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THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF NEASPEC

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Note by the Secretariat

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I. BACKGROUND

A. NEASPEC mandate / objectives

1. NEASPEC was established in 1993 as a follow up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in 1992, reflecting the recognition of the needs for subregional cooperation in addressing the environmental issues, including those that are not confined to national boundaries.¹

2. One key message repeatedly emphasized since the establishment is that NEASPEC should take step-by-step approach around agreed priority areas, focusing on practical activities that would yield tangible results² - simple and easy-to-comprehend activities.³

3. *“Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)”* was adopted at SOM-3 in 1996 and consequently endorsed by the ESCAP 53rd Commission as ESCAP resolution (53/3). The Framework sets out an operational framework as well as its objectives and commitment. It reaffirms the commitment of the participating countries to promote subregional cooperation to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development in North-East Asia (through NEASPEC). It thus spells out the principal objective of the Programme as “to promote subregional environmental cooperation and sustainable development efforts for enhancement of quality of life and well-being of present and future generations in line with the spirit of UNCED”.⁴ It also envisages that NEASPEC to play a key role in enhancing capacity of the participating countries in environmental management efforts through subregional cooperation.

4. *Vision Statement* for NEASPEC⁵ was adopted at SOM-6 in 2000 and provides policy guidance to NEASPEC in the 21st Century”.⁶ The statement calls on participating countries to “promote common policy dialogue on approaches and views and coordinated actions on subregional environmental issues”. It also agreed to develop NEASPEC into a comprehensive programme for environmental cooperation in North-East Asia.

5. Although a Framework and a Vision Statement were developed, it was considered premature to formulate a strategy for subregional cooperation “(...) since it required definition of future prospects after careful and extensive consideration based on the evolution of the subregional cooperation in North-East Asia over time”.⁷ With passage of time, however, the need to develop a long-term vision and a strategy for subregional

¹ Para 5 SOM-1 report

² Para 13 SOM-1 report

³ Para 5 SOM-1 report, etc

⁴ Para 3.1, SOM-3 Report Annex

⁵ *Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia*, dated 9-10 March 2000, Seoul, RoK

⁶ Para 3 SOM-6 report

⁷ Para 20, SOM-3 report on Framework

cooperation is increasingly recognized,⁸ and SOM-18 agreed on formulating long term strategic plan by SOM-20.

B. Other subregional environmental programmes in the Asia-Pacific region

6. NEASPEC is unique in a sense that it is the “Only framework of its kind in the subregion for modest but practical environmental cooperation”.^{9,10} There are environmental cooperation programmes in other subregions in Asia-Pacific, such as the ASEAN Environment Programme (ASEP), Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) for Central Asia,¹¹ and the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) and the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). Other subregions, however, have some established subregional cooperation frameworks in areas other than environment. For instance, ASEP is one of the programmes of ASEAN,¹² which is an established entity as a group in South East Asia envisioning integration of the subregion, currently taking steps towards the creation of ASEAN Economic Community in 2015. SACEP consists of the same members as SAARC,¹³ an inter-governmental economic and geopolitical cooperation framework in South Asia. SPREP’s membership coverage is similar to other inter-governmental organizations in the South Pacific, such as Forum Secretariat and South Pacific Community.¹⁴ Similarly, there are various cooperation mechanisms in Central Asia, reflecting historical ties among countries in the subregion.

C. Other players in the field

7. From the outset, NEASPEC has been expected to work in partnership with relevant entities for its programme activities as well as for its secretariat support. The first SOM was organized in cooperation with ESCAP, UNDP and UNEP in 1993. The Vision Statement for NEASPEC,¹⁵ adopted at SOM-6, envisages NEASPEC to seek support from those UN agencies as well as multilateral financial institutions such as ADB and the World Bank. The Statement also seeks to forge partnership with ongoing initiatives, e.g., Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO-ASIA), Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), and the Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP, now GTI - Greater Tumen Initiative). For instance, SOM-4 emphasized the importance of cooperation and complementarity with Tumen River

⁸ Para 27, SOM-11 report

⁹ Para2, SOM-5 report

¹⁰ Para 20, SOM-15 report (proceedings)

¹¹ http://ec-ifas.waterunites-ca.org/ara_basin/institutions/mkur/index.html

¹² <http://www.asean.org/>

¹³ <http://www.saarc-sec.org/>

¹⁴ <http://www.spc.int/>

¹⁵ *Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia*, dated 9-10 March 2000, Seoul, RoK

Area Development Programme.¹⁶ SOM-8 also recommended that representatives from those relevant initiatives be invited to NEASPC SOM for exchange of information.¹⁷ Membership and key focus areas of some of these initiatives are provided in Annex I.

