

Annex IV

Report of the NOWPAP coordinator on the implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan

The following progress report on the implementation of NOWPAP activities covers the period from the Ninth IGM in November 2004 till September 2005.

9th IGM decisions

At the 9th IGM (November 2004, Busan, Korea), the following decisions were made.

1. To convene an Intersessional Workshop to discuss new directions of work of NOWPAP RACs, to be held around mid-2005 in the Republic of Korea. The workshop will be attended by the NOWPAP National Focal Points and experts. Financial support for the travel of two representatives of each country and the secretariat will be covered by the NOWPAP Trust Fund.
2. To develop the activity on sustainable management of marine litter in the NOWPAP region. The programme of work and budget for this activity should be developed by the RCU for the next biennium, based on consultations between the NOWPAP National Focal Points, the RACs and the planned Intersessional Workshop, and be presented by the RCU for consideration at the Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting.
3. To discuss the proposal on the increased contributions to the NOWPAP Trust Fund during the Intersessional Workshop in 2005.
4. To conduct further consultations regarding the proposal from Japan on the expansion of geographical coverage of the NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. This proposal will be discussed during the Tenth Intergovernmental Meeting.
5. To endorse in principle the concept paper on the GEF proposal, "Addressing Land-Based Activities that Affect the Marine and Coastal Environment in the Northwest Pacific Region", subject to the request that UNEP DGEF will circulate via e-mail a revised project concept, incorporating the comments and addressing the concerns raised during this meeting. The UNEP and the NOWPAP RCU should further proceed with the work on this proposal by submitting the concept paper to the GEF for approval.

The following is the short overview of the main actions undertaken by the Regional Activity Centres (except CEARAC) and the RCU from the 9th IGM.

DINRAC - Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre

The DINRAC has continued to develop and update its website where many documents related to NOWPAP and the UNEP Regional Seas Programme are available. DINRAC National Reports on Data and Information Networks in the Northwest Pacific Region were published as both hard copy and CD-ROM. Report of the 3rd DINRAC Focal Points Meeting was also published and distributed in 2005. DINRAC updated the Databases on NOWPAP Institutions and NOWPAP Experts on Coastal and Marine Environment intended as a tool for scientists, policy-makers and anyone else who is interested in getting information on coastal or marine environmental experts and institutions in the NOWPAP region. Both these databases are available on CD-ROM. Currently, two DINRAC activities are under way: 1) Development of a Framework for the Creation of NOWPAP DINRAC Meta-database; and 2) Study of Existing GIS-type Products. The MOUs with national experts who will implement these activities are already signed. In September 2005, DINRAC is planning to organize a joint Focal Points and Expert Meeting to discuss proposals for 2006-2007 biennium.

MERRAC - Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre

In May 2005, MERRAC 8th Focal Points Meeting was held in Daejeon, Korea, to discuss recent results and proposals for 2006 and 2007 biennium. At the same time, 1st Competent National Authorities Meeting was held within the NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. MERRAC has finalized three specific projects: on shoreline clean-up; on environmental sensitivity mapping; and on dispersant application, which will be published later this year. MERRAC specific projects on regional mapping of vulnerable resources; on oil spill modeling; and on minimum level of preparedness, will be implemented in 2006 and 2007 (pending approval by the 10th IGM). Reports of the 2004 MERRAC Expert Meeting and 8th FPM were published and distributed in 2005. Due to hard work of MERRAC staff, NOWPAP countries have agreed on the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and signed the Memorandum of Understanding for this Plan in 2004 and 2005.

POMRAC – Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre

The POMRAC is responsible for implementing activities under Working Group 1 – Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants and Working Group 2 - River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants to the Marine and Coastal Environment. After the 9th IGM, reports of both Working Group meetings and the 2nd POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (which were held in 2004) were published and distributed. The problem with payments for POMRAC experts preparing National Reports on Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants and River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants has been resolved and the eight MOUs were signed. Some National Reports were received in mid-2005.

