

Last updated: 26 March 2024

Concept Note for MPA Talk

Expanding the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN)

Background

The North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) was established in 2013 by the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) at the 18th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-18). Since its inception with 12 Marine Protected Area (MPA) sites across China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation, NEAMPAN aims to foster the protection of marine biodiversity, sustainable use of marine resources, effective management of MPAs, and enhance regional cooperation.

Over the last few years, the global community has bolstered its efforts towards unlocking the potential of marine environments, notably under the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030). In addition, some remarkable milestones include the adoption of the UN Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty in 2023. Also, recent UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) meetings have highlighted the ocean's pivotal role in climate efforts, with key agreements and initiatives emphasizing the integration of ocean-based solutions into national and global climate strategies. The High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy's 2023 report also showcases the significant potential of the ocean in reducing greenhouse gas emissions across various sectors, including marine conservation and renewable energy.

In response to these global trends, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 79th Commission Session adopted the Resolution 79/2 on regional cooperation to accelerate climate action on oceans in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development¹, paving the way for regional dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region for ocean-based action addressing climate change.

Over the past decade, NEAMPAN has contributed to promoting the importance of marine protected areas as a key tool for protecting the health of ocean and coastal ecosystems. Among various activities implemented by NEAMPAN, the report titled "Management Plans, Monitoring and Assessment of Marine Protected Areas²", prepared by national technical experts with financial contribution by the Russian Federation, investigated the characteristics of national- and site-level MPA management plans focusing on 12 NEAMPAN sites. This report outlines the wide range of ecological features, climates, and sizes within the network, alongside the variation in protection levels, management strategies, and monitoring approaches reflective of differing national conservation practices. The overview stresses the need for customized, effective management and monitoring to safeguard marine biodiversity and ensure sustainable resource use within NEAMPAN. NEAMPAN secretariat also organized a number of meetings and webinars by inviting NEAMPAN site managers for the exchange of knowledge, information, experiences and good practices to strengthen MPA management effectiveness and capacity.

¹ [79/2. Regional cooperation to accelerate climate action on oceans in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development \(un.org\)](#)

² [REPORT North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network web.pdf \(neaspec.org\)](#)

Despite the strategic importance of NEAMPAN and its potential to contribute significantly to regional and global environmental targets, the network has faced challenges in leveraging active engagement and operational momentum among NEAMPAN members. The low level of activity hinders progress in achieving the network's objectives, including the expansion of MPA coverage, the sharing of best practices and knowledge, and the strengthening of regional collaboration for marine conservation.

In response to these challenges, there is a pressing need to reignite interest and commitment among the network's members, stakeholders, and broader community. To this end, the NEASPEC Secretariat submitted to the SOM-26 the Consultation Paper, "Proposed Approach and Criteria for NEAMPAN Sites Expansion" (Annex III) in which NEASPEC member States agreed to the general direction of this approach.

Objectives

The main objective of the MPA Talk is to revitalize NEAMPAN by discussing benefits and challenges, drawing upon feedback from past Steering Committee meetings and workshops. Past discussions highlighted the importance of broadening NEAMPAN's activities and attracting new MPA sites, specifically targeting the working level such as MPA managers and researchers. This approach aligns with the objectives outlined in the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2025. Consequently, to fully operationalize NEAMPAN, revisiting the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025 (Table 1) is essential.