II. NEASPEC IN THE CURRENT CONTEXT

A. Growing urgency to address environmental issues

8. North-East Asia is one of the most dynamic economies in the world, and not surprisingly faces a number of challenges ranging from water shortage, land degradation, desertification, sandstorms, climate change and others.¹⁸

9. With intensifying environmental challenges, there is a growing sense of urgency among the countries in the subregion on the need to address environment issues as one of the key elements affecting long-term development as well as the need for subregional cooperation. For instance, SOM-5 recognized “the urgent need for exchanges of views on policy matters among the neighboring countries for environmental protection and sustainable development for which the North-East Asian countries had accumulated valuable experience and expertise. Those should be fully utilized for promoting further cooperation.”¹⁹

10. Modalities of the current programmes of NEASPEC (details provided as Annex II) focuses on sharing experiences and building capacities of the common environmental issues for which subregional member states see practical benefits for cooperation. Key question is how NEASPEC should strengthen its programmes – concentrate on the modalities and areas of the current programme areas or broaden the scope of the programme. (*Questions 4 and 5 in Section III*)

B. Beyond environmental cooperation

11. The recognition of the needs and benefits of subregional cooperation in environmental issues was a major motivation for establishment of NEASPEC.²⁰ Some countries view that the environmental cooperation also offers a gateway for a broader subregional cooperation in North-East Asia. The importance of NEASPEC has been emphasized as a unique platform for all the North-East Asian countries to promote

¹⁶ Para 16, SOM-4 Report

¹⁷ Para 28, SOM-8 report

¹⁸ Para 19, SOM-16 report, (proceedings)

¹⁹ Para3, SOM-5 Report

²⁰ Para 25 of SOM 17 report - on policy issues for sustainable development in North-East Asia

cooperation on environment and development issues, as well as NEASPEC's role in promoting sustainable development.²¹

12. In the preparatory process of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), SOM-16 had a subregional consultation on Rio+20 to formulate and provide subregional inputs. The Chair's Summary of the SOM-16 noted some possible areas of mutual interest for subregional cooperation, which include: mainstreaming sustainable development into national development plans; exchanging information and best practices on environmental legislation, regulation and development of economic instruments; and promoting multi-stakeholder involvement in sustainable development.

13. The question is whether NEASPEC views it as a long-term strategy to broaden the scope of its focus beyond environmental cooperation, and to serve as a platform to facilitate concerted inputs and discussions of subregional member States on the decisions of Rio+20 and key international outcomes of post Rio+20. (*Questions 1 and 6 of the Section III*)

C. NEASPEC in subregional, regional and global context

Subregional context

14. As mentioned above, there are some subregional level frameworks related to environment which covers a subset of NEASPEC members or include them together with countries in other subregions (Annex I). NEASPEC needs to strengthen the link with these initiatives and identify areas of complementarity. For instance, the significance of promoting policy guidance role of NEASPEC by creating linkages with the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Korea (TEMM)²² was noted, while more productive dialogue was called for at the programme level in such areas as dust and sandstorms and transboundary air pollution.^{23,24}

Regional context

15. ESCAP subregional office reports to the ESCAP Commission Sessions on its activities including its function as NEASPEC secretariat and related activities. While

²¹ Para 20, SOM-15 report (proceedings)

²² Para 27, SOM-11 report

²³ Para 18, SOM-15 report

²⁴ "The 16th Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting took place in Daegu during 28-29 April. In addition to acknowledging key developments in their countries, the Meeting also adopted nine new priority areas for tripartite environmental cooperation for the period from 2015 to 2019 including air quality improvement, climate change response, and transition to green economy. The key developments acknowledged from the three countries are: Realizing sustainable environmental welfare and creating new value from environment - Korea; strengthening environmental legal system and promoting ecological civilization to make new achievements with emphasis on air pollution treatment - China; and Comprehensive measures on PM2.5 and development of climate change mitigation - Japan."

NEASPEC serves like an operational arm of ESCAP in North-East Asia focusing on environmental matters,²⁵ SOM remains as NEASPEC's highest decision making body, which gives direction and makes decision on NEASPEC programmes.

