

Report of the Fourteenth NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting

Background leading to this meeting

1. The Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre (CEARAC) is one of the four Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to implement activities relevant to specific components of the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). Since its inception in 2002, CEARAC has been mainly working on monitoring and assessing harmful algal blooms (HABs) including red tides (under Working Group 3) and application of remote sensing techniques to the study of the marine and coastal environment (Working Group 4).
2. Since 2008, when CEARAC initiated an activity on eutrophication as a joint work of WG3 and WG4, its foci have shifted to eutrophication, marine biodiversity, and seagrass distribution. CEARAC has implemented several activities during the past biennia in these areas by using the knowledge and experiences in working on HABs and applying remote sensing techniques at the same time.
3. While reviewing the progress of the planned activities for the 2014-2015 biennium, the 13th NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) held on 25-26 August 2015 in Toyama, Japan, discussed proposed activities for the 2016-2017 biennium, which were agreed to be submitted to the twentieth Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) held on 28-30 October 2015 in Beijing, China for adoption.
4. Upon adoption of the Program of Work and budget for NOWPAP for the 2016-2017 biennium at the 20th NOWPAP IGM, the 14th CEARAC FPM was held in Toyama, Japan on 7-8 April 2016 to review the details of its activities for the 2016-2017 biennium.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting

5. The meeting was opened at 9:00 at Meeting Room One in Tower 111, Toyama, Japan, on 7 April 2016 by the Director of CEARAC, Mr. Kazuya KUMAGAI. He welcomed participants and expressed regret that some Focal Points (FPs) could not be present. Then, welcoming remarks were made by the NOWPAP Coordinator, Dr. Alexander TKALIN. He wished for a successful meeting for all.

Agenda Item 2 Organization of the Meeting

6. The meeting elected Dr. Junlong LI, FP of China as the chairperson and Dr. Yasuwo FUKUYO, FP of Japan, as the rapporteur.
7. It was understood that, for the purposes of the CEARAC FPM, as mentioned in the annotated agenda, the rules of procedures in the meeting be basically those of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA, previously the rules of procedures of the Governing Council of UNEP) with appropriate adjustments to suit the nature of the meeting. Decisions should be made by consensus and English was the working language of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3 Adoption of the Agenda

8. The Chairperson introduced the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/1) with the Annotated Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/2).
9. The meeting reviewed the agenda items and adopted both documents.

Agenda Item 4 Report of the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) on the implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)

10. Dr. TKALIN reported the progress of the entire NOWPAP activities since the 13th CEARAC FPM (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/3). While touching upon a new payment system in UN organizations, Dr. TKALIN mentioned delayed allocation of the budget from the NOWPAP Trust Fund (TF) to all RACs. He also mentioned the reduced manpower of NOWPAP RCU at present.
11. Then, Dr. TKALIN encouraged more collaboration among RACs and relevant researchers by participating in FPMs of other RACs and joining projects such as a joint survey of floating marine litter suggested by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan.
12. Dr. Genki TERAUCHI from the Secretariat of CEARAC suggested that, to seek more efficient way of RACs' collaboration, other means could be explored rather

than just attending other RACs' FPMs. Dr. FUKUYO mentioned that organization of meetings on specific themes back-to-back with RACs' FPMs could be possible.

13. The meeting acknowledged the report of the RCU on implementation of NOWPAP.

Agenda Item 5 Report on CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium

14. Mr. KUMAGAI reported the results of the entire activities and expenditures of CEARAC for the 2014-2015 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/4). Then, the Secretariat of CEARAC explained delays in projects for the 2014-2015 biennium on (1) Pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region, (2) Trial application of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment, and (3) Case studies on seagrass mapping in the selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region.
15. Regarding the project of eutrophication assessment, Dr. TERAUCHI explained the progress of preparation of a web-based map on potential eutrophic zones in the NOWPAP region. Dr. TKALIN and Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, FP of Russia, doubted the high chlorophyll-*a* detected by satellite observations in some coastal areas. Dr. FUKUYO recommended the Secretariat to exclude uncertain results where no *in situ* data is available. Dr. Joji ISHIZAKA, FP of Japan, recommended to continue the activity of eutrophication assessment for a long time scale. The meeting agreed with these recommendations.
16. After review, the meeting accepted the report on CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium.

Agenda Item 6 Workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium

17. Mr. KUMAGAI presented an overview of the entire workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/5), which was adopted at the 20th NOWPAP IGM. Then, detailed explanation of respective specific projects followed.