RCU

The co-hosted RCU offices in Toyama and Busan were inaugurated in November 2004. The recruitment of staff members for both RCU offices was finalized in April 2005. The establishment of the RCU is a crucial landmark in the history of NOWPAP and will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the Action Plan. The new secretariat has commenced the important task of coordinating NOWPAP from the region. In February-March, the RCU staff members have visited UNEP and UNON in Nairobi for short training and orientation. Now both RCU offices are fully operational and are working in close contact with National Focal Points, NOWPAP RACs, UNEP HQ, UNON and UNEP GPA office in the Hague to ensure that all NOWPAP activities are being implemented in time, within the allocated budget and according to the UN rules and regulations.

Contacts with relevant organizations, programmes and projects

After establishment of both offices in Toyama and Busan, RCU staff has established contacts with the following organizations, programmes and projects in the region (in alphabetical order):

- East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU);
- Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA);
- Kanazawa University Center of Excellence Programme;
- North East Asian Regional – Global Ocean Observing System (NEAR-GOOS);
- GEF/UNDP/IMO Regional Programme on Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA);
- North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES);
- UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project;
- UNESCO/IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC);
- UNDP/GEF Project on the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME);

This work will be continued on a permanent basis.

Public awareness

As part of public awareness strategy, the RCU staff members have visited the key ministries and organizations involved in NOWPAP activities in three member countries: Japan, the People's Republic

of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. RCU staff members also visited local authorities in Toyama and Busan and were in touch with media and environmental NGOs. As a result, from November 2004 to September 2005, about 40 articles about NOWPAP were published in Japan in Korea.

RCU offices in Busan and Toyama attracted many visitors from Korea and Japan as well as from abroad. RCU staff members also participated in some local and regional meetings to increase public awareness about NOWPAP.

The work to increase awareness of general public regarding NOWPAP activities will be continued by the RCU (as well as by RACs). For example, contacts with NGOs will be developed within the marine litter initiative. The NOWPAP website – an important tool to increase public awareness – is now being developed and will be launched in the second half of 2005.

NOWPAP Intersessional Workshop

According to the 9th IGM decision, the Workshop was held on 25-26 July 2005. NOWPAP member states preliminary agreed to increase their annual contributions to the NOWPAP Trust Fund; to start Marine Litter Activity (MALITA); and to modify the directions of work of NOWPAP RACs. The final decisions on these issues will be made by the 10th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting in November 2005.

GEF PDF-B proposal

The GEF PDF-B proposal on the Assessment and Management of Land-Based Activities in the NOWPAP region is being finalized by UNEP DGEF in close consultations with the GEF Secretariat, UNEP RS and UNEP GPA offices and NOWPAP RCU. The focus of the new proposal is on Persistent Toxic Substances (PTS). The final project concept will be submitted to the GEF Secretariat in October 2005.

Other issues

According to the 9th IGM decisions, the proposal on Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) has been developed by UNEP consultant and NOWPAP RCU. All NOWPAP members nominated National Marine Litter Focal Points who are now working with national authorities and related organizations to ensure coordination of NOWPAP MALITA with national activities on marine litter. The MALITA proposal was discussed and approved in general at the NOWPAP Intersessional WS in July 2005.

The documents related to NOWPAP-2 project (legal issues) were retrieved from Nairobi for further consideration. The current status and proposal on future actions was discussed at the NOWPAP Intersessional WS in July 2005. Now the regional overview on NOWPAP/2 project is being updated by member states. The final version might be available in late 2005.

The year 2005 is critical for NOWPAP. According to the decisions of last NOWPAP IGMs, the directions of work of NOWPAP RACs should be re-considered and modified as necessary in order to ensure the future success of NOWPAP. The RCU now has the important and challenging task to reorganize NOWPAP, to introduce the demarcation of new responsibilities to the RACs and to coordinate these new directions.