16. ***Implementing regional agenda at subregional level:*** ESCAP holds *ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED)* every 5 years, with the latest held in 2010 in Astana, Kazakhstan. While ministries represented at MCED is not necessarily environment ministry alone and NEASPEC is not defined as a subsidiary nor parallel entity of MCED, Ministerial-level decisions on environment and development issues are certainly directly relevant to the direction of NEASPEC programmes. For instance, SOM-7 supported ESCAP resolution 57/2, "Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000". It encouraged active participation of NEASPEC members in the implementation of the recommendations of MCED 2000, notably Regional Action Programme, 2001-2005, including its priority implementation mechanism, Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment.²⁶ As for MCED 2005 as well, SOM-11 recognized the importance of developing subregion-specific activities, as follow up to the major outcome of the MCED 2005, while tailoring it to meet the specific needs of the subregion.²⁷

17. ***Formulating subregional perspective in the regional process:*** With suggestions at SOM-9 and proposal by the Government of the ROK, an informal meeting of Ministers of Environment in North-East Asia was held during MCED2005 to take advantage of ministerial level representation at the Conference and to promote NEASPEC programme.²⁸ Based on experience of this gathering, SOM-11 suggested the member countries to express their views on occasional ministerial gatherings on an informal basis in the margin of other ministerial forums".²⁹ NEASPEC will gradually need to consider how it links with regional forums on environmental issues. (*Question 2 in Section III*)

Global context - from Rio to Rio+20 and Sustainable development goals

18. NEASPEC has operated in line with the internationally agreed sustainable development goals while it had contributed to provide subregional perspective to the global discussion on sustainable development, mostly through ESCAP.

19. At its establishment, Agenda 21 is referred to as general policy guidance on subregional cooperation.³⁰ NEASPEC's Framework (adopted in SOM-3) was submitted to

²⁵ Para 23, SOM-16 (proceedings)

²⁶ Para 1, SOM-7 report

²⁷ Para 8, SOM-11 report

²⁸ Para 9, SOM-9 report

²⁹ Para 4, SOM-11 conclusion

³⁰ Para 20, Report of EGM to SOM-2

ESCAP 53rd session and consequently adopted as resolution (53/3) and transmitted to Special Session of the UNGA on mid-term review of Agenda 21 (1998) for information.³¹

20. For the Rio+20 preparation process, pro-active contribution of NEASPEC was proposed as some countries “wishes to expand the scope of cooperation within NEASPEC and highlighted that NEASPEC should contribute to the preparation process of the Rio+20 by consolidating political will and determination in the subregion”.³²

21. SOM-17 in 2012 reviewed the outcome of Rio+20 concluded in the same year.³³ Noting that NEASPEC has its origins in the Rio conference focusing on sustainable development, NEASPEC saw general consensus on the need for the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome at regional, subregional, and national levels.

22. Rio+20 outcome and proposed formulation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have now merged with the on-going discussion on post-2015 development agenda, which is to succeed Millennium Development Goals. While such approach ensures that pressing policy issues such as persistent poverty and intensifying environmental problems are addressed together within the overarching framework of sustainable development, it poses a significant challenge of developing meaningful set of goals covering multi-faceted issues of sustainable development.

23. The latest list of proposed Sustainable Development Goals (outcome of Open Working Group³⁴) includes some goals that are directly or indirectly relevant to the current NEASPEC programmes.³⁵

24. The current NEASPEC programmes concentrate on the practical and easy-to-comprehend activities and thus focus on narrowly defined technical cooperation. Given the expected contribution of NEASPEC to environment, and more broadly to sustainable development, a question arises as to how NEASPEC projects its programmes in the sustainable development framework, i.e., to what extent the programmes can or should cast light on socio-economic aspects.

³¹ Recommendation by SOM-3

³² Para 22 SOM-16 report (proceedings – Korean intervention)

³³ Para 15 SOM-17 report

³⁴ <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

³⁵ For instance; (Goal 11) Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); (Goal 12) Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; (Goal 14). Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; (Goal 15). Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; (Goal 17). Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

III. LONG-TERM NEASPEC STRATEGY

25. With the above background in mind, the following section poses various questions to NEASPEC member States for its guidance on a long-term NEASPEC strategy, which will be proposed for adoption in the SOM-20 in 2015.

