

Minutes of the First MPA Talk North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN)

28 March 2024 (Virtual)

1. The first MPA Talk of North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) was held virtually on 28 March 2024. The Meeting was attended by members of the NEAMPAN Steering Committee representing China, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation (see Annex I).
2. The secretariat provided a briefing on the outcomes of the 26th Senior Officials Meeting of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) in 2023, which included various initiatives such as NEAMPAN workshop in 2024, a study project on ocean-based climate actions of NEAMPAN sites, potential expansions of NEAMPAN sites, and the prospective development of a strategic framework and action plan for NEAMPAN through consultations with the Steering Committee (see Annex II).
3. The secretariat initiated the Talk by outlining its primary objective of revitalizing NEAMPAN, leveraging insights from previous Steering Committee meetings and NEAMPAN activities. The secretariat suggested applying the Chatham House Rule in a non-attributable manner to facilitate open and candid discussions from the participants, which was agreed upon as a modality of the Talk. The secretariat also revisited the main objective and activities under the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025: Marine Protected Areas, which is a principal guiding document for NEAMPAN.
4. During the discussion, participants provided their views on challenges and solutions, strengthening NEAMPAN, organizational structure and partnerships and general feedback. Key discussion points include:
 - a. Meeting Dynamics:**
 - i. Participants recognized the limitations of online meetings for interactive discussions and the need for more face-to-face interactions for substantive agenda items.
 - b. Strategic Initiatives and Alignment:**
 - i. A consensus was reached on the necessity for the expansion of NEAMPAN sites to augment the network's impact and inclusivity.

- ii. The participants reached a consensus for more involvement of NEASPEC national focal points in NEAMPAN, aiming to revitalize NEAMPAN activities and align the overarching strategic direction.
- iii. It was acknowledged that closer strategic alignment with global conservation objectives, could be crucial.
- iv. The discussion highlighted a critical need to enhance more active participation and site representation among NEAMPAN members, emphasizing the benefits for membership and the strategic use of the UN frameworks to attract more MPA sites.
- v. The establishment of an Advisory Committee was generally agreed upon to concretize the technical inputs under NEAMPAN.

c. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- i. The participants acknowledged the value of collaborative activities, such as joint training seminars conducted by Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) on integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and marine spatial planning.
- ii. Participants endorsed the proposal of conducting theme-based activities, particularly seminars or projects focusing on scientific issues such as ecological connectivity (e.g., marine mammals or endangered marine species).
- iii. The secretariat and members identified several key partnerships, including NOWPAP, PEMSEA, East Asian Biosphere Reserve Network (EABRN), Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC), International Union for Conservation for Nature (IUCN), and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which would be beneficial in increasing NEAMPAN's activities.
- iv. More involvement of local NGOs and practitioners was suggested to augment the limited manpower at the working level on the sites.

d. Resource and Knowledge Management:

- i. A database of specialists and practitioners involved in NEAMPAN MPAs was proposed to benefit a wide range of professionals, including scientists, site managers, and museum specialists.
- ii. Case studies from NEAMPAN MPA sites might be helpful to improve MPA management effectiveness.

5. In conclusion, members agreed on the following action items to be undertaken in Q2 2024.

- a. The secretariat proposed to synthesize the discussions of the first MPA talk, conduct further research on potential activities, and engage with partners, NEASPEC national focal points and NEAMPAN Steering Committee members. The inputs from these meetings and research will be used as references in drafting a zero draft for the NEAMPAN's revitalization with the planned activities.
 - b. The secretariat will liaise with Chinese NEAMPAN members to advance the planning of the planned NEAMPAN workshop in China.
6. The next NEAMPAN MPA Talk is planned in Q3/4 2024, aiming to invite a broader set of stakeholders, including NEASPEC national focal points and other partners. This will facilitate a more profound and inclusive discussion on the network's action plan and planned activities.

ANNEX I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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ANNEX II

Activity plan for marine protected areas in 2024

A. Work plan for knowledge sharing and capacity-building

Approach and modality: Focus on sharing information and knowledge through a NEAMPAN workshop. The event can be jointly organized with (sub) national, regional or global agencies to maximize synergy with various stakeholders and facilitate the exchange of experiences and good practices of MPAs.

Key Activities

- **A.1: Organization of a NEAMPAN workshop (Q1/Q2, 2024).**

As an activity postponed from 2023, the Secretariat plans to organize an in-person NEAMPAN workshop in China to share national and MPA-level practices among NEAMPAN MPAs and member countries, to address climate change impacts on MPAs and discuss ocean-based actions opportunities for collaboration through the NEAMPAN. The budget for this activity was USD30,000 as approved at SOM-25 and remained for use in 2024. The Secretariat has not foreseen the need for an increased budget.

B. Work plan for research studies

Approach and modality: Focus on expanding understanding and knowledge on climate change impacts on marine protected areas and the role of MPAs/MPA networks to tackle such impacts in North-East Asia. These studies can be utilized to organize a subregional/national workshop(s) in the following years.

Key Activities

- **B.1: Publication of the Study on “Challenges and impacts of climate change on MPAs and relevant ocean-based solutions in the Republic of Korea”** including case studies of three

NEAMPAN sites (Q2, 2024). As a continuation of the planned study in 2023, the Secretariat aims to finalize the study by June 2024. The budget for the activity was USD 15,000 as approved by SOM-25 and remained for use in 2024. The Secretariat has not foreseen the need for an increased budget.

- **B.2: A Study on Ocean-Based Climate Actions of NEAMPAN Sites in China (Q3 2024 - Q1 2025)**

The Secretariat plans to continue research studies on the impacts and challenges of climate change on NEAMPAN sites and the existing or potential ocean-based climate actions by MPAs in response to the challenges. Following the tailored study on the three NEAMPAN sites in the Republic of Korea, a similar study focusing on the NEAMPAN sites in China will be conducted. (Approximate budget: \$25,000)

C. Work plan for NEAMPAN Expansion

Approach and modality: Focus on expanding NEAMPAN sites in a strategic and dynamic manner, with phased actions plans and approaches. In an early stage of NEAMPAN development to leverage partnerships and optimize its impact, member States have the full discretion to nominate MPAs with minimal criteria, as appropriate, and with no cap on the number of nominations by 2025. At a later stage, NEAMPAN may consider a twinning approach among MPAs and a more stringent set of criteria to enhance its ecological connectivity and management effectiveness.

Key Activities

- **C.1: Operationalization of NEAMPAN Sites Expansion (Q1-Q4 2024)**

The Secretariat plans to operationalize the NEAMPAN expansion in line with the Proposed Approach and Criteria for NEAMPAN Sites Expansion (Annex II to the agenda item 6c), should it be approved by member States at SOM-26.

- **C.2: Discussions on the potential development of a NEAMPAN Strategic Framework and Action Plan (Q1-Q4, 2024)**

The Secretariat plans to organize meetings with the Steering Committee members on a quarterly basis, aiming to explore the potential development of a NEAMPAN Strategic Framework and Action Plan. As indicated in the Proposed Approach and Criteria for NEAMPAN Sites Expansion, this strategic framework and action plan could reaffirm the overarching goal of NEAMPAN,



further developing specific objectives aligned with ESCAP's regional strategies and priorities. It would detail the prioritization of NEAMPAN themes with phased action plans for each theme.

Further details on the outcomes of the 26th Senior Officials Meeting of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) available at:
<https://neaspec.org/content/neaspec-26th-senior-officials-meeting>