

ACTION PLAN

for the PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT and DEVELOPMENT

of the MARINE and COASTAL ENVIRONMENT

of the NORTHWEST PACIFIC REGION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme

1. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme was established in 1974 as a global programmed implemented through regional components. It has been repeatedly endorsed by the UNEP Governing Council as a regional approach to the management of marine and coastal resources and control of marine pollution. The regional Seas Programme at present comprises 10 regional, while three more regional Programmes, including NOWPAP, are being developed. There are over 140 coastal States and Territories participating in the Programme. It is an action-oriented Programme having concern not only for the consequences but also for the causes of environmental degradation and encompassing a comprehensive approach to combatting environmental problems through the integrated management of coastal and marine areas.

2. The fulcrum for each regional Programme is the Action Plan. All action plans are structured in a similar manner and designed to link assessment of the quality of the marine environment

with the causes of its deterioration, leading to activities designed for rehabilitation and improvement in the short term and comprehensive protection and management for sustainable development in the longer term. Action Plans usually include the following elements:

Environmental Assessment which comprises baseline studies, research and monitoring of the quality of the marine environment and the factors that may influence it. It is not to be confused with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

Environmental Management which includes cooperative training in assessment methodologies, ecosystem management, control of wastes from industrial, agricultural and domestic sources and the formulation of contingency plans for dealing with pollution emergencies.

Environmental Legislation which seeks legal commitments in the form of conventions, protocols and similar instruments on a regional basis as well as ratifying and implementing legislation at the national level.

Institutional Arrangements which determine the frequency of meetings, setting of objectives, reviewing progress and approving activities and budgets, as well as providing a secretariat to coordinate activities.

Financial Arrangements through which UNEP often provides “seed financing” until the participating Governments are able to assume full Responsibility for budgetary requirements, at which stage UNEP usually assumes responsibility for administering trust funds that are set up.

3. The initial Objectives and Goals adopted by the various regions do have a common thread. however, there is sufficient flexibility in the system to allow for particular emphases and priorities

as perceived by the Governments concerned. While Action Plans are fashioned on a similar mould for all regions, the priorities differ from region to region. There could even be differences within the same region over time, through the merging of some objectives and the lessening in importance of others.

4. The key to the success of any regional action plan is a common understanding and a mutual commitment by the participating governments to act collectively or individually towards shared regional goals. This commitment is usually in the form of conventions and protocols.

1.2 The Northwest Pacific Action Plan

5. The Governing Council of UNEP at its Fifteenth Session (Decision 15/1: "Strengthening the role and effectiveness of the United Nations Environmental Programme", part VI.3) approved the "preparation of new action plans for seas not yet covered by the regional sea Programme (Northwest Pacific, Black Sea)" as one of the activities listed within the "Supplementary Programme of Environment Fund Activities for the Biennium 1990-1991" attached as an Annex to the above-listed decision. The countries that make up the Northwest Pacific region are: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation.

6. As a first step in this process, UNEP initiated a series of consultations with representatives of the governments of the region and with other organizations within the United Nations system. This culminated in the First Meeting of Experts and National Focal Points on the Development

of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan which was held in Vladivostok from 28 to 31 October 1991 in cooperation with the Centre for International Projects and the Pacific Oceanological Institute.

7. Experts and National focal Points presented reports on the aspects of the marine environment in their region. They also agreed on the scope and format of national reports which they undertook to prepare and which were to review the state of the marine environment and the coastal areas within the countries, comment on national policies, measures and relevant activities dealing with marine pollution problems, make proposals on ways and means for solving environmental problems, and finally propose activities for the Action Plan. The meeting also agreed on a workplan and timetable towards the preparation of draft Action Plan and a draft Regional Overview.

8. At the second meeting of Experts and National Focal Points on the Development of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, held in Beijing from 26 to 30 October 1992, in cooperation with the National Environmental Protection Agency, the first draft of the Action Plan was discussed. Subsequently, UNEP arranged for revisions and improvements to the draft and final draft was discussed and agreed to by the participants at the Third Meeting of Experts and National Focal Points on the Development of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, which was held in Bangkok from 10 to 12 November 1993.

