



**Northwest  
Pacific  
Action Plan**

Distr.: RESTRICTED

UNEP/NOWPAP/POMRAC/  
FPM 14/Inf. 5

20 September 2017

Original: English

---

Northwest Pacific Action Plan  
Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center

The Fourteenth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting  
Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 25-26 October, 2017

**Draft NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2023**

**Draft NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2018-2023**

**(Ver.01\_08072017)**





## Contents

1. Introduction and background .....	4
2. NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2012-2017: Achievements and lessons learned .....	6
3. NOWPAP Vision 2030 .....	8
4. Operating principles of the Strategy .....	10
5. Priority Areas and Proposed Outcomes .....	11
5.1. Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management (ICARM) .....	12
5.2. Assess status of the marine and coastal environment.....	15
5.3. Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution .....	18
5.4. Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity .....	20
5.5. Strengthen regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization ....	23
6. Monitoring and Evaluation of NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 .....	27
Annex 1: NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 .....	29

## 1. Introduction and background

1. The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP) was adopted in September 1994 as one of the 18 Regional Seas Programmes of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment). The geographical scope of the NOWPAP covers 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, and the Russian Federation from about 121<sup>0</sup>E to 143<sup>0</sup>E longitude, and from approximately 52<sup>0</sup>N to 33<sup>0</sup>N latitude, without prejudice to the sovereign right of any State.
2. Through the Action Plan, NOWPAP members agreed on a common framework for regional marine and coastal cooperation built on principles of trust, cooperation, partnership and solidarity. Throughout their common history, they have shown great success in living and dealing with change, embracing the possibilities and opportunities when faced with challenges.
3. The NOWPAP leaders showed great foresight in establishing the intergovernmental mechanism mandate - "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" – that remains strong and contemporaneous as when it was formulated more than twenty years ago. Since the adoption, NOWPAP has been addressing all five elements of the Action Plan: (i) assessment of regional environmental conditions, (ii) environmental data and information management, (iii) development and application of ecosystem-based approach towards coastal and marine environmental planning, (iv) implementing effective measures for mutual support in emergencies (associated with oil and noxious and hazardous substances (NHS) spills) and coastal and marine pollution prevention, and (v) by strengthening NOWPAP institutional framework.
4. There has been a long history of ecosystem modification and degradation in the Northwest Pacific; this trend has accelerated with modern development pressures. NOWPAP region today is one of the most densely populated world's areas with a total population of about 300 million people, most of them living in the coastal areas. Based on the results of the UN Environment-GEF-led Transboundary Waters Assessment (2016), two major Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) of the NOWPAP region (Sea of Japan LME and Yellow Sea LME) are characterized by "high" to "highest" scores with respect to cumulative human impacts globally.

5. The Second Report on the State of the Marine Environment for the NOWPAP Region (2014) (SOMER-2) identified eight major regional environmental issues:

- ✓ *Fragmentation, degradation and loss of habitats and landscapes;*
- ✓ *Chemical contamination of waters, sediments and biota resulting from pollution from land-based sources;*
- ✓ *High risk of oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) pollution incidents on the sea;*
- ✓ *Eutrophication caused by the increased input of nutrients into marine waters and associated harmful algal blooms (HABs) and increased hypoxia;*
- ✓ *Introduction of invasive non-indigenous species; and*
- ✓ *Marine litter pollution.*

Only two among those - *overfishing and destructive fishing practices and global climate change impacts on socio-ecological systems* - remained outside of the NOWPAP scope due to the limited internal capacity and existence of other regional institutions and mechanisms addressing these issues.

6. NOWPAP works to provide its member states with technical advice and support for capacity building for the region's environment and development priorities. It also promotes sustainable development and co-operation in the region through partnerships and joint activities. NOWPAP is member of the UN Environment Regional Seas Programmes and its activities are subject of the Agreement of Cooperation between the UN Environment and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) (2014). It is a non-country partner or observer in a number of regional institutions such as the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) (*ex-officio* member in several thematic groups), Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) (non-country partner), North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) (partner), the IOC-UNESCO Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) (partner), the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea LME Project Phase II (partner), and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) (partner). On marine litter issues NOWPAP works closely with the Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting (TEMM).

7. Specialized contributions from the four NOWPAP four Regional Activity Centers (RACs)<sup>1</sup> hosted by national institutions and the Secretariat provided by UN Environment through the Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) with two offices (in Toyama, Japan and Busan, Republic of Korea) ensures implementation of biannually agreed by member states

---

<sup>1</sup> Special Monitoring and Coastal Environment Assessment Regional Activity Centre (CEARAC) is hosted by the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Centre (NPEC) in Toyama, Japan; Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (DINRAC) is based in the China-ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Center (CAEC) of the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) in Beijing, People's Republic of China; Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC) is established in the Korea Research Institute of Ships and Ocean Engineering (KRISO) of Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KRISO/KIOST) in Daejeon, the Republic of Korea, and Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (POMRAC) is hosted by the Pacific Geographical Institute (PGI) of the Far East Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Vladivostok, Russian Federation.

activities and coordination within the system and with NOWPAP regional and global partners. Financial sustainability of the NOWPAP Trust Fund that reached 100% replenishment target in 2017 and is based on voluntary contributions of member states with additional resources coming from member states and various partners to support the Action Plan is a political achievement of major importance.

## 2. NOWPAP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2012-2017: Achievements and lessons learned

8. NOWPAP MTS 2012-2017 consists of five substantive themes: 1) integrated coastal and river basin management; 2) regular assessments of the state of marine environment; 3) pollution prevention and reduction (including harmful substances, hazardous waste and marine litter); 4) biodiversity conservation (including invasive alien species); and 5) climate change impacts. These five themes are underpinned by the additional operational themes focused on strengthened regional cooperation, information management, public awareness, and resource mobilization. Many suggested activities proposed in the NOWPAP MTS 2012-2017 are completed or on track by the end of 2017.
9. NOWPAP established the baseline to measure the effectiveness of the Action Plan by setting up regional Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) and is continuing working on EcoQO indicators. During the last six years, NOWPAP made important progress in the provision of technical information about the state and trends in eutrophication and hypoxia, incidence and extent of harmful algal blooms, understanding of major threats to marine and coastal biodiversity in some pilot areas, invasive species, and marine litter. This data is supporting NOWPAP national policy and decision-makers to develop measures addressing conservation and management of marine and coastal environment in the region.
10. SOMER-2 report (2014) summarized information about the status of the marine environment and identified major threats from human activities in the NOWPAP region. NOWPAP also produced *Regional overview of persistent toxic substances and persistent organic pollutants of ecological concern (2015)* and the report on *integrated coastal planning and ecosystem-based management of the northwest Pacific region (2015)*. The latter provided an initial overview of marine spatial planning and regional guidelines for integrated coastal planning and management. NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) (2008) is being successfully implemented through national and regional actions; the Northwest Pacific Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) was

established in 2014 by the NOWPAP and the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC). Close to a dozen of sectoral guidelines (for fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, ports and others) addressing threats from marine litter were produced by NOWPAP during the last six years to inform policy process.

