

## **NOWPAP/NEASPEC Joint Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Marine Protected Areas in the Northwest Pacific**

**13-14 March 2013, Toyama, Japan**

### **REPORT OF THE JOINT WORKSHOP**

1. NOWPAP and NEASPEC jointly organized the Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Marine Protected Areas in the Northwest Pacific on 13-14 March 2013 in Toyama, Japan, to share information of methodologies for marine environment assessment and the current status of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in member States, and discuss the programme and operational modality of the proposed North-East Asian MPA Network.
2. The Workshop brought together national focal points of the Network and experts from China, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation and international marine programmes including the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC).

#### **Day 1: Conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity, and monitoring and assessing marine biodiversity conservation**

3. The Workshop on the first day led by NOWPAP and chaired by Dr. Yoshihisa Shirayama, Executive Director of Research, Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology, focused on the Status of MPAs and Future Plans for Conservation of Marine Biodiversity, and Current Status and Challenges of Assessing Marine Environment for Marine Biodiversity Conservation.
4. The Workshop shared information on the details of MPAs, including definition, categories and monitoring/management status in each member state, and developed an information sheet on MPA definition/categorizations to be finalized based on additional information provided after the workshop.
5. The workshop discussed the similarities and differences of definition /categorization of MPA in the member states and recognized the usefulness of such information for future

considerations in improving the management and/or expanding the area of MPAs.

6. The Workshop also shared information on challenges in properly maintaining and managing MPAs as well as future plans to design/expand MPAs including the possible application of "Ecologically or Biologically Significant marine Area (EBSA)" concept developed by the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).
7. The Workshop recommended that CEARAC will further collect and compile the above-mentioned information in the Regional Report to be published in the end of 2013 and will make best effort to widely disseminate such information for the use of the member states.
8. The Workshop learned prior/ongoing related activities for assessing marine environment for marine biodiversity conservation conducted by PICES, HELCOM and IOC/WESTPAC and recognized the usefulness and necessity of marine environmental assessment especially for conservation of marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region.
9. The Workshop recognized that the "Procedures for assessment of eutrophication status including evaluation of land-based sources of nutrients for the NOWPAP region" could be a good basis to consider a marine environmental assessment tool for marine biodiversity conservation.
10. The Workshop stressed the necessity of developing the Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region as the basis of setting targets for assessment and for appropriate management. The Workshop also noted the necessity of collaborative regional activities toward the conservation of marine biodiversity in the whole NOWPAP region.
11. After the extensive discussion, the Workshop recommended the following:
  - i. CEARAC will assess the availability of data and considers the collection of metadata and development of an assessment tool based on the available data for marine biodiversity conservation in the NOWPAP region.
  - ii. While recognizing that the indicators employed by HELCOM and indicators being studied by PICES are useful references for the NOWPAP region, CEARAC will take into account the availability of data and the different conditions of marine environment in the NOWPAP region when selecting indicators.
  - iii. CEARAC will prepare a workplan for the above-mentioned activities to be further discussed at its Expert Meeting and Focal Points Meeting to be held in 2013.
  - iv. CEARAC will strengthen collaboration with relevant partners, such as PICES, HELCOM and IOC/WESTPAC in conducting these activities.