1.3 Geographic coverage

9. The geographical scope of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan will cover the marine environment and coastal zones of the following States:

[Democratic People's Republic of Korea;]

Japan;

People's Republic of China;

Republic of Korea;

Russian Federation

from about 121°E to 143°E longitude, and from approximately 52°N to 33°N latitude, without prejudice to the sovereign right of any State.

2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Goals

10. The overall goal of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan is:

The wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment so as to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region, while protecting human health, ecological integrity and the region's sustainability for future generations.

11. The meeting also adopted three subsidiary and complementary goals as follows:

- i) The control, halting and prevention of any further degradation and deterioration of the coastal and marine environmental and its resources;
- ii) The recovery and rehabilitation of coastal and marine environments that have been degraded and which still have the potential for such a recovery;
- iii) The long-term sustainability of coastal and marine environmental quality and resources as assets for the present and future human populations of the region.

2.2 Objectives

12. The key to a successful strategy for applying remedies where needed, and protecting what is still of good quality, lies in wise management. This must be preceded by a clear understanding of the environment and resources that are to be managed. Resource information needs to be organized in a useable and accessible format. Then there is a need to plan for management. The strategy for wise management of the northwest Pacific coastal and marine environment should therefore consist of 5 main elements:

monitoring and assessment of the environmental condition

creation of an efficient and effective information base

integrated coastal area planning

integrated coastal area management

establishment of a collaborative and cooperative framework

13. The above 5 elements provide an excellent framework for the development of the 5 Objectives through which NOWPAP States can achieve their adopted Goals. These Objectives will be pursued through activities or tasks which, in turn, will generate specific project proposals. Therefore, after analyzing the objectives selected by other regional seas, giving effect to the discussion at the Second Meeting of Experts and National Focal Points on the Development of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan, and guided by the Overall Goal and three Subsidiary goals adopted for NOWPAP above, the Objectives proposed for the Northwest Pacific Action Plan for the short and medium-term are:

- i) To assess regional marine environmental conditions by coordinating and integrating monitoring and data-gathering systems on a regional basis, making the best use of the expertise and facilities available within the region on a consistent and collective basis;
- ii) to collate and record environmental data and information to form a comprehensive database and information management system which will serve as a repository of all relevant available data, act as the sound basis for decision-making, and serve as a source of information and education for specialists, administrators, and other;
- iii) To develop and adopt a harmonious approach towards coastal and marine environmental planning on an integrated basis and in a pre-emptive, predictive and precautionary manner;
- iv) To develop and adopt a harmonious approach towards the integrated management of the coastal and marine environment and its resources, in a manner which combines protection, restoration, conservation and sustainable use;
- v) To develop and adopt effective measures for mutual support in emergencies, collaboration in the management of contiguous bodies of water, and cooperation in the protection of common resources as well as in the prevention of coastal and marine pollution.

3 ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

14. Within the framework of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), it was decided to undertake a number of activities and tasks in pursuit of their chosen goals and objectives and provide for the exchange of as much data and information as national legislation and regulation permit. These activities and tasks are listed according to the specific objective the support.

3.1 **Objective 1:** To assess regional marine environmental conditions by coordinating and integrating monitoring and data-gathering systems on a regional basis, making the best use of the expertise and facilities available within the region on a collective and consistent basis.

15. The wise use, development and management of resources require a sound information base, adequate knowledge of natural processes, an understanding of the interrelationships between resources and between them and their environment, as well as their range of tolerance to environmental stress. This assessment and recording of resources, environmental characteristics, as well as human uses, is needed on a comprehensive, regional basis, according to agreed, consistent and compatible procedures. It is also important to establish a baseline against which the NOWPAP activities can be evaluated. Such an evaluation will be a continuing process and comprises monitoring, sampling and review.

