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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Strengthening Subregional Cooperation on Marine Protected Areas

Note by the Secretariat

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

1. At the 16th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-16) of NEASPEC held in September 2011 in Seoul, the Government of Republic of Korea presented a project proposal on “Strengthening Subregional Cooperation to Address Environmental Challenges related to Transboundary Marine Pollution”, which recommended a new framework of cooperation in the subregion to address challenges in protecting marine environment. The SOM-16 decided to organize an Expert Consultation Meeting (ECM) to further elaborate the proposal for the decision of SOM-17.
2. The ECM, which was held on 27-28 June 2012 in Seoul, facilitated exchange of views and ideas among national experts and other stakeholders on the scope of this new initiative, modality of its implementation and required partnerships with relevant organizations and mechanisms. Participants exchanged ideas and views on existing gaps in multilateral cooperation, subregional needs and institutional capacity in North-East Asia. As a result, it was generally perceived that the facilitation of cooperation among Marine Protected Areas (MPA) could be the main focus of NEASPEC activities with regard to marine environment.
3. Following the ECM, the Secretariat conducted research on the situations of MPAs in the subregion as well as potentials of establishing a MPA network. Research showed various benefits of the regional networks for the conservation of biodiversity, a common and improved management of the areas, information and technology sharing, capacity building, efficient use of resources, as well as dialogue between stakeholders. The research also revealed various divergences between member States in North-East Asia in the definition and management of MPAs, statistical inconsistency in MPA identification, deficiencies in national-level MPA networks, and limited international cooperation.
4. The research also presented potential roles of a subregional MPA network, which could act as a key subregional platform for information sharing, provide a platform for joint assessment and monitoring, establish links to and partnership with other regional and global programmes, etc.
5. The SOM-17 underscored the role of Marine Protected Areas as an effective system for marine biodiversity conservation and the importance of information sharing among member States. In this regard, the Meeting endorsed the proposal for launching North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN), with further discussions among member States on concrete plans and progress, and recommended the Secretariat to ensure close collaboration with relevant mechanisms for the development and implementation of the network.

6. Following the approval of the project, NEASPEC and NOWPAP jointly organized the Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservations and MPAs 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 MPAs in member States, and discuss the programme and operational modality of the endorsed NEAMPAN. 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).

7. The Workshop focused on MPA and potential areas of subregional cooperation, and programme and operational modality of NEAMPAN. Regarding the programme and operational modality of the Network, the Workshop came to the following conclusions:

- a. The objective of the NEAMPAN is to strengthen roles of MPAs in the conservation of marine biodiversity with aim to reach ecologically coherent (adequacy, representativity, resilience, and connectivity) network of well managed MPAs;
- b. Activity areas of the NEAMPAN include 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. Contrary to existing intergovernmental programmes in North-East Asia such as NOWPAP, Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Project, and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) which cover only limited MPAs, the regional scope of the NEAMPAN will cover all of the MPAs ranging from the MPAs of the above-mentioned mechanisms to Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Coast of Japan; and
- d. The workshop agreed that the Network Secretariat will be operated by NEASPEC in collaboration with NOWPAP and other partners such as YSLME, PEASEA and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

II. DIRECTION AND CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR SETTING THE NEAMPAN

8. Subsequent to the workshop, the Secretariat further elaborated the role of NEAMPAN and prepared a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) of the NEAMPAN, which is attached as Annex 1.

9. **Goal of the Network.** 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.

10. **Geographical Scope of the Network.** The NEAMPAN covers the seas of North-East Asia, where MPAs of the five member States are located. It covers the geographical scope of the Yellow Sea MPA Network and NOWPAP, while being a part of PEMSEA region.

[Table 1] Geographical Scope of MPA Networks

Programmes/Projects	Geographical Scope
NEAMPAN	Seas of North-East Asia
Yellow Sea MPA Network	Yellow Sea
NOWPAP	North-West Pacific (121°E-143°E, 33°N-52°N)
PEMSEA	Seas of South-East Asia and North-East Asia including five large marine ecosystems (East China Sea, Yellow Sea, South China Sea, Sulu-Celebes Sea, Indonesian Seas)

11. **Benefits of the Network.** The NEAMPAN could bring various benefits as follows:

- a. minimizing the duplication of efforts and resources by convening all stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as from the local communities;
- b. ensuring the protection of an ecosystem or species that cannot be adequately protected in one country, such as migratory species like Black-faced Spoonbills and Cranes which are designated as target species under the NEASPEC Nature Conservation Strategy;
- c. ensuring that transboundary protected areas are given adequate attention;
- d. sharing effective conservation approaches across similar sites in different regions;
- e. developing collaboration between neighboring countries to address common challenges and issues; and
- f. strengthening capacity by sharing experiences and lessons learned, new technologies and management strategies, and by increasing access to relevant information.