Table 1. NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025

<i>Objectives</i>	By 2025, develop NEAMPAN to be fully functional for strengthening partnerships among target MPAs and stakeholders and enhancing capacity to achieve, <i>inter alia</i> , the SDG 14 and relevant goals associated with marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner
<i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, information, experiences and good practices with regard to strengthen MPA management effectiveness</i> • <i>Facilitate cooperation on the protection of endangered and rare migratory marine species</i> • <i>Cooperate with existing partnerships to maximize the synergy with various initiatives at national, (sub-)regional and global level in capacity-building and technical assistance in support of on-the-ground implementation priorities</i> • <i>Enhance interactive communication among policy makers, scientific community and local stakeholders to promote ecosystem approach for MPA management</i>

In addition, when NEAMPAN was established in 2013, the Terms of Reference Section 6, "Organizational Structure" stipulates the role of the Advisory Committee (AC) in providing scientific and technical guidance and advice. The AC is yet to be established, but may be considered to establish to benefit the network's success, ensuring that NEAMPAN's activities and strategies are grounded in robust scientific knowledge and best practices in marine conservation.

NEAMPAN TOR / 6. Organizational Structure

... ii) AC provides scientific and technical guidance and advice. Ad-hoc working groups or task forces could be established and operated, when necessary.

Modality and Frequency:

The Secretariat plans to organize the MPA Talk through online meetings. These meetings aim to facilitate open discussions, gather candid feedback and suggestions from participants. For this purpose, we will extend invitations to other stakeholders, including the National Focal Points (NFPs) and partners previously involved with NEAMPAN.

To encourage open and candid discussions among participants, the MPA Talk will adopt the Chatham House Rule in which the report will highlight key discussion points with no attributions.

Strengthening Partnerships:

To augment NEAMPAN's impact, we propose exploring strategic partnerships with regional and global organizations working on marine conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. In particular, leveraging existing relationships with other regional MPA networks, environmental NGOs, and intergovernmental organizations could provide more insights, resources, and avenues for advocacy.

The following organizations are those that have worked with NEAMPAN in the past:

- EAAFP (Ref. [Partners - Eaaflyway](#); and [Become a Partner - Eaaflyway](#))
- MedPAN (Ref. [Our partners | MedPAN - Le réseau des gestionnaires d'Aires Marine Protégées](#))
- PEMSEA (Ref. [Non-Country Partners | PEMSEA](#))
- NOWPAP ([Partnerships | Northwest Pacific Action Plan \(NOWPAP\) \(unep.org\)](#))

Other potential partnerships to be sought are listed in Annex I. When expanding a new partnership, the Secretariat will consult with Steering Committee members to obtain their agreement. According to NEAMPAN TOR, NEAMPAN shall seek partnerships as follows:

NEAMPAN TOR on 4. NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the NEAMPAN consists of central and local management authorities of target MPAs, related national academic or policy institutions, NGOs from the five member States, namely China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, as well as relevant marine programmes and projects and international organizations. Others who are part of MPAs in North-East Asia may be invited to participate in specific activities of the NEAMPAN.

Key Questions for Steering Committee Members

To kick off the MPA Talk, we would like to invite you to share your candid opinions based on your experience with NEAMPAN, including but not limited to the following:

- Challenges and Solutions
 - What are the top challenges faced in engaging with NEAMPAN, and your suggestions for overcoming them?
 - How can NEAMPAN improve its approach to expanding and attracting new MPA sites?
- Strengthening NEAMPAN

- What steps are crucial to reinvigorate NEAMPAN's member engagement and operational momentum?
- How can the network better support the exchange of practices and knowledge to enhance MPA management?
- Organizational Structure and Partnerships
 - How significant is the role of the Advisory Committee in NEAMPAN's success, and what are your thoughts on its establishment?
 - Which strategic partnerships should NEAMPAN prioritize to increase its impact on marine conservation?
- General Feedback
 - What additional initiatives or changes would you recommend for NEAMPAN to achieve its strategic goals by 2025?

