



Distr.: Limited  
3 August 2023  
English only

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**UNITED NATIONS**  
**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**  
Fifth Meeting of NEACAP Science and Policy Committee  
8 September 2023  
Seoul, Republic of Korea

## **Mid-term review of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership Work Plan 2021-2025**

### **Background**

1. The [NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025](#), adopted at the 24<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-24) in October 2020, includes the plan for the Science and Policy Committee (SPC) of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP) to have a mid-term review of the Work Plan's implementation in 2022. Subsequently, the fourth meeting of NEACAP SPC (SPC-4) recommended that the mid-term review of NEACAP be conducted in 2023 as the implementation of NEACAP activities was delayed. The 25<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-25) in September 2022 approved the recommendation.
2. As such, the fifth meeting of NEACAP SPC (SPC-5) will review the progress made of the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025, discuss necessary adjustments and make recommendations for the 26<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-26) to consider.
3. Following the adoption of the Plan at SOM-24 in 2020, the third Meeting of NEACAP SPC (SPC-3),<sup>1</sup> held virtually in April 2021, agreed on the following two outputs.
  - **“Output 1”:** Policy analysis and policy dialogue will be implemented in a mutually supportive way, with the outcome of a “policy analysis report”, which could be prepared by 2022 and published by 2023; and
  - **“Output 2”:** regarding collaboration on technology components, focusing on a review paper as a reference for understanding current processes and voluntary cooperation on Best Available Techniques (BAT).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.neaspec.org/content/third-meeting-science-and-policy-committee-north-east-asia-clean-air-partnership>

## Main achievements in 2021-2023

4. Between 2021 and 2023, NEACAP has made notable progress in promoting collaborative activities on addressing air pollution in North-East Asia. For output 1, a policy analysis report is being drafted by an international expert and national experts nominated by member States, and the first draft is expected to be prepared by the end of September. This will be followed by two rounds of policy dialogues from the fourth quarter of 2023, where key findings of the report will be shared with policymakers and other stakeholders from member States.
5. For output 2, a revised version of the review paper on the Best Available Techniques (BAT) is shared with member States and SPC members for final review. Afterwards, the paper will be finalized as reference material. It will also be utilized with other resources for a Technology Forum on emerging technologies and deployment in priority areas such as transport, industry, and residential sectors.
6. In addition to the planned outputs, NEACAP has contributed to implementing *the Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution (RAPAP)*<sup>2</sup>, adopted at the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the ESCAP Committee on Environment and Development in December 2022. NEACAP collaborated in the organization of the *High-Level Forum on Clean Air (HLFCA)*, held from 2 to 3 March 2023 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to operationalize the RAPAP through further elaborating areas and modality of cooperation, strengthening connections among existing subregional initiatives, and creating a foundation of knowledge and expertise. NEACAP activities and the main outcome of the HLFCA were presented to the inaugural Forum for International Cooperation on Air Pollution (FICAP)<sup>3</sup> on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 where 178 air quality experts gathered to collaborate on the reduction of air pollution through common policy solutions.
7. The Secretariat has also supported the inception of the Technical and Training Program (TNT Program) on air quality management by a NEACAP Technical Center, the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) of the Republic of Korea. The NIER initiated the programme in 2021 with a two-month course by inviting all member States to nominate participants. The Secretariat and NIER received nominations of one government official and two experts from Mongolia. Due to the travel restrictions under the COVID-19 pandemic, only one government official could attend the course.

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<sup>2</sup> Ministerial Declaration on Protecting Our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific (unescap.org)

<sup>3</sup> [Global Forum \(unece.org\)](https://www.unece.org/globalforum)

8. The Secretariat will also support a study tour on innovative technologies and good practices for air pollution control for city officials of Bangladesh, India and Thailand, which will be conducted from 18 to 21 September 2023 in the Republic of Korea.

## Challenges

9. The implementation of the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in slow progress. A significant number of scheduled activities were either canceled or adapted to online or hybrid formats, extending until the conclusion of 2022. Notably, events like SPC-4 and SOM-25 were affected by these changes. As a consequence, the collaboration between SPC members and experts has been hampered, experiencing a slowdown and encountering difficulties.
10. The implementation of the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 has also encountered challenges influenced by various factors in North-East Asia. Obtaining guidance and approvals has often involved lengthy consultation processes with member States. For instance, delays in receiving nominations of national experts for the policy analysis report (output 1) have resulted in activity delays. As a result, adjustments were made to the plan for the policy analysis report, which was eventually approved during SOM-25
11. The collaboration process within the NEACAP is further complicated by the varying capacities and standards of member states in monitoring and controlling air pollution. Each member State possesses different resources, capabilities, and approaches when it comes to monitoring and mitigating air pollution. These disparities in capacities and standards can hinder effective collaboration.

