



Highlights of Progress of NOWPAP Regional Activity Centers (RACs)

CEARAC

CEARAC is continuing working on the feasibility study towards assessment of seagrass distribution, and plans to organize an international workshop on mapping seagrass in the NOWPAP region in summer of 2017.

In the first quarter of 2017, CEARAC finalized the report on the status of major pressures (eutrophication, non-indigenous species and habitat alteration) on marine biodiversity in the NOWPAP region. The assessment results for several pilot areas making an important input for the CEARAC's future activities addressing the impacts on the marine and coastal biodiversity and towards the development of a common procedure to assess major pressures on marine biodiversity.

A WebGIS on potential eutrophic zones in the NOWPAP region is completed and should be available soon at the Marine Environmental Watch Project website at <http://ocean.nowpap3.go.jp/WebGIS/>.

DINRAC

The redesigned DINRAC website went online in May 2016.

DINRAC representatives attended the Freshwater Health Index (Dongjiang Project) Consultation Meeting on 13 November 2016 in Guangzhou, China. Freshwater Health Index aims to systematically evaluate the watershed ecosystem vitality, ecosystem services, and management mechanisms from watershed scale. The index provides an important reference to the public and policy makers.

DINRAC participated in China-ASEAN Environmental Protection Information Sharing Platform Workshop in Beijing, China from 26th to 27th, October 2016. The meeting recommended to enhance cooperation with NOWPAP DINRAC in the field of Marine environmental data and information exchange for regional environmental governance and management.

The data on marine litter collected in the framework of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in 2013 and 2014 by CEARAC were uploaded to the new DINRAC website.



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MERRAC

MERRAC conducted the 6th NOWPAP DELTA exercise on 14 July 2016 in Weihai, Shandong Province, China.

MERRAC completed the Online Pollution Reporting System. The Centre also finalized report "Risk Assessment of Oil Spill Incident: Likelihood analysis", and published a Review and analysis of existing floating marine litter: Prediction models in the NOWPAP region.

MERRAC continues maintaining database of contacts and equipment of NOWPAP members on marine pollution prevention and response.

POMRAC

A regional workshop on Development of the Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) for the NOWPAP region "Targets and indicators for Ecological Quality Objectives used in NOWPAP member states" was held together with the 13th POMRAC Focal Point Meeting in Vladivostok, Russia 18 May 2016.

Within the framework of the 10th International Ecological Forum "Nature without borders" (Vladivostok, Russia, 20-21 October 2016) POMRAC participated in preparation of the thematic session "Transboundary natural processes in the Asia-Pacific region and the role of negative impacts of natural disasters in the region". The session emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in addressing causes and effects of natural disasters.

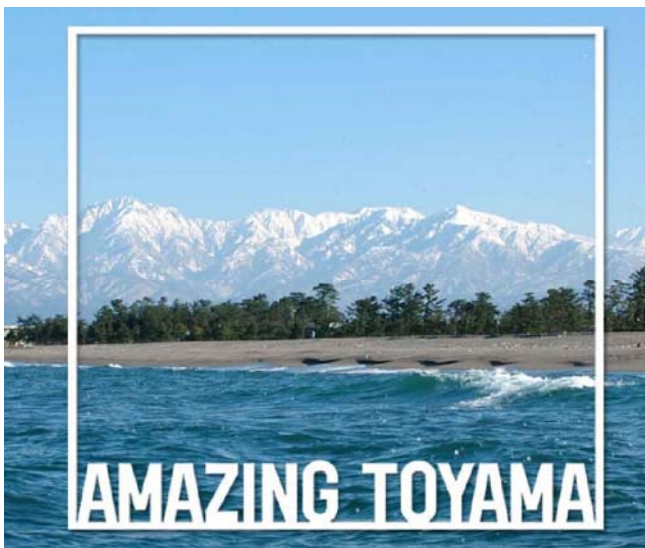
POMRAC is continuing research of micro-plastics content and transfer in the Peter the Great Gulf in cooperation with the Maritime State University. The data to be generated would be among first data sets available to show the levels and distribution of microplastics in the Russian part of the NOWPAP region and is an important contribution to the future activities of NOWPAP addressing microplastics issues.



NOWPAP is discussing how to strengthen co-operation with local authorities in Japan

NOWPAP Senior Coordinator, Lev Neretin, met with local authorities in Toyama Prefecture and Toyama City. He expressed his appreciation to Toyama Prefecture Governor, Mr. Takakazu ISHII, for continuing support to NOWPAP and interest to strengthen links between NOWPAP and the Prefecture to support environmental co-operation in the region. Among the issues discussed were reduction of marine litter and stronger engagement of public and private sector in environmental activities. The visit was followed couple weeks later by the meeting with the Mayor of Toyama City, Mr. Mashashi MORI, and his staff in the Environmental Policy and Strategic Planning and Resilience Divisions. In 2008 Toyama City was selected by the national government of Japan as the first "eco-model" city in the country for its pioneering efforts in promoting low-carbon economies and society. The city is also part of several global initiatives such as Sustainable Energy for All and the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities. Municipal officials introduced various environmental programs and activities supported by the city government. In discussions NOWPAP Coordinator emphasized common goals and interests to undertake joint activities.

In this critical for NOWPAP year focusing on the development of the next medium-term strategy for 2018-2023, NOWPAP RCU will continue playing coordinating role and making efforts to engage with various stakeholders on ways to strengthen regional environmental co-operation for the protection of marine environment through stronger engagement of local authorities and public in the NOWPAP activities.