## **Day 2: National marine protected areas and North-East Asia MPA Network**

12. The Workshop on the second day led by NEASPEC focused on MPA and Potential Areas of Subregional Cooperation, and Programme and Operational Modality of North-East Asia MPA Network. Major findings from the Workshop's review of MPAs in member States are as follows.
13. **China:** Since 1963, China has established 235 MPAs consisting of 171 Marine Nature Reserves (at both national and provincial levels), 40 Special Marine Reserves (Ocean Park, Marine Ecological Reserve, Marine Resource Reserve, etc) and 24 Fisheries Genetic Resources Reserves. Amongst them, national Marine Nature Reserve has the strictest regulations for management by not allowing any human activity in core and buffer zones except scientific and educational activities which require prior approval from the State Council. In terms of institutional arrangements, four main agencies including Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), State Oceanic Administration (SOA), States Forestry Administration (SFA) and Bureau of Fisheries under the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) are responsible for the management of MPAs.
14. **Japan:** Existing systems that may correspond with some features of MPAs are following: 29 Natural Parks, 56 Quasi National Parks, 91 Natural Coastal Protected Zones, 1 Nature Conservation Area (in Okinawa), 82 Wildlife Protection Areas, 55 Protected Water Surface, Natural Habitat Conservation Area, and Natural Monuments of which Nature Conservation Area, National Park and Natural Monument are under the IUCN protected area categories of I-III. In order to strengthen and improve MPA management, in 2011 the Government made a further clarification of MPA definition in Marine Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, highlighting the goals of supporting the sound structure and function of marine ecosystems and ensuring the sustainable use of marine ecosystem services.
15. **Republic of Korea:** Since 1968, Republic of Korea has created 565 protected areas adjacent to/or related to marine environment. The protected areas include 6 Protected Marine Areas, 12 Wetland Protection Areas, 4 Marine Environment Conservation Areas, 10 Fisheries Resource Protection Areas, 167 Special Islands, 4 National Parks, 3 Ecosystem/Landscape Conservation Areas, 166 Wildlife Protection Areas, and 193 Natural Heritages, while many of them may not necessarily fall under the strict definitions of MPAs. In terms of institutional mechanisms, Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs (MLTM) is responsible for managing three areas including protected marine area, wetland protection area, and marine environment conservation area, while Ministry of Environment is responsible for special islands, national parks, ecosystem/landscape conservation areas and wildlife protection areas. For fisheries resource protection areas, both MLTM and Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MIFAFF) are engaged in their management. Also Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) takes responsibilities of cultural heritage.

16. **Russian Federation:** Russian Federation's MPAs at federal level include 19 marine nature reserves, 2 national parks, and 10 wildlife refuges. In order for the Russian Federation to fulfill the goals of CBD, it introduced a draft concept of development of MPAs in 2012 which aims to develop MPA system by improving the efficiency of management and operation, and to ensure environmental safety, protection of biological and landscape diversity, conservation and sustainable management of natural and cultural heritage.
17. Regarding the programme and operational modality of the Network, the Workshop came to the following conclusions:
- a. **Objective:** Strengthen roles of marine protected areas in the conservation of marine biodiversity with aim to reach ecologically coherent (adequacies and representatives, replication and connectivity) network of well managed MPAs.
  - b. **Activity Areas of the Network:** Information and knowledge sharing; Knowledge building through collaborative work; Capacity building for management; Networking with relevant regional and global mechanisms; and Raising public awareness and stakeholder involvement.
  - c. **Target MPAs:** The Workshop decided to enlist all of the above-mentioned MPAs in each member State for further consideration, and requested the national focal points to communicate with the Secretariat about the scope of target MPAs for the Network. While the selection of target MPAs are subject to further consultations with each member State, in the case of the Russian Federation, the national focal point proposed to focus on MPAs in Russian Far East only.
  - d. **Network Membership:** Central and local management authorities of member States for MPA; national institutions and academic institutions; and international organizations and non-governmental organizations.
  - e. **Organizational Structure:** The Workshop discussed the proposed format of the structure which may consist of steering committee, advisory committee and network secretariat, and requested the Secretariat to reformulate options based on the review of organizational structure of similar networks.
  - f. **Budget:** The Workshop came to a general understanding that the core budget would be covered by NEASPEC while other funding sources including Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) could be explored for programme.
  - g. **Secretariat and Programme Operation:** The Workshop agreed that the Network Secretariat will be operated by NEASPEC in collaboration with NOWPAP and

other partners. With regard to programme operation, the Workshop, after reviewing two options suggested that the activities of the Network shall be coordinated by NEASPEC in cooperation with other relevant mechanisms including NOWPAP, YSLME, PEMSEA and WWF.

- h. **Roles of Member States:** The Secretariat stressed the importance of member States-driven programme and contributions of member States to program formulation and implementation. In this regard, the Secretariat informed that a template for collecting views of member States on their contribution to and expectations about the Network will be circulated to national focal points in due course.
- i. **Expected process:** The Secretariat presented a tentative timeline for preparing terms of reference and programme of the Network as follow: (1) March-July 2013: Developing a detailed terms of reference and programme through close consultations; (2) October-December 2013: Approval of the SOM-18 on the TOR and programme and reporting to NOWPAP IGM; and (3) early 2014: launching seminar and commencing activity implementation.

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