12. **Two Types of a MPA Network.** A MPA Network can be considered as a social network and an ecological network.

- a. An MPA network as a social network is to focus more on networking individuals and MPA institutions in order to facilitate learning and coordination of administration and planning by linking people and institutions involved in MPAs into a coordinate and holistic initiative. A social MPA network acts as an effective platform to cooperate between stakeholders to share information, enhance management efforts, and promote the network’s viability and longevity. Below are the examples of social MPA networks.

[Table 2] Examples of social MPA networks

Regional	Caribbean MPA Managers Network and Forum (CaMPAM) North American MPA Network (NAMPAN) Mediterranean Protected Area Network (MedPAN) Proposed WIOMSA network of MPA professionals Regional Network of Protected Coastal and Marine Areas in the South-East Pacific Tropical Eastern Pacific Marine Corridor Network (CMAR – or Corredor Marino) Pacific Local Marine Management Area (LMMA) Network
National	Philippine MPA Support Network Vietnam social MPA Network Fiji LMMA Network Ecuador Grupo Nacional de Trabajo sobre Biodiversidad Marina

(Source: UNEP-WCMC, 2008)

- b. An MPA network as an ecological network is a coordinated system of MPAs linked through biological levels as well as administrative levels. In this regard, it must be appropriately placed, sized and spaced to function collectively for biodiversity goals, reflecting a consistent approach to design, finance, management and monitoring. UNEP provides four key aspects of principles for the design of an ecological MPA network as follows:
- Adequacy: To be of sufficient size, shape and appropriate spatial distribution to ensure the ecological viability and integrity of populations and species;
 - Representativity: To include one or more MPAs for each example of the full range of biological diversity and the associated oceanographic environment

within the given area

- Resilience: To include multiple samples of habitat types, separated spatially, in a system to spread the risk of a large scale event destroying the only protected site of a certain habitat; and
- Connectivity: To ensure linkages as a result of the particular characteristics of marine organisms and of the marine environment including the mixing of waters.

13. ***Target MPAs by the Network's Development Stage.*** Target MPAs will be selected by each member States after the scope of target MPAs is decided in accordance with the Network's objectives endorsed by member States. The Network will focus more on the function of social MPA Network at an initial stage with the efforts to strengthen its function as an ecological MPA Network; in other words, the scope of target MPAs will be mostly project-based at the initial stage. For the Russian Federation, MPAs in Russian Far East will be only considered.

14. ***Activities of the Network.*** Based on the priority activity areas and operational modalities identified during the Toyama Workshop, it is proposed that thematic areas of the activities could include (1) protection of key marine animals such as Spotted Seals or Black-faced Spoonbills; (2) sustainable use of marine resources such as seafood security or fish stocks restoration; (3) effective MPA management such as local participation, public awareness or MPA database; and (4) collaboration with other relevant programmes, networks and projects in the region such as NOWPAP, YSLME and EAAFP. Modalities of the Network can be categorized into four: (1) to convene regular network meetings, issue publications and open internet webpage in order to share information and experiences; (2) to develop research and monitoring projects/seminars for biodiversity conservation and management improvement; (3) to provide training courses and exchange MPA managers with the Network for capacity building; and (4) to make a network with relevant regional and global mechanisms.

15. ***Secretariat and Programme Operation of the Network.*** Organizational structure of the Network will consist of Steering Committee as the governing body, Advisory Committee for scientific and technical guidance and advices, and Secretariat. For the Secretariat, it was agreed at the Toyama Workshop that NEASPEC will act as the Secretariat and manage daily work of the Network in collaboration with NOWPAP and other partners such as YSLME, PEMSEA and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

16. The Meeting may wish to review and approve the Terms of References (TOR) and programmes of the Network.

17. The Meeting may wish to invite member States to provide further guidance on activities and the involvement of national agencies, and nominate the member and alternate member of the Steering Committee upon the approval of the TOR.

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Annex 1. (DRAFT) 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.