Annex I: List of potential partnerships (not exclusively)

Regional Environmental Organizations

- Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA)
- North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES)

Intergovernmental Organizations

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programmes Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), specifically its work on fisheries and aquaculture
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

International Marine Protected Areas Networks

- Mediterranean Protected Areas Network (MedPAN)
- Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA)
- Caribbean Marine Protected Area Management Network and Forum (CaMPAM)

Global Marine Conservation Networks

- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) - Marine Protected Area Specialist Group
- Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI)

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Conservation International (CI)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Academic and Research Institutions

- First Institute of Oceanography of China (China)
- Korea Maritime Institute (ROK)
- Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology (Japan)
- Ocean University of China (China)
- Korea Maritime and Ocean University (South Korea)
- Far Eastern Federal University (Russia)

Annex II: NEAMPAN ToR

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE NORTH-EAST ASIAN MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK

1. NAME OF THE NETWORK

The name of the network shall be 'North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network,' which shall be abbreviated and hereinafter referred to as NEAMPAN.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

The goal of the NEAMPAN is 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.

Under the goal of the NEAMPAN, its objectives are listed as follows:

- i) To strengthen roles of MPAs in conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity with aim to reach ecologically coherent network of well managed MPAs;
- ii) To act as a key institutional mechanism for North-East Asian countries for sharing information and experiences on MPA management, including marine biodiversity conservation, socio-economic development, dialogue between stakeholders and local community participation;
- iii) To provide opportunities for the relevant stakeholders of the MPAs to improve their knowledge and skills in maintaining and managing MPAs as well as design and expand MPAs;
- iv) To promote and facilitate cooperative research and projects for improving management effectiveness of individual MPAs as well as the concerned national and local policies;
- v) To promote and strengthen cooperation and partnership with other sub-regional, regional and global programmes concerning biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of marine and coastal areas; and
- vi) To contribute to the national conservation policies and regional and global environmental commitments, such as biodiversity targets and sustainable development goals.

3. GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE AND TARGET MPAS

The geographical scope of the NEAMPAN is the seas of North-East Asia, where MPAs of the five member States, namely China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, are located.

Target MPAs shall be selected by each member State after the scope of target MPAs is decided in accordance with the Network's objectives accepted by member States. The scope of target MPAs shall be mostly project-based at an initial stage and be further elaborated scientifically at a later stage, since the MEAMPAN will focus more on a role of social or human networking at an initial stage with a vision to develop into an ecologically coherent MPA network.

i) Target MPAs at an initial stage

The target MPAs at an initial stage shall be mainly the MPAs participating in activities of the Network for management improvement and cooperation among MPAs of similar ecological features or management challenges (e.g. coastal wetlands, islands, control of aquaculture) as well as some MPAs involved in protection of key migratory species (e.g. Spotted Seals, Black-faced Spoonbills and Sea Turtles). National representative MPAs that are selected by the member States could be also included.

ii) Target MPAs at a later stage

The target MPAs at a later stage shall be the MPAs that form an ecologically coherent network of well-managed MPAs or a representative system of MPAs in the sub-region. To identify and select sites to be included in the Network, aims, principles, and ecological criteria of the ecologically coherent MPA Network in North-East Asia should be developed and agreed by the member States.

4. NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the NEAMPAN consists of central and local management authorities of target MPAs, related national academic or policy institutions, NGOs from the five member States, namely China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, as well as relevant marine programmes and projects and international organizations. Others who are part of MPAs in North-East Asia may be invited to participate in specific activities of the NEAMPAN.

5. ACTIVITY AREAS

The priority activity themes of the NEAMPAN are as follows:

- i) Protection of key marine animals, such as Spotted Seals, Black-faced Spoonbills and Sea Turtles, and their habitats;
- ii) Sustainable use of marine resources, such as aquaculture, seafood security, fish stocks restoration;

- iii) Effective MPA management, such as local participation, public awareness, prevention of 'paper parks,' and MPA database; and
- iv) Collaboration with other relevant programmes, networks and projects in the region, such as NOWPAP, YSLME and EAAFP, as well as other relevant initiatives and projects of NEASPEC.

