkh Ecological Research and Community Center, Mongolia (6 -8 July 2025)
- US\$ 844 for the organization of the Technical Review Meeting on the Draft Revised International Single Species Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbill in Incheon, Republic of Korea (8-9 September 2025)
- US\$ 13,808 for organizing the Training Workshop on Migratory Bird Conservation and Wetland Management in North-East Asia in Vladivostok, Russian Federation (18-20 May 2026)
- US\$ 74,450 for partnerships through letters of agreement with the following partners:
 - US\$ 30,000 with the International Crane Foundation, ending 31 December 2026
 - US\$30,000 with the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, ending 30 September 2026
 - US\$ 5,450 with the Federal State Budgetary Institution Joint Directorate of Kedrovaya Pad' State Nature Biosphere Reserve and Land of the Leopard National Park (LLNP), ending 31 December 2026
 - US\$ 9,000 with the Federal State Budgetary Institute State Nature Biosphere Reserve "Daursky", ending 31 December 2026
- US\$ 15,100 for engaging consultancy services to conduct analytical studies on the interlinkages between agricultural practices, agrobiodiversity, and migratory bird conservation in the North-East Asian subregion
- US\$ 1,883 for the layout and design of a project study
- US\$ 450 to cover bank charges and other UNDP service fee charges
- US\$ 15,243 to cover indirect management and administrative costs associated with the implementation and delivery of programme activities

14 By the end of 2026, total expenditure of the project is projected to incur additional expenses of **US\$ 15,000** for the implementation of the following activities:

- US\$ 15,000 for an LOA with the All-Russian Research Institute for Environmental Protection (VNII Ecology), ending 31 December 2026 (to be committed in October 2026)

III. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERS AND OTHERS

15 During the reporting period, the secretariat obtained additional financial and in-kind support from project partners through joint activities and collaboration. Table 7 details the in-kind contributions received by the secretariat since 1 July 2025.

Table 5. In-kind contributions received from 1 July 2025 to 30 September 2026

Activity	Date and venue	Partner	In-kind contribution
Training Workshop for Young Crane Researchers in North-East Asia	6-8 JUL 2025, Khentii province, Mongolia	Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia, and International Crane Foundation	Expertise, staff support, and logistical support
5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities	25 AUG 2025, Bangkok, Thailand	Incheon Metropolitan City, ESCAP Environment and Development Division, and UN-Habitat	Expertise and financial support
NEACAP Symposium on Integrated Management of Air Pollution to Respond to Climate Change	4 SEP 2025, Goyang, Republic of Korea	National Air Emission Inventory and Research Center of the Republic of Korea;	Expertise, venue, staff support, and logistical support
Technical Review Meeting on the Draft Revised International Single Species Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbill	8-9 SEP 2025, Incheon, Republic of Korea	East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) secretariat, Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group, POSCO International	Expertise, staff support, and logistical support
NEASPEC 28th Senior Officials Meeting	22-23 SEP 2025, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Mongolia	Venue, facilities, staff support. and logistical support
NEACAP Second Policy Dialogue	23 SEP 2025, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Mongolia and NEACAP SPC members of Mongolia	Expertise and logistical support
NEACAP National Workshop on Air Quality Management in Mongolia: Developments and Prospects	24 SEP 2025, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Mongolia and NEACAP SPC members of Mongolia	Expertise and logistical support
International Forum to Combat DLDD in NEA and the Capacity-Building Workshop on Addressing Desertification and Land Degradation in North-East Asia: Impact of Climate Change and Sectoral Policies	24-25 SEP 2025, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	National Forestry Agency, Mongolia, DLDD-NEAN Secretariat	Staff support, expertise, and financial and logistical support
Side Event at 82 nd Session of ESCAP, Leaving No One Behind in a Dusty World: Regional Cooperation on Sand and Dust Storms for All Ages	23 APR 2026, Bangkok, Thailand	Government of Mongolia, Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat	Staff support, expertise, financial and logistical support
Training Workshop on Migratory Bird Conservation and Wetland Management in North-East Asia	18-20 MAY 2026, Primorsky Krai, Russian Federation	Land of the Leopard National Park of the Russian Federation	Venue, staff support, expertise, and financial and logistical support
Workshop on the Establishment of the Big Cat Network and Transboundary Conservation of Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard, and Snow Leopard in North-East Asia	21-22 MAY 2026, Primorsky Krai, Russian Federation	Land of the Leopard National Park of the Russian Federation	Venue, staff support, expertise, and financial and logistical support
NEAMPAN Workshop on Marine and Coastal OECMs in North-East Asia	24-25 JUN 2026, Busan, Republic of Korea	Korea Maritime & Ocean University, Korea Marine Environment Management Corporation, and Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea	Venue, staff support, expertise, and financial and logistical support

NEACAP Side Event at CED-9: Advancing Clean Air in Asia and the Pacific: Lessons from North- East Asia for Regional Action	02 JUL 2026, Bangkok, Thailand	Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, National Institute of Environmental Research of the Republic of Korea, and ESCAP Environment and Development Division	Expertise and logistical support
Side Event at UNCCD COP17 From Commitments to Action: Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation for Sand and Dust Storms in North-East Asia	25 AUG 2026, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	The Government of Mongolia, Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, and ESCAP Asian and Pacifica Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management	Expertise, financial and logistical support
2026 Blue Sky Symposium	7 SEP 2026, Seoul, Republic of Korea	National Air Emission Inventory and Research Center of the Republic of Korea and UNEP (serving as the Secretariat for the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET))	Venue, staff support, expertise and logistical support

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

16 The Meeting may wish to:

- (a) Express its appreciation to member States for their financial contributions to the NEASPEC Core Fund and project-based funds, as well as to partner organizations for their support and in-kind contributions;
- (b) Encourage member States to increase their contributions and/or make new financial commitments in support of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030, given the significant decrease in the balance of the NEASPEC Core Fund. It is noted that the secretariat provides essential baseline support by absorbing significant staffing, administrative, and programme costs. While the secretariat continues to optimize operational costs and leverage its own institutional resources to sustain NEASPEC activities, without increased contributions from member States and other donors, the Core Fund balance will be insufficient to sustain secretariat operations beyond 2027.
- (c) Request member States to announce their intended financial and in-kind contributions towards the implementation of programmes and activities; and
- (d) Accept the financial report.

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