

Meeting summary of COBSEA's Virtual Workshop on Nutrient Pollution

1. On 3 March 2021, COBSEA Secretariat hosted a virtual workshop on nutrient pollution in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) to share draft findings of a desk review on nutrient pollution, invite input to support its finalization, and exchange views on possible future efforts to address nutrient pollution through COBSEA. See Annex 1 for agenda of the webinar and presentations on COBSEA's website¹.
2. Over 20 attendees from seven COBSEA countries participated in the event along with consultants carrying out the desk review, representatives from the GPNM and the COBSEA Secretariat. A list of participants can be found in Annex 2.

Introduction – Mr. Jerker Tamelander, COBSEA Coordinator

3. Mr. Tamelander welcomed participants to workshop. He provided an overview of the agenda and introduced the desk review work. Mr. Tamelander further presented the land-based pollution theme of the COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022 which includes a focus on nutrients, sediments and wastewater. He noted that while the Strategic Direction identifies general measures (identification of sources, prevention, reduction and control) and activities (regional guidelines, policy and information exchange and training) it does not provide further information or analysis to support implementation. As such, the desk review is aimed at compiling information that can be used in the development and implementation of activities through COBSEA, based on the Strategic Directions. The work is carried out in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) with funding from the Ministry of Environment of Sweden. Findings arising from the desk review will be presented to the COBSEA Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) for consideration. Mr. Tamelander emphasized that any follow-up activity must be country driven, and include consultation among all COBSEA countries as well as agreement through the IGM.
4. Mr. Tamelander shared information on rules and regulations related to COBSEA project development and financial resources. He referenced the Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine and Coastal Areas of the East Asian Region (the East Asian Seas Action Plan) which outlines steps recommended for project formulation, development and funding. Mr. Tamelander noted that the aim is to develop major regional projects within existing frameworks and that any project development should be undertaken with full cooperation of the National Focal Points and Secretariat. Financial support for action plan activities may come from the COBSEA Trust Fund, participating governments and governments supporting the action plan as well as UN organizations and other international and regional organizations. Funding must adhere to the UN Financial Rules and Procedures as well as the Financial Rules and Procedures for COBSEA.

Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) – Mr. Mahesh Pradhan, GPNM, UNEP

5. Mr. Pradhan provided an overview of the work of GPNM both globally as well as regionally. GPNM oversees the nutrient pillar under the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). Mr. Pradhan showcased the increased focus on nutrients during the past years resulting in multiple initiatives, reports as well as a UNEA resolution on sustainable nitrogen management. In 2019 a global nitrogen campaign was launched in support of the Colombo Declaration ambition to halve nitrogen waste by 2030. To support implementation of the UNEA4 resolution on a sustainable nitrogen management, an intergovernmental working group on nitrogen management has been established with the participation of over 40 member states. Mr.

¹ <https://www.unep.org/cobsea/events/workshop/nutrient-pollution-workshop>

Pradhan invited COBSEA countries to join the initiative and will circulate the call for focal points to COBSEA countries. The nitrogen working group is also exploring the establishment of an Inter-convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism which aims to harmonize nutrient work across conventions. Several GEF-projects further target nutrients, such as the project Towards International Nitrogen Management System (INMS) in which 60 institutions are collaborating. One of the INMS outputs is the international nitrogen assessment report, which is expected to be launched in 2022. Another GEF-project which has been completed, the Global Nutrient Cycling, produced an Ecosystem Health Scorecard which has been applied in the Philippines in the context of Laguna Bay. Mr. Pradhan further gave an overview of work carried out with and through Regional Seas programmes. In collaboration with the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), a South Asia Nitrogen Hub was established through support from the UK. Likewise, the Cartagena Convention is finalizing a regional nutrient reduction plan. Other ongoing GPNM work includes input to the United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021 and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

Draft nutrient pollution desk review – Ms. Connie Chiang and Ms. Saisunee Chaksuin

6. Ms. Chiang presented the draft nutrient study including methodology and preliminary results. She noted that the main sources of nitrogen and phosphorus in the region derive from land-based activities and are transported to coastal and marine environments via rivers. Major impacts of nutrients in the region include eutrophication, loss of biodiversity and negative effects on tourism. Ms. Chiang described that almost all COBSEA countries have specific targets for nutrient and pollution reduction as well as monitoring programmes in coastal areas. Proposed regional responses to address better nutrient management include a regional strategy, guidelines and/or action plan; support towards monitoring and assessment; further research and knowledge sharing; stronger integration and coordination; as well as establishing an expert working group. The responses are based on gap findings and can leverage existing regional and global measures, projects and tools. Ms. Chiang thanked national experts from COBSEA countries for providing valuable input during the fact-finding phase of the study and expressed her appreciation towards written comments on the draft desk study submitted by COBSEA countries.