Activity modalities shall be selected and designed to be effective in accomplishing the objectives of the Network, including the following:

- i) Regular network meetings, publication and internet homepage for sharing of experiences and information;
- ii) Research and monitoring projects and seminars for biodiversity conservation and management improvement;
- iii) Training courses and exchanges of MPA managers for capacity building; and
- iv) Networking with relevant regional and global mechanisms for overall objectives.

6. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of the NEAMPAN consists of: Steering Committee, Advisory Committee and Secretariat. The Steering Committee of the NEAMPAN will report to the SOMs of NEASPEC.

- i) Steering Committee, which consists of one representative from each member States, provides the policy and operational guidance for the NEAMPAN. Steering Committee meetings are convened bi-annually to plan activities of the NEAMPAN and to monitor and review ongoing activities as well as network operation.
- ii) Advisory Committee provides scientific and technical guidance and advices. Ad-hoc working groups or task forces could be established and operated, when necessary.
- iii) Secretariat, which shall be served by the Secretariat of NEASPEC in collaboration with NOWPAP and other partners, administers the work of the Network, coordinates the Network activities and runs the meetings of Steering Committee and Advisory Committee.

7. PROGRAMME OPERATION

Programmes of the NEAMPAN shall be operated in a way to build on existing schemes to create synergies, to promote partnership with existing activities and networks and to support the sub-regional implementation of international agreements such as Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). NOWPAP, YSLME including Yellow Sea MPA Network, EAAFP and PEMSEA are among key partner programmes,

projects and networks in North-East Asia. Partnership with WWF, UNEP, UNDP and multi-lateral financing shall be also sought.

8. BUDGET

Main source of funding for the NEAMPAN shall be the Core Fund of NEASPEC. In addition to the Core Fund, other funding sources such as voluntary contributions from member States, multilateral financial mechanisms and private sector could be explored for the Network. Financial or in-kind contributions from member States are much welcome.

9. ROLES OF MEMBER STATES

Member States-driven activities and contributions of member States are essential for a success of the NEAMPAN. The roles of member States include:

- i) proposing or initiating the NEAMPAN activities in cooperation with other member States;
- ii) disseminating lessons learned and best practices from their MPAs and related projects among other member States of the Network;
- iii) promoting maximum contribution of individual MPAs of member States to the Network; and
- iv) exploring possibilities for financial or human contributions necessary for the operation and activities of the Network.

Last updated: 31 August 2023

Annex III Consultation Paper
**Proposed Approach and Criteria for
NEAMPAN Sites Expansion**

1. Background

The East and North-East Asia (ENEA) Office of the Economic and Social Commission of East Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), serving as the Secretariat of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), has established the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) in 2013 under the framework of NEASPEC. The NEAMPAN, aiming to be an effective, functional and representative network of marine protected areas (MPAs), has 12 MPA sites (as of October 2023): six from China, one from Japan, three from the Republic of Korea and two from the Russian Federation. It seeks to promote 1) protection of key marine animals and habitats; 2) sustainable use of marine resources; 3) effective MPA management; and 4) collaboration with relevant networks and programmes, through capacity-building activities and networking with regional and global mechanisms.

The NEAMPAN has a Steering Committee (SC) nominated by the respective member States to provide the policy and operation guidance for the NEAMPAN activities, and reports to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC on its recommendations and matters that require attention and/or decisions of the SOM. At the SOM-25 in September 2022, the member States recommended the expansion of NEAMPAN sites among member States to further promote and strengthen knowledge sharing and partnerships.

In response to the member States' recommendation, the Secretariat presents this proposed approach and criteria to expand NEAMPAN sites, for the SC's consultation and endorsement, and thereafter for the Senior Officials Meeting's consideration and approval.

2. Proposed approaches and criteria for the expansion of NEAMPAN sites

In order to propose an approach to expand the NEAMPAN sites, the Secretariat conducted a preliminary stocktaking of NEAMPAN activities since its establishment in 2013 (Table 1 of Annex IV), analyzing common features and interest of the existing 12 MPAs (Table 2 of Annex IV). Based on the findings, the Secretariat developed this draft proposal for NEAMPAN expansion, with SC members' consultation and endorsement, for member States' consideration and approval at SOM-26.

