

United Nations Environment Programme

NOWPAP



**Northwest
Pacific
Action Plan**

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Draft NOWPAP Communication Strategy 2018-2023

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**Regional
Seas**

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List of Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COBSEA	Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities
ICC	International Coastal Cleanup
IGOs	Intergovernmental Organizations
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC/WESTPAC	Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
MALITA	Marine Litter Activity
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NHS	Noxious and Hazardous Substances
NOWPAP	Northwest Pacific Action Plan
NW	Northwest
PEMSEA	Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia
PICES	North Pacific Marine Science Organization
RACs	Regional Activity Centers
RAP MALI	Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
YSLME	UNDP GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project

1. Introduction

1. Northwest Pacific Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) was adopted by the People's Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation in 1994 as one of the 18 Regional Seas Programmes of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The overall goal of NOWPAP is "wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment so as to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region, while protecting human health, ecological integrity and the region's sustainability for future generations". NOWPAP's institutional structure consists of the four Regional Activity Centers (RACs) established in 2000-2002 in each member state and the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) with two offices in Toyama, Japan and Busan, R. Korea established in 2004-2005.

2. Since the adoption, NOWPAP has been addressing all five elements of the Plan, namely: (i) assessment of regional environmental conditions, (ii) environmental data and information management, (iii) development and application of ecosystem-based approach towards coastal and marine environmental planning, (iv) implementation of effective measures for mutual support in emergencies (associated with oil and hazardous and noxious substances (HNS) spills) and coastal and marine pollution prevention, and (v) strengthening NOWPAP institutional framework.

3. The 2018-2023 NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS 2018-2023) adopted in October 2018 aims to equip Member States with the evidence-based cooperative mechanism to ensure a healthy marine and coastal environment, thereby advancing regional progress towards achieving ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 Vision is a resilient Northwest Pacific marine and coastal environment, supporting sustainable development for the long-term benefit of present and future generations. The major focus of the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 is on the coordination of the regional implementation of the ocean-related SDGs using NOWPAP mechanism.

4. As NOWPAP is a country-driven programme under UNEP, being implemented by the RCU, RACs, focal points and experts involved, building public awareness is a joint task and commitment borne by all the stakeholders involved. Making NOWPAP itself known to the public is just a part of what the communication strategy should be about. Most importantly, people need to know more what NOWPAP mean to them, what message NOWPAP is conveying and what issues and activities are associated with NOWPAP.

5. Implementation of NOWPAP Communication Strategy should be aligned with the NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 and with the NOWPAP Resource Mobilization Strategy, when approaching the target group of donors. Effective communication and outreach are important means for resource mobilization. Increased mobilization of resources means ultimately that NOWPAP activities have been recognized and donors have trust that NOWPAP projects are beneficial for the region.

6. NOWPAP Communication Strategy (2019) builds upon NOWPAP Public Awareness Building Strategy (2011) and sets the strategic direction for NOWPAP internal and external communication, to accurately reflect current priorities of NOWPAP work, particularly those of the NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 and the MTS Outcome: NOWPAP communications, public advocacy and digital

engagement products better inform, influence and mobilize stakeholders and resources for the protection of marine and coastal environment.

2. Communication objectives

7. Mission:

“Provide accurate, timely, clear and complete information on marine and coastal environmental and relevant development issues in the NOWPAP region to inform target audiences and drive support for the NOWPAP and its work.”

8. Goals

- Strengthen the NOWPAP “image” – reinforce perception of the NOWPAP as the major regional forum for addressing marine environmental issues in the coastal seas of the NW Pacific;
- Provide a “voice” for the NOWPAP senior officials on issues where they reached a consensus – position NOWPAP as a credible entity on important issues related to marine environmental protection and sustainable development in the region;
- Highlight the ways NOWPAP contributes to positive outcomes for the NW Pacific marine and coastal environment, especially through the work of NOWPAP Regional Activity Centers (RACs) and RCU;
- Generate a positive narrative of international and regional cooperation, sustainable development, and environmental protection that reinforces the message that economic, social and environmental benefits of sustainable development in the region and the use of marine resources would not be attained without regional transboundary cooperation.

3. Operational principles

9. NOWPAP (both RCU and RACs) communications *resources are limited and must be deployed wisely*. Programming and outreach efforts will take this into account and, where additional initiatives are deemed appropriate/desirable, will identify additional resources to support them.

