

**Meeting minutes of the Expert Meeting on Marine Biodiversity  
and Eutrophication in the Northwest Pacific Region**

(4-5 August 2011, Toyama, Japan)

A meeting to discuss future CEARC activities with experts in the field of marine biodiversity and eutrophication assessment was held in Toyama, Japan on 4-5 August 2011. The following meeting minutes were prepared by CEARC secretariat to share among the participants.

➤ **Marine biodiversity session**

1. NPEC introduced CEARC's workplan on marine biodiversity for 2012-2013 and the new methodology for marine environment assessment developed by NPEC.

2. Following the presentation by Dr. Yoshida (CEARC), the meeting participants discussed the workplan and the contents of the methodology with Dr. Matsuda as a moderator.

Major comments in the discussion were as follows:

- Overall, discussion points suggested are too broad, so the discussion should be focused on what CEARC will/should do in the next biennium, 2012-2013.

Comments on the presented workplan:

- 'EBSA' (Ecologically and Biologically Significant Area) is a relatively new idea/approach.
- CEARC should consider 3 annexes adopted in the decisions of CBD COP9.
- It is important to conduct monitoring after establishing MPAs.
- Assessments should be done first, then establishment of EBSAs or MPAs should be considered; not the other way around
- Some criteria for EBSA designation are unclear (e.g. naturalness), so more practical approaches should be applied.
- In case of the Helsinki Commission (Baltic Sea area), HELCOM is responsible for development of concepts and guidelines for establishing MPAs. Actual establishment of MPAs is decided by member states respectively.
- It needs to be checked whether the NOWPAP member states are interested in establishing new MPAs/EBSAs in their sea areas.
- Developing common indicators and implementing the assessment with the common indicators are essential steps to be taken.
- Preparing data inventory as an initial step in marine environment assessment can

be one of the areas in which all RACs can cooperate.

- Activities on marine biodiversity are related to those on ICARM.
- It is necessary to consider DINRAC's reports published in 2007 (related to biodiversity data and information) to understand what data and information are available.
- It is more practical to initiate marine BD activities by conducting case studies.
- Focusing on declining species is important as it could be a good indicator of ecosystem health status.
- If 'EBSAs are established/designated in the sea area, the relationship with ballast water exchange areas (or exemption areas) under the BWM (International Convention for the control and management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) should be carefully considered.

3. Taking into consideration the comments/opinions by the participants, including those listed above, NPEC presented the revised workplan.

- (1) To develop the criteria on ecologically and biologically significant areas which will contribute to designing of MPA in the NOWPAP member states and to implement case study for applying criteria in the NOWPAP region
- (2) To develop common indicators for assessment of marine environment and ecosystem status in the NOWPAP region

4. There were more comments on the revised workplan:

- It is desirable to implement the suggested activities in parallel.
- It should be reminded that no common indicators have been officially adopted but PICES is just starting to work on a framework of common indicators by the new Working Group 28.
- It is appropriate that Activity 2 in the revised workplan is implemented as a case study.
- Perhaps comparing histories (e.g. designating criteria, features) of current national reserves/MPAs in the NOWPAP member states could be one of possible CEARAC activities on marine BD.
- It is important not only to establish MPAs, but also monitor/follow-up on their effectiveness.

5. After the discussion, the meeting agreed to propose the following 3 possible activities and discuss later on at the CEARAC FPM. NPEC mentioned the difficulty of

implementing all 3 due to lack of enough human resources.

- (1) To develop the criteria on ecologically and biologically significant areas (based on CBD criteria), which will contribute to designing of MPAs in each NOWPAP member state.
- (2) To develop a framework of common indicators for assessment of marine environment and ecosystem status in the NOWPAP region (developing data inventory in parallel).
- (3) To assess the effectiveness of existing MPA in each NOWPAP member state.

6. Finally, it was decided to keep all 3 proposed activities in the CEARAC's 2012-2013 workplan on marine BD to be submitted to the 9<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM (September 2011) with more detailed/concrete explanations for adoption (to be later submitted to the 16<sup>th</sup> NOWPAP IGM for final approval).

➤ **Eutrophication session**

1. Mr. Terauchi introduced CEARAC's workplan on eutrophication for 2012-2013.
2. Then Dr. Ishizaka, moderator of this session, gave an additional explanation.
3. Following the presentations by NPEC and Dr. Ishizaka, the meeting participants discussed the workplan. Major comments in the discussion were as follows:
  - Activities on eutrophication assessment should be continued in 2012-2013.
  - It is expected to expand target sea areas towards assessment of eutrophication of the whole NOWPAP region, but availability of data should be checked beforehand.
  - Is it not possible to set 'Common reference values' to be applied in the assessment in all NOWPAP member states.
  - DO (dissolved oxygen) is a different reference parameter comparing with others in terms of its characteristics. In a physiological approach, it could be possible to develop 'Common reference values.'
  - 'Integrated Report on Eutrophication' is a good starting point. The current assessment should be continued, although the procedures need refinement. In HELCOM, there were problems in the assessment procedures at the beginning, and they were refined/solved gradually. The important thing is continuing the assessment.
  - An individual chapter to describe technical problems of the Common Procedures for

eutrophication assessment should be included in the Integrated Report on Eutrophication.

4. Taking into consideration the comments/opinions by the participants, including those listed above, NPEC and the moderator presented the revised workplan based on the activity “Revision of the Common Procedure towards eutrophication assessment of the whole NOWPAP region and application of the refined procedures to existing and expanded sea areas in the NOWPAP region”.

5. After discussion, it was agreed to submit the revised workplan to the 9<sup>th</sup> CEARAC FPM (September 2011).