2.1. Stocktaking of NEAMPAN sites and activities

MPA networks could take various forms³: 1) **social networks**, focusing on networking among MPA managers, practitioners, administrative agencies and management offices and formed by communication, sharing of information and results, and coordination of administration and planning; 2) **ecological networks**, formed by natural connections of species and habitats

³ NEASPEC, 2013. Background Report on the Terms of References of the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network. https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Annex%20_SOM18_Marine%20Protected%20Areas.pdf

between and within sites to enhance the ecological characters and functions of MPAs; and 3) **management-based networks**, formed by creating consistency and efficiency among MPAs in enforcement, monitoring, capacity building and awareness raising⁴ and aiming to enhance management effectiveness on a larger ecosystem-based scale than that of a single MPA.⁵

The Terms of References (ToR) for NEAMPAN suggest that it should start as a social network, which focuses more on management improvement and cooperation among MPAs.⁶ Since its establishment, NEAMPAN has facilitated the learning and cooperation among member countries, SC members, MPA managers and institutions to share information and enhance management efforts. In line with the guidance of the SC, the member States designated 12 MPAs from China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation and the Secretariat conducted a series of activities and organized four SC meetings, as detailed in Table 1 of Annex IV to this document.

NEAMPAN can further progress to develop into a more ecologically coherent network by connecting areas with similar ecological features, management challenges, or key migratory species needing protection (e.g., Spotted Seals, Black-faced Spoonbills, and Sea Turtles). The narrative below outlines the current status, possible approach, and strategic framework.

1) **NEAMPAN is still in its early development phase and operates with a country-driven focus.**

NEAMPAN is currently in its early stage of development as a social network and has not yet been fully scaled up in terms of the number of MPAs and the scope of activities. Despite the conducted activities and research since its establishment, including considerations of the impacts of COVID-19, NEAMPAN is not yet functioning as a fully operational network capable of maximizing visibility and impact at the subregional level.

In order to improving the impacts of NEAMPAN, the Secretariat will continue coordinating the NEAMPAN under the guidance of member States and following the well-established country-driven processes (e.g. governance structures, rules and procedures), while fulfilling any identified gaps to advance the NEAMPAN development in an effective manner. The Secretariat will continue organizing capacity-building activities and research to meet the needs of member States and their designated MPAs.

The forthcoming activities will necessitate a more programmatic approach, with additional strategic guidance from member States yet to be consulted. Based on the lessons learned from past NEAMPAN activities, the Secretariat has encountered challenges concerning the attendance of representatives at in-person events. To address this, the Secretariat intends to

⁴ Jungho Nam, 2016. Benefits and Challenges of MPAs Network. NEAMPAN Workshop 2016 on “Sharing Experiences in MPA Management” & 2nd Steering Committee Meeting. <https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/1.%20Benefits%20and%20challenges%20of%20MPA%20network.pdf>

⁵ NOAA, National Marine Sanctuaries Programme. MPA Networks Training Module available at https://nmssanctuaries.blob.core.windows.net/sanctuaries-prod/media/archive/management/pdfs/js_mentor_networks_mod2_curr.pdf

⁶ NEASPEC, 2013. Background Report on the Terms of References of the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network. https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Annex%20_SOM18_Marine%20Protected%20Areas.pdf

explore diverse channels for future communications and activities, which may include, but not limited to virtual meetings and webinars, E-learning and capacity building, subregional workshops, online surveys and polls, etc.