A. Vision/Strategic Priorities

26. In setting the strategic priorities, key question is what issues are best addressed at regional/subregional level, and whether it is desirable and feasible. It may be categorized into 3 types of cooperation as follows;

- (a) *Mutual support to deal with domestic environmental issues* – for example, capacity building for managing environmental challenges such as dust and sandstorms
- (b) *Coordinated policy/actions to minimize borderless environmental issues* – for example, policy coordination for transboundary air pollution, transboundary nature conservation
- (c) *Global environmental debate* – for example, formulating (sub) regional perspective for Rio+20

(a) Mutual support to deal with domestic environmental issues

27. One of the views is that NEASPEC should continue promoting sustainable development in North-East Asia through an action-oriented, pragmatic approach to cooperation.³⁶ Major modality for this type of cooperation would be sharing experiences and assisting other members to build capacities to address the domestic environmental issues. Such programmes can also develop tools and mechanisms to share knowledge with other subregions. Many of the current NEASPEC activities fall into this category. Question is in what areas and how to strengthen this type of activities. (Relevant questions under “programme areas”)

(b) Coordinated policy/actions to minimize borderless environmental issues

28. NEASPEC was initiated as an overarching forum to discuss all issues on environment in the subregion. Successful cooperation in transboundary air pollution projects encouraged broadening the areas of NEASPEC programmes, reflecting the common interest of the member countries. There has been some view that NEASPEC can also be an effective forum of common policy dialogue on issues related to climate change, nature

³⁶ Para 11, SOM-10 report (proceedings – China’s intervention)

conservation, etc.³⁷ Question is whether NEASPEC envisages developing into forum of policy dialogue and in what areas.

(c) Global environmental debate

29. Subregional mechanism would be an effective channel to transmit the subregional perspectives to regional or global discourse on environment / sustainable development. NEASPEC, when the occasions arise, have made an efforts to discuss on subregional perspective and transmit it to the regional / global fora, as described above.

30. As described above, regional and global debate is placing much stronger emphasis on integration of environment, social and economic dimensions for a sustainable future. This is a shift away from sustainable development debate that was traditionally seen primarily as environment related discussion. NEASPEC SOM, in its discussion on institutional framework for sustainable development in preparation of the Rio+20, noted the need for governments to scale-up their efforts to mainstream sustainable development into their national development agenda and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. The SOM also took note of the view that “the issues of sustainable development need to be addressed at multiple levels with attention to horizontal and vertical integration and with participation of various stakeholders”.³⁸

31. Question posed in formulating the long-term strategy of NEASPEC is whether / how to institutionalize the link between the subregional discussion and regional / global fora. Another question is how to internalize the global / regional debate on sustainable development and reflect them into NEASPEC programme.

1. *How NEASPEC programmes should respond to the global call to pay more attention to sustainable development perspective?*
2. *Should NEASPEC institutionalizes the link with MCED (or any other ministerial forum) and incorporate its decision?*
3. *With increasing sense of urgency to integrate environmental, social and economic dimensions, as reflected in the ongoing process of formulating Sustainable Development Goals, how the NEASPEC programmes should be recast?*

³⁷ Para 13, SOM-9 report

³⁸ Para 12, Annex I. Chair’s Summary: National and Subregional Activities and Processes in Preparation of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (SOM16)

B. Programme areas

32. As of 2014, NEASPEC's activities are conducted in the following 5 major programme areas. Description of objectives and activities are provided in Annex II.

- (a) Nature conservation
- (b) Transboundary air pollution
- (c) Dust and sandstorms
- (d) Marine protected areas
- (e) Eco-efficiency partnership

These programmes have evolved reflecting the priority areas of the subregion as well as NEASPEC's overall approach to focus on practical activities that lead to tangible results.

33. Member States are invited to provide guidance on the strategic target of the current programmes for the next 5 to 10 years, in particular in light of the type of subregional cooperation described above. Member States are also invited to provide guidance on emerging areas of concern that should be incorporated in the NEASPEC programme. Possible strategic targets are provided below as examples, while SOM is expected to provide ultimate guidance and decision on the targets.

