

## **Implementation of NOWPAP activities since the 13<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting**

### **Report of NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit**

1. This report on the implementation of NOWPAP activities covers the period since the 13<sup>th</sup> CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) held in August 2015.
2. More details of CEARAC activities will be presented by the CEARAC Director under separate agenda item. The brief information on activities of all NOWPAP RACs is given below, highlighting both achievements and challenges which these RACs are facing.

#### **CEARAC – Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre**

3. At the end of 2015 and in early 2016, CEARAC was finalizing the activities approved for the 2014-2015 biennium by the 18<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM:
  - Pilot assessment of the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in selected areas of the NOWPAP region.
  - Trial application of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP common procedure for eutrophication assessment.
  - Case studies of seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region using remote sensing.
4. Unfortunately, finalization of these three projects was delayed and the reports on biodiversity threats and seagrass mapping are expected to be published in the second quarter of 2016. Interactive map of eutrophic zones will be ready in the third quarter of 2016. CEARAC work on eutrophication might contribute to achieving one of the targets of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): relevant indicator for the SDG 14 (on oceans) is an “Index of Coastal Eutrophication” (ICEP).
5. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has approved two CEARAC projects for the 2016-2017 biennium which will be built upon the results achieved during the 2014-2015 biennium:
  - Development of a draft common procedure for assessment of the impacts of major pressures on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region.
  - Feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution in the NOWPAP region.
6. Due to UNEP transition to new enterprise resource planning system Umoja, from 2016-2017 biennium, each NOWPAP RAC has to sign small scale funding agreement (SSFA) with UNEP. Such SSFA for CEARAC has been signed in late February 2016 and the activities approved by the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM were launched after that.

#### **DINRAC - Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre**

7. At the end of 2015, DINRAC has completed most of the activities approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM for the 2014-2015 biennium:
  - Annual summary of major marine environmental data available in the NOWPAP region.
  - Annual updating of existing databases in order to share the latest data in the NOWPAP region.

- Developing visualized DINRAC website and enriching the thematic maps in the web GIS system.
  - Collection of information on endangered/threatened species in the NOWPAP region.
8. Activity on endangered species has been delayed due to late submission of data from some of the national experts nominated by member states. The data were uploaded on DINRAC website in March 2016.
  9. The new Website and web GIS System were also launched at the end of March 2016.
  10. DINRAC has maintained the following databases (available at the DINRAC website):
    - Database on major environmental data.
    - Database on NOWPAP Coastal and Marine Environmental Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) Applications.
    - Database on Marine Litter.
    - Database on Coastal and Marine Nature Reserves.
    - Database on NOWPAP Publications.
    - Databases on NOWPAP Institutions and Experts.
  11. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has approved the following activities for the 2016-2017 biennium:
    - Development of DINRAC website (maintenance and updating of existing databases, visualization of data through web-based GIS, etc.).
    - Annual summary of major environmental data (continued from 2014-2015).
    - Collection of information on endangered/threatened species in the NOWPAP region (phase 2, with expanded geographical coverage).
    - Compilation of marine environmental standards used in NOWPAP member states.
  12. In addition, the 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has requested DINRAC to ensure financial transactions for two NOWPAP activities where all NOWPAP RACs will be involved, to be overseen by POMRAC:
    - Development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs), targets and indicators.
    - Training course on integrated coastal and river basin management (ICARM).

**MERRAC – Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre**

13. At the end of 2015 and in early 2016, MERRAC was finalizing the activities approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM (and modified later by the 17<sup>th</sup> MERRAC FPM):
  - Risk assessment of oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substance (HNS) spills in the NOWPAP region.
  - Online pollution reporting system.
  - Updating database of oil and HNS equipment and experts.
14. Unfortunately, finalization of some activities was delayed and the report on risk assessment as well as the draft format for databases on oil and HNS experts and equipment are expected to be presented to the MERRAC FPM in May-June 2016. Work on online pollution reporting system was also delayed and will be continued as a part of 2016-2017 MERRAC work plan.

