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**REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

(Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda)

**Marine Protected Areas**

*Note by the Secretariat*

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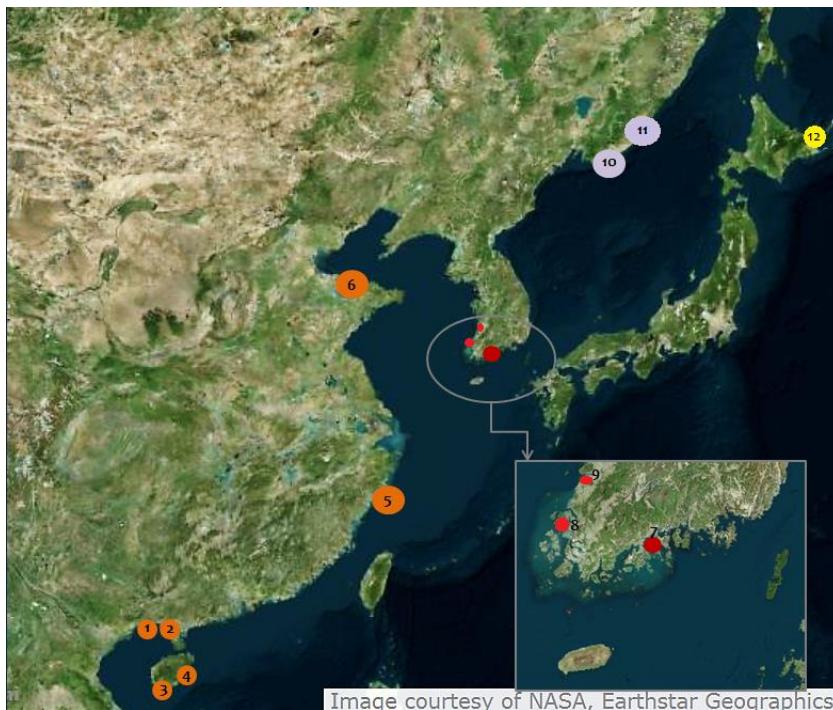
Annex. Outline of the study under the project "Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of marine protected areas

## I. BACKGROUND

1. The North-East Asia Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) was launched in November 2013 at the 18th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-18) to strengthen subregional cooperation on the marine environment. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of NEAMPAN adopted in SOM-18 spell out the objectives, geographical scope, target marine protected areas (MPAs), network membership, activity areas, organizational structure, programme operation, budget and roles of member States. Following the adoption of TOR, the Steering Committee was established, to provide policy and operational guidance for NEAMPAN. It was suggested to hold biennial meetings to plan network activities and review ongoing activities as well as network operation.
2. The 1<sup>st</sup> Steering Committee meeting held in March 2014 in Incheon, Republic of Korea (ROK) further clarified national approaches to MPA, the strategic direction of the Network, target MPAs, network membership, as well as organizational and managerial structures. The TOR of the Steering Committee, which was endorsed by SOM-19 in 2014, defines the function of the Steering Committee as providing policy and operational guidance, planning and monitoring on NEAMPAN activities, as well as providing recommendations on new programmes and budgetary matters to SOM for consideration.
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee meeting was held back-to-back with the 1st NEAMPAN workshop in June 2016 at the Suncheon Wetland Protected Area, ROK, one of the target MPAs. The 1<sup>st</sup> NEAMPAN Workshop brought together Steering Committee members, managers of 8 NEAMPAN sites, as well as experts from international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The Workshop facilitated (1) sharing experiences of MPA management; (2) sharing experiences in partnership and networking among MPAs; and (3) exchanging views on common concerns and interests of the NEAMPAN members. Discussions included key protected species in each NEAMPAN site, challenges of insufficient funding, interests in eco-tourism balancing the conservation with socio-economic needs, and most importantly, areas of potential collaborative activities.
4. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Committee meeting, among others, reviewed and made suggestions on the project proposal by the Russian Federation on "*Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of MPAs*", which was later endorsed by SOM-21. The Russian Federation announced to provide US\$120,000 to implement the project.
5. At the SOM-22, the Government of the Republic of Korea announced the nomination of Gochang Wetland Protected Areas as an additional NEAMPAN site. Thus, NEAMPAN currently has a total of 12 sites nominated by the member states as NEAMPAN member sites, including six sites from China, one from Japan, three from the Republic of Korea, and two from the Russian Federation as shown in Table 1 below.
6. At the SOM-22, the Meeting encouraged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to join the activities of NEAMPAN, considering its recent participation in international fora on

conservation. That is, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea formally became the 170<sup>th</sup> Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention and designated the Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve and the Rason Migratory Bird Reserve as its first two “Ramsar Sites” in 2018; and joined East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) with Kumya Wetland Reserve and Mundok Wetland Reserve listed as Flyway Network Site (FNS) in 2018 as well.

