

Report of the Twelfth NOWPAP CEARAC Focal Points Meeting

Background leading to this meeting

1. The Special Monitoring and Coastal Environmental Assessment Regional Activity Centre (CEARAC) is one of the four Regional Activity Centres (RACs) to coordinate activities relevant to specific components of the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). Since its inception in 1999, CEARAC has been mainly working on monitoring and assessing harmful algal blooms (under Working Group 3) and application of remote sensing techniques to the study on the marine and coastal environment (Working Group 4).
2. Since 2008, when CEARAC initiated an activity on eutrophication as a joint work of WG3 and WG4, its foci have shifted to eutrophication and marine biodiversity, and CEARAC has implemented some activities during the past bienniums on these areas.
3. Later on, NOWPAP Mid-Term Strategy 2012-2017 (MTS) suggested five thematic elements such as “Regular assessments of the state of the marine environment” and “Biodiversity conservation” including the development of a NOWPAP action plan for biodiversity conservation, with which CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium are expected to be aligned.
4. Based on the output and outcomes of the past activities and the progress of the on-going activities as well as the directions of the NOWPAP MTS, the Secretariat of CEARAC presented a draft workplan and budget of CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium, which had been discussed at the 11th CEARAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) (11-12 September 2013, Toyama Japan) and agreed to be submitted to the 18th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) (4-6 December 2013, Toyama, Japan)
5. Since NOWPAP member states approved by correspondence the NOWPAP work plan and budget 2014-2015 in April 2014, all planned activities of CEARAC had been suspended until that time.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting

6. The meeting was opened at 9:00 at Meeting Room One in Tower 111, Toyama, Japan, on 2 July 2014 by Mr. Kazuya KUMAGAI, Director of CEARAC. Then, welcoming remarks were made by Mr. Xiaodong ZHONG, Deputy Coordinator of NOWPAP.

Agenda Item 2 Organization of the Meeting

7. The meeting elected Dr. Changkyu LEE, FP of Korea, as the chairperson and Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, FP of Russia, as the rapporteur.
8. It was proposed that, for the purposes of the CEARAC FPM, the rules used in the meeting be basically those of the Governing Council of UNEP, adjusted as appropriate to suit the nature of the meeting. Decisions should be made by consensus and English was the working language of the meeting.

Agenda Item 3 Adoption of the agenda

9. The Secretariat introduced the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/1) with the Annotated Provisional Agenda (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/2).
10. The meeting adopted both documents.

Agenda Item 4 Report of the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) on the implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)

11. Mr. Zhong reported the progress of all NOWPAP activities since the 11th CEARAC FPM (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/3).
12. Dr. Yasuwo FUKUYO, FP of Japan, raised concerns about the current status of inter-RAC cooperation and expressed his hope that NOWPAP will continue to develop its intra-RAC relationships. Mr. Zhong answered that participation by other RAC representatives in FPMs is one example of sharing information and learning from each other. Mr. Zhong also pointed out that some of activities involved RACs participation such as SOMER-2 and marine litter.

13. The meeting acknowledged the report.

Agenda Item 5 Report on CEARAC activities for the 2012-2013 biennium

14. The Secretariat reported the implementation and the expenditure of CEARAC activities for the 2012-2013 biennium, including RAP MALI (marine litter activities) (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/4).

15. Dr. Fukuyo asked again about RAC cooperation, specifically in regards to 2.3.1: preparation of the regional report on marine protected areas (MPAs) in the NOWPAP region. The Secretariat answered that the DINRAC database was a useful reference material for selecting target MPAs and preparing a regional report. The meeting strongly encouraged future cooperation with other RACs and other regional and international organizations.

16. Dr. Joji ISHIZAKA, FP of Japan, asked about the NOWPAP remote sensing training courses and follow-up activities by CEARAC. The Secretariat replied that they had initiated a survey of the participants and are in the process of assessing the performance of the courses and will evaluate the future of these activities in the current biennium. Dr. Ishizaka said he expected CEARAC to consider continuation of capacity building programs.

17. Dr. Junlong LI, FP of China, suggested that more time be given for study of FPM working documents. The Secretariat promised to prepare necessary documents 3 or 4 weeks before the meeting in the future.

18. After discussion, the meeting adopted the report on the implementation and the expenditure of CEARAC activities for the 2012-2013 biennium.

Agenda Item 6 Workplan and budget for CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium

19. The Secretariat presented a workplan and budget of CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/5). Then, more detailed explanation of three specific projects followed.