15. In October 2015, expert meeting on oiled wildlife response in the NOWPAP region was organized in Vladivostok, Russia.
16. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has approved the following MERRAC activities for the 2016-2017 biennium:
  - Organization of an expert meeting as well as BRAVO and DELTA exercises.
  - Development of MERRAC information system based on Web GIS.
  - Development of information sharing platform on oil and HNS spills in the NOWPAP region.
  - Oiled wildlife response.
17. These activities have been started after signing the SSFA between MERRAC and UNEP in late February 2016.

### **POMRAC – Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre**

18. In 2015, most of POMRAC activities were “frozen” due to problems with processing payments to foreign experts in Russia. The 20<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM has decided to allocate part of POMRAC budget for the 2016-2017 biennium to DINRAC in order to implement the following two activities to be overseen by POMRAC:
  - Development of ecological quality objectives (EcoQOs), targets and indicators for the NOWPAP region (with a regional workshop).
  - Training course on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM).
19. These activities have been actually started in 2014-2015, so some information was collected and one regional workshop on EcoQOs was held in 2014 with the participation of other RACs and NOWPAP partners (PICES, PEMSEA, YSLME and OSPAR).
20. The Regional Overview on Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS) and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) Issues of Ecological Concern in the NOWPAP Region has been published in late 2015.
21. Also in 2015, POMRAC has published and distributed the report consisting of two parts: A) Regional overview on marine spatial planning and ecosystem-based management in the selected areas of the NOWPAP region (prepared in 2014); and B) Regional guidelines for integrated coastal planning and management in the northwest Pacific region.
22. In February 2016, the SSFA between POMRAC and UNEP has been signed and the activities were launched.

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23. In addition to specific projects carried out by NOWPAP Regional Activity Centres (RACs), several activities were implemented and coordinated by the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) as described below.

### **Raising public awareness and building partnerships**

24. According to NOWPAP Public Awareness Strategy, the following actions were taken by NOWPAP RCU and RACs:
  - NOWPAP homepage and RAC homepages have been maintained and constantly updated. News and information have been posted on the NOWPAP homepage in five languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian) since 2006.

- Electronic newsletter (NOWPAP Quarterly) has been distributed by NOWPAP RCU through e-mails to member states and partners since 2008.
  - Recent news and information about NOWPAP activities have been highlighted and shared on Facebook since 2011.
  - News about NOWPAP implementation were regularly posted at the partners' websites and introduced in their electronic newsletters (e.g., UN in Korea website, PEMSEA e-Updates).
  - Information about NOWPAP activities was introduced to UNEP ROAP and GPA websites and contributed to the UNEP DEPI Dispatch regularly.
  - RACs and RCU staff members also delivered lectures/presentations at a local level.
25. While attending a few global and regional meetings (e.g., annual Global Meetings of Regional Seas, PICES Annual Meetings, East Asian Seas Congress, etc.) as well as local events, RACs and RCU staff members contributed to increasing NOWPAP visibility and attracting public attention to marine environment conservation by introducing the NOWPAP activities.
26. Close partnership relations were maintained with many relevant organizations, programmes and projects in the region (in alphabetical order):
- International Environment Technology Center (IETC) of UNEP.
  - North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Corporation (NEASPEC).
  - North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES).
  - Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA).
  - UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC).
27. NOWPAP also continued to maintain close relationships with civil society including NGOs such as *Japan Environment Action Network* (JEAN), *Our Sea of East Asia Network* (OSEAN), *Ocean Conservancy* (OC) and *Shanghai Rendu* (Environmental NGO in China) in order to raise public awareness on marine litter as well as strengthening cooperation between policy makers and civil society for enhanced marine litter management.