**Table 1. NEAMPAN Sites**



	MPA site	Conservation status	Relevant international reference (year of designation)
1	(China) Beilun Estuary National Marine Nature Reserve	Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	Ramsar site (2008)
2	(China) Shankou Mangrove National Marine Nature Reserve	Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	UNESCO-MAB (2000) Ramsar site (2002) IUCN category V
3	(China) Sanya Coral Reef National Nature Reserve	Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	IUCN Category V
4	(China) National Nature Reserve of Dazhou Island Marine Ecosystems	Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	IUCN Category V
5	(China) Nanji Islands National Marine Nature Reserve	Marine Nature Reserve (MNR)	UNESCO-MAB (1998) EAAFP Network site
6	(China) Changyi National Marine Ecology Special Protected Area	Marine Special Protected Area (MSPA)	
7	(ROK) Muan wetland Protected Area	Coastal wetland protected area	Ramsar site (2008)

8	(ROK) Suncheon Bay wetland Protected Area	Coastal wetland protected area	Ramsar site (2006) IUCN Category V
9	(ROK) Gochang Wetland Protected Areas	Coastal wetland protected area	Ramsar site (2010) UNESCO MAB site(2013)
10	(Russia) Far-Eastern State Marine Biosphere Reserve	State nature reserve	UNESCO-MAB (2003)
11	(Russia) Sikhote-Alin State Natural Biosphere Reserve	State nature reserve	UNESCO-MAB (1978) UNESCO World Heritage Site (2001)
12	(Japan) Shiretoko National Park	National park	UNESCO World Heritage Site (2005)

## II. UPDATE ON THE NEAMPAN PROJECT AND ACTIVITIES

7. The past NEAMPAN activities indicate that many of MPA managers face the challenge of balancing conservation and socio-economic activities to support local communities and sustain the operation of MPA management activities. Effective management of MPA requires a good understanding of the status of MPAs, both from biological/ecological as well as socio-economic perspective. It is particularly true for NEAMPAN sites in which various human activities take place around the coast. Thus, equally important as collection and accumulation of data on the ecological/environmental status of MPA is (i) monitoring the impact of and on human activities, (ii) assessment and evaluation of monitored data, and (iii) reflection of the evaluation results into the management process.

8. Given that NEAMPAN sites are a selection of well-managed MPAs in North-East Asia under the national-level administration in respective countries, their monitoring and management experiences will serve as laboratories for balancing conservation and socio-economic objectives in MPA management. Studies on those experiences will thus serve as beneficial knowledge products for effective management of MPAs in member States. These aspects are reflected in the NEAMPAN project described below, which was funded by the Government of the Russian Federation.

9. *NEAMPAN Project on “Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of marine protected areas”:* Following up on the endorsement by SOM-21 in 2017, the Project commenced in 2018, with formal approval by the Government of the Russian Federation and internal clearance by the ESCAP administration on the release of funds for the project activities.

10. Under the project, studies on MPAs of the four countries are conducted. The studies include review of modalities to assess environmental and socio-economic status of MPA and its connection to the management plans and strategies. The NEAMPAN secretariat developed an outline and the Terms of Reference of the studies and engaged experts from the four countries to conduct the studies in the respective countries.

11. An Expert Meeting on monitoring and assessment of MPAs were held in December 2018 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, (i) to review preliminary findings of the study to ensure coherence among the country studies and (ii) to identify MPAs for case studies. Follow-up meeting of the authors of the studies was held on 30 April 2019 in Incheon to provide feedback on the draft of the studies.

12. Most of the country studies are under the final review by the Secretariat after going through the process of drafting, reviewing and revision, incorporating comments by the secretariat as well as the discussion at the Expert Meeting. The key findings are summarized in the following section III.