11. NOWPAP members continued developing and implementing measures against marine pollution emergencies through the NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP). Oil spill exercises and training were supported on a regular basis keeping competent authorities ready for effective preparedness and response in case of a major oil/NHS spill accident. Members are provided with a sophisticated information database in support of the RCP that was developed and hosted by the NOWPAP.
12. NOWPAP continued updating and collecting information about the coastal and marine environment available online in various databases. New databases on environmental standards, invasive and endangered species, marine protected areas, and marine litter have been created. NOWPAP also significantly increased its public outreach and communication activities and was actively engaged in various global, regional, national and sub-national fora. Various partners were engaged in NOWPAP activities on a regular basis making NOWPAP an important member of the expansive network of regional institutions working on environmental issues.
13. Dominant environmental issues in the NOWPAP region continue to be the increasing impacts of climate change on ecosystems, economies and the society, making achievement of environmental goals and management response more challenging and uncertain. Loss of biodiversity and introduction of invasive species, including with ballast waters are significant. Marine protected areas and other forms of spatial protection of biodiversity cover only 4% of marine and coastal areas in the NOWPAP region, significantly below the global target of 10%. While the number of oil spills exceeding 1,000 tons has been decreasing over the years, the number of smaller oil spills does not show such downward tendency. Eutrophication is on the rise caused by the increased input of nutrients resulting in higher incidence of harmful algal blooms and hypoxic events. Pollution by persistent toxic substances is prevalent but continues to be limited to “hot spots” in the coastal areas. Finally, marine litter, including microplastics remains an important issue of regional concern.
14. While NOWPAP member states had measurable progress across various priority areas of the MTS 2012-2017, few important activities were not implemented or completed. Among them are lack of progress in the development of Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation, lack of progress on capacity building for integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, on prevention of alien species invasions through ballast waters, and the assessment of climate

change impacts on marine and coastal ecosystems. Collection and sharing of various environmental data continues to be challenging.

15. Implementation of NOWPAP activities faces some important challenges that should be addressed by the new MTS. Among them is a lack of translating results of NOWPAP assessments into policy and management action on the ground. There is also a lack of capacity and sufficient resources available to RACs while integration of activities and collaboration between NOWPAP RACs should be strengthened, particularly in addressing such complex issues as biodiversity, integrated ecosystem management and climate change impacts. Potential to improve NOWPAP outreach to sub-national and business communities as well as NGOs and working closer with traditional and new partner institutions is not yet fully realized.
16. Over time NOWPAP mechanism has transformed from a “project-based” to a “RAC-based” institution that limits its ability as a whole to secure additional funding and develop projects and activities with external partners. NOWPAP efforts to attract additional to the Trust Fund Resources are perceived to be insufficient, however no effort was made to assess leveraged resources secured by NOWPAP RACs and partners for the implementation of NOWPAP activities. Financial and in some areas administrative management of NOWPAP Trust Fund is not as efficient as it should be. Results-based management with clear performance indicators and identification of lessons and best practices was not fully embedded into the MTS 2012-2017 making full assessment of NOWPAP achievements and processes challenging.

### 3. NOWPAP Vision 2030

17. The new 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the UN member states in 2016 acknowledges the integrated nature of the many challenges that humanity faces. Halting and reversing environmental degradation requires systemic actions across all three domains of sustainable development: environmental, economic and social. NOWPAP major focus is on the achievement of SDG 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” emphasizes the importance of seas and oceans for sustainable development.
18. At the regional level, NOWPAP is best suited to apply the ecosystem approach and to form multi-stakeholder partnerships for the protection of marine and coastal environment and enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation. NOWPAP already delivers on SDG implementation and the major focus of the NOWPAP MTS 2017-2023 will be on *the coordination of the regional implementation of the ocean-related SDGs using NOWPAP mechanism*. NOWPAP will contribute concretely to achieving SDG 14 (particularly



targets 14.1, 14.2, 14.5, and 14.c) and SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. While main contribution will be on the achievement of SDG 14 targets, NOWPAP activities will also contribute to or advance achieving SDGs 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 15.

19. **Strengthening implementation of the NOWPAP based on ecosystem approach and achieving regionally agreed Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs)** is necessary to achieve SDG targets and fulfill the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Future NOWPAP agenda will be geared towards SDGs implementation focusing on issues of regional concern and interest.
20. NOWPAP will strengthen implementation of its two Regional Action Plans – the Regional Oil and NHS Spill Contingency Plan and the Regional Action on Marine Litter, increasingly focusing on microplastics, continue assessing the spatial scale and evolution of eutrophic and hypoxic zones and the phenomena of harmful algal blooms, to fulfill SDG 14.1.
21. To fulfill SDG 14.2 and 14.5, NOWPAP will embark on a range of activities to develop a Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation, including identification of critical habitats, species and the expansion of area-based biodiversity conservation measures such as marine protected areas (MPAs). NOWPAP will accelerate its activities to ensure mutual learning and capacity building towards closer regional cooperation on integrated coastal zone planning and management as well as marine spatial planning in the region. Finally, during the period of 2018-2023, as a baseline for SDG implementation, NOWPAP will produce an integrated assessment of the state of the NOWPAP marine and coastal ecosystems (SOMER-3) that will be used to review and set up new NOWPAP priorities, until 2030.
22. In response to growing and inter-connected environmental challenges, NOWPAP will **rely increasingly on partnerships in the region and globally**. NOWPAP will continue collaboration with traditional regional partners (PICES, TEMM, YSLME GEF project, PEMSEA, COBSEA, NEASPEC, and IOC-WESTPAC) and with other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to learn and support each other in efforts addressing SDGs issues.
23. Finally, NOWPAP will **continue engaging in global processes and mechanisms supporting effective measures towards achieving SDGs**, particularly SDG 14. NOWPAP inputs will contribute to reporting on relevant SDG 14 indicators and progress towards implementation. NOWPAP SOMER-3 will follow guidelines and contribute to the second phase of the Regular Process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socioeconomic aspects (Regular Process). NOWPAP members may use it as a platform to report on the SDG 14 implementation in national inputs to voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda for High-Level Political Forum.

Through Regional Seas Programme, NOWPAP will continue providing inputs to various global reporting and implementation mechanisms, including annual reports of the UN Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, UN Environment Assembly resolutions, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), and others.

24. NOWPAP will **monitor and report on the implementation of several voluntary commitments registered at the 2017 UN Conference** “Our oceans, our future: Partnering for the implementation of SDG 14”: *Strengthening regional cooperation for the protection of the marine and coastal environment in the Northwest Pacific (#OceanAction17490) and Marine environment protection through CEARAC of NOWPAP (#OceanAction17558)*.
25. NOWPAP Vision: **A resilient Northwest Pacific marine and coastal environment<sup>2</sup>, supporting sustainable development for the long-term benefit of present and future generations.**

#### 4. Operating principles of the Strategy

26. Operating principles define the approach to achieving the Vision. They guide the way NOWPAP approaches its work and the choices it makes. NOWPAP will coordinate internally and externally with partners to focus its actions based on the six principles described below.
27. NOWPAP mandate for improved environmental management and sustainable development of the coastal and marine ecosystems is defined by the founding document of the Action Plan (1994). During 2018-2023, NOWPAP activities will focus on the five major areas related to the achievement of SDG 14 and other relevant SDGs:
- Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management;
  - Assess status of the marine and coastal environment;
  - Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution;
  - Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity;
  - Strengthen regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization.

