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Twenty-fifth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-25) of NEASPEC

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Virtual meeting

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda)

Air Pollution

Note by the Secretariat

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Annex II. Report of the fourth Meeting of NEACAP Science and Policy Committee

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Launched at the 22nd Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-22) of NEASPEC in 2018, member States have taken steady steps to institutionalize the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP). In accordance with the Terms of Reference (TOR) of NEACAP, member States designated national experts and research institutions, respectively, as the Science and Policy Committee (SPC) members and Technical Centers (TCs) of NEACAP and convened the first Meeting of SPC (SPC-1) in July 2019 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, to discuss the operation of NEACAP including its priority programme areas. The meeting presented its conclusion report (*NEASPEC/SOM (23)/1, Annex I*)¹ together with draft Rules of Procedure, respectively, for NEACAP SPC, TCs and Working Groups at SOM-23 in October 2019. The SOM-23 adopted the Rules of Procedure and requested the SPC to initiate extensive discussions on the priority areas and develop possible workplans to be provisionally agreed upon by member States before the SOM-24.

2. Subsequently, the second Meeting of SPC (SPC-2) was held virtually on 2-3 June 2020. The meeting discussed the priority areas of NEACAP and their overall goals and activities. After intensive discussions and further consultations during June-August 2020, SPC-2 agreed on its recommendations, including the draft NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025. The draft Work Plan categorized NEACAP activities into two groups: Category I activities that can be started without specific intensive preparatory work and provide immediate benefits for member States, and Category II activities that build scientific approaches for policy making but require scientific and collaborative preparation. SPC-2 proposed Category I activity on “Policy and Technology Cooperation (PTC)” to be the priority for NEACAP from 2021 to 2025 and suggested methodological research and capacity building for Category II activities to be further discussed.

3. Member States adopted the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 at the SOM-24 held virtually in October 2020. The Work Plan provided a list of indicative activities on PTC, including (a) proposing potential technical and policy measures, (b) organizing policy dialogue, (c) conducting policy analysis on air pollution management, (d) supporting voluntary collaboration on the Best Available Techniques, and (e) supporting technology forum on emerging technologies and deployment. The SOM-24 also agreed that the implementation of the Work Plan is further consulted among member States on the specific area and process of each activity.

¹ The documents are available at: <http://www.neaspec.org/article/neaspec-23rd-senior-officials-meeting-som>

II. OUTCOME OF NEACAP SPC-3

4. Following the decision of the SOM-24, the third Meeting of NEACAP SPC (SPC-3) was held virtually in April 2021 to discuss the specific topics and modalities of PTC activities and formulate its recommendation on the priority areas of Category II activities. Based on the Background Paper on the Policy and Technology Cooperation (*NEACAP/SPC(3)/1*) prepared by the Secretariat, the SPC-3 reached its conclusion of the discussion on specific topics and modality of Category I and recommendations on Category II priority areas (see Annex I).

Topics of Category I activities and modalities

5. SPC-3 recommended two specific outputs to be developed as per the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025. Regarding “Output 1” on the policy components, SPC-3 proposed implementing policy analysis and policy dialogue in a mutually supportive way, with the outcome of a “policy analysis report”, which could be prepared by 2022 and published by 2023. SPC-3 also recommended organizing two policy dialogues in consultation with member Governments.

6. SPC-3 advised taking a step-by-step approach to start the PTC activities with the policy components. It recognized the importance of involving experts from each member States, with further discussions needed on the formation of the expert group to substantiate the PTC activities. SPC-3 recommended that an expert team be established to conduct the policy analysis as appropriate, and the experts could be nominated in accordance with national procedures.

7. SPC-3 suggested policy analysis on NEACAP priority air pollutants such as PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and ozone, taking into account the different and common conditions among the countries as reference for strengthening policy exchange and collaboration and review the policy progress and challenges in each country. The policy analysis would include a review of country situation and existing research with regard to volatile organic compounds (VOCs), ammonia (NH₃), and others, if available.

8. SPC-3 agreed that “Output 2”, on collaboration on technology components, should work on a review paper as a reference for understanding current processes and voluntary cooperation on Best Available Techniques (BAT).

Recommendation on Category II priority areas

9. SPC-3 noted that the potential priority area of Category II needs further discussion. It also noted that the importance of capacity development and the scientific and collaborative preparation could be considered for further discussion.

10. SPC-3 recommended that capacity development work can be conducted as appropriate by providing assistance for experts/ persons from NEACAP member countries to learn experiences and methodological matters of Category II, which could be decided on the case-by-case basis following the normal practice of NEASPEC.

11. SPC-3 noted that the Secretariat, based on the conclusion and recommendation of the meeting, will develop the plan of the identified PTC activities with a budget which will be consulted with national focal points and reported to member Governments at the SOM-25.

Follow-up to SPC-3 and Activity Implementation

12. The Secretariat shared the Outcome of SPC-3 (NEASPEC/NFP/4) with member Governments for consideration and guidance at the Meeting of NEASPEC National Focal Points (NFP) held virtually in May 2021. Member Governments agreed that the Secretariat prepare an SPC-3 meeting report based on the text agreed upon at the SPC-3 and develop a guideline on the nomination of experts for Category I before the next SPC and NFP meeting for further consultation with SPC and member Governments.

13. Subsequently, the Secretariat prepared a draft Expert Nomination Guideline for NEACAP Policy Analysis Report, draft TORs for an international and national expert consultants on the policy analysis, and the TOR for an international consultant on BAT, and shared with the SPC members and member Governments in July 2021.