10. Successful *external communications depend upon effective internal communications*. With the coordinating role of RCU, NOWPAP entities (NOWPAP Focal Points, RACs Focal Points, RCU and RAC Secretariats) will maintain an active exchange of information and best practices through introducing communication agenda items in regular NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meetings, Meetings of RAC Focal Points and regular RCU and RAC Secretariats meetings.

11. Much of the work produced by the NOWPAP is scientific and technical in nature, while the NOWPAP’s target audiences are diverse. NOWPAP communicators will remain mindful of this, and will *make every effort to adapt the language, format, and tone of their products to best communicate in a clear and concise manner with the audiences they target*.

12. Communication strategy is owned by all major communicators of NOWPAP (NOWPAP Focal Points, RACs Focal Points, RCU and RAC Secretariats) and sharing common responsibility for its implementation in accordance with its comparative advantage.

13. In the event of a disaster or other crisis situation in the marine environment of the NW Pacific (e.g., major oil or chemical spill, any environmental emergency of regional and global importance), media may request for comments from any NOWPAP entity (RCU or RACs). Consensual decision by NOWPAP Focal Points will serve as the primary voice of the NOWPAP for any necessary crisis communications, and media requests will be directed to the NOWPAP RCU, which will redirect them to NOWPAP Focal Points for decision in prior consultation with RAC Directors as appropriate.

14. As the NOWPAP evolves, so too does the communications landscape in which it operates. NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting may choose to call *for a review of Communication Strategy* together with the mid-term and final evaluation of NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023.

4. Target audiences

- **Inhabitants of the NW Pacific region**

15. Keeping those living in the NW Pacific region informed about NOWPAP work increases their understanding of and support for that work. Raising awareness of the NOWPAP work among those living outside the region could help generating support for allocating greater resources to NOWPAP issues

- **Policy- and decision-makers**

16. Policymakers engaged with the NOWPAP (locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally) benefit from a fuller awareness of the NOWPAP assessments and policy recommendations. The NW Pacific marine environment and the NOWPAP's work benefit from the decisions made by well-informed policymakers. Maintaining frequent contacts and information exchange with concerned governmental departments at various levels in the NOWPAP Member States is critical for NOWPAP public awareness building.

- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs)**

17. Regionally and internationally recognized organizations – both taking part as observers in NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meetings and others – play a significant role in shaping opinion about the NOWPAP region and the NOWPAP mechanism itself. NOWPAP is one of the 18 Regional Seas Programmes and its secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). NOWPAP closer association with UNEP provides important communication opportunities regionally and internationally to advance good practices of ocean governance and awareness about marine environmental issues. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue between the NOWPAP and NGOs and IGOs enhances the ability – and opportunities – to amplify messaging on issues of common concern.

- **Scientific and research community**

18. Those researching issues in and related to the NOWPAP region may or may not interact directly with the NOWPAP. Outreach to this group can help ensure that all of those whose work could benefit from a greater awareness of NOWPAP activities or those who could potentially contribute to these activities will have the opportunity to interact directly with the NOWPAP. Recognition of NOWPAP by academic community will give NOWPAP activities more “academic accreditation”, which in turn will help NOWPAP to make its recommendations acceptable by decision-makers. Towards this end, it is imperative to ensure the high academic quality of NOWPAP technical reports and publications.

- **Private sector**

19. NOWPAP engagement with businesses and industries remains limited and on a case by case basis. However, outreach to private sector community having an interest in sustainable development of coastal and marine resources in the NOWPAP region (e.g., resource development, energy, environment, shipping, tourism, and others) can help establish and maintain a dialogue with them on opportunities for sustainable development in the NOWPAP region and raise corporate environmental and social responsibility of those involved.

- **Youth**

20. Younger generation engagement is an important aspect of strengthening the NOWPAP. This area of engagement remains underutilized and should be enhanced to build awareness of the NOWPAP’s work and create a sense of shared community on issues of common concern and interest to young people living in the NOWPASP region.

5. Key Messages

21. *“NOWPAP is the major regional forum for addressing marine environmental issues in the coastal seas of the NW Pacific; it’s where the NOWPAP Member States (Japan, P.R. China, R. Korea and the Russian Federation) come together to assess common transboundary issues and coordinate their response to marine environmental problems in the region.”*

The NOWPAP activities and projects, including two Regional Action Plans (on Marine Litter and on Preparedness and Response to Oil and NHS spills) are all products of collaboration among the four NOWPAP Member States, with the active support of the scientific community.