NOWPAP will deliver its mandate through strategic use of or combination of technical assistance, capacity building, data and information management, and public awareness and outreach.

28. **(i) Relevance to regional and national contexts and priorities:** NOWPAP will prioritize work

---

<sup>2</sup> Ecosystem resilience is a term coined for “the capacity of socio-ecological system to absorb disturbance and re-organize so as to retain essentially the same function, structure and feedbacks – i.e., to have the same identity.”

that supports delivery of national priorities or strategies, regional strategies, and obligations under multilateral environmental agreements.

29. **(ii) Leveraging science for policy and decision-making:** Through RACs supported by RCU, NOWPAP will continue bringing together various stakeholders, particularly academia, in data gathering, analysis and assessment at the regional level and continue improving quality of its deliverables (data, technical reports and guidelines). NOWPAP's focus will continue to be on (i) provision of policy-relevant assessments, (ii) facilitation of science-policy dialogues (through meetings of RACs and technical workshops), and (iii) contribution to science-policy interface through supporting agenda setting at the national (through NOWPAP Focal Points), regional (through participation in regional fora), and global (through the UN Environment Regional Seas Programme and other UN-led processes) levels. DINRAC will develop further and maintain NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal – a dynamic platform to share data and environmental information about the region's marine and coastal ecosystems.
30. **(iii) Synergy through strategic collaboration and partnerships:** NOWPAP will deliver work for which it has the mandate, technical expertise of RACs and RCU, and available budget. NOWPAP will engage diverse stakeholders from regional and national institutions, including central and local governments, major groups, private sector, and regional and global institutions in issue-based collaboration and partnerships built on common principles and values and shared goals of sustainable development of the marine and coastal environment.
31. **(iv) Return on investment:** NOWPAP will adopt approaches and pursue only those activities that have a high likelihood of sustained outcomes and represent good value for money. NOWPAP will work to ensure the financial sustainability of the Action Plan and leverage its Trust Fund with new and additional technical and financial resources.
32. **(v) Results-based management:** NOWPAP will continue strengthening planning and delivery process, based on the progressive use of results-based management. It will strengthen connection and synergies of activities between RACs and between RACs and RCU through internal arrangements for planning, delivery and budgeting, and performance indicators.
33. **(vi) Communication and public outreach:** NOWPAP will enhance public advocacy and digital engagement strategies to better inform, influence and mobilize stakeholders and resources for the protection of marine and coastal environment. Communication and public outreach will increasingly become part of the DNA of the NOWPAP RCU and RACs.

## 5. Priority Areas and Proposed Outcomes

34. Achieving environment and development outcomes<sup>3</sup> and impacts<sup>4</sup> take many years. Therefore, NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023 uses results-focused, longer-term outcome planning approach aligned with the target date of the 2030 Agenda. NOWPAP strategic focus and priority areas for the period of 2018-2023 are as follows:
1. Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management;
  2. Assess status of the marine and coastal environment;
  3. Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution;
  4. Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity;
  5. Strengthen regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization.
35. For each priority area of the MTS 2018-2023, Figure 1 (being developed) provides an overview of SDGs and targets vis-à-vis corresponding objectives and tasks of the NOWPAP and role of RAC(s).
36. Each priority area has specific objectives and corresponding outcomes/expected accomplishments. The adoption of two year biennial programmes of work and budget in the broader context of the 6-year MTS will outline activities towards achieving the longer-term impacts (EcoQOs and relevant SDG targets). MTS will allow for the adaptive approach to incorporate emerging issues and lessons learned to be reflected in the biennial work programs. These programs of work and budgets will be reviewed every two years as a part of the NOWPAP program development cycle.
37. The objectives under each priority area define the intention, while activities in the biennial work programs show logical steps towards achieving the outcomes/expected accomplishments in the period 2018-2023. The impact indicators (indicators for EcoQOs and relevant SDG 14 indicators) explain how environmental change would be measured in 2030 (SDG target year) and beyond. They are beyond the capacity of NOWPAP alone. The next sections provide an overview of regional priorities. Annex I includes summary of regional priorities, objectives, outcomes/expected accomplishments, and suggested activities for the period of 2018-2023.

### [5.1. Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management \(ICARM\)](#)

38. The coastal areas of NOWPAP region are characterized by varying and often contrasting social, economic, geographical and geopolitical features. There are

---

<sup>3</sup> Outcomes are defined as the uptake, adoption or use of NOWPAP intervention that is observed as a change of behavior, attitude, condition, knowledge or skill. Negotiated and agreed outcomes become expected accomplishments.

<sup>4</sup> Impacts are the ultimate ambition to be realized and represent environmental change. In the NOWPAP context they are linked to Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) and SDG targets that NOWPAP could not achieve alone.

differences in political systems among the neighboring countries, density and numbers of population, natural resource potential, natural and climatic conditions and in levels of industrial development along the coasts. Under these conditions the application of the Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM) as an overarching approach to the region's integrated management is particularly relevant (Regional Overview on Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM) in the NOWPAP Region, 2010).

39. This priority area responds directly to Objectives (3) and (4) of the Action Plan that focuses on ecosystem-based planning and management, respectively. The expected 2030 Impact is **SDG 14.2** and corresponding indicators:

*By 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of SDGs 6, 11, 14, and 15 (Fig. 1).

40. NOWPAP started activities addressing integrated coastal and river basin management (ICARM) in 2007 when it established the ICARM Working Group. This group was instrumental in setting up regional dialogue and produced Regional overview of marine spatial planning and ecosystem-based management in the selected areas of the NOWPAP region (2015) and Regional guidelines for integrated coastal planning and management in the NW Pacific region (2015). NOWPAP continues working with PEMSEA on training for integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. While NOWPAP individual member states made significant progress at the national level to advance legal, policy and management frameworks for coastal zone management and marine spatial planning, institutional development and organizational strengthening of ICARM at the regional level has barely started and remains the utmost necessity (NOWPAP POMRAC Technical Report No.8, 2015).
41. MTS 2018-2023 Objective for priority area "Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management" is ***NOWPAP countries increasingly apply ecosystem-based approach to planning and management as a basis to achieve healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems.***
42. MTS 2018-2023 *Outcomes/ Expected Accomplishments* for this priority area are as follows:
- 1.1. NOWPAP member states are developing and applying ecosystem-based management policies, tools and practices to support sustainable development of coastal zones and the marine environment;
  - 1.2. Planning and decision-making processes for ICZM and MSP by NOWPAP

member states recognize inter-connectedness between the land and the sea and promote cross-sectoral cooperation;

- 1.3. Planning mechanisms, including integrated water resources management, ICZM and MSP in NOWPAP member states contribute to reduced pressures on the coastal and marine environment.