### **NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI)**

28. NOWPAP member states have continued their efforts in organizing and supporting activities against marine litter such as ICC (International Coastal Cleanup) campaigns, the Green New Deal Fund (Japan) and the Comprehensive Marine Litter Management Plan (Korea).
29. Sponsored by the Chinese government and the NOWPAP Trust Fund, the 2015 NOWPAP ICC campaign and marine litter management workshop were successfully held in Yantai, China, in September 2015.
30. CEARAC, supported by the GPA and NOWPAP RCU, continued to maintain and enrich the Northwest Pacific Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML): [http://www.npec.or.jp/NWPacific\\_node/index.html](http://www.npec.or.jp/NWPacific_node/index.html). CEARAC has also compiled recent ML monitoring data (as well as results of ICC surveys) from NOWPAP member states which will be submitted to DINRAC.
31. DINRAC has continuously updated its ML database with monitoring results provided by the NPEC (Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan) and MOF (Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, Korea) as well as ICC results from China and

- Russia. All national ML monitoring data and related information, including the data from the SOA (State Oceanic Administration) of China, are available at the DINRAC website (<http://dinrac.nowpap.org>).
32. MERRAC has published the report on *Best Practices in dealing with Marine Litter in Fisheries, Aquaculture and Shipping Sectors in the NOWPAP Region* in 2015. However, another MERRAC report on floating marine litter distribution has been delayed.
  33. A report (by CEARAC) on *Marine Litter Management within a River Basin* was compiled and published in 2015. This report features a case study of Oyabe River Basin (Toyama Prefecture, Japan) in which the issue of marine litter has been addressed by multi-stakeholder approach.
  34. NOWPAP work on marine litter (and accumulated data) might contribute to achieving one of the targets of the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): relevant indicator for the SDG 14 (on oceans) is "Floating Plastic Debris Density".
  35. News and information related to marine litter have been posted on the NOWPAP homepage and continually updated by NOWPAP RCU, shared by e-mail with NOWPAP RACs and NOWPAP Marine Litter Focal Points. However, due to departure of a responsible person in RCU, such information sharing became irregular and was terminated in early 2016.
  36. In 2016-2017, two NOWPAP ICC campaigns are expected to be organized (in Russia and in Japan). CEARAC will focus on enhancing the regional GPML node while DINRAC will continue to maintain and improve ML database. MERRAC will implement the project related to floating ML and POMRAC, in cooperation with ML Focal Point, will initiate the project on micro-plastics.

#### **Restructuring the NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) and new enterprise resource planning system (Umoja)**

37. During the last two years NOWPAP member states had extensive discussions (including two extraordinary IGMs) and decided to reduce the number of UNEP RCU staff members from six to four and to downgrade the levels of some RCU posts (Table 1). As a result, some RCU staff members felt insecure and three persons have left the RCU in July-August 2014. As two of those staff members who have left in 2014 were responsible (among other issues) for resource mobilization and project development, no new project proposals were developed recently.

**Table 1. Revised RCU structure**

<b>Toyama RCU office</b>	<b>Busan RCU office</b>
P5 Coordinator	P3 Programme Officer
G6 Programme Assistant	G4 Team Assistant

38. While the recruitment by UNEP of the new staff for the 4 posts is still ongoing, one more staff member left in February 2016, leaving only two UNEP staff members in the RCU. Of course, such situation has negative effects on RCU operations and overall NOWPAP implementation.
39. Due to transition of UNEP (and the major part of the whole UN system) from previous fund management system (IMIS) to the new enterprise resource planning system (Umoja), some delays have occurred due to technical difficulties of the transition. In particular, with the new small scale funding agreements (SSFAs) signed between RACs and UNEP, schedule

of cash advance requests, submission of reports, and subsequent payments are different comparing to previous biennia and delays with payments are expected. From the other hand, introduction of Umoja and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) is expected to bring more transparency and efficiency to the UN and UNEP operations.

40. The factors described in this last part of the RCU report may have some impact on the implementation of the RACs activities in the coming years.