16. The following tasks, involving investigative research, resource surveys and documentation of human needs will contribute towards this Objective, and have been selected for implementation:

- (a) Prepare and publish a Directory of Marine Environmental Institutions in the NOWPAP region, including a list the leading scientists and other worker together with their areas of interest and expertise;
- (b) Assess the capabilities of national scientific, academic and other research institutions to investigate and record environmental processes, resources and their characteristics. such an assessment will involve the identification of institutions which can serve as regional, activity centres, and the degree to which they may need to be strengthened in order to assume such a role;
- (c) Develop collaborative research projects on aspects of environment, resources, and their uses; facilitate sharing of certain special equipment and facilities such as laboratories and research vessels; exchange scientists, technicians and other specialists between institutions within the region;
- (d) Establish a collaborative, regional monitoring programme, targeted to specific indicative parameters and undertaken according to agreed, consistent procedures, following intercalibration to ensure regional and international compatibility;
- (e) Emphasize research, survey and monitoring of environmental characteristics which extend beyond national boundaries, and resources which are shared on a regional basis, without prejudice to the relevant existing and future national legislations and intergovernmental agreements; research and survey of socio-economic activities, human needs and quality of life.

3.2 Objective 2: to collate and record environmental data and information to form a

comprehensive database and information management system which will serve as a repository of all relevant available data, act as the sound basis for decision-making, and serve as a source of information and education for specialists, administrators, and others throughout the region.

17. The Countries of the Northwest Pacific Region are rich in data and information. Other data systems have also been developed by UNEP and by other international agencies such as IOC and FAO on a regional basis. The above activity will generate even more data on a region-wide basis. The information and data are most useful if they are properly organized and managed in a manner which will make them readily accessible by those who need them most.

18. The development of a cooperative regional approach to databases and related tools which will overcome these difficulties comprises the following tasks:

- (a) Develop and establish a Regional Information Referral System (RIRS) on projects related to the protection and management of the marine and coastal zone environment;
- (b) Develop a digitized map base for the entire region at a scale no less than 1:250,000, to serve as the base for an electronic database in the form of a Geographic Information System (GIS). The GIS will become the repository for environmental and resource information and serve as the basis for decision-making on resource use. Each country GIS will be complete and self-contained, but each would be compatible and in harmony with as well as contribute to the region as a whole;

(c) Review and give due consideration to similar electronic databases developed on a sectoral basis by a number of international agencies, as a starting point for the development of a comprehensive regional GIS;

(d) In order to ensure that the responsibility of maintaining and updating the GIS passes quickly to an in-country institution, appropriate equipment and training must be made available in each participating country;

(e) Since the number of users of a GIS will be somewhat limited for the foreseeable future, the GIS Database will be used to produce and publish a printed Atlas of Coastal and Marine Resources for each country. Such an atlas will reach planners and managers, students, special interest groups, tourists and members of the general public.

3.3 Objective 3: to develop and adopt a harmonious, approach towards coastal and marine environmental planning on a integrated basis and in a pre-emptive, predictive and precautionary manner;

19. Environmental planning is an orderly and rational process which prepares for the protection, management and wise use of environment, its resources, and the actions of those who live in it. The aim of environmental planning is to predict the likely consequences of decisions and actions on the wide planning sets or underscores existing goals and objectives, identifies and helps resolve conflict, provides a framework for rational and purposeful decisions, guides the deployment of finite resources, and provides a mechanism by which the performance of environmental managers can be measured.

20. In their endeavor to achieve regional harmony in the management of the coastal and marine environment and its resources, regional States have recognized that wise management must be based on adequate planning . A number of tasks towards achieving such an objective are listed below:

(a) Survey national environmental goals, objectives, strategies and policies and identify aspects which require strengthening in order to enable the environmental perspective to be incorporated in all developments from the early planning stage;

(b) Provide advice and assistance where needed for the development of environmental planning procedures including conflict resolution and multiple use strategies and where appropriate, facilitate public involvement in this process;

(c) Provide advice and assistance where needed for the establishment of an Environmental Impact assessment Process which will apply to all proposals and developments which are likely to have consequences for the environment. Such a Process must not only identify the potential impacts, but it must also evaluate alternative options, seek ways and means of reducing impacts, propose mitigation measures, plan monitoring procedures, set in place contingency plans, and identify which party is responsible for what activity;

(d) Provide professional training for environmental planners and managers at universities and other institutions both within the region and outside. Those institutions within the region which have the potential should be developed into specialized centres of excellence to serve the region;

(e) In zoning areas of coast and seabed, selected special areas should be set aside as marine parks and recreation reserves for the continued enjoyment by local people and visitors;

(f) Set aside and protect representative examples of the regional environment as genetic reserves. Protect the best of the remaining resources that give the region its distinctive ecological character.