43. NOWPAP will re-establish the ICARM Working Group (ICARM WG) under the framework of POMRAC to provide a forum for regional, trans-boundary and cross-sectoral dialogue on integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and marine spatial planning (MSP) in the NOWPAP region. As initial tasks, WG will (i) update national information on ICZM and MSP developments and best practices, especially on the elements covered by the NOWPAP ICARM regional guidelines (2015). The Group will exchange experience on the mainstreaming of ICZM and MSP into national SDG frameworks. NOWPAP will continue close co-operation with PEMSEA providing regular training opportunities on ICZM and MSP with a target having annual training activities by 2023. ICARM WG will also look for opportunities to exchange experience and lessons learned with the HELCOM-VASAB Maritime Spatial Planning Working Group, one of the successful ICZM and MSP platforms among Regional Seas. The group will revise Regional guidelines on ICZM and MSP when deemed necessary in order to have a common regional vision and agree on principles of transboundary cooperation on ICZM and MSP in the NOWPAP region. Finally, the Group will start identifying ICZM and MSP cases that could benefit from transboundary co-operation and common experiences as well as evaluate possible project ideas and funding sources to support these activities. YSLME GEF project will undertake several activities related to site-based integrated coastal management plans and NOWPAP will explore further opportunities for collaboration with the GEF project.
44. POMRAC will provide secretariat services for the ICARM WG under the RCU guidance. Other NOWPAP RACs will provide inputs and benefit from activities and results of the ICARM WG: MERRAC will support activities focused on environmental sensitivity mapping; CEARAC work on coastal and marine biodiversity will provide important inputs on biodiversity hotspots and the use of area-based management tools, including MPAs; DINRAC will serve as an information platform for data and knowledge related to ICZM and MSP in the NOWPAP region as deemed appropriate by the ICARM WG.
45. The indicative list of potential **Partners** for implementation of the priority area will include relevant national and local authorities and institutions, scientific and research institutions in the NOWPAP member countries as well as the following global and regional partners: PEMSEA, YSLME GEF project, UN Environment Regional Seas Programme (HELCOM in particular), and UNESCO/IOC (on global dialogue).

## 5.2. Assess status of the marine and coastal environment

46. NOWPAP regular assessment work is instrumental in informing environmental management actions and identifying emerging issues of regional and global concern in the NOWPAP region. Instead of establishing a regional environmental monitoring system, NOWPAP members agreed to use the results of national monitoring and assessments. NOWPAP assessments played an important role to inform member states about various emerging issues such as marine litter, invasive species, eutrophication and hypoxia, climate change impacts and others. During the last few years NOWPAP produced several important regional assessments, including “State of Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP Region” (SOMER-2) (POMRAC, 2014), “Regional Overview of the PTS in the Coastal Environment of the NOWPAP Region” (POMRAC, 2015), “Monitoring and Management of Marine Protected Areas in the NOWPAP Region” (CEARAC, 2012), Integrated Report on Harmful Algal Blooms for the NOWPAP Region” (CEARAC, 2011), several reports on the status of land-based and sea-based marine litter produced by CEARAC and MERRAC.
47. Environment assessment work will continue having a prominent role in the MTS 2018-2023 with its focus shifting towards more policy-based advisory documents, identification of emerging environmental threats as well as forecasting. Priority area responds directly to Objectives (1) and is also related to Objective (2) of the Action Plan. The expected 2030 Impact is:

*Evidence-based policy making by NOWPAP member states informed by robust data and assessments fully integrates the environmental dimension of sustainable development of the coastal and marine environment.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDGs 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17 (Fig. 1).

48. MTS 2018-2023 Objective for priority area “Assess status of the marine and coastal environment” is ***NOWPAP countries are presented with and use reliable information and data on the state of marine and coastal environment to support evidence-based policy making process.***
49. MTS 2018-2023 *Outcomes/ Expected Accomplishments* for this priority area are as follows:
- 2.1. NOWPAP member states are provided with integrated periodic assessments of state of marine and coastal environment and its individual components, including (but not limited to) biodiversity, chemical and biological pollution, harmful algal blooms, marine litter, oil and HNS threats, and climate change impacts to inform

and foster policy action;

- 2.2. “Good environmental status” of the NOWPAP is defined and provides a baseline and direction for member states action;
- 2.3. NOWPAP member states, through the NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal, have free and user-friendly access to data and reliable information on coastal and marine environment collected from members, NOWPAP RACs, other institutions and projects;
- 2.4. New and emerging environmental issues, including climate change impacts on socio-ecological systems in the NOWPAP region, are identified and addressed by member states, as appropriate.

50. Assessments of marine and coastal environment and its components are integral part of all priority areas of the NOWPAP and all four NOWPAP RACs supported by RCU will be involved in these activities. Thematic assessments are included under other priority areas. The major undertaking under this area during the period of 2018-2023 will be planning, development and publication of the holistic Third Assessment “State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region” (SOMER-3). Several working groups will be established to develop SOMER-3 and various national and regional institutions will be involved. POMRAC will provide leadership during planning and synthesis of results as well as lead working group(s) addressing issues of atmospheric and land-based pollution and integrated management. CEARAC will oversee preparation of chapters addressing biodiversity status and conservation measures. MERRAC will provide oversight on SOMER-3 activities assessing impacts of maritime activities on the environment. DINRAC’s role in SOMER-3 will concern knowledge management and capacity assessment gaps. Overall activity will be implemented in close partnership with all RACs and RCU and involve inputs from various national, regional and global institutions as well as individual scientists and specialists. SOMER-3 will provide an important contribution to the second phase of the Regular Process Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. It will follow Global Integrated Marine Assessment Handbook guidelines and adopt relevant methodology for NOWPAP conditions. The major external partner for SOMER-3 assessment is PICES and its relevant working groups and advisory panels. NOWPAP RACs and RCU will continue close cooperation with PICES, including alignment and “cross-fertilization” between SOMER-3 and the Third North Pacific Ecosystems Status Report to be finalized by 2019. NOWPAP and PICES may mutually support other relevant scientific assessments of mutual interest.

51. POMRAC will lead further development indicators for Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs). In 2014 NOWPAP members agreed on the list of five following EcoQOs for the NOWPAP region:

- (1) Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure;