UN Environment Launched a Global Campaign on Marine Litter

On 23rd February 2017 during the Economist Oceans Summit in Bali, the UN Environment launched a global #CleanSeas campaign to eliminate major sources of marine litter: microplastics in cosmetics and the excessive, wasteful usage of single-use plastic by the year 2022. UN Environment calls for robust enforcement of legislation and relevant policies as well as for the enhanced efforts from private, civil society and public at large to combat marine litter problem. Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment, said, "It is past time that we tackle the plastic problem that blights our oceans. Plastic pollution is surfing onto Indonesian beaches, settling onto the ocean floor at the North Pole, and rising through the food chain onto our dinner tables. We've stood by too long as the problem has gotten worse. It must stop."

More than 8 million tons of plastics get into the oceans annually, equal to dumping a garbage truck of plastic every minute. At least US\$8 billion in damage each year is caused by marine debris to marine ecosystems. More than 600 species of marine animals are impacted by ingesting or becoming entangled in plastics floating in the ocean.

The UN campaign will be implemented in three phases: building an awareness, engage public from 2017 to 2018, scaling up and replicating action around the world from 2018 to 2020, especially working with industries to reduce the use of single-use plastics and microbeads, and working towards to a closed loop economy - one in which plastics never become waste, but re-enter the economy as technical or biological capital from 2021 to 2022.

NOWPAP was among the first Regional Seas programmes that initiated marine litter activities in 2005. A NOWPAP marine litter database was established in 2006. NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was adopted in 2007 provides strategic directions for NOWPAP member states to improve the quality of the marine and coastal environment of the Northwest Pacific region by addressing the marine litter problems through cooperation and partnerships. Northwest Pacific Regional Node was the first regional node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter established with support by Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) by the Northwest Pacific Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC) and Regional Coordinating Unit of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP).

NOWPAP has organized a series of international marine litter workshops and ocean cleanup campaigns since 2005, published a number of reports on monitoring and assessing on marine litter in the region.

Throughout the year, the #CleanSeas campaign will be announcing ambitious measures by countries and businesses to eliminate microplastics from personal care products, ban or tax single-use bags, and dramatically reduce other disposable plastic items.

People around the world are taking action to turn the tide on plastic in our oceans.

Join NOWPAP and the global movement to end plastics pollution in the ocean. Act Now!

About #CleanSeas:

The #CleanSeas campaign is a global movement targeting governments, industry and consumers to urgently reduce the production and excessive use of plastic that is polluting the earth's oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health. UN Environment aims to transform all spheres of change - habits, practices, standards and policies around the globe to dramatically reduce marine litter and the harm it causes. Ten countries have already joined the campaign. They are: Belgium, Costa Rica, France, Grenada, Indonesia, Norway, Panama, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone and Uruguay.



NOWPAP shared experience with the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project (YSLME) on means of addressing marine litter

January 24th, 2017: Dr. LIU Ning, Programme Officer of the NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit attended the Preparatory Meeting for the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Project Phase II in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The project entitled "Implementing the Strategic Action Programme for the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem: Restoring Ecosystem Goods and Services and Consolidation of a Long-Term Regional Environmental Governance Framework" builds upon four years of regional cooperation for the sustainable use of the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem put in place by China and the Republic of Korea, supported by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Yellow Sea Partnership and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The initial project completed a regional Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and finalized a regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP).

The project's objective is to foster a long-term sustainable institutional, policy, and financial arrangements for effective ecosystem-based management of the Yellow Sea. To achieve this objective, the project will support the formation of an YSLME Commission that will oversee the implementation of the SAP; and will support the states' efforts to reduce the decline in biological resources and to restore depleted fish stocks in the Yellow Sea.

Dr. LIU briefed meeting participants about the NOWPAP Regional Marine Litter Action Plan and what NOWPAP member states have done in prevention, monitoring and reduction of marine litter in the region. The participants at the meeting agreed to work collaboratively with NOWPAP on marine litter issues, including those addressing micro-plastics.

The next phase of the dialogue and discussion of further priorities for cooperation will happen during the upcoming YSLME Project Inception Meeting that will establish the institutional structure of YSLME Interim Commission Council, approve activities and the workplan for 2017, and a roadmap towards a sustainable regional framework.

YSLME Project's geographic area and mandate overlap and complement the NOWPAP's activities. NOWPAP experts were involved in the formulation of the YSLME TDA and SAP. We are looking very much forward to continue the good legacy and enhance this very important for NOWPAP co-operation with the YSLME Project in the future.



Visits to www.nowpap.org

From 1 January to 31 March 2017, NOWPAP website had received 43 sessions of which 93% were from new visitors.



Future missions / events in the 2nd quarter of 2017

- The Twentieth NOWPAP MERRAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) and The Twelfth Competent National Authorities (CNA) Meeting for NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan, 10-13 April, Seoul, Republic of Korea
- G7 Workshop “Mainstreaming the work of the Regional Sea Programmes towards the better implementation of the G7 Action Plan and the achievement of the global commitments on marine litter”, 19-22 April, Rome, Italy
- The Eleventh Intergovernmental Session of the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific, 21-23 April, Qingdao, China
- PICES-NOWPAP Science Dialogue, 10-11 May, Toyama, Japan
- 15th NOWPAP DINRAC Focal Point Meeting, 25-26 May, Beijing, China
- The high-level 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, 4-10 June, New York, U.S.A.