3.4 **Objective 4:** To develop and adopt a harmonious approach towards the integrated management of the coastal and marine environment and its resources, in a manner which combines protection, restoration, conservation and sustainable use.

21. The NOWPAP region is among the most highly-populated regions of the world, and the pressures and demands that this large population brings to bear on the environment are considerable. It is possible to strike a wise balance between providing for human needs, the use of resources and development on one hand, and protection, enhancement and sustainability of the environment on the other hand. Such a balance will be struck through an effective management system that in turn relies on good planning. The components of good management for environmental protection, restoration, conservation and sustainable use in the Northwest Pacific region, include the following tasks:

(a) Survey and monitor human health, in particular the incidence of conditions related to pollution. The result of the marine environmental regional assessments, repeated regularly, will provide an important indicator of the success or otherwise of NOWPAP;

(b) Zone bodies of water for particular purposes according to mutually-agreed and pre-determined criteria, and control discharges and other inputs to ensure that water quality is maintained at levels such that it can be used for whatever purpose it has been set aside for; to introduce compulsory environmental impact assessment according to national criteria;

(c) In an effort to improve water quality throughout the region, cooperation to control and reduce the total discharges from land-based sources of domestic wastes, industrial effluents and those from agricultural non-point sources is required;

(d) In an effort to improve water quality throughout the region, cooperation is also necessary in the prevention, control and combatting of marine pollution from sea-based sources, inter alia, through the implementation of existing international conventions concerned;

(e) Cooperate in the enhancement of national and regional capacities to prepare for and respond to marine pollution emergencies;

(f) while encouraging tourism development as a source of income and employment in the region, exercise control over the adverse impacts of development of hotel accommodation and other facilities in coastal areas;

(g) In managing the coastal environment, special efforts should be made to protect as far as possible, all estuarine systems, saltmarshes, wetlands, and other coastal margins, Endeavour to maintain them as functioning systems.

3.5 Objective 5: To develop and adopt a regional framework for collaboration in the management of contiguous bodies of water, and cooperation in the protection of common resources as well as in the prevention of coastal and marine pollution

22. The depth of the commitment to act collectively or individually towards agreed common goals is best demonstrated by relying on the regional capabilities to cope with marine and coastal emergencies, many of which transcend national boundaries;

23. The following tasks will be undertaken as and when appropriate;

- (a) Survey national environmental legislation, assessing in particular provisions for the control of pollution, provisions for the prevention of environmental damage caused by the exploration and exploitation of non-renewable resources, maintenance of the quality of life, protection of critical habitats and species at risk, and ensuring sustainability;
- (b) Establish a meaningful dialogue on effective protection and management of the coastal and marine environment and its resources;
- (c) Develop and adopt effective measures for regional cooperation in combatting pollution resulting from accidental causes;
- (d) Seek and obtain advice and assistance to enable regional States to harmonize environmental legislation and to facilitate their participation in, and compliance with, existing relevant international agreements;
- (e) Take measures, cooperate, coordinate and facilitate exchange of relevant information and conduct joint surveys with a view to implementing, in the Northwest Pacific Area, relevant international agreements, such as the 1972 London Convention, the international Convention for the prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto as amended (MARPOL 73/78), and the international Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation, 1990 (OPRC Convention).

4 INSTITUTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

4-1 The NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meetings

24. The Northwest Pacific Action Plan, with its Goals, Objectives and first set of activities and Tasks, has been set in train by the approval of the first few projects for implementation under the various Activities. The Goals and Objectives are not expected to require significant amendment in the short-or medium-term. However, the Activities may require review from time to time, and their relative priority could change to reflect changes in the regional situation. The Projects will certainly be finite and those completed successfully will need to be closed and evaluated, and new ones will need to be adopted. These changes in Activities and the closing of old Projects and adoption of new ones is something which will need to happen regularly-annually, or biennially. The body charged with this review function must be made up of senior representatives of the member States. It is expected that representatives of various regional and international organizations whose aims and interests are in harmony with those of the NOWPAP will also participate in the Intergovernmental Meeting as observers.