- (2) Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems;
  - (3) Eutrophication adverse effects (such as loss of biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algal blooms, and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters) are absent;
  - (4) Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health, and
  - (5) Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments.
52. In 2016, Regional overview and preliminary list of possible indicators for EcoQOs to define and monitor “Good Environmental Status” (the term from the Marine Strategy Framework Directive of the European Union) of the NOWPAP region were proposed. During 2018-2023 NOWPAP will finalize EcoQOs indicator list and will start collecting and reporting on these indicators. While the methodological work will be completed by POMRAC, data collection and presentation in a user-friendly form will be done by DINRAC. Three RACs will provide advice and facilitate data collection for EcoQOs indicators (DINRAC – information portal, invasive alien species (EcoQO 2) and Red List species, CEARAC – major indicators for biological and habitat diversity and index of coastal eutrophication – EcoQOs 1 and 3, POMRAC – on land-based sources of pollution (EcoQO 4), and NPEC supported by RCU on marine litter – EcoQO 5.
53. DINRAC website will be re-designed to serve as a repository of environmental data and information for the NOWPAP region to become the NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal for general public, policy- and decision-makers, and specialists. DINRAC will continue collecting and updating regularly data and information on major marine environmental issues and databases and links to NOWPAP products. The focus of environmental data collection will be on carefully selected relevant EcoQOs and SDG indicators as well as various sources of information supporting Objectives of the MTS 2018-2023. By the target date of MTS – 2023 - NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal supported by DINRAC should become the main information source for NOWPAP members and beyond on the monitoring and tracking progress on EcoQOs and relevant SDGs targets addressing marine and coastal environmental issues in the region.
54. Recognizing the importance of climate change impacts on NOWPAP socio-ecological systems and acknowledging the lack of expertise in this area among RACs, RCU will take a lead in exploring possibilities for necessary regional work on climate change impacts that is not yet considered by other institutions, will be supported by NOWPAP member states and contribute to implementation of the Action Plan. Some potential activities with PICES and the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) will be explored, particularly in the context of SOMER-3 preparation and carbon sequestration (blue carbon) work as a logical follow up work to the ongoing work on seagrass mapping by CEARAC.
55. The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation will include relevant national and regional institutions, particularly scientific and research institutions in the NOWPAP member countries as well as the following regional and global partners: PICES,

UN Environment Science Division, and the UN Environment-WCMC.

### 5.3. Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution

56. Chemical pollution of water, sediments and biota in the coastal and marine environment of NOWPAP is coming from both, land-based such as riverine and atmospheric transport, and sea-based sources due to intensive shipping, aquaculture and port activities. Environmental conditions are improving for some pollutants in some NOWPAP areas, but contamination linked to hazardous substances remains a problem in many others. The NOWPAP region is particularly vulnerable to marine pollution incidents due to its high shipping density (more than half of the 20 top container terminals are located in the region) and to higher risk of oil and HNS pollution incidents. Eutrophication caused by human-mediated input of nutrients into coastal waters is also major concern, especially in coastal areas near large rivers and/or cities. Consequences of eutrophication may be linked to the increasing incidence harmful algal blooms and hypoxia. NOWPAP addresses land-based and sea-based sources of marine litter since mid-2000s through the implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (2008) (RAP MALI) with the involvement of all NOWPAP RACs. Leadership is provided by the established NOWPAP Marine Litter Focal Points group. Through NPEC, NOWPAP maintains regional node of the UN Environment-administered Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) that represents depository of regional data and information on marine litter.
57. In order to respond to oil and NHS spills within the NOWPAP region, since 2000 a joint center of UN Environment and IMO, MERRAC, has been carrying activities addressing oil and NHS spill preparedness and response. NOWPAP Regional Oil and HNS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP) adopted by NOWPAP members provides a framework for cooperation on oil and NHS spills preparedness and response. As a secretariat of NOWPAP RCP, MERRAC enhanced regional capacity through practical implementation of the RCP, such as development of technical guidelines and manuals, conduction of regular exercises and information sharing.
58. The priority area responds directly to Objective (4) and (5) of the Action Plan. The expected 2030 Impacts are as follows:

*SDG 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.*

and

*NOWPAP EcoQO 3: Eutrophication adverse effects are absent, EcoQO 4: Contaminants*

*cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health and EcoQO 5: Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDGs 2, 6, 8, 12, and 14 (Fig. 1).

59. MTS 2018-2023 Objective for priority area “Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution” is ***NOWPAP countries develop and adopt effective measures for mutual support in marine pollution emergencies and in the prevention and mitigation of coastal and marine pollution.***
60. MTS 2018-2023 *Outcomes/ Expected Accomplishments* for this priority area are as follows:
- 3.1. NOWPAP member states have effective measures in place against marine pollution emergencies through the NOWPAP Regional Oil and NHS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP);
  - 3.2. NOWPAP member states are provided with reliable information, guidelines and best practices addressing prevention and mitigation of coastal and marine pollution, including eutrophication;
  - 3.3. NOWPAP member states effectively deal with marine litter, including microplastics, through the effective implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI).
61. NOWPAP member states are parties of OPRC Convention, and three NOWPAP member states (China, Japan and Republic of Korea) are parties of OPRC-HNS Protocol. In order to facilitate compliance with OPRC Convention and OPRC-HNS Protocol and enhance regional capacity to respond to emergencies through NOWPAP RCP, MERRAC will continue playing a leading role in activities related to oil and HNS spill prevention and response, including risk assessment. Through MERRAC, NOWPAP will contribute to the implementation of the IMO Strategic Plan 2016-2021, Strategic Direction 7 focused on reducing and eliminating adverse impacts from shipping on the environment.
62. While MERRAC will continue supporting effective measures against marine pollution emergencies through cooperation between competent national authorities (CNAs), during 2018-2023, MERRAC Focal Points will look into effective ways and assess available resources to address (through information exchange, technical assistance and capacity building) other adverse impacts of shipping on the environment such as those regulated by the two relevant for NOWPAP IMO conventions: International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto and by the Protocol of 1997 (MARPOL) and International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004. The latter is ratified by the three NOWPAP members (Japan, R. Korea and the Russian Federation) and entered into force in September 2017. Under the

Convention, all ships in international traffic are required to manage their ballast water and sediments to a certain standard.

63. Marine litter issue is one of global concern. Thanks to strong commitment of the NOWPAP member states, Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) and Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) have been implemented by all RACs under the overall guidance of RCU since 2006. NOWPAP will continue RAP MALI implementation to prevent and mitigate the marine litter pollution through regular annual marine litter management workshops and International Coastal Cleanup campaigns. NOWPAP will continue engaging various stakeholders in the region and beyond as well as working with sister regional programs: COBSEA, PEMSEA, and YSLME on marine litter activities through participation in joint meetings, technical assistance and capacity building support. NOWPAP will continue collaboration with the Tripartite Environmental Ministers Meeting (TEMM, with the participation between Japan, P.R. China and the Republic of Korea) and other mechanisms (e.g., regular Eco Asia meetings) to address effectively resource conservation, recycling, “circular economy” and “sound material cycle society” by promoting 3R approach (reduce, reuse, recycle) as well as continue working with Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Oceans and Fisheries Working Group on marine litter issues. NOWPAP will update and maintain Regional Node of the GPML hosted by the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC) - the major information portal on marine litter data in the NOWPAP region.
64. As a new focus for 2018-2023 period, NOWPAP will develop regional assessment of microplastics sources and impacts. This work to be led by DINRAC??? and supported by RAP MALI Focal Points and RCU will be implemented through joint workshops, harmonization of methodology (together with the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP)), scientific exchanges and site visits, and other means. Supervised by NOWPAP Marine Litter Focal Points and led by RCU, NOWPAP intends to develop a project to address issues of microplastics in the NOWPAP region and seek additional funds to implement this activity.
65. CEARAC will continue collecting data and regularly update regional maps of eutrophication status and trends using NOWPAP Common Procedure.
66. The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation includes relevant national and local authorities and institutions, scientific and research institutions in the NOWPAP member countries as well as the following regional and global partners: UN Environment Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, UN Environment/GPA GPML and GPNM, IMO and its Environment Committee, ITOPF, IPIECA, PICES, YSLME GEF project, APEC, COBSEA and others.

