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Twenty-seventh Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-27) of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)

12-13 December 2024

Beijing, China

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda)

Air Pollution

Note by the Secretariat

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I. BACKGROUND

1. Air pollution is a major environmental issue that adversely affects human health and ecosystems, underscoring the importance of clean air for quality of life and environmental sustainability. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution is responsible for approximately 7 million premature deaths annually, with the majority occurring in the Asia-Pacific region.
2. Over the past few decades, numerous efforts have been made to tackle air pollution, leading to the establishment of cooperation mechanisms at subregional, regional, and global levels. Notable among these are the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), launched in 2018, and the Asia Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP), initiated in 2022.
3. Member States adopted the work plan on air pollution at the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) Senior Official Meeting (SOM-26) which included Category 1 activities on the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report and NEACAP Policy Dialogues. Member States agreed that the final report should be adopted at SOM-27. Additionally, member States agreed that a detailed concept note for the second Policy Dialogue (to be prepared by the NEASPEC Secretariat) would be provided for their consideration to decide on its necessity, including the possibility of holding it in conjunction with SOM-27. In relation to the preparation for the next NEACAP Work Plan, SOM-26 advised to clearly define the roles of the Technical Centers in developing the next plan. Furthermore, commending the Symposium jointly organized by ESCAP and the National Air Emission Inventory and Research Center (NAIR) in September 2023, member States requested to hold the NEACAP Symposium annually.

II. PROGRESS OF ACTIVITIES

Policy Analysis Report

4. The **Policy Analysis Report** was developed through a structured approach. A Report Project Team was formed comprising of national experts nominated by member States. The collection of national inputs was carried out from April to December 2023.

Table 1. Policy Analysis Report Project Team

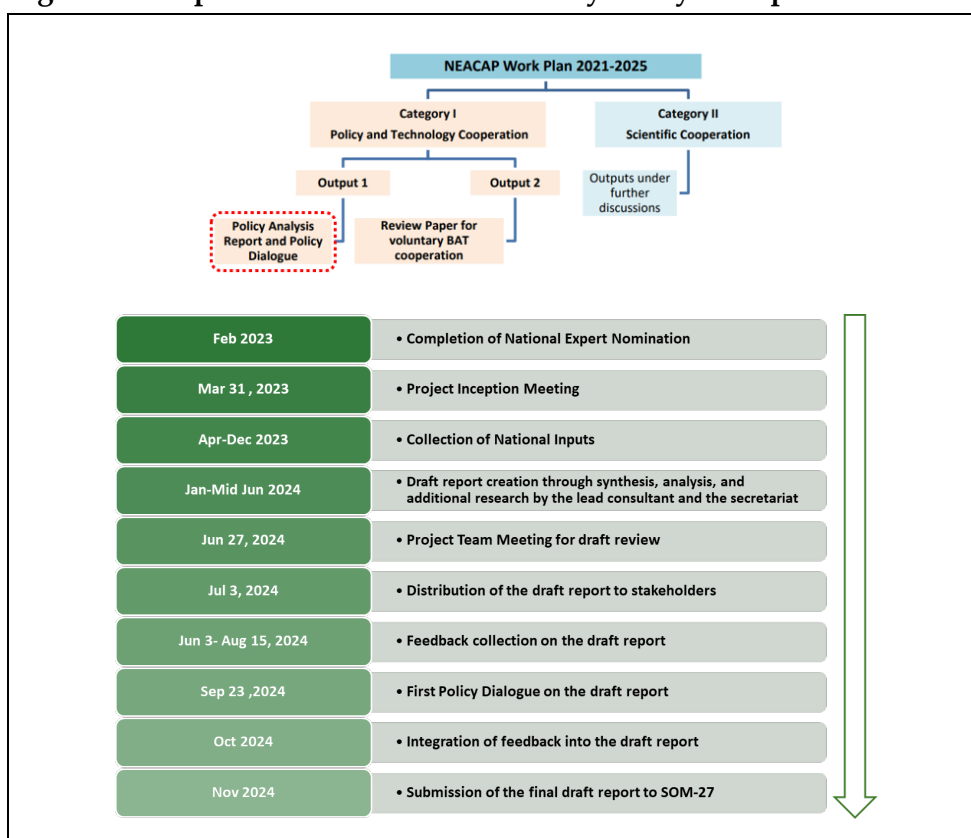
Lead Expert	Mr. Zbigniew Klimont Research Group Leader
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		Pollution Management Energy, Climate, and Environment program (ECE)	
		International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)	
National experts	China	Mr. Zheng Yixuan Associate Professor Chinese Academy of Environmental Planning	
	Japan	Mr. Eric Zusman Research Director Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Mr. Hiroaki Minoura Visiting Researcher Asia Center for Air Pollution Research (ACAP) Lecturer Nagoya University of Commerce and Business
	Mongolia	Mr. Batbayar Jadamba Director Environment Monitoring Division National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring	Ms. Gantuya Ganbat Assistant Professor German-Mongolian Institute for Resources and Technology
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Ki-chul Choi Research Fellow Korea Environment Institute (KEI)	Ms. Seung-min Lee Research Fellow Korea Environment Institute (KEI)
Project Coordination	Ms. Minkyung Hong NEASPEC Secretariat		

5. The lead consultant and the secretariat synthesized and analyzed these inputs between January and mid-June 2024. Following the project team’s online meeting (27 June 2024) to refine the draft, the first draft was circulated to stakeholders (including member States through the NEASPEC National Focal Points, members of NEACAP Science and Policy Committee (SPC) and representatives of Technical Centers (TC)) on 3 July 2024. Following the review of stakeholders, the First NEACAP Policy Dialogue was held on 23 September 2024. During the 6th Meeting of the NEACAP Science and Policy Committee (SPC-6) held on 24 September 2024, SPC members agreed on the timeline in finalizing the report, in view of its consideration and envisaged adoption by member States at SOM-27. Following the agreed timeline (shown in succeeding section), a revised report (addressing

comments received from stakeholders during the review period and from the dialogue) and its executive summary were circulated to stakeholders on 28 October 2024. The draft Executive Summary of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report is submitted to SOM-27 for member States' review and approval (see Annex I. Draft Executive Summary of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report). The full report, which is being finalized by the secretariat as reference, is under consideration of member States.