6.1 Development of a draft common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region

18. Dr. Takafumi YOSHIDA from the Secretariat of CEARAC explained the workplan on development of a draft common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/6).
19. Dr. TKALIN stressed that the goal of CEARAC should be the “assessment of impacts of three major pressures”, NOT biodiversity conservation or biodiversity assessment. He also doubted if it is indeed possible to measure “impacts” on biodiversity.
20. Dr. FUKUYO also expressed his concern on lack of information on marine species/organisms related to biodiversity in the region.
21. The meeting requested the Secretariat to prepare an additional material to explain the proposal and contents of this activity. After explanation of additional material from the Secretariat, the meeting decided to change the title of the project to “Assessment of the major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region”.
22. The meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate the revised version of the workplan to FPs within two weeks for feedback to be provided also within another two weeks.

6.2 Feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region

23. Dr. TERAUCHI explained the workplan on a feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region as well as the progress of the seagrass mapping case studies conducted in the 2014-2015 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/7).
24. Dr. SHULKIN, Dr. FUKUYO and Dr. Young Nam KIM, FP of Korea, clarified if making a list for satellite data archives is limited to the areas where case studies were conducted or not. Dr. TERAUCHI replied that the list should be limited to the

case study areas in the 2014-2015 biennium for the purpose of supplementing information.

25. Dr. KIM asked the Secretariat about the temporal scope to collect literature on seagrass distribution. Dr. TERAUCHI replied that he will encourage national experts of the NOWPAP member states to collect as much information as possible on seagrass distribution in each country to understand their temporal changes.
26. Dr. SHULKIN suggested the Secretariat to reconsider the titles of Chapter 3 and 4 in the provisional table of contents of the feasibility study report to clarify that the Chapter 3 is about the case study areas and Chapter 4 is about the entire NOWPAP coastal area. Dr. TERAUCHI agreed with this proposal and promised to reconsider the titles.
27. Dr. TERAUCHI proposed to change the title of 3.2 from "Development of a seagrass database in the NOWPAP region" to "Development of an *in situ* seagrass database in the NOWPAP region" in response to Dr. FUKUYO's question about database to be developed.
28. The meeting adopted the workplan in principle with modifications to reflect the discussion.

6.3 CEARAC Marine Litter Activities

29. Dr. YOSHIDA presented a workplan on marine litter activities of CEARAC for the 2016-2017 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 14/8).
30. The meeting acknowledged the report.

Agenda Item 7 Collaborative areas with other RACs and other regional and international organizations

31. Mr. KUMAGAI explained potential collaborative areas with NOWPAP RACs and other regional and international organizations, focusing on the planned activities of CEARAC for the 2016-2017 biennium.

32. While explaining current projects in IOC/WESTPAC, Dr. FUKUYO expressed potential collaboration with NOWPAP and suggested CEARAC's participation in a strategic meeting on HABs.
33. Dr. FUKUYO also advised the Secretariat to collaborate with DINRAC for implementation of specific projects related to invasive species and WebGIS construction. Mr. Chunwei HAN, representative of DINRAC, agreed with this advice and expected enhanced collaboration with CEARAC.
34. Dr. Anatolii KACHUR, Director of POMRAC, and Dr. SHULKIN pointed out that CEARAC activities and a POMRAC activity on Ecological Quality Objectives are closely related and encouraged CEARAC's active involvement in POMRAC activities.
35. Dr. KIM suggested potential collaboration between CEARAC and the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) on marine protected areas (MPAs) and expected collaboration between CEARAC and NEASPEC.
36. Dr. ISHIZAKA mentioned International hydrological program (IHP) and explained a plan of a training program. He expected CEARAC to support the training course.

Agenda Item 8 Arrangement of the 15th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM

37. Mr. KUMAGAI proposed to hold the 15th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM in autumn of 2017 in Toyama, Japan, and the meeting agreed on the proposal.

Agenda Item 9 Other matters

38. The meeting was invited to raise any other issues relevant to the CEARAC activities and no other issues were raised.

Agenda Item 10 Adoption of the report of the meeting

39. A draft report of the 14th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM was prepared by the Secretariat of CEARAC with the help of the rapporteur. After review, the report was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Item 11 Closure of the meeting

40. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the 14th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM was closed by the chairperson at 11:30 on 8 April 2016.