

United Nations Environment Programme

NOWPAP



**Northwest
Pacific
Action Plan**

Distr.: RESTRICTED

UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/12 rev 0

28 December 2019

Original: English



Twenty Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting of
the Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Beijing, People's Republic of China
11-13 February 2020

Report of the 16th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting

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**Regional
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List of Acronyms

DINRAC	Data and Information Network Regional Activity Center
EcoQOs	Ecological Quality Objectives
FP	Focal Point
FPM	Focal Points Meeting
IGM	Intergovernmental Meeting
ICARM	Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management
NOWPAP	Northwest Pacific Action Plan
POMRAC	Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center
RAC(s)	Regional Activity Center(s)
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSFA	Small-Scale Funding Agreement
SOMER	State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP Region
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

Background

1. The Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center (POMRAC) is one of the four Regional Activity Centers (RACs) established to coordinate activities relevant to specific components of the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). Initially, POMRAC had the responsibility to implement activities related to atmospheric deposition of contaminants and river and direct inputs of contaminants.

2. The 10th NOWPAP IGM has approved the new directions for the NOWPAP RACs and RCU. Regarding POMRAC, the IGM confirmed for 2006 and future years the preparation of regional overviews on atmospheric deposition of contaminants and river and direct inputs of contaminants with subsequent preparation of the State of Marine Environment Report in the NOWPAP Region (SOMER). After that, POMRAC was expected to focus on activities related to Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM) including land-based sources of pollution. Preparation of SOMER and all activities related to ICARM were implemented in close collaboration with all NOWPAP RACs.

3. The 12th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM (4-5 September 2014, Busan, Republic of Korea) reviewed and discussed major POMRAC activities in accordance with the decisions of the 18th NOWPAP IGM. One of the main POMRAC activities agreed upon was the development of Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) in the NOWPAP region.

4. In 2015, most of POMRAC activities were “frozen” due to problems with processing payments to foreign experts from Russia. The 20th IGM (Beijing, People’s Republic of China 28-30 October 2015) decided in order to simplify the administrative processes of recruitment and payments to foreign experts (consultants), to assign the implementation of some POMRAC activities through DINRAC budget with a Small-Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) between POMRAC and DINRAC while maintaining POMRAC responsibility for the outputs and leadership of these activities.

5. The 13th POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) back-to-back with the Workshop on EcoQOs (Vladivostok, Russia, 19-20 May 2016) agreed to prepare a Regional Overview on possible Ecological Quality Objectives in the NOWPAP region, discussed the format and procedures of work for this and other POMRAC activities in 2016-2017 biennium. The Meeting has adopted the structure and contents of the Regional Overview “Targets and indicators for Ecological Quality Objectives for the NOWPAP region”.

6. The 14th POMRAC FPM (Vladivostok, Russia, 25-26 October 2017) reviewed and adopted the “Regional overview of possible Ecological Quality Objective indicators for the NOWPAP region”, compiled by the International Consultant based on the National Inputs prepared by the nominated national experts. The Meeting discussed future POMRAC activities for the 2018-2019 biennium, including

- 1) Development of regional NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned with SDG indicators, phase 1;
- 2) Assessment of trends in river and direct inputs of contaminants to the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP region during the last decade;
- 3) Microplastics abundance in river runoff and coastal waters of the NOWPAP region with a case study in the Russian part of NOWPAP area.

7. The 16th POMRAC Focal Points Meeting (FPM) was held in Beijing, China on 30-31 October 2019 to review the progress of POMRAC current activities and to discuss the activities for the 2020-2021 biennium. Focal Points and experts of the NOWPAP Members, namely China, Japan, Korea, and Russia participated in the FPM. Other participants included a NOWPAP RCU representative as well as representatives of CEARAC and DINRAC.

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the Meeting

8. The 16th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting was opened at 9:30 am on 30 October 2019 by the Director of POMRAC, Dr. Anatoly KACHUR at the Grand Metropark Hotel Beijing. He welcomed all participants, special thanks to the DINRAC colleagues who assisted in the organization of the FPM in Beijing and expressed his hope for the successful venue of the meeting.