14. The Secretariat made the job opening announcement for the international consultants for during September-October 2021 and hired two international experts from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) and the Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific of the Asian Institute of Technology (RRCAP-AIT) for the Policy Analysis Report and the BAT review paper, respectively, in accordance with the ESCAP Rules and Regulations on consultants. As senior researchers of the institutions that facilitate various international research projects, the two experts are expected to bring a great wealth of knowledge and experience to the planned work.

15. To bridge the time gap between the SOM-24 in 2020 and the SOM-25, which was postponed from December 2021 to September 2022, a meeting of NFP was organized virtually on 7 April 2022. The meeting requested the Secretariat to circulate two concept notes of the policy analysis report and the BAT review paper to NFP for member Governments' review and ad-hoc approvals.

16. With the ad-hoc approval on the concepts by the member Governments, the SPC-4 was organized virtually on 30 June 2022 and discussed the draft consultation points on the policy analysis report and policy dialogues and the voluntary collaboration on BAT and exchanged views on the ideas of activities for 2024 and 2025 (see Annex II).

III. OUTCOME OF NEACAP SPC-4

Draft workplan for the policy analysis report and policy dialogues

17. The SPC-4 advised adjusting the suggested timelines for drafting by the expert group and reviewing by member States and suggested organizing the 1st Policy Dialogue to review the draft report in conjunction with the 5th SPC meeting in 2023 if the draft is ready and the 2nd Policy Dialogue in later 2023 or early 2024 depending on the progress of the report. The Committee advised that the launch of the finalized report, including the executive summary, be pursued in 2024, in conjunction with a major event in the region and consider translating the executive summary for policymakers into the languages of the member States of NEASPEC.

Work plan for voluntary BAT collaboration

18. The SPC-4 was informed of the plan to present the progress and preliminary findings of the draft BAT review paper at the SOM-25 in 2022 and recommended that the draft paper would be circulated for review by the SPC members and for review and approval by the NEASPEC member States and finalized in 2023.

Activities for 2024-2025

19. The SPC-4 noted that the Secretariat plans to organize technology forum(s) or workshop(s) in 2024 or 2025, based on the policy analysis report and the BAT review paper, including emerging technologies. The SPC-4 recommended conducting the mid-term review of NEACAP in 2023 and suggested considering preparatory works such as a preliminary stock-taking study on potential priority areas of Category II for discussion at SPC-5 in 2023.

Other issues

20. The SPC-4 proposed an amendment of item 6.1 of the Rules and Procedures for the Science and Policy Committee of the NEACAP on the rotation of the SPC chairpersonship, following the common practice of the Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. The proposed amendment is reported as Annex III.

IV. FOLLOW-UPS OF SPC-4

21. The Secretariat resumed consulting with member Governments to complete the nomination of national experts for the policy analysis report. The Secretariat is ready to support the preparation of the policy analysis report in collaboration with the expert team, including national experts nominated by member States and SPC members during 2022 and beyond. The work will involve (a) holding an inception meeting to discuss the outline and a detailed preparation plan, (b) conducting country analyses for inputs, (c) facilitating a review by experts and policymakers on the draft report, and (d) finalizing the report in early 2024. In this regard, member Governments are requested to nominate national experts to prepare the report, if not done.

22. The Secretariat has been working with the engaged consultant on the review of BAT policies as a reference for voluntary cooperation among member States. The Secretariat was also invited to join the OECD Expert Group on BAT in November 2021 and the BAT webinar in June 2022, which are participated by experts from the OECD and non-OECD countries, including China and the Russian Federation. The OECD Expert Group has accumulated solid experiences that NEASPEC could utilize for supporting cooperation among member States on, for example, BAT policies, approaches and effectiveness. Thus, the Secretariat will continue to engage with the OECD on potential collaboration.

23. Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the SPC-4, the Secretariat would like to propose the activity plan for 2022-2023, as presented in Annex IV.

24. Concerning the policy dialogue, the Work Plan 2021-2025 indicates holding dialogues for exchanging information and policy experience in collaboration with the relevant processes, such as the Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Air Pollution (TPDAP) of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The benefit of collaborating with TPDAP has been further discussed during SPC meetings.

25. The Secretariat has also supported the inception of the Technical and Training Program (TNT Program) on air quality management by a NEACAP Technical Center, the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) of the Republic of Korea. The NIER initiated the programme in 2021 with a two-month course by inviting all member States to nominate participants. The Secretariat and NIER received nominations of one government official and two experts from Mongolia. Due to the travel restrictions under the COVID-19 pandemic, only one government official could attend the course. With the lessons learnt from the first-year programme, the NIER has offered more diverse courses between 2, 4 and 8

weeks starting in May and August 2022, respectively, to accommodate applicants' different needs and conditions.

V. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

26. The Meeting may wish to request member States the following:
- (a) Complete the nomination of national experts for the NEACAP policy analysis, if not yet done;
 - (b) Provide continued support and guidance on the work of NEACAP. This includes contributions of Technical Centers in operationalizing the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 by initiating voluntary training programmes and providing needed resources, including and not limited to in-kind contributions;
 - (c) Support collaboration between NEACAP and relevant mechanisms and announce their intended contributions to the work of NEACAP, and request China, Japan and the Republic of Korea to support linking the policy dialogue with TPDAP; and
 - (d) Consider hosting the next NEACAP SPC meeting, Policy Dialogues and other meetings concerning activities in the Work Plan.
27. The Meeting may wish to review and approve the following:
- (a) The proposed amendment to the Rules of Procedures of the NEACAP Science and Policy Committee (Annex III); and
 - (b) The proposed activity plan for 2022-2023 (Annex IV).

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