- *Coordinated policy for nature conservation:* By 2025, NEASPEC members will have fully operationalized multilateral/bilateral frameworks for the coordination of policies, plans or programmes for each of the selected endangered species in the subregion, with enhanced transboundary cooperation among all stakeholders.
- *Mutual support and coordination for transboundary air pollution:* By 2020, fully operationalize a subregional framework on transboundary air pollution to facilitate information sharing, joint study and cooperation among Member States.
- *Mutual support for dust and sandstorm:* By 2025, NEASPEC members will fully implement the Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms with revisions to reflect changes in domestic and subregional situation.
- *Mutual support for Marine Protected Areas:* By 2025, the NEAMPAN will have done the first round of scientific and policy assessment for the target MPAs to improve their management effectiveness.

4. *What are the areas and modalities that need to be strengthened in the current NEASPEC programmes?*

5. *In light of emerging challenges, are there any issues that need to be covered by future NEASPEC programmes?*

6. *How should the NEASPEC be strengthened its role in subregional cooperation?*

C. Strategy for partnership

34. Besides the partners in the subregion described above, there have been various partners/potential partners in NEASPEC operation. Cooperation with various projects or networks was also suggested in the past, for instance, collaboration with Global Environmental Facility partners with regard to NEASPEC project on dust and sandstorms.³⁹

35. However, such institutional and financial supports have been somewhat limited to ADB which was the key source of NEASPEC activities on transboundary air pollution, while technical collaboration is maintained with specialized entities focusing on specific themes such as dust and sandstorms, nature conservation, etc. The SOM is invited to provide guidance on organizations/institutions with which NEASPEC should forge strategic partnerships.

7. What is the long-term goal of NEASPEC in respect to partnership with other organizations / institutions / networks? In what areas new or enhanced partnership is desirable and feasible?

IV. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT OF NEASPEC

A. NEASPEC Secretariat

36. SOM-15 in 2010 recommended that the secretariat function to be carried out by the ESCAP ENEA office.⁴⁰ Subsequently, ESCAP ENEA Office was designated as permanent secretariat of NEASPEC in 2011 at 67th session of ESCAP Commission.⁴¹ There has been a general consensus on the need for strengthening the capacity of NEASPEC Secretariat, including human resource situation through secondment of national experts and/or Junior Professional Officers, as well as the need for expanding its partnership with other relevant mechanisms and programmes.⁴²

B. Governing body of NEASPEC

37. The Senior Officials Meeting acts as the governing body,⁴³ providing overall policy guidance and decision on project coordination and management. Meanwhile, discussions on strengthening the institutional mechanism of NEASPEC have reviewed recommendations on strengthening the political commitment to upgrading SOM to the ministerial level and

³⁹ Mentioned in the para 9 SOM 8 report

⁴⁰ Para 7, SOM15 report

⁴¹ Para 15, SOM 16 (proceedings)

⁴² Para 17 SOM17

⁴³ Decision at SOM3

raising the level of delegates from the environment and/or development ministries for the SOM or ministerial level meetings.

8. *In view of NEASPEC long-term strategies (envisaged to be agreed in 2015), are any changes in the current institutional arrangements required in order to accommodate the new strategies?*

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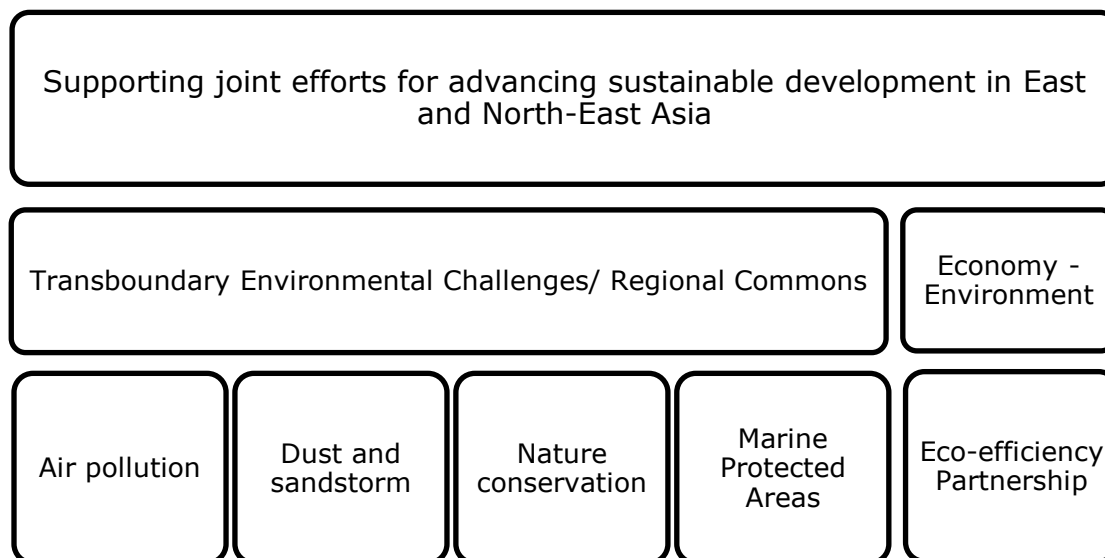
ANNEX I. Environment related mechanisms in North-East Asia and their focused areas

