



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



Distr.: General
15 September 2015

Original: English

**The first meeting of the Regional Seas
Indicators Working Group**
Istanbul, 23 October 2015

Provisional Programme

Background

UNEP Regional Seas Programme was launched in 1974. In each of the 18 regional seas (Black Sea, Wider Caribbean, East Africa, East Asia, ROPME sea area, Mediterranean, Northeast Pacific, Northwest Pacific, South Pacific, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, South Asia, South East Pacific and West and Central Africa), a regional seas programme was established and is under implementation. Antarctic, Arctic, Baltic Sea, Caspian Sea and Northeast Atlantic are regional seas associated with the UNEP Regional Seas Programme. For each of these regional seas, an action plan serves as the basis for regional cooperation and regionally coordinated action to address the issues related to and prioritised in the marine and coastal environments of these seas. Many of the regional seas programmes continue to assess the state of the marine environment on a regular basis, and recently more effort has been made to connect the regional state of the marine environment reporting with the Global Ocean Assessment processes. Different regional seas carried out the state of the marine environment reporting based on different methodologies, and introduction of key indicators for the purpose of assessing the state of the marine environment is observed in some of the regional seas programmes.

A limited number of regional seas programmes clearly set the ecosystem-based objectives or in a limited number of cases regional targets, which the member countries collectively endeavour to achieve. In relation to the proposed approach: Ecosystem Approach to Regional Seas, UNEP is proposing to establish a set of indicators, from which the regional seas programmes can withdraw and decide in order to track down the chronological changes of the status of marine and coastal environment. The regional seas programmes are also urged to set their own regional ecosystem based management objectives or even targets to achieve through their collective efforts. In order to measure the progress in the achievements in the ecosystem-based objectives and targets, another set or the similar set of indicators may be used.

On a global scale, the UN member states are proceeding with the World Ocean Assessment (also referred to as the regular process), but the currently developed assessment is narrative-based assessment based on the existing and emerging literature. It is expected that chronological changes will be monitored based on the indicators in the follow-up Regular Process. UNEP and UNESCO-IOC have developed a set of indicators for the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme, targeting Large Marine Ecosystems and Open Ocean, but there has been difficulties for the Regional Seas programmes to take them up in their own assessment and management efforts. Based on the Rio+20 Outcome document: The Future We Want, the international community started discussing the Sustainable Development Goals and how to measure their achievements through possible application of indicators. Many of the indicators already developed through some of the regional seas programmes would contribute to the discussion of the marine and ocean related SDGs development and indicators associated with them.

Based on the UNEP Regional Seas Strategic Directions, following the Ecosystem Approach to Regional Seas programme, UNEP is proposing that the Regional Seas programmes agree on a set of core indicators and another set of supplementary indicators, so that each of the regional seas programmes can mainstream these indicators within their assessment and monitoring programmes and they can report on the indicators regularly to the UNEP Regional Seas Programme for its central compilation. Such a mechanism should be closely linked with the UNEP-Live, which is UNEP's flagship data and information management programme.

UNEP launched a report: Measuring Success: Indicators for Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans, in which indicators used in different Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans have been compiled and presented. UNEP also organised the Technical Workshop on Selecting Indicators for the State of Regional Seas (30 June – 2 July 2014, Geneva, Switzerland). In this workshop, the participants recommended to establish a regional seas indicator working group. Thereafter, there have been several developments in this field, including development of the Sustainable Development Goals and discussion on associated indicators, and conclusion of the Transboundary Water Assessment Programme. Based on the recommendations from the Geneva workshop, the current meeting will start the working group process and will be organised for the following objectives:

- (1) to organise the Regional Seas Indicator Working Group, and agree on its workplan and timetable; and
- (2) to agree on a preliminary set of indicators in line with the proposed SDGs and based on the results of the TWAP.

The meeting will be organised in English alone and all documents for the meeting are prepared in English only. Before the terms of reference of the Working Group are agreed to, UNEP will chair the first meeting, and will function as rapporteur, but the issue of chair and rapporteur will need to be discussed during the item of the terms of reference.

Provisional Programme

Timing	Activities	Responsible
23 October 2015		
0900-0915	Opening of the meeting Objective of the meeting Adoption of agenda and programme	UNEP
0915-1000	Working Group Terms of	UNEP

	Reference Discussion	
1000-1030	TWAP results Discussion	UNEP and UNESCO- IOC
1030-1040	Presentation on Regional Seas Dataset	UNEP WCMC
1040 - 1110	Regional Seas Indicator Matrix Comments	UNEP Participants
1110-1120	Coffee/tea break	UNEP
1120-1230	Discussion of the preliminary indicator matrix	Participants
1230-1400	Lunch break	
1230 – 1400	Continued discussion of the preliminary indicator matrix	Participants
1400-1445	Agreement of the preliminary indicator matrix	Participants
1415-1500	Coffee/tea break	
1500-1520	Presentation of a draft workplan of the Working Group	UNEP
1520-1700	Discussion and agreement of a workplan of the Working Group	Participants
1700-1720	Presentation of draft conclusions	UNEP
1720-1750	Agreement of draft conclusions	Participants
1750-1800	Closure of the Working Group	