Specific implications for the expansion of NEAMPAN sites exist. A critical near-term priority by 2025 is to "develop NEAMPAN to be fully functional for strengthening partnerships among target MPAs and stakeholders and enhancing capacity to achieve, inter alia, SDG14 and relevant goals associated with marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner." To achieve this goal, NEAMPAN necessitates a diverse and sizeable participant pool to effectively leverage partnerships and amplify its impact. However, the fact that NEAMPAN is country-driven and still in its early stage of development entails that this expansion should be aligned with established country-driven processes, ensuring adherence to principles and governance structures that maintain the initiative's focus and effectiveness.

2) NEAMPAN may consider a “twinning” approach among its MPAs to enhance common and connected ecological characters;

NEAMPAN’s vision to develop itself into an ecological network needs further exploration on a targeted cooperation for certain ecological characters (e.g. natural connection and linkages of a targeted marine species or habitat). The proposed twinning approach, or sister sites, is an approach to bring together existing and potential NEAMPAN sites in different countries that possess shared key species or connectivity of habitats. This approach aims to better assist MPAs through conducting collaborative activities for their conservation efforts. Should the member States agree on the proposed twinning approach, the Secretariat, with the policy and technical guidance from the SC, would support NEAMPAN countries in conducting dedicated studies to 1) explore the feasibility of the proposed approach; and 2) delve into the ecological connectivity of migratory species and their habitats in the subregion.

3) A strategic framework of NEAMPAN with prioritized themes and phased action plans are needed;

Within the existing NEASPEC framework and strategy, NEAMPAN focuses on four priority themes: 1) protection of key marine animals and habitats; 2) sustainable use of marine resources; 3) effective MPA management; and 4) collaboration with relevant networks and programmes. In addition to these themes, NEAMPAN MPAs at the 2016 NEAMPAN Workshop⁷ indicated common interests in scientific research (e.g. marine spatial planning, monitoring of ecosystems and ecological characters).

These themes may imply different prioritizations and selection criteria for member countries to nominate potential MPA sites to expand the NEAMPAN. The potential selection criteria to nominate MPA sites may include, but not limited to 1) the ecological viability and integrity of species (e.g. MPAs with appropriate spatial distribution, a representative ecological feature and

⁷ NEASPEC 2016, Meeting Report of 2016 North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) Workshop available at https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/2016%20NEAMPAN_workshop%20report_Final.pdf

connectivity of marine ecosystems); 2) economic and social benefits; 3) partnerships; and 4) management capacity and effectiveness.

Taking the opportunity of NEAMPAN expansion, member States at SOM-26 may consider further discussions to explore NEAMPAN's strategic vision with prioritized themes and action plans. Built upon the existing NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 and four priority themes, the discussions on a potential NEAMPAN strategic framework would 1) enable member States to expand the NEAMPAN sites in a more strategic and coordinated way in the long term; 2) provide existing and potential MPAs with a clearer and common vision and incentives to collaborate; 3) better align NEAMPAN's latest development with ESCAP's regional strategies and priorities in a dynamic manner; and 4) provide a more fit-for-purpose guidance to the NEAMPAN Secretariat to advance the expansion and carry out future capacity-building activities in a streamlined and programmatic manner.

Should the member states approve to convene discussions to explore NEAMPAN's strategic framework as a planned activity for 2024, the Secretariat would provide operational support to coordinate and consult with relevant stakeholders (e.g. governments, SC members, MPA managers and relevant experts) for the discussions.

2.2. Proposed approach and criteria for the expansion of NEAMPAN sites

Considering the abovementioned stocktaking, the Secretariat would propose a two-phased approach to expanding the NEAMPAN sites for member States' discussion and consideration at SOM-26, with prior SC's consultation and endorsement.

Recognizing the NEASPEC Strategic Plan, it is crucial to fully fledge NEAMPAN's functionality by 2025 as a social network, necessitating a large and diverse pool of MPAs to leverage partnerships and impacts. Therefore, the Secretariat suggests that from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025, the member States have the full discretion to designate new MPAs with minimal criteria and no cap on the number, as appropriate and on a rolling basis, for phase-one expansion of NEAMPAN. The Secretariat will analyze the data and present the preliminary results to the SC and SOM meeting.