Institution	Membership							Air quality	Desertification	Biodiversity / Nature conservation	Marine environment	Economy and environment, resource management	Other areas
	China	DPRK	Japan	Mongolia	ROK	Russia	(Other)						
NEASPEC	x	x	x	x	x	x		Air pollution	Dust and sandstorm	Nature conservation	Marine protected area	eco-efficiency partnership	
Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI)	x	*	–	x	x	x						transport, energy, tourism and investment with environment as a cross cutting theme	
North West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)	x	–	x	–	x	x				Biodiversity conservation (marine)	Marine environment, marine pollution		Climate change impact (on marine area)
North-East Asian Forest Forum (NEAFF)	x		x	x	x					Forest ecosystem			
East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN)	x	x	x	x	x	x				conservation policy, transborder conservation.		ecotourism development in biosphere reserves	
Tripartite Environment Ministers' Meeting (TEMM)	x		x		x			Air quality improvement (sharing air pollution control policies, exchanging best practices, etc.)		Biodiversity (restoring endangered species, and access and benefit sharing)	Marine environment (marine litter)	Circulative mgmt of resources/3R/ transboundary movem't of e-Waste Conservation of water Transition to green economy	Chemical mgmt and environm'l emergency response Climate change response Environm'l education, public awareness and corporate social responsibility Rural environm'l mgmt
Joint Research Project on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollutants (LTP)	x		x		x			Long range air pollutants					
Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Acid deposition (incl. Soil and vegetation, inland aquatic environm't)			Acid deposition		

ANNEX II. NEASPEC Programmes

NEASPEC programmes evolved over the years and currently have focus on 5 key areas. A brief overview below describes the current programmes of NEASPEC as of 2014.

[Current Composition of NEASPEC Programme]



Transboundary Air Pollution

Transboundary air pollution (TAP) has been identified as one of the top priorities by the member States since the establishment of NEASPEC. With the support of the ADB, NEASPEC implemented the project on “Mitigation of TAP from coal-fired power plants in North-East Asia”, which was undertaken in three phases during 1996-2012. Since then, NEASPEC has been working on reviewing the broader context of transboundary air pollution, gaps in subregional cooperation and potential approaches to cooperation.

Current Projects and Activities

Development of the Technical and Policy Frameworks for Transboundary Air Pollution Assessment and Abatement in North-East Asia (2014-2015)

NEASEPC is working on developing the concept of a comprehensive subregional cooperation framework that addresses both science and policy aspects of TAP with a focus on PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀ and Ozone considering the level of national concerns in member countries, and their linkages with other pollutants including SO_x, NO_x, Black Carbon, NH₃ and VOCs; and covering modelling on source-receptor relationship of transboundary air pollution, policy scenarios, impact assessment, etc.

Nature Conservation

NEASPEC member States identified six flagship species and endorsed the Nature Conservation Strategy at the SOM-12 in 2007.⁴⁴

Under the Strategy, NEASPEC aims to;

- (1) Contribute to biodiversity conservation in the subregion by ensuring the survival of six flagship species (Black-faced Spoonbill, White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane, Amur Tiger, Amur Leopard and Snow Leopard);
- (2) Promote transboundary and intergovernmental cooperation for nature conservation among NEASPEC member States; and
- (3) Enhance coordinated mechanism for the conservation of target species and their habitats.

Current Projects and Activities

Conservation and Rehabilitation of Habitats for Key Migratory Birds in North-East Asia

This Project aims to improve the conservation status and strengthen international cooperation for Black-faced Spoonbills, White-naped Cranes and Hooded Cranes through conserving their habitats.