22. *“NOWPAP, its four Member States and inhabitants of the region address the impacts of human activities on the marine and coastal environment in the region, in a responsible, constructive way that safeguards the environment and the interests of inhabitants.”*

The diverse regions and peoples along the NOWPAP coasts are bound together by a common aspiration for a healthy and prosperous marine and coastal environment, to sustain vibrant communities, and maintaining peace and cooperation in the region.

The NOWPAP mandates for sustainable development and marine environmental protection go hand-in-hand and must be achieved together.

The NOWPAP through its Medium-term Strategy 2018-2023 Vision - A resilient Northwest Pacific marine and coastal environment, supporting sustainable development for the long-term benefit of present and future generations - promotes the resilience of NOWPAP ecosystems and communities.

23. *“Through a network of four specialized Regional Activity Centers and the Regional Coordinating Unit, the NOWPAP conducts a wide range of assessments and projects aimed at developing the knowledge and solutions needed to address the main transboundary questions facing a changing NW Pacific coastal and marine environment (pollution, habitat degradation, biodiversity loss compounded by the impacts of climate change.”*

The NOWPAP marine and coastal environment is undergoing rapid changes, and its Member States and the scientific community are working together through the NOWPAP mechanism to better understand and adapt to these changes.

The NOWPAP develops knowledge and networks that empower the inhabitants of the region to take action to improve their quality of life.

24. *“NOWPAP through its support for regional international cooperation aimed at improved environmental protection and sustainable development contributes to the achievement of ocean-related Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14 and maintaining regional peace and cooperation.”*

25. NOWPAP medium-term priorities are aligned closely with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 14 and could not be achieved without nurturing and strengthening partnerships with relevant national, regional and international institutions.

26. NOWPAP provides an intergovernmental platform facilitating regular cooperation and dialogue among various stakeholders in the region and beyond addressing marine environmental protection and sustainable development that in turn makes an important contribution to maintaining regional peace and prosperity.

6. Communication channels that are being used

27. NOWPAP logo: Logo is intended to be the face of the NOWPAP and is meant to visually communicate the unique identity of the Action Plan (i.e., partnership for people and seas and interconnectedness of actions on land to the state of the marine environment) and what it represents. Logos of NOWPAP RACs should be amended accordingly to have similar “look and feel” to the NOWPAP logo. NOWPAP logo and its derivatives are being used in various printed and online materials produced by NOWPAP.

28. NOWPAP website (<https://www.unenvironment.org/nowpap/>). A new NOWPAP website was launched in December 2018 upgraded from the site established originally in November 2005. NOWPAP website complemented by the websites of NOWPAP RACs remains the most important source of information about NOWPAP activities serving as the first point-of-contact and placing the organization’s offerings on display. The NOWPAP website serves as a conduit to RAC websites, to the NOWPAP’s social media presence, and to the NOWPAP’s public documents. It is maintained and updated by the NOWPAP RCU.

29. Social media: The ability of social media to both amplify messaging and reach key audiences – notably opinion leaders, journalists, and youth – continues to grow. However, effective use of social media requires on-going, real-time interaction that is labor intensive. While investment in social media can pay dividends, that investment must be sustained over the long term to deliver results. The NOWPAP Facebook ([facebook.com/nowpap](https://www.facebook.com/nowpap)) and Twitter (to be established) accounts are managed by the NOWPAP RCU. NOWPAP RACs are encouraged within their capacities to develop own social media accounts managed by their own secretariats.

30. Short videos on key NOWPAP issues could raise interest of the public and stakeholders. Videos are one of the most effective social media tools available. NOWPAP is currently producing several short videos that will be placed on the NOWPAP website and other platforms (YouTube, Vimeo). These short videos could be used at the events with the participation of NOWPAP experts.

31. Traditional media: Regretfully, NOWPAP did not utilize successfully traditional media – television, radio, and print – for outreach and communication efforts. While there are some limitations of the usability of the traditional media to highlight NOWPAP achievements, occasionally and with the release of important technical reports or decisions made by Member States, this communication means have capacity for drawing a wider audience and should be utilized on a case-by-case basis.