The minimal criteria to consider may include: 1) MPAs' alignment with national strategies for biodiversity and marine conservation; and 2) their institutional capacity for participating regional and international events (e.g. English skills, experiences in regional or international settings, multilateral partnerships). By this approach, NEAMPAN would aim for a drastic increase in the number of NEAMPAN sites, which would enable the increased visibility of NEAMPAN at the subregional level and possible identification of common interests and ecological characters towards "twinning" MPAs at a later stage for knowledge sharing and capacity building.

At the operational level, the Secretariat recommends the member States to submit the following supporting documents to the Secretariat on a rolling basis: 1) a list of nominated MPAs; 2) an elaboration of factors/criteria being considered for such nominations; and 3) a detailed introduction document of each nominated MPAs.

Built upon the increased participating MPAs in NEAMPAN post phase one, phase-two expansion could be more targeted to involve certain MPAs that would enhance the common interests of NEAMPAN (e.g. twinning approach, sectoral collaborations, etc). Dependent on the dynamic development of the NEAMPAN after phase-one expansion, the member States may consider a dedicated study, with technical support of SC members and expert consultants, to explore a comprehensive and more stringent set of criteria for MPAs to join NEAMPAN during phase-two expansion. This study may enable the phase-two expansion to fit for the purpose of the ESCAP's regional priorities and NEAMPAN strategic development.

Annex IV

Table 1 Overview of NEAMPAN Activities Since Establishment

Activities	Time and Location	Activities Highlights
NEASPEC/NOWPAP Joint Workshop	13-14 March 2013, Toyama, Japan	(i) shared information on the details of MPAs, including definition, categories and monitoring/management status in each member state (ii) focused on MPA details, categorizations, and monitoring/management status in each member state
First Steering Committee Meeting	19-20 March 2014, Incheon, Republic of Korea	(i) clarified national approaches to MPA, strategic direction of the Network, target MPAs, network membership, as well as organizational and managerial structures (ii) agreed on the TOR of the Steering Committee, to define the role and responsibility of their own work as members of the Committee and to be submitted to the SOM-19 for endorsement
NEAMPAN Workshop 2016 and Second Steering Committee Meeting	15-16 June 2016, Suncheon, Republic of Korea	(i) shared experiences of MPA management in terms of 1. Assessment of ecosystem services and sustainable management of resources; 2. Sustainable management of human activities including tourism; and 3. Stakeholder participation. (ii) Shared experiences in partnership and networking among MPAs 1. Exchange experiences of interaction with other MPAs in various activities at national or international levels 2. Information on workshops / trainings provided by international organizations and NGOs
International Seminar on Marine Protected Areas in YSLME and North-East Asia	14 July 2017, Republic of Korea	(i) NEAMPAN and YSLME Project Management Office co-organized this seminar to contribute to the MPA designation process, as well as effective and equitable management of the coastal habitats to contribute to the achieving the SDG14 (ii) Field Visit to Coastal Wetlands of Ganghwa Island, Republic of Korea, which was co-hosted by Ganghwa County, Incheon, Republic of Korea