20. Mr. Zhong asked for a clarification of 2014-2015 biennium budget allocations and advised the Secretariat to, present budget according to the workplan and budget approved by the IGM and UNEP HQs.
21. The Secretariat said they will provide FPs with the current procedure for updating the HAB database. At the same time the Secretariat asked FPs to collect the latest information on HABs in order to resume updating the database. The meeting agreed to discuss the performance of the CEARAC website and database at the next CEARAC FPM based on a review to be prepared by the Secretariat.
22. The meeting agreed to adopt the revised workplan and budget of entire CEARAC activities for the 2014-2015 biennium after necessary revision is applied in respective activities, taking into account the comments by FPs in this meeting.

Agenda Item 6.1 Activity on marine biodiversity (Pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region)

23. The Secretariat presented a workplan and budget on pilot assessment on the impacts of major threats to marine biodiversity in selected sea areas of the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/6).
24. Ms. Sawako TADA, FP of Japan, expressed support by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, for this activity, as indicated by them providing available data. She then asked the Secretariat to use more consistent wording in the document and also asked about the selection criteria of target sea areas. The Secretariat explained that the potential areas for the pilot assessment had been used in previous CEARAC activities and have useful data readily available.
25. Dr. Ishizaka requested to clarify the use of CEARAC activity on eutrophication assessment and other RACs' activities for the current activity. He also expressed difficulty in the evaluation of the influence of the selected indicators on marine biodiversity. The Secretariat said that this activity is based on previous procedures and past output of relevant CEARAC activities.
26. Dr. Anatolii KACHUR, POMRAC representative, pointed out the importance of this activity to POMRAC's activity on Ecological Quality Objectives (EQO).

27. Dr. Shulkin asked the Secretariat about the list of assessment indicators. The Secretariat answered that the final selection of indicators is flexible and it will be discussed based on the pilot assessment results in each member state.
28. Dr. Fukuyo asked the Secretariat to reconsider some unclear indicators such as aquaculture and foreign ships in Table 2 in the working document (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/6).
29. Dr. Li expressed that “Qingdao Peninsula” is not correct in name and suggested the Yantai and Dalian coastal area as a potential sea area selection in China. He also mentioned that other important indicators, such as dissolved inorganic nitrogen, should be included in the assessment indicators.
30. The Secretariat asked FPs to nominate an expert (or experts) for this project and select target sea area(s) by correspondence after this FPM.
31. The meeting agreed to adopt the revised workplan and budget after necessary revision is applied.
32. The Secretariat promised to submit a revised workplan by the end of July 2014, taking into account this meeting’s comments on indicators used in the assessment of major threats to marine biodiversity, for FPs to review by mid-August 2014.

Agenda Item 6.2 Activity on eutrophication (Trial applications of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment)

33. The Secretariat presented a workplan and budget on trial applications of the screening procedure of the NOWPAP Common Procedure for eutrophication assessment for the entire NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/7).
34. Dr. Shulkin inquired about how residence time of nutrients will be evaluated. The Secretariat explained how it was evaluated in enclosed bays facing the NOWPAP sea area in Japan and asked other member states to establish their own methodology.

35. Dr. Li asked to clarify the differences between potential eutrophic zones in CEARAC and potential problem areas in OSPAR. The Secretariat replied that CEARAC's use of the word "potential" implies that those zones have a possibility of eutrophic condition and need further evaluation to confirm if they are actually eutrophic or not.
36. Dr. Kyung-Hoon SHIN, FP of Korea, mentioned that Korea has many coastal monitoring programs but that it may be difficult to assess eutrophication of the entire coast line. The Secretariat agreed with this opinion and suggested to set some criteria to select potential eutrophic zones.
37. Dr. Ishizaka mentioned that this project was originally meant to evaluate the eutrophication status of the entire NOWPAP sea area, not just enclosed bays. He then suggested reconsidering the indicators for the screening procedure, specifically residence time. He also stated that an important output is to discover which areas are unknown/unevaluated as well as "potential eutrophic or non-eutrophic". The Secretariat answered that they are very flexible in changing indicator selection and they will discuss by correspondence among the nominated experts and CEARAC FPs before implementation of the activity.
38. Dr. Shin suggested that the temporal trend of inventory of nutrients or COD (or TOC), in addition to chlorophyll-a, might be a useful indicator to be tested, as obtaining reliable data of nutrient input and residence time is very difficult due to the various pathways of nutrients.
39. Dr. Shulkin asked about the scale of the map output, also how this project will take into account seasonal characteristics of red tide. The Secretariat replied that 1km² should be good enough as a scale, and that seasonal characteristics are not currently considered in this project
40. The meeting agreed to adopt the revised workplan and budget after necessary revision is applied.
41. The Secretariat promised to submit a revised workplan by the end of July 2014, taking into account this meeting's comments on indicators for the screening procedure, for FPs to review by mid-August 2014.