#### [5.4. Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity](#)

67. Recognizing the utmost importance of protecting biodiversity in the NOWPAP region, NOWPAP has started relevant activities in 2007. Among major threats to marine and coastal biodiversity in the region are over-fishing, impacts from nutrient overloading, introduction of non-indigenous and invasive species, negative impacts from aquaculture, destruction and modification of habitats, and impacts of climate change. While the total number of MPAs is continuously increasing in the region, the rate of increase is among lowest worldwide and the total regional coverage of MPAs does not exceed 4% of the total EEZ area, which is well below the SDG 14.5 and CBD Aichi target of 10% coverage of coastal and marine areas combined. In recent years NOWPAP conducted few biodiversity related assessments (e.g., “Monitoring and Management of MPAs in the NOWPAP Region” (CEARAC, 2013) and CEARAC continuing work on seaweed and seagrass bed mapping). NOWPAP collaborated with NEASPEC that launched North-east Asia MPAs network in 2013. In 2014, NOWPAP supported the identification of Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSA) in the North Pacific facilitated by the Convention on Biological Diversity. In 2017 CEARAC completed assessment of major impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity in pilot regions of the NOWPAP area.
68. Biodiversity conservation, including invasive alien species management was included in the NOWPAP MTS 2012-2017 as one of the priorities with the ultimate expected output – Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation. The strategy noted that most of the activities would be implemented using external resources. Unfortunately, progress was slow and the Regional Pan was not delivered. One of the major constrains that prevented progress in this priority area was the lack of NOWPAP resources dedicated to biodiversity related activities due to other priorities, lack of mobilized by NOWPAP technical expertise and lacking leadership from member states to prioritize these activities.
69. Recognizing the transboundary nature of many biodiversity issues in the region and NOWPAP’s comparative advantage to address conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity (rich national technical and policy expertise, some experience of NOWPAP RACs, and the absence of any regional institution taking a holistic approach to marine and coastal biodiversity), MTS 2018-2023 will put emphasis on this issue by dedicating Trust Fund resources into this area to be supplemented by leveraged financing. CEARAC will lead this activity and coordinate inputs from other RACs with the ultimate goal to develop a Regional Action Plan on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation by the end of MTS period – 2023.
70. This priority area responds directly to Objectives 3, task (e), (f); Objective 4 (g) of the Action Plan that focus on biodiversity conservation measures. The expected 2030 Impacts are as follows:

*SDG 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and taking action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans;*

*SDG 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information;*

*NOWPAP EcoQO 1: Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure;*

*and*

*NOWPAP EcoQO 2: Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDGs 6, 11, 14, and 15.

71. MTS 2018-2023 Objective for priority area “Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity” is ***NOWPAP countries are provided with reliable information and analysis of the status of biodiversity and conservation measures and recommendations for action as expressed in a Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation.***

72. MTS 2018-2023 *Outcomes/ Expected Accomplishments* for this priority area are as follows:

- 4.1. NOWPAP member states are provided with information and data, including on the status and major threats to Red List species and invasive alien species and sensitive habitat mapping in the region;
- 4.2. NOWPAP member states effectively address marine and coastal biodiversity conservation through planning and application of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs) and Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs);
- 4.3. NOWPAP member states adopt Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation.

73. Due to limited financial resources and capacity constrains among RACs, the focus of biodiversity-related activities will be on the collection of national data on IUCN Red List species (to be continued by DINRAC) and the assessment of their status (by CEARAC) as well as identification and mapping of NOWPAP threatened coastal and marine biotopes (CEARAC). In parallel, NOWPAP RACs supported by RCU will work with regional and national partner institutions on the development and implementation of Species Conservation Plans, the work to be supported largely by leveraging external funds. Among candidate species are threatened migratory bird species and biotopes.

The second priority area will include data sharing and regional dialogue on the use of area-based management tools to conserve marine and coastal biodiversity. These activities will be undertaken by the ICARM Working Group and CEARAC with a clear delineation of responsibilities. On area-based biodiversity protection measures, NOWPAP will cooperate with the NEASPEC project “Strengthening the subregional cooperation through knowledge sharing on sustainable management of MPAs”. The project will analyze and improve management practices in member sites of North-East Asia Marine Protected Area Network (NEAMPAN) and support knowledge sharing among the sites. Also NEASPEC project on the environmental and institutional context of connectivity conservation in transboundary habitats, focusing on the Dauria International Protected Areas (DIPA) and Tumen River area is of relevance. Activities of YSLME GEF project addressing MPA networks in the YSLME are complementary and NOWPAP will explore opportunities for cooperation on data sharing and learning with the YSLME GEF project.

74. In order to implement the above activities effectively, RACs supported by RCU will be looking for external funding sources with the aim to develop regional projects supporting objective of the priority area.
75. The indicative list of potential **Partners** for the implementation of the above priority area will include relevant national and local authorities and institutions, scientific and research institutions in the NOWPAP member countries as well as the following regional and global partners: CBD, UN Environment-WCMC, Convention on Migratory Species and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), Ramsar Convention, BirdLife International, IMO GLOBALLAST, East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP), Arctic Council Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group (CAFF), YSLME GEF project, and the UN Environment Regional Seas.

#### [5.5. Strengthen regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization](#)

76. Success of NOWPAP as a regional cooperation mechanism for the protection of coastal and marine environment will depend on the way how it will organize itself to achieve the outcomes under each priority area and, ultimately, objectives of the Action Plan. The operating principles of the Strategy described in Chapter 3 define what will be prioritized in the delivery of NOWPAP activities and are as follows: (i) Relevance to regional and national contexts and priorities, (ii) Leveraging science for policy and decision-making, (iii) Synergy through strategic collaboration and partnerships, (iv) Return on investment, (v) Results-based management, and (vi) Communication and public outreach.
77. MTS 2018-2023 will strengthen and where necessary upgrade all core functions of the

Action Plan - environmental assessment, environmental management, environmental legislation, institutional and financial arrangements – while moving towards further integration of various activities, integration between four RACs and stronger coordinating role of the RCU. NOWPAP will continue integrating and further aligning its activities with regional and global priorities and institutions, while expanding its partnership base. Communication and outreach will become an integral part of this priority area.

78. This priority area responds directly to Objective 5, tasks (b), (d), and (e). The expected 2030 Impact are as follows:

*Strengthened and effective regional framework for collaboration in the management of coastal and marine environment to support achievement of relevant SDGs in the NOWPAP region.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

79. MTS 2018-2023 Objective for priority area “Strengthened regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization” is ***through NOWPAP mechanism member countries strengthen regional cooperation, complemented by partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise and financial resources to support the achievement of Action Plan objectives.***

80. MTS 2018-2023 *Outcomes/ Expected Accomplishments* for this priority area are as follows:

- 5.1. NOWPAP network of Regional Activity Centers is managed effectively and complemented by well-functioning multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- 5.2. NOWPAP Trust Funds are managed efficiently and effectively through improved administrative, financial and human resources management;
- 5.3. NOWPAP communications, public advocacy and digital engagement products better inform, influence and mobilize stakeholders and resources for the protection of marine and coastal environment;
- 5.4. External capacity and financial resources are mobilized for the implementation of NOWPAP activities.