Agenda Item 2. Organization of the Meeting

9. The meeting elected the Chairperson and the Rapporteur for the 16th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting. Following the rule of rotation, agreed upon during the previous POMRAC Focal Points Meetings, a representative of Russia, Dr. Vladimir SHULKIN, was elected as the Chairperson, and Mr. Yuta SHINPO, a representative of Japan, was elected as the Rapporteur.

10. The participants agreed that the rules used during the meeting will be those of the UN Environment Assembly, adjusted as appropriate to suit the nature of the meeting. English was chosen as the working language of the meeting and all decisions were agreed to be made by consensus.

11. Dr. Kachur introduced the timetable of the meeting and provisional list of the documents (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/Inf. 1).

Agenda Item 3. Adoption of the agenda

12. The Chairperson invited the meeting to consider the Provisional Agenda (NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM16/1) and the Annotated Provisional Agenda (NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM16/2). The meeting unanimously adopted the agenda.

Agenda Item 4. Overview of the progress made in the intersessional period after the 15th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting

Agenda item 4.1. Report of NOWPAP RCU representative on the progress in the implementation of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan after the 15th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM

13. The chairperson invited Dr. Ning LIU, NOWPAP RCU Representative, to present this agenda item. Dr. Liu welcomed the participants and introduced them to the progress of the entire NOWPAP activities during the intersessional period (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/3).

Agenda item 4.2. Report on the implementation and expenditure of POMRAC activities in 2018-2019 biennium

14. The Chair invited the Director of POMRAC to present the implementation of POMRAC activities in 2018-2019 (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/4). After the presentation, the meeting was invited to comment on this activity.

15. Dr. Alexander TKALIN, the international consultant of NOWPAP POMRAC, asked the secretariat to clarify which information from Working Group 1 (Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants) will be made available in the planned State of The Marine Environment Report (SOMER-3) considering that activities of the WG 1 were suspended for the recent years. Dr. Kachur responded that data collected by the WG in the late 2000s (2008 to 2010) will be included in the Report.

16. Ms. Ying WANG, POMRAC FP of China, raised a concern about defining microplastic concentrations in the rivers, noting that it is important to develop related harmonized monitoring methods and select sampling sites in the rivers. Dr. Kachur suggested that these issues should be discussed during the related workshop on 1 November 2019.

Agenda item 4.3. Report on the implementation of activity “Microplastics abundance in river runoff and coastal waters of the NOWPAP region with a case study in the Russian part of NOWPAP area”

17. Mr. Nikolai KOZLOVSKII, the representative of POMRAC, presented the progress in implementation of this activity (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/5). Experts took into account that POMRAC will circulate the technical report for their comments by the end of November.

Agenda Item 5. Report on the implementation of activity “Development of regional NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned with SDG indicators, phase 1”

18. Dr. Tkalin presented the Regional synthesis report “Development of regional NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned with SDG indicators, phase 1” (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/6, and UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/ FPM 16/Inf.7).

Agenda Item 6. Report on the preparation Regional Overview “Assessment of trends in rivers and direct inputs of contaminants to the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP region during the last decade”

19. Dr. Shulkin, as an expert of NOWPAP POMRAC, presented the Regional Overview “Assessment of trends in rivers and direct inputs of contaminants to the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP region during the last decade” (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/7).

20. Dr. Tkalin asked if any comments from related experts on this Overview are already available. Dr. Shulkin noted that some countries did not send their feedback yet.

21. Dr. Yury ZUENKO, the POMRAC expert of Russia, wondered about possible reasons resulting in increased nutrient concentrations in river input from Russia due to fertilizers use compared to other

NOWPAP countries. Dr. Shulkin responded that for the time being there are official data on fertilizer use and data on nutrient concentrations in rivers that show some relationship.

22. Ms. Xie XIN, the POMRAC expert of China, suggested that more data after 2010 can be added by the Chinese side to improve the report.

23. Ms. Wang mentioned that the National Marine Environmental Monitoring Center (NMEMC) is trying to integrate surface water standards and marine water standards.

24. FPs took note that after further comments from related experts the Regional Overview will be published and circulated among representatives of member countries.