Figure 1. The process of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report Production



Policy Dialogue

6. **The First NEACAP Policy Dialogue** was held on 23 September 2024 in Incheon, Republic of Korea (see Annex III. Report on the First Policy Dialogue). The dialogue provided an opportunity for stakeholders to jointly consider the draft NEACAP Policy Analysis Report, further discuss the comments from stakeholders and agree on the next steps in finalizing the report for the consideration of SOM-27. Participants included government officials, SPC members and TC representatives.

7. The dialogue was structured into sessions that included an overview of the research project and in-depth discussion on the report's data and policy analysis and recommendations. During these sessions, the participants provided feedback on the

consistency and accuracy of data, policy implementation challenges, and recommendations. These inputs were reflected in the final draft of the report.

Symposium

8. In response to the guidance from SOM-26, a symposium was organized by the secretariat with NAIR (a Technical Center of the Republic of Korea) on 13 September 2024 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The symposium was attended by various stakeholders including governments, academia, research institutions, and international organizations.¹

9. The discussions during the symposium addressed the critical connection between climate change and air quality management, fostering dialogue among stakeholders from North-East Asia and beyond. Key topics included the impacts of climate change on air quality, emission reduction goals, and the effects of air quality policies on climate change. The symposium provided a platform for participants to share insights on tackling these interconnected challenges.

Other Activities: Outreach

10. NEACAP has contributed to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP)² adopted at the Seventh session of the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Development in December 2022. NEACAP collaborated in organizing the *Clean Air Week: Air Quality Management in Asia and the Pacific* held on 9-13 September 2024 in Seoul.³ During the week, government officials and experts working on air quality management in Asia and the Pacific participated in a series of meetings and trainings on air pollution monitoring, air pollution management, and use of satellite data, among others.

III. OUTCOMES OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF NEACAP SCIENCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE (SPC-6)

11. SPC-6 was held on 24 September 2024 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, with representatives from China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation, along with NEACAP Technical Centers from China and the Republic of Korea.

¹ [Symposium 2024 Climate Change and Air Quality Management](#), Seoul, 13 September 2024.

² ESCAP, [Protecting our planet through regional cooperation and solidarity in Asia and the Pacific](#) (ESCAP/CED/2022/2).

³ [Clean Air Week: Air Quality Management in Asia and the Pacific](#), Seoul, 9-13 September 2024.

The meeting reviewed the results of the First Policy Dialogue, agreed on the NEACAP Activity Plan for 2024-2025, and discussed the preparation for the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 (See Annex IV. Report on NEACAP SPC-6). Initial views were exchanged on the role of Technical Centers, which will be further clarified during the preparation of the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030.

12. Following the review and deliberation of the proposed NEACAP Activity Plan for the remaining 2024 and 2025, the Committee reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

A. Policy Cooperation

Activity	Details
<p>Finalization of Policy Analysis Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of the Draft Full Report and Preparation of the Draft Executive Summary: Revision of the draft full report based on the comments received during review period and during the First Policy Dialogue. (September - October) • Circulation of the Revised Drafts (the Executive Summary and the Full Report): The drafts will be circulated to NEASPEC National Focal Points (NFPs), SPC members and TC representatives for review. (October) Secretariat to set timeline to receive further comments on revised drafts. (10 days after the circulation) • Reflecting Comments: Revised drafts will be further updated to address received comments, to the extent possible. The secretariat will prepare the draft concept note for the Second Policy Dialogue planned after SOM-27 for further consideration at SOM-27. The drafts will be included in the SOM-27 document set. (November) • Consultation with Member Governments through NEASPEC NFPs before SOM-27: Discuss the draft Executive Summary for adoption at SOM-27. And the full report will be finalized by the secretariat as reference. (November) • SOM-27: It is envisaged that the Executive Summary will be adopted at SOM-27. SOM-27 will provide guidance on the Second Policy Dialogue. (December)
<p>Organization of Second Policy Dialogue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on identifying priorities based on the recommendations under the Executive Summary for the guidance of SPC members and TC representatives in the preparation of the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 and possible activities in 2025. • To be held at an appropriate time to maximize the participation of stakeholders of member governments. The Seventh Meeting of the Science and Policy Committee (SPC-7) will be held in conjunction with the Second Policy Dialogue.

Activity	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicative timing: First half 2025.

B. Capacity Building

Activity	Details
Capacity Building Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage SPC members and TCs to organize capacity building opportunities such as training workshops based on the recommendations of the Policy Analysis Report. • The secretariat will seek interests of other institutions to organize capacity building opportunities. • The secretariat will support capacity building opportunities organized under NEACAP.

C. Knowledge and Information Sharing

Activity	Details
Symposium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The secretariat will support the symposium organized under NEACAP. • Indicative timing: For discussion at SPC-7.

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

13. The Meeting may wish to request member States to:
- (a) Approve the draft Executive Summary of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report (Annex I);
 - (b) Provide guidance on the process for finalizing the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report
 - (c) Approve the proposed activity plan in 2025 (Annex IV);
 - (d) Seek views on the Second Policy Dialogue (Annex V); and
 - (e) Indicate interest in hosting the Seventh Meeting of the Science and Policy Committee (SPC-7) and other related activities.

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