

Building a network of MPA education centers to increase awareness of threats, values, impact of loss and YSLME biodiversity

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For conservation and effective management of the Yellow Sea, it is necessary to make the public understand its values and threats. To this end, building education centers in marine protected areas (MPAs) is of great importance not just for exhibition, education and publicity, but also because they serve as an on-site management facility that practically protects the marine ecosystem.

In particular, in order to strengthen the functions and links of scattered marine protected areas and effectively increase public awareness, efforts to establish networks linking MPA education centers to share information and experience and jointly establish progressive strategies are critical. In addition, MPA education centers can play a very effective role in sharing various research results carried out at the YSLME level to the public. This could be the basis for joint cooperation of all MPA in the Yellow Sea in the future.

The network of MPA education centers in ROK has been launched since 2011. The aim of the network is to improve conservation, management and effective use of the marine ecosystem on MPA through each center and to enhance the center's role as a communicator for public awareness and provider of education service on marine ecosystem conservation. Moreover, it is to facilitate information exchange and joint cooperation activities between the MPA education centers with local communities.

The center network consists of 17 institutions total, so far, and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries participates as an advisory body. Ten of them have been established as



MPA education centers and are in operation, and three are preparing to build a center. Four institutions are also participating in the network to support them. The Center Network is a government-NGO governance organization, now headed by the Eco-Horizon Institute as Secretariat. Legal basis of network is on Guidelines for MPA Management and Administration by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries as an administrative ordinance.

Through ROK's network example, it is important to set up a network of MPA education centers within the entire Yellow Sea to create a specific model case for joint cooperation at the YSLME level. It will be a great help in cooperation for effective conservation and management of the three countries in the Yellow Sea from now on.

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