81. In order to reach Objectives and Outcomes of the MTS, NOWPAP will continue focusing on scientific and technical assessments, capacity building measures, and data and information exchange. During MTS 2018-2023, NOWPAP will particularly strengthen the following elements of the Action Plan: (i) science-policy interface and the role of RACs as primary conduits for policy- and decision-relevant environmental



information and advice for policy and decision-makers, (ii) expansion of multi-stakeholder partnerships supporting NOWPAP mandate at the global, regional, national and where feasible - sub-national levels, (iii) public advocacy, outreach and communications, and (iv) increased mobilization of external technical expertise and financial resources. NOWPAP will also strengthen monitoring and reporting mechanisms using results-based management framework (see chapter below).

82. Particular emphasis will be paid to enabling existing and building new capacity to address complex environmental challenges facing the region. NOWPAP will continue leveraging its partnerships to support training of specialists and young scientists in the region on priority issues of the Action Plan. RACs supported by RCU will increase efforts to make all NOWPAP technical assessments, guidelines and best practices notes policy-relevant providing clear set of recommendations and proposed actions to advance goals of the Action Plan.
83. NOWPAP partnerships with various national, regional and global institutions are horizontal element of all NOWPAP activities. NOWPAP is one of the 18 Regional Seas Convention and Action Plans (under the Regional Seas Programme umbrella) in the framework of the United Nations Environment Programme and will continue collaboration within this framework (e.g., Regional Seas SDG Outlooks, cooperation with global mechanisms and bodies) and with individual Regional Seas on issues of common interest, including monitoring and reporting mechanisms at the global level (Regular Process and UN GA and UN Environment reporting mechanisms). NOWPAP partnerships with regional organizations, including PEMSEA (on ICZM capacity building), PICES (on various environmental issues, including SOMER-3, biodiversity including harmful algal blooms, microplastics, emerging environmental issues, and climate change impacts), YSLME (on marine litter, biodiversity and governance), NEASPEC (on regional network of MPAs), and TEMM (on marine litter management) will be deepened and expanded. NOWPAP will seek new partners and opportunities in the region and globally to leverage its expertise and financial resources.
84. NOWPAP RCU and RACs will enhance public advocacy and progressively employ digital engagement strategies to better inform, influence and mobilize stakeholders and resources for the protection of marine and coastal environment. NOWPAP corporate website will be redesigned and regularly updated with the information about NOWPAP activities as well as provide relevant environment information. Digital communication tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and others will be used regularly. RACs will also maintain their own websites and enhance use of digital tools as well. DINRAC website will be re-designed to serve as a repository of environmental data and information for the NOWPAP region to become the NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal for general public, policy- and decision-makers, and specialists (see

chapter 4.2).

85. NOWPAP RCU was established to ensure integrated and well-managed execution of activities and projects under the Action Plan through provision of secretariat services and administrative and financial support of NOWPAP operations. During 2018-2023 period, RCU will play an increasing role in (i) assuring coordination and integration of RACs activities, (ii) brokering partnership and collaboration with regional and global institutions, (iii) lead and support public outreach and advocacy for regional and international priorities with member states, and (iv) provide leadership in the identification and preparation of project proposals in the areas where RAC expertise is limited. NOWPAP major activities will continue to be implemented by RACs, but RCU will lead mobilization of practical project management expertise and work closely with RACs and other entities on the mobilization of additional/leveraged financial resources.
86. Some NOWPAP present and past projects required additional human resources and expertise not available in the four RACs. NOWPAP Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) was implemented using project-specific implementation mechanism that included oversight provided by member-states through Marine Litter Focal Points that to this day are responsible for national and regional coordination, while major activities are implemented by NOWPAP RACs and coordinated by RCU. With NOWPAP moving increasingly into technical areas that require strong cross-sectoral expertise (such as ICZM, marine biodiversity, marine litter, potentially climate change impacts and others), this project-focused approach will be increasingly used by the NOWPAP. Depending on issues and project ideas, NOWPAP will establish several Working Groups (WGs) consisting of representatives of member states with relevant expertise that may report directly to the IGM. RCU or RAC Secretariat (depending on the issue) will provide secretariat services to these groups. Using this modality during 2018-2023 period, NOWPAP will reestablish ICARM WG, Microplastics WG, and potentially one or two groups addressing specific issues addressing marine and coastal biodiversity (among candidate issues are invasive species, migratory birds, HABs, area-based management for biodiversity conservation, including MPAs). The WG activities will be supported by seed funding for secretariat services from the NOWPAP Trust Fund, but their main activities will be funded by mobilized externally resources. Specific project proposals will be developed by the members of the WG supported by RCU and RACs where applicable. The proposed operational modality will become a major source of external expertise and funding for NOWPAP activities. In addition, additional resources will continue to be leveraged by RACs and RCU where applicable for the implementation of core activities supported largely by the NOWPAP Trust Fund.

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation of NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023

87. Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on the MTS 2018-2023 implementation will be the responsibility of the RCU, in collaboration with member states and RACs. Through a structured and integrated planning, implementation and reporting process, NOWPAP will ensure higher levels of transparency and accountability. It should support culture of evaluation, self-reflection, and continuous improvement. NOWPAP approach to planning and monitoring will be defined by two documents:
- a. Biennial Programme of Work, and
  - b. MTS Results Planning and Performance Reporting Framework (RPPF).
88. NOWPAP Programme of Work for the two-year cycle will describe the approach to progress towards achievements of MTS objectives. It will set targets, indicators and activities as well as budget for each biennial cycle. Biennial activities and budgets are based on decisions made by Focal Points Meetings (FPMs) of each RAC a year preceding the biennial cycle and approved by the NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM). Adopted by the IGM biennial programmes of work will serve as a basis for more detailed annual work programmes and budgets of RACs and RCU. RAC work plans will include responsibilities and major partners, budget allocation from the Trust Fund and external resources (where applicable) as well as specific performance indicators derived from the Biennial Programme of Work. Progress on the implementation of the Biennial Programme of Work will be reported annually and necessary adjustments in activities and budgets made at the NOWPAP IGM. NOWPAP will adopt a procedure for monitoring and reporting on financing leveraged by RACs, RCU and other partners where applicable.
89. RPPF will describe how NOWPAP results will be monitored and reported, and how lessons learned will be identified and applied. This framework to be introduced for the MTS 2018-2023 should allow NOWPAP members to understand the strategies and modalities used to achieve major outcomes of the MTS. The framework will (i) define NOWPAP planning cycle with clear division of responsibilities and linkages between planning and reporting; (ii) define what NOWPAP will monitor, evaluate and report on the progress towards achieving objectives of the MTS; (iii) describe NOWPAP approach to learning and continuous improvement, and (iv) align NOWPAP achievements with relevant international frameworks, including reporting on relevant SDGs. This framework will be developed within a year following the adoption of the MTS 2018-2023.
90. The MTS 2018-2023 will be governed and monitored by the member states through NOWPAP IGMs. Implementation of specific elements of the MTS will be reviewed at the annual meetings of RAC Focal Points. Half-way, in 2020, RCU will undertake internal review of the progress achieved under the MTS using inputs from member states, RACs

and other NOWPAP stakeholders and in accordance with the MTS Results Planning and performance reporting framework. Recommendations and necessary adjustments will be considered and approved by the IGM. During the last year of MTS, 2023, NOWPAP RCU will commission an independent review of the progress achieved, identify challenges and propose recommendations for future action.