25. It was therefore decided that policy guidance and decision-making for the Action Plan will be provided by regular Intergovernmental Meetings. Subsequent to second meeting, the NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting will meet annually in one of the participating countries on a rotational basis and operate according to the terms set forth in Resolution 2.

4-2 Coordination and Implementation

26. The implementation of the Action Plan will comprise a number of projects running in parallel. These projects will be entrusted to national institutions to the extent that the institutions are capable. In this, the institutions will be supported by relevant regional and international

organizations, particularly those that are already active in the region. Where necessary, national institutions will be strengthened to enable them to participate effectively in the various projects(see Objective 1).Until such time as national and regional institutions can undertake all activities under the Action Plan, and whenever a particular project so requires, local capabilities will be supplemented by assistance of experts from elsewhere in the region or from outside the region.

27. In view of the multiple projects that are possible and the scattered nature of the various activities, as well as the wide scope of input possible from both within and outside the region, implementation of the Action Plan must be coordinated. A network of participating institutions coordinated by regional activity centres will be established for this purpose.

28. NOWPAP States, with the assistance of UNEP, will work towards the establishment of a Regional coordinating Unit(RCU) to ensure that integrated and well-managed execution from within the region of projects under the Action Plan.

29.Until such time as an RCU is established and functioning effectively, the member Governments designate UNEP as the organization responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the Action Plan, and invite the Executive Director of UNEP to prepare, in cooperation with the competent international, regional and national organizations, a detailed programme document describing the operational details of projects to be developed on the basis of priorities identified by the member Governments.

4.3 Financial arrangements

30. The activities agreed upon as part of implementation of the Action Plan will be financed principally by contributions from the Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. Direct financial support from UNEP and in-kind contribution from United Nations and other bodies will be made available in the initial stages. However, participating States acknowledge the need for financial commitments on their part and ratio of members' financial and in-kind contributions to contributions from the United Nations systems will increase until the financing of the Action Plan is independent of funding from the United Nations system. Nevertheless, United Nations bodies and other international and regional organizations may continue to make contributions, in cash or in kind, to the work being carried out under the Action Plan.

31. The participating Governments agree to establish a Trust Fund for the Protection and Management of the Coastal and Marine Environment and the Resources of the Northwest Pacific region, to be known as the NOWPAP Trust Fund.

32. The NOWPAP Trust Fund will be contributed to by each of the member States. The frequency of contributions, the overall amount and individual contribution will be agreed to no later than by the second Intergovernmental Meeting.

33. More specifically, the Terms of Reference of the NOWPAP Trust Fund shall be as follows;

The NOWPAP Trust Fund is established to provide financial support for the implementation of the Action Plan adopted by Intergovernmental Meeting on the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region.

The administration and management of the NOWPAP Trust Fund shall be governed by the Financial Regulations and Rules of United Nations. It is understood that these rules provide, inter-alia, that UNEP shall make a deduction equal to 13 per cent of all expenditures financed from the Trust Fund to defray administrative support costs.

The expenditures of the NOWPAP Trust Fund shall be financed from contributions in accordance with the decisions on financial arrangements adopted by the Intergovernmental Meeting on the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region. No expenditure from the NOWPAP Trust Fund shall be made before a minimum of US \$ 50,000 has been contributed to the Trust Fund.

All contributions shall be paid in fully convertible United States dollars.

The NOWPAP Trust Fund shall be subject to audit by the United Nations Internal Audit Service.

The Executive Director of UNEP, through his/her reports to the Intergovernmental Meeting, shall report on the status of the Trust Fund.

The Trust Fund shall be established for a period of four years, 1994-1997, and decisions for its extension shall be made by the Intergovernmental Meeting of NOWPAP through the relevant Governing Councils of UNEP.