Agenda Item 7. Discussion of the future POMRAC activities on 2020-2021

Agenda item 7.1. Discussion of the proposal for the Development of regional NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned with SDG indicators. Phase 2

25. Chairperson asked POMRAC Secretariat to present the work plan and budget for the activity "Development of regional NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned with SDG indicators, phase 2" (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/8). Dr. Kachur has presented the planned activity.

26. Dr. Wenlu LAN, the expert from China, asked if member states should use baseline values or national standards for testing the targets. Dr. Jongseong RYU, the Focal Point from Korea, clarified that it is optional to indicate national standards or baseline values depending on each member state. Dr. Tkalin suggested that in case if national standard values are too high, experts might consider baseline values instead.

27. After the discussion, the Meeting agreed with the activity and recommended to use all available data for testing the targets. Focal points adopted this activity for the next biennium.

Agenda item 7.2. Discussion of the proposal for POMRAC activities related to the preparation of SOMER-3

28. Dr. Shulkin as a Focal Point of Russia presented the draft structure and content of the Third State of Marine Environment Report (SOMER-3) suggested by POMRAC Secretariat for the discussion (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/9).

29. Dr. Tkalin asked that a footnote is needed that SOMER-3 will be published in 2022 and worried that new nominations for the activity will be made only after the 24th NOWPAP IGM. Also, he worried about receiving principal agreement from MERRAC on the implementation of this activity due to the fact that MERRAC representatives did not attend this meeting. Dr. Shulkin said that nominating experts for SOMER-3 is more appropriate after the IGM approves the activity.

30. Dr. Genki TERAUCHI, the representative of NOWPAP CEARAC, said that printing of SOMER-3 in 2022 should be clearly mentioned in the working document. Allocation of 24,000 USD for the subchapters could be discussed at the coming workshop.

31. Prof. Osamu MATSUDA, the expert from Japan, asked Dr. Shulkin to clarify the relations among POMRAC and other RACs during the preparation of the previous SOMER-2 to better understand the responsibilities of each RAC if the discussed activity will be agreed upon by the next IGM. Dr. Shulkin provided detailed explanations.

32. Ms. Wang asked to clarify the scope of POMRAC work because the center is focusing on the marine environmental monitoring and assessment. She suggested to narrow down the list of suggested EcoQOs to intensify work on a reduced number of objectives for SOMER-3. Dr. Tkalin mentioned that POMRAC in cooperation with other RACs already prepared 1st and 2nd SOMER. Besides, according to the NOWPAP mid-term strategy for 2018-2023, POMRAC has to assess the status of the marine environment.

33. After a discussion, the activity was in principle agreed upon by the FPs and participating RACs and recommended for consideration at the 24th NOWPAP IGM.

Agenda item 7.3. Discussion of a proposal for the continuation of activity
“Microplastics abundance in river runoff of the NOWPAP region”

34. Mr. Kozlovskii presented the proposal for the continuation of activity on the assessment of microplastic abundance in the river runoff within the NOWPAP region in form of National inputs with further compilation as a regional overview (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/10).

35. The decision on the suggested activity was postponed at least by 1 November 2019 when member countries would provide their national presentations on microplastic in the river runoff to further discuss possibilities of implementing this activity.

Agenda Item 8. Work plan and budget of POMRAC activities for the 2020-2021 biennium

36. Director of POMRAC introduced to the Meeting the Work plan and Budget for POMRAC in 2020-2021 biennium (UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/FPM 16/11), for the further approval at the 24th NOWPAP IGM (11-13 February 2020, Beijing, China).

37. Dr. Liu raised concern that no activities on ICARM WG are planned for the next biennium. Dr. Kachur responded that ICARM activities will be resumed in the biennium of 2022-23.

38. The participants adopted the work plan in principle, pending further discussion of Agenda item 7.3 during the related workshop on 1 November 2019.

Agenda Item 9. Arrangements for the 17th NOWPAP POMRAC FPM

39. Dr. Kachur suggested arranging the 17th NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting in Vladivostok, Russia in the second or third quarter of 2020.

Agenda Item 10. Other matters

40. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 11. Adoption of the report of the meeting

41. The draft report of the meeting was prepared by the Rapporteur and the Secretariat and adopted.

Agenda Item 12. Closure of the meeting

42. The meeting was closed by the Chairperson at 12.30, 31 October 2019.