Agenda Item 6.3 Activity on seagrass mapping (Case studies on seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region)

42. The Secretariat presented a workplan and budget on case studies on seagrass and seaweed mapping in selected sea areas in the NOWPAP region (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/8).
43. Dr. Shulkin asked if satellite imagery will be procured for all NOWPAP member states by the Secretariat. The Secretariat replied that it should in principle be purchased by the Secretariat, but that affordability and availability will be a limiting factor. The Secretariat asked FPs to select case study areas so that the Secretariat can look for satellite data archives.
44. Dr. Fukuyo suggested taking in information about rehabilitation activities implemented in degraded coastal areas as a method for choosing case study areas. The Secretariat agreed with this suggestion and replied that the selection of case study areas will be a key to this aspect.
45. Ms. Guihua DONG, FP of China, said that because of low transparency in the Yellow Sea, seagrass and seaweed are difficult to detect by satellite imagery in China and required field confirmation. She also worried about how to select case study areas. The Secretariat replied that they are aware of the difficulties in China. Then, the Secretariat indicated that they need specific locations for case study candidates within the NOWPAP geographical scope in China, so they can start to look for satellite data archives.
46. Dr. Young-Nam KIM, FP of Korea, supported organization of an international workshop to help implement this activity. The Secretariat agreed with this opinion and expressed their will to seek external funding for organization of such a workshop.
47. Dr. Shulkin pointed out that the success of this activity will depend on timely preparation of the manual.
48. The Secretariat introduced comments by Dr. Teruhisa KOMATSU, an advisor of this project (Atmosphere and Ocean Research Institute, the University of Tokyo),

recommending that the case studies should solely focus on mapping seagrass and not seaweed in 2014-2015 biennium. The meeting agreed with this comment.

49. The meeting agreed to adopt the revised workplan and budget after necessary revision is applied.
50. The Secretariat promised to submit a revised workplan by the end of July 2014, taking into account the comments on the case studies on seagrass and seaweed mapping, for FPs to review by mid-August 2014.

Agenda Item 7 Workplan for CEARAC Marine Litter Activities (RAP MALI)

51. The Secretariat presented a workplan and budget on marine litter activities (RAP MALI) for the 2014-2015 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/9).
52. Mr. Zhong suggested the expression “Regional report” on page 2 in the working document (UNEP/NOWPAP/CEARAC/FPM 12/9) should be just “Report” because it covers only Japan.

**Agenda Item 8 Collaboration with other RACs and other regional/
international organizations**

53. The Secretariat presented potential collaborative work with other RACs and NOWPAP partners, which CEARAC plans to implement during the 2014-2015 biennium and beyond.
54. The Secretariat introduced that CEARAC and PICES will jointly publish a scientific report on the economic impact on HABs to fisheries and aquaculture by the 2014 PICES annual meeting (16-26 October, Yeosu, Korea).
55. The Secretariat introduced two examples of collaborations between NOWPAP and PICES: a Joint Study Group and a possible Joint Workshop at the 2015 PICES annual meeting (15-25 October, Qingdao, China).
56. Dr. Toru SUZUKI, representative of PICES, briefly explained the progress of establishing the Joint Study Group and the procedure to apply for a joint workshop.

57. The meeting agreed that Secretariat will prepare two draft proposals on two candidate themes for the joint workshop and ask FPs to review them in July. Based on the comments from FPs, the Secretariat will choose one theme and submit the proposal through RCU to PICES in August 2014.
58. Ms. Nobuko KAJIURA, representative of the Secretariat of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), presented the North East Asia Marine Protected Area Network (NEAMPAN). She emphasized the importance of collaborating with NOWPAP and its member states.
59. Dr. Fukuyo, acting as a representative of IOC/WESTPAC, presented that organization's recent activities, especially its international scientific symposium and capacity development efforts.

Agenda Item 9 Arrangement of the 13th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM

60. The Secretariat proposed to hold the 13th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM in September 2015 in Toyama, Japan, and the meeting agreed on the proposal.

Agenda Item 10 Other matters

61. The meeting was invited to raise any other issues relevant to the CEARAC activities. Mr. Zhong reminded CEARAC to consider gender issues in the implementation of CEARAC activities and he encouraged FPs of CEARAC and representatives of other RACs to nominate women experts to participate in their activities.

Agenda Item 11 Adoption of the report of the Meeting

62. A draft report of the 12th NOWPAP CEARAC FPM was prepared by the Secretariat with the help of the rapporteur. After review, the report was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Item 12 Closure of the Meeting

63. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the twelfth NOWPAP CEARAC FPM was closed by the chairperson at 12:00 on 3 July 2014.