



**United Nations
Environment
Programme**



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**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 has developed a set of indicators for the Transboundary Waters Assessment Programme, targeting Large Marine Ecosystems and Open Ocean, but there is 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 |

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|-------------|---|---------------------------|
| | Reference Discussion | |
| 1000-1030 | Presentation of the proposed indicator matrix comments | UNEP DEWA Participants |
| 1030-1045 | Coffee/tea break | UNEP |
| 1045-1230 | 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 | |