13. ***NEAMPAN Workshop and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting:*** Following up on the plan to hold NEAMPAN workshop and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting in China, the Secretariat closely communicated with the focal points of NEAMPAN in the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of Ministry of Natural Resources (NFGA) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as Steering Committee members of the Government of China. Given the considerable changes in responsibilities of the relevant offices in the ministries as a result of the major institutional restructuring of the Government of China, the Secretariat viewed that it would still take time to operationalize close engagement with a new counterpart institution for marine projected areas programme to ensure the smooth transition. Thus, the Secretariat proposed to reschedule the meeting in China in future date. In the meantime, the Secretariat plans to hold a workshop in conjunction with the project on "*Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of marine protected areas*" in the Republic of Korea. This occasion could be utilized to organize the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting.

14. ***ESCAP Theme for the Commission session in 2020:*** Importance of economic, social and environmental cooperation in ocean related issues is gaining ground in regional fora. In this context, the NEAMPAN studies on MPAs in the North-East Asia can potentially demonstrate examples of area based management for sustainable use of the ocean. It is worth noting in this context that the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its 75th session of the Commission in May 2019, selected the theme of the Commission of 2020 (76th session) as "Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development."<sup>1</sup> The study is expected to demonstrate the contributions of the Asia-Pacific in sustainable management of ocean in advance of the second United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to be held in June 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> ESCAP annual report 17 May 2018 – 31 May 2019 (ESCAP/75/35).

[https://www.unescap.org/commission/75/document/E75\\_35E.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/commission/75/document/E75_35E.pdf)

### **III. MANAGEMENT OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS**

**Summary of findings from the project, “Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of marine protected areas”**

15. While the NEAMPAN sites are all designated protection sites by the national authority in the respective countries, institutional frameworks for management of the sites vary across countries, in particular, in terms of the responsibilities in monitoring and involvement in development and implementation of management plans. Below highlights some different institutional frameworks across countries, drawn from the reports being completed under the above-mentioned project.

16. In China, Marine protected areas (MPAs) are categorized into three groups, Marine Nature Reserve (MNR), Marine Special Protected Area (MSPA) and Aquatic Germplasm Resources Conservation Zones (AGRCA), with varying degree of restriction on human activities within the area, governed by respective set of legislations. After the recent restructuring of the Government, both MNR and MSPA are administered by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of Ministry of Natural Resources, while AGRCA is administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Each MPA management authority develops a management plan, following the common framework provided by the central government while tailoring it to reflect the local context of the respective MPA. The approval by the central government of the management plan of MPA is a precondition for the release of budget to the respective MPA management authority which, in turn, is tasked to implement the management plan. Monitoring of the protected targets in all kinds of protected areas follows the technical guidelines on monitoring. Each management agency of MPA is responsible body for conducting the monitoring, although monitoring is often outsourced to other professional qualified agencies due to capacity constraints of the MPA management authority. Monitored data are evaluated and analyzed and reflected into annual workplan to be implemented by the MPA administration, although the monitored data are not necessarily available for the public or research institutions.

17. In Japan, MPA system is consisting of three categories by objectives, which are administered by different ministries; 1) Protection of natural scenery (implemented by Ministry of Environment), 2) Protection of natural environment or habitats and growing areas for organisms, (implemented by Ministry of Environment), and 3) Protection, cultivation etc. of aquatic animals and plants (implemented by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries), although the classification is not mutually exclusive. In the case of Shiretoko MPA, fisheries activities are allowed in the area. Thus multiple administrative authorities are involved in the management depending on the target of protection, governed by respective legislation (e.g., fisheries administered by Fisheries Agencies according to fisheries related laws; pollution control by Ministry of Environment, waste management by Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport

and Tourism). Management plan for the marine area of the Shiretoko National Park was developed specifically to meet the commitment by the Government to meet the conditions for the inscription to the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List, to demonstrate the sustainable management (including fisheries) of the site. The Marine Management plan for the site details the monitoring plans and monitoring parameters responding to the plan. However, there is no clear feedback mechanism of ecosystem monitoring results into plans or management measures.