## **Consultation points**

12. Based on the above progress, SPC-5 may wish to discuss the following points during the mid-term review of the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025.

- **Review of the progress made and make adjustments:** SPC-5 is to review the progress made on the planned outputs, share experiences and observations on the implementation modalities, timeline, roles of SPC and technical centers (TC), support from the secretariat, etc., and discuss successes and limitations. Based on the review of the progress made, SPC-5 is to recommend appropriate adjustments to the planned activities under the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 for the consideration of SOM-26. Specifically, SPC-5 can provide guidance for (1) **Policy cooperation:** the ongoing work on policy analysis report and planned policy dialogues, and (2) **Technology cooperation:** utilizing the reference paper on BAT.

- **Preparation for NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030:** The NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 identified “Policy and technology cooperation (Category I)” as its priority area while noting the importance of Category II activities, which are duly important for building scientific approaches for policy making but requiring scientific and collaborative preparation and development of the capacity of experts to initiate the activities. In this regard, SPC-5 can discuss the preparations required to initiate Category II activities in the next five-year cycle. As requested by the SPC-4, the preliminary stock-taking study on potential priority areas has been prepared for discussion at SPC-5 (Please refer to Annex 2).

## Annex 1. Priority area identified in the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 and progress made

**Table 1 Priority area identified for NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025**

<b>Policy and technology cooperation</b>	
<b>Goals and Approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange information on emissions control technologies and national policies in use and/or under-development, if available</li> <li>• Propose potential technical and policy measures to tackle air pollution through science-based, policy-oriented consultations, policy scenarios and information exchange among national scientists, experts, policy- and decision-makers of the member States</li> </ul>
<b>Indicative Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose potential technical and policy measures through sharing information and lessons learnt on relevant good environmental practices applied nationally</li> <li>• Organize policy dialogue for exchanging information and policy experience in collaboration with the relevant processes, such as the Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Air Pollution (TPDAP)</li> <li>• Conduct policy analysis on air pollution management in support of policy dialogue and technology cooperation</li> <li>• Support voluntary collaboration among member States on the Best Available Techniques</li> <li>• Support technology forum on emerging technologies and deployment in priority areas such as transport, industry, and residential sectors</li> </ul>

### Progress made on policy analysis and policy dialogue (Output 1)

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>
JUL 2021	Expert Nomination Guideline for the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report and draft Terms of Reference for an international consultant and national experts were circulated to member States and SPC members.	Completed
JAN 2022	The international consultant was hired from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), in accordance with the ESCAP Rules and Regulations, to lead the preparation of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report, with inputs from national experts (to be) nominated by member States.	Completed
FEB 2023	The nomination of national experts was completed.	Completed
MAR 2023	The inception meeting of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report was held with the international consultant and national experts nominated. The meeting discussed the outline of the Policy Analysis Report and inputs to be prepared by national experts.	Completed

JUN-AUG 2023	National experts provide the international consultant with national inputs in accordance with the provided guidance.	Ongoing
SEP 2023	A draft of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report is to be prepared.	Ongoing
Q4, 2023	Based on the draft NEACAP Policy Analysis Report, the first policy dialogue is to be organized, possibly in conjunction with the 26 <sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting, to inform policymakers of the preliminary findings of the report to and to receive their feedback.	Planned
2024	The NEACAP Policy Analysis Report is to be finalized based on the feedback received from the first policy dialogue and review of the member States. And the executive summary will be translated into NEASPEC languages.	Planned
2024	The second policy dialogue is to be organized with the launch of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report.	Planned

**Progress made on the support of voluntary collaboration among member States on the Best Available Techniques (Output 2)**

Timeline	Progress	Status
JAN 2022	A consultant was hired from the Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific, Asian Institute of Technology (RRCAP-AIT), in accordance with the ESCAP Rules and Regulations, to prepare for a review paper as a reference for understanding current processes and voluntary cooperation on best available techniques.	Completed
JUN 2022	A draft review paper on the best available techniques was prepared by the consultant. The Preliminary findings of the paper was presented to the OECD BAT webinar in June 2022, which are participated by experts from the OECD and non-OECD countries, including China and the Russian Federation.	Completed
AUG 2022	The draft was shared with the SPC members for feedback.	Completed
JUL 2023	The draft was revised based on the feedback received from SPC members.	Completed
JUL2023	The revised version was shared for review by NEASPEC member States and the SPC members.	Ongoing
SEP 2023	The review paper on the best available techniques will be finalized as reference material.	Planned