## Annex 1: NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023

### NOWPAP MTS 2018-2023

**NOWPAP Vision: A resilient Northwest Pacific marine and coastal environment, supporting sustainable development for the long-term benefit of present and future generations.**

2017-2023 MTS Objectives	2030 Impact	Outcomes / Expected Accomplishments	Suggested Activities (lead RAC)
<b>1. Support integrated coastal and river basin planning and management (ICARM)</b>			
<p>1.1. NOWPAP countries increasingly apply ecosystem-based approach to planning and management as a basis to achieve healthy and productive coastal and marine ecosystems.</p>	<p>Priority area responds directly to Objectives (3) and (4) of the Action Plan that focuses on ecosystem-based planning and management, respectively. The expected 2030 Impact is <b>SDG 14.2</b> and corresponding indicators: <i>By 2020, sustainably manage, and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience and</i></p>	<p>1.1.1. NOWPAP member states are developing and applying ecosystem-based management policies, tools and practices to support sustainable development of coastal zones and the marine environment;</p> <p>1.1.2. Planning and decision-making processes for ICZM and MSP by NOWPAP member states recognize inter-connectedness between the land and the sea and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of ICARM WG (POMRAC)</li> <li>• Regional overview of ICZM and MSP applications, best practices and lessons learned (ICARM WG, POMRAC)</li> <li>• ICZM/MSP regular training organized (ICARM WG, POMRAC together with PEMSEA)</li> <li>• Regional overview of best practices of mainstreaming ICZM/MSP into national SDG frameworks (ICARM WG, POMRAC)</li> <li>• Update of regional ICARM guidelines (ICARM WG, POMRAC)</li> </ul>

*take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of SDGs 6, 11, 14, and 15.

promote cross-sectoral cooperation;

1.1.3. Planning mechanisms, including integrated water resources management, ICZM and MSP in NOWPAP member states contribute to reduced pressures on the coastal and marine environment.

- Identification of ICZM/MSP sites of transboundary importance and development of project proposals to support management of these sites (ICARM WG, POMRAC)

## 2. Assess status of the marine and coastal environment

2.1. NOWPAP countries are presented with and use reliable information and data on the state of marine and coastal environment to support evidence-based policy making process.

Priority area responds directly to Objectives (1) and is also related to Objective (2) of the Action Plan.

The expected 2030 Impact is:

*Evidence-based policy making by NOWPAP member states informed by robust data and assessments fully integrates the environmental dimension of sustainable development of the coastal and marine environment.*

2.1.1. NOWPAP member states are provided with integrated periodic assessments of state of marine and coastal environment and its individual components, including (but not limited to) biodiversity, chemical and biological pollution, harmful algal blooms, marine litter, oil and HNS threats, and climate change impacts to inform and foster policy action;

- Establishment of expert WG(s) for development of SOMER-3 (POMRAC)
- Third Report State of the Marine Environment Report for the NOWPAP region (POMRAC)
- NOWPAP SDG Outlook 2030 (POMRAC supported by RCU and Un Environment Regional Seas)
- Adoption of indicators for Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs) (POMRAC supported by all other RACs on specific indicators)
- Collection of information on EcoQOs and

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDGs 6, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 17.

2.1.2. “Good environmental status” of the NOWPAP is defined and provides a baseline and direction for member states action;

2.1.3. NOWPAP member states, through the NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal, have free and user-friendly access to data and reliable information on coastal and marine environment collected from members, NOWPAP RACs, other institutions and projects;

2.1.4. New and emerging environmental issues, including climate change impacts on socio-ecological systems in the NOWPAP region, are identified and addressed by member states, as appropriate.

SDG indicators (integrated by DINRAC and supported by other RACs on specific indicators: CEARAC – biodiversity and eutrophication related, POMRAC – pollution related, MERRAC – sea-based marine litter, CEARAC – land-based marine litter through Regional Node of GPML)

- Regular collection of data and information (EcoQOs and SDG 14 indicators) (DINRAC)
- Regular update of existing databases and establishing new databases through DINRAC websites (DINRAC)
- Re-design of the DINRAC website to become NOWPAP Data and Knowledge Management Portal (DINRAC)

---

### 3. Prevent and reduce land- and sea-based pollution

---

---

<p>3.1. NOWPAP countries develop and adopt effective measures for mutual support in marine pollution emergencies and in the prevention and mitigation of coastal and marine pollution.</p>	<p>The priority area responds directly to Objective (4) and (5) of the Action Plan. The expected 2030 Impacts are as follows:</p> <p>SDG 14.1: <i>By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.</i></p>	<p>3.1.1. NOWPAP member states have effective measures in place against marine pollution emergencies through the NOWPAP Regional Oil and NHS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance and implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Oil and NHS Spill Contingency Plan (RCP), including activation of RCP in case of a major oil/NHS spill incidents in the NOWPAP region (MERRAC)</li> </ul>
	<p>and</p> <p><i>NOWPAP EcoQO 3: Eutrophication adverse effects are absent, EcoQO 4: Contaminants cause no significant impact on coastal and marine ecosystems and human health and EcoQO 5: Marine litter does not adversely affect coastal and marine environments.</i></p>	<p>3.1.2. NOWPAP member states are provided with reliable information, guidelines and best practices addressing prevention and mitigation of coastal and marine pollution, including eutrophication;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection and dissemination of information related to oil/NHS spill preparedness and response (MERRAC)</li> <li>• Development of operational and technical guidelines and manuals related to marine pollution preparedness and response by implementing specific projects (MERRAC)</li> </ul>
	<p>Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of</p>	<p>3.1.3. NOWPAP member states effectively deal with marine litter, including microplastics, through the effective implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization of oil/NHS spill exercises and training courses (MERRAC)</li> <li>• Identification of new projects supporting implementation of NOWPAP relevant IMO Conventions (MERRAC)</li> <li>• Organization of regular marine litter management workshops and International Coastal Cleanup Campaigns (ICC) (Marine Litter Focal Points supported by RCU)</li> <li>• Maintaining and upgrading North Pacific</li> </ul>

---



several targets of SDGs 2, 6, 8, 12, and 14.

- Regional Node of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (NPEC supported by RCU)
- Regional assessment of microplastics with policy relevant recommendations (DINRAC? supported by RCU)
  - Development of harmonized methodology on microplastics (Marine Litter Focal Points supported by RCU)
  - Scientific capacity building on measurement and assessment of microplastics pollution (Marine Litter Focal Points, external partners and funds)
  - Regular update of potential eutrophication zones in the NOWPAP region using Common Procedure (CEARAