

Report on development of the CEARAC Medium-term Strategy on Marine Biodiversity Conservation (MTS)

1. Background

CEARAC Focal Points have requested CEARAC Secretariat to show a clear vision of NOWPAP and CEARAC's activities for marine biodiversity conservation based on the governmental needs and policies of the NOWPAP member states.

NOWPAP Marine and Coastal biodiversity Conservation Regional Action Plan (RAP BIO) is exactly the one which shows NOWPAP's vision and the basic policy for marine biodiversity conservation in this region, and RAP BIO was planned to be developed in the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2012-2017. However, unfortunately RAP BIO has not been developed yet, and its development is included in the new NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023. In the meantime, it is necessary to develop a CEARAC's own medium-term strategy which links with marine biodiversity conservation strategy stated in NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023, taking into consideration series of discussion on NOWPAP RAP BIO and needs of the member states.

At the 15th CEARAC FPM (2017), CEARAC Secretariat proposed a project to develop CEARAC Medium-term Strategy on marine biodiversity conservation (CEARAC MTS), and the proposal was approved at the 22nd NOWPAP IGM held in December 2017. At the 16th CEARAC FPM held in May 2018, detailed workplan of this activity was discussed and six potential topics which CEARAC could/should implement in the future was selected. The feasibility assessments on the six potential topics were then implemented in each member state in order to identify possibility of their implementation and to prioritize these potential topics.

2. Objective

Objective of this activity is to develop CEARAC MTS which shows CEARAC's basic policy on its future marine biodiversity conservation activities, based on the priority and feasibility study of potential topics. CEARAC MTS is required to contribute to policies and actions for marine biodiversity conservation of the member states, and to global targets such as Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) accordingly.

3. Tasks

3-1 Selection of potential topics for future activities

At the 16th CEARAC FPM, the member states agreed to select following six potential topics;

- 1) Assessment of marine biodiversity,
- 2) Harmful invasive species,
- 3) Specific migratory species,
- 4) Conservation of biological habitats, including tidal flat, salt-marsh and seagrass/seaweed beds,
- 5) Plankton species related to aquaculture and fisheries, and
- 6) Environmental DNA (e-DNA)

3-2 Feasibility assessment of potential topics

Regarding above mentioned six potential topics, feasibility assessments were implemented in each member state in order to clarify the relationship between each topic and national policies, available data and information and possibility of their implementation. The experts who were nominated by CEARAC FPs implemented feasibility assessments (Table 1). As of July 2019, feasibility assessment reports were submitted from China, Japan and Russia. The result of feasibility assessments are shown in Annex 1.

Table 1 Experts who implement feasibility assessment

China	Dr. Huang Bei, Zhejiang Provincial Zhoushan Marine Ecological Environmental Monitoring Station
Japan	CEARAC Secretariat
Korea	Dr. Yong-Rock An, Department of taxonomy and systematics, Marine Biodiversity Institute of Korea
Russia	Dr. Tatiana Olrova, National Scientific Center of Marine Biology FEB

3-3 Organization of a marine biodiversity workshop and meeting for developing CEARAC MTS

Based on the feasibility assessment results, a marine biodiversity workshop and meeting for developing CEARAC MTS are planned to be held in order to prioritize the potential topics. At the meeting, information on current movements of the member states in terms of marine and coastal biodiversity conservation will be shared and the outline of CEARAC MTS will be discussed.

However, as shown in 3-2, because of the delay of report submission from Korea, organization of the planned workshop and meeting should be postponed, which is originally held before the 17th CEARAC FPM.

Then, CEARAC Secretariat proposes the revision of the workplan and schedule as follows:

Step 1: CEARAC Secretariat prepares the first draft of CEARAC MTS (July 2019)

Step 2: Experts of feasibility assessment and CEARAC FPs review the draft (August 2019)

Step 3: CEARAC FPs approve the draft CEARAC MTS and proposal of activities for the 2020-2021 biennium in principle at the 17th CEARAC FPM (September 2019)

Step 4: CEARAC Secretariat organize a workshop to discuss the detailed workplan of approved activities for the 2020-2021 biennium (November 2019)

Step 5: NOWPAP IGM will approve CEARAC MTS and workplan of marine biodiversity activities for the 2020-2021 biennium

Along with the revised workplan, revised budget allocation is proposed. The changed budget plan is shown Table 2 below.

4. Expected outcomes

CEARAC MTS shows the clear direction on CEARAC activities for marine biodiversity conservation after 2020. CEARAC MTS will be developed based on the needs and feasibility of the NOWPAP member states, therefore, future CEARAC activities will contribute to policies on marine biodiversity conservation of the member states.

In the 2018-2019 biennium, an activity “Development of a roadmap for NOWPAP Regional Action Plan for

marine and coastal biodiversity conservation (RAP BIO)” is being implemented. Through the development of CEARAC MTS, CEARAC clearly states our future vision and role, which contributes to development of RAP BIO.

Global activities for marine biodiversity conservation have been enhanced along with establishment of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and SDGs. Future CEARAC biodiversity activities will contribute to the achievement of these global targets in the NOWPAP region and the NOWPAP member states.

5. Budget

Original

Tasks	Budget (US\$)
Feasibility assessment	12,000 (3,000 US\$ x 4 member states)
Marine biodiversity workshop and meeting for development CEARAC MTS	15,000
Development of CEARAC MTS	3,000
Total	30,000

Revised

Tasks	Budget (US\$)
Feasibility assessment	9,000 (3,000 US\$ x 3 member states except for Japan)
Workshop for discussion of workplan	18,000 (Habitat, plankton and e-DNA)
Development of CEARAC MTS	3,000
Total	30,000

5. Schedule

Timing	Activity	Main body	
2019	Summer	Preparing the first draft of CEARAC MTS	CEARAC Secretariat
	August	Review of the first draft	Biodiversity experts and CEARAC FPs
	9-10 September	The 17 th CEARAC FPM - Approval of submission of CEARAC MTS to the IGM - Approval of workplan for the 2020-2021 biennium	CEARAC FP CEARAC Secretariat
	November	Workshop for discussion of workplan	Experts on habitat, plankton and e-DNA
	24-26 December	The 24 th NOWPAP IGM - Approval of CEARAC MTS	NOWPAP National FPs

		- Approval of workplan and budget for the 2020-2021 biennium	
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