Input from COBSEA countries – Representatives from COBSEA countries

7. All participating COBSEA countries expressed their support to the work and provided input to the draft desk study. Countries acknowledged the challenge of nutrient pollution in the region and the importance to focus on this topic. A suggestion was made to focus primarily on regional rather than national settings and to ensure solutions and policy suggestions are clearly aligned with identified gaps. It was further suggested that responses should benefit local communities and include elements of public awareness. One country noted the need to present the report for consideration at COBSEA's IGM prior to deciding upon follow-up actions deriving on the basis of the report.
8. Indonesia recommended engaging regional mechanisms, including the Regional Capacity Center for Clean Seas (RC3S), to take a role in relation to the study and the nutrient work. Presented options included providing a service point for knowledge management and other data-related needs for the region; storing and mirroring regionally agreed open data sources; as well as serving as a platform offering technical assistance and information on pollution management.

Suggested follow-up and closing – Mr. Jerker Tamelander, COBSEA Coordinator

9. Countries yet to submit written comments on the draft desk review and/or answers to the questionnaire on nutrient pollution and governance measures were encouraged to do so. The draft desk review will be revised on the basis of country input. Once revised, the draft report will be circulated again to COBSEA countries for additional comments. The final draft version of the desk review will be presented to IGM 25 for consideration. A discussion on further action on nutrient pollution to be pursued through COBSEA will be held on the basis of the nutrient report and IGM outcomes.

Annex 1. Agenda

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>
14:00	Welcome and opening remarks	COBSEA Coordinator
14.05	Presentation of GPNM and work in other Regional Seas	Mahesh Pradhan, GPNM, UNEP
14.15	Presentation of the draft nutrient pollution desk review	Consultants
14.35	Input from COBSEA countries (3-5 min per country)	Representatives from COBSEA countries
15.30	Discussion including suggested follow-up	
15.55	Summary and closing	COBSEA coordinator

Annex 2. List of Participants

<i>COBSEA country</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
People's Republic of China	Dr. Pei Xiangbin	Director, Department of Marine Ecology and Environment, Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE)
	Dr. Liu Guozhi	Director Level, Department of International Cooperation, MEE
	Dr. Zhang Yang	Research Associate, Department of Marine Ecology and Environment, MEE
	Ms. Fu Yulin	Senior Programme Manager, Department of International Cooperation, MEE
	Dr. Yu Yunjun	Research Scientist, South China Institute of Environmental Sciences, MEE
Indonesia	Mr. Dida Migfar Ridha	Director for Coastal and Marine Pollution and Degradation Control, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF)
	Ms. Rotua Lelawaty Simamora	Senior Environmental Impact Control Officer, MoEF
	Ms. Arum Prajanti	Senior Environmental Impact Control Officer, MoEF
	Mr. Tedi Bagus Prasetyo Mulyo	Programme and Cooperation Officer, MoEF
Republic of Korea	Dr. Ario Damar	Assoc. Prof. Department of Aquatic Resources Management, IPB University Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences, IPB University Indonesia
	Mr. Won Keun Chang	Research Fellow, Korea Maritime Institute
Malaysia	Ms. Norina anak Frederick Sambang	Department of Environment
	Mr. Khairul Nizam	Department of Environment
	Ms. Malisa Mat Noor	Ministry of Environment and Water (KASA)
Philippines	Ms. Michiko Sibunga	Engineer II, Environmental Management Bureau, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
	Engr. Angelo Tagacay	Water Quality Management Staff, DENR
	Mr. Niño Pinalva	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
	Mr. Salvador Bataller, Jr.	Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Singapore	Ms. Nuraini bte Supaat	Deputy Principal Scientific Office, National Environment Agency
Thailand	Dr. Jiraporn Chareonwattanaporn	Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
	Ms. Jirarat Riamchareon	Department of Marine and Coastal Resources

	Ms. Wimalin Klaewtanong	Environmentalist Senior Professional Level, Pollution Control Department, Water Quality Management Division
	Ms. Wilawan Thanatemaneeerat	Environmentalist Professional Level, Pollution Control Department, Water Quality Management Division
COBSEA Secretariat	Mr. Jerker Tamelander	COBSEA Coordinator
	Ms. Katrin Eitrem Holmgren	Associate Programme Officer
	Ms. Krittika Kleesuwan	Programme Assistant
GPNM	Mr. Mahesh Pradhan	GPNM Coordinator
	Ms. Milcah Ndegwa	Associate GPNM Officer
Consultants	Ms. Connie Chiang	Consultant - Lead Researcher
	Ms. Saisunee Chaksuin	Consultant - Assisting Researcher