		(iii) Facilitated the sharing of experiences of MPA establishment and management in North-East Asian countries sharing experiences on MPA governance
Expert Workshop on Management Strategies and Monitoring & Assessment of Marine Protected Areas in North-East Asia	20 December 2018, Incheon, Republic of Korea	(i) NEAMPAN's first project, "Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of MPAs" focusing on management strategies and monitoring/assessment of the designated NEAMPAN sites startedSS (i) The first occasion for national experts to gather together to discuss on their preliminary findings and to ensure coherence among the studies on the NEAMPAN sites
NEAMPAN Project Review Meeting on Strengthening the Subregional Cooperation through Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Management of Marine Protected Areas	30 April 2019, Incheon, Republic of Korea	(i) provide an opportunity for the key project experts to align on their current understanding of the studies under the project, Strengthening the Subregional Cooperation through Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Management of Marine Protected Areas"
Third NEAMPAN Steering Committee Meeting	23 April 2021, virtual	(i) provided key points of discussion and consideration for the NEAMPAN Steering Committee to identify the NEAMPAN activities in 2021 and beyond, and operationalized the Strategic Plan
NEAMPAN Workshop 2021	15 July 2021, virtual	(ii) provided simultaneous interpretation services in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian to facilitate wider and active engagement from local MPA stakeholders (ii) indicated the need to expand NEAMPAN sites and requested the Secretariat to regularly communicate with NEAMPAN members
Webinar on climate change and MPAs; and Fourth Steering Committee meeting 2022	20 July 2022, virtual	(i) discussed the roles of MPAs and MPA networks to tackle climate change, and learned national and local-level policies and practices in North-East Asia

Table 2 Overview of 12 NEAMPAN Sites (as of October 2023)

MPA's name	Key species or protected targets	Management stress	International network
China			
Beilun Estuary National Marine Nature Reserve	Mangrove ecosystem	aquaculture and agriculture might cause potential impact ⁸	Ramsar site
Changyi National Marine Ecology Special Protected Area	<i>Tamarix chinensis</i> , marine organisms and coastal wetland ecosystems	Weak public awareness and resources exploitation activities	-
Nanji Islands National Marine Nature Reserve	Marine shellfish and algae as well as their habitats	Loss of marine and terrestrial life due to large-scale collection and harvest ⁹	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve
National Nature Reserve of Dazhou Island Marine Ecosystems	Swiftlet, its habitat and the marine ecological system	Insufficient funding, illegal tourism and overfishing	-
Sanya Coral Reef National Nature Reserve	Coral reef and the marine ecological system	Climate change, marine contamination and human activities	-
Shankou Mangrove National Marine Nature Reserve	7 bird species of global threatened listed by IUCN, Mangrove ecosystem	Destruction of mangrove forest due to economic activities ¹⁰ Afforestation of mangrove forests since 2002 restored	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve; and Ramsar site

⁸ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (2006-2008 version) for Beilun Estuary

⁹ <http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=CPR+15&mode=all>

¹⁰ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (2001 version) for Shankou Mangrove

		approx. 200 ha mangrove forests ¹¹	
Japan			
Shiretoko National Park	Marine ecosystem, rare salmonids, cetaceans, sea lions and seals as well as their habitats	Protection of endangered and rare species, sustainable development of fisheries	UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site
Republic of Korea			
Muan Tidal Flat Wetland Protected Area	Habitats and spawning site for endangered and rare birds	Prevention of coastal environmental pollution	Ramsar site
Suncheon Bay Tidal Flat Wetland Protected Area	Hooded Crane, phragmites communis community	Tidal flat restoration, marine pollution prevention and management	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve; and Ramsar site
Gochang Tidal Flat Wetland Protected Area	Migratory birds, Oriental White Stork, Saunders's gull, Far Eastern curlew and Chinese egret	Management and investigation of tidal flat ecosystem	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve; and Ramsar site
Russian Federation			
Far-Eastern State Marine Biosphere Reserve	Conservation of marine ecosystems and support for marine biological research	Over-exploitation of marine and recreational resources ¹²	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve

¹¹ Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (2006-2008 version) for Shankou Mangrove

¹² NEAMPAN MPA profiles provided by the Russian Federation

Sikhote-Alin State Natural Biosphere Reserve	Conservation and study of the natural functioning of natural complexes in totality	Prevent illegal poaching on terrestrial and at sea	UNESCO-MAB Biosphere Reserve; and UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site
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(Source: NEASPEC, 2016 NEAMPAN Workshop Report available at https://neaspec.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/2016%20NEAMPAN_workshop%20report_Final.pdf)