18. Republic of Korea has 8 types of protected areas according to respective acts for management designated by three different ministries, i.e., Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF), Ministry of Environment, and Cultural Heritage Administration. MOF and Ministry of Environment have joint jurisdiction over Wetlands Conservation Act while MOF has jurisdiction over Coastal Wetland and Ministry of Environment (ME) has jurisdiction over In-land Wetland. Monitoring have been conducted with the national marine ecosystem monitoring program every year. The three NEAMPAN sites of the Republic of Korea fall under the category of Coastal Wetland Protected Area. Each site has management master plan while environmental. Monitoring is centralized at MOF which has jurisdiction over nationwide marine of our country. It operates survey systems such as National marine ecosystem monitoring, marine environment measurement network, automatic measuring network for marine water quality, fixed oceanographic survey, fishing ground environment monitoring, citizen monitoring, etc. for prompt diagnosis and evaluation of status and change of our country's marine ecosystem. In addition to ecological and environmental parameters for monitoring, parameters of the national marine ecosystem monitoring program includes socio-economic parameters such as economic valuation of tidal flat, residents' awareness change.

19. In the Russian Federation, there are various categories of specially protected areas (SPAs) such as reserves, national parks, nature monuments and zakanniks, depending on the strictness of protection, time frame, goal of establishment and level of management. However, sea areas are under federal jurisdiction in accordance with Russian legislation and the legislation on SPA does not envisage individual category of MPAs, even though a number of SPAs (including NEAMPAN sites) have marine water areas as their part. Development of policies and regulations, coordination and control of environmental monitoring is centralized in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology, leaving limited role for the MPA management offices / institutions for monitoring the health of MPAs, except in the form of scientific research projects. For instance, in Far Eastern State Marine Biosphere Nature Reserve (FEMBR), one of NEAMPAN site, state of the environment is estimated taking into account the data of the automatic meteorological station in the southern section of FEMBR, which measures the direction and speed of wind, precipitation, atmospheric pressure and air temperature. Primorsky Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Department (Primgidromet), which is part of the Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring, carries out its activities in accordance with

the Federal Law "On Environmental Protection" and" the Resolution "On Approval of the Regulation on public service monitoring the state of the environment".

20. Besides the studies under the project, the Secretariat initiated a pilot study on MPA management in DPRK in collaboration with Hanns Seidel Foundation, drawing lessons from their experiences supporting DPRK for the inscription of Mundok Migratory Bird Reserve and the Rason Migratory Bird Reserve as the Ramsar sites. The DPRK has 5 types of protected areas related to MPA which include plant reserve, animal reserve, migratory birds reserve, sea birds reserve and marine resources protection area.

#### **IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

21. With the latest nomination of additional NEAMPAN sites (Gochang Wetland Protected Area) by the Republic of Korea, NEAMPAN currently has 12 sites. In order to share challenges and opportunities in MPA management in various environment and socio-economic context, the Meeting may wish to encourage the Member States to consider adding more NEAMPAN sites.

22. NEAMPAN has been undertaking its first NEAMPAN project since its establishment. In this context, the Meeting may wish to request Member States to consider proposing and hosting a workshop to facilitate the exchange of experiences on evaluation methodologies and management planning of NEAMPAN site to disseminate findings from the project.

23. To assist the NEASPEC Secretariat to efficiently implement the planned activities including organization of the workshops and Steering Committees, the Meeting may wish to request the Member States to advise the Secretariat, if any, on the process of identification of the counterpart institutions which are designated to support the implementation of NEAMPAN activities.

24. The Meeting may wish to reiterate its encouragement for DPRK to participate in NEAMPAN activities, by nominating Steering Committee member, nominating MPA sites, and/or participating in the NEAMPAN workshops.

25. The Meeting may wish to invite member States to propose NEAMPAN activities which are in line with the scope of the Network, as contained in the Terms of Reference, and to provide financial/in-kind contributions to activities.

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## **ANNEX**

### **Outline of the study “Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of marine protected areas**

#### **1      Review of management plans / strategies of the selected NEAMPAN site**

- 1.1 Basic information of the target MPA
- 1.2 Background of strategic / management plan of the target MPA
- 1.3 Objective of MPA management plan
- 1.4 Key contents of the management plans

#### **2      Monitoring and assessment of designated MPAs**

- 2.1 Monitoring parameters
  - 2.1.1 Areas addressed by the monitoring parameters: biological, socio-economic, environmental
  - 2.1.2 Monitoring bodies and collection of data
- 2.2 Assessment of data
  - 2.2.1 Assessment criteria and responsibilities
  - 2.2.2 Assessment against goals and indicators
- 2.3 Links between monitoring/assessment results and management
  - 2.3.1 Use of monitoring data
  - 2.3.2 Institutional aspects: Parties involved in the management of MPAs

#### **3      Feedback of assessment results to management plans and practices**

#### **4      Case studies – monitoring and assessment results and corresponding measures in the the MPA**