Planned activities include:

- (a) Scoping survey in selected 8 target sites in China, Japan, Mongolia, ROK and the Russian Federation;
- (b) Joint study in Dauria International Protected Area (China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation), and the Korean Demilitarized Area (DPRK and ROK);
- (c) Capacity building and awareness-raising on habitat management and conservation in 2014-2015; and
- (d) Development of a strategy for habitat conservation and rehabilitation.

Study on Transborder Movement of Amur Tigers and Leopards using Camera Trapping and Molecular Genetic Analysis

In order to provide scientific basis to protect and improve existing ecological corridors of tigers and leopards in transboundary area of China and the Russian Federation, the Project involves carry out camera trapping and molecular genetic analysis (simply put, DNA analysis) for the two species. By filling knowledge gaps in demographic characteristics (ex. population size and trends) and geographic distribution, this two-year project expects to

⁴⁴ http://www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/Publication_SavingNatureConservation.pdf

develop more effective and efficient conservation policy frameworks.

Sample collection in a non-invasive way and camera trapping will be conducted in Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces in China and the Land of Leopard National Park in the Russian Federation, followed by molecular genetic analysis.

Dust and Sandstorms

Dust and sandstorms (DSS) is a transboundary issue of a non-point origin, which has raised serious concern in the subregion. NEASPEC member States noted the severity of desertification and problems of DSS therefore included this programmatic area as one of the priority areas of NEASPEC at the SOM-7 (2001).

As a follow-up activity of the “Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of DSS in NEA” jointly undertaken by ADB, UNCCD, UNEP, ESCAP and four NEASPEC member States (China, Japan, Mongolia and ROK) in 2003-2005, the NEASPEC Secretariat had developed its project to support the implementation of the Plan.

The first project focused on the border area of Mongolia (Zamyn-Uud) and China which involved:

- (1) Capacity-building: training workshop for Mongolian experts in China;
- (2) Tree planting and irrigation system installation;
- (3) Development of online GIS database on national programmes for combating desertification; and
- (4) Publication of awareness raising and capacity building materials.

Current Projects and Activities

Training and knowledge sharing on combating desertification

Subsequent to the two training workshops (with field visits) for Mongolian experts, held in China in 2011 and 2013, respectively, NEASPEC plans to continue to facilitate member countries to share knowledge of successful practices for combating desertification.

Eco-Efficiency Partnership

Adopted as a new programmatic area at the SOM-12 (2006), the “Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia” supports member countries to jointly work on the improvement of eco-efficiency of economy. Since then, the NEASPEC Secretariat prepared

a guidebook entitled *Eco-efficiency: A Practical Path to Sustainable Development (2007)*⁴⁵, conducted a series of consultations with experts on measures for improving eco-efficiency, and identified the promotion of low carbon cities as a key area of subregional cooperation.

Current Projects and Activities

Subregional Platform for Low Carbon Cities

Further on two subregional conferences on low carbon cities held in Suwon (ROK) and Beijing, in 2011 and 2013, NEASPEC is working on the development of a subregional platform for LCC to facilitate information sharing and communications, joint studies and assessments, and capacity building among stakeholders. In particular, activities of the platform will include on sharing experiences among national initiatives such as Pilot Low Carbon Cities (China), Eco-model City Initiative (Japan), Pilot City Development for Climate Change (ROK), etc.

Marine Protected Areas

NEASPEC member States during 2011-2013 carried out a series of consultations on a new programme on marine environment and, at its 18th Senior Officials Meeting in November 2013, launched the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN). The Network aims to establish an effective, functional representative network of MPAs in North-East Asia for conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity and more efficient MPA management.

Current Projects and Activities

North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN)

Covering all the seas of North-East Asia where MPAs of the five member States (China, DPRK, Japan, ROK and the Russian Federation) are located, the Network aims to

- (a) strengthen roles of MPAs in conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity;
- (b) act as a key institutional mechanism for North-East Asian countries for sharing information and experiences on MPA management;
- (c) provide opportunities for the relevant stakeholders of the MPAs to improve their knowledge and skills in maintaining and managing MPAs;
- (d) promote and facilitate cooperative research and projects for improving management effectiveness;
- (e) promote and strengthen cooperation and partnership with other sub-regional, regional

⁴⁵ <http://www.neaspec.org/sites/default/files/ECO-EFF.pdf>

and global programmes; and

(f) contribute to the national conservation policies and regional and global environmental commitments

After the first meeting of the Steering Committee in March 2014, NEAMPAN current works on identifying priority target MPAs from each member States and preparing the network workplan.