32. Press releases: target journalists, media outlets, and key individuals/organizations (e.g., high level officials and donors) to inform them about key NOWPAP news and activities. Press should be invited to participate in key NOWPAP events. This would provide an important channel to engage high level intergovernmental and government officials, scientists and other experts increasing NOWPAP exposure. Contacts should be sought with national television producers and broadcasters in the NOWPAP Member States.

33. Newsletter: NOWPAP News is produced quarterly and a new user-friendly format (using Spark Adobe) was in use since mid-2017. The News are distributed among governmental focal points, research institutes, international organizations, NGOs with past history of engagement with the NOWPAP and allows for open subscription.

34. Events: NOWPAP-related events and symposia (local, national, regional and international) provides a natural platform for the NOWPAP's experts. Seeking out appropriate opportunities to provide NOWPAP speakers for these events both positions NOWPAP as a credible voice on marine environmental issues in the NW Pacific and provides an opportunity for NOWPAP representatives to shape the discussions that take place.

35. Public events could be held jointly with central or local governments, environmental NGOs and other partners, and attractive themes could be chosen to attract media attention. Attendance by senior officials and eminent people in these events is also critical to attract public attention.¹

36. Activities and campaigns initiated by local authorities, NGOs and other organizations can be explored by NOWPAP RCU and RACs for building public awareness and for NOWPAP promotion. Local authorities always play an important role for law enforcement and implementation of national

¹ For example, during the implementation of NOWPAP MALITA (Marine Litter Activity) and RAP MALI (Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter), such public events allowed to attract NOWPAP member states attention and publicize NOWPAP. As one of the activities under MALITA and RAP MALI, promoting the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) in NOWPAP countries has been successful, which led to recognition of marine litter as a trans-boundary issue and brought more wide public participation in ICC campaigns, in particular in China and Russia.

environment plans and have stronger links with local communities. NOWPAP RCU and RACs should be more proactively involved in local workshops, environmental campaigns, exhibitions and other social events in their hosting countries, by e.g., delivering presentations, lectures and speeches.

37. NOWPAP publications and promotional materials: NOWPAP publications (printed and increasingly online) and promotional materials carry the information about the marine environmental issues in the region and are important communication channels for NOWPAP.

7. Communication channels that we need more of...

38. "Ready to use" media materials: To improve further NOWPAP visibility, images and ready-to-use commentaries on a broad range of NOWPAP issues that can be quickly and effectively deployed, would benefit significantly NOWPAP outreach.

39. Graphics: NOWPAP RCU and RACs do not yet produce "infographics" charts and similar materials. Well-designed infographics can convey information quickly and engagingly, lend themselves to sharing via social media. Infographics should become a regular component of NOWPAP efforts to inform and engage target audiences.

40. Fact Sheets: Fact Sheets could provide basic information on specific topics to general audiences. Fact Sheets are particularly useful to those who need quick and easy access to clear, concise and meaningful technical information. Like infographics, they should become a regular component of NOWPAP communications.

41. Policy Brief is a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and it offers recommendations on the best options to take. It is aimed at government policymakers and others who are interested in formulating or influencing policy. Policy briefs should become an integral and mandatory part of any public release of NOWPAP integrated reports. NOWPAP RCU working closely with responsible for publication RACs and experts should take responsibility for producing NOWPAP Policy Briefs.

8. Role of NOWPAP partners in NOWPAP communications

42. Building strong partnerships and relationships with relevant organizations is one of the key factors for the successful implementation of the NOWPAP Communication Strategy. NOWPAP has built partnership arrangements and implemented some joint activities with the key projects and programmes in the region (such as COBSEA, IOC/WESTPAC, PEMSEA, PICES and YSLME Phase II project and others), and such cooperative relationships should be continued, including participation in joint events and meetings, information exchanges and regular updates on NOWPAP activities at the partners' websites.

43. Within the UN system, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP Regional Seas Programme, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA), IOC/WESTPAC and IMO are important partners for the NOWPAP.

Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) secretariats, such as CBD, are also thought to be important partners and their potential in building public awareness needs to be utilized.

44. As the implementation of UNEP Communication Strategy will produce several relevant for NOWPAP toolkits and guidelines (e.g., related to ecosystem services, ecosystem-based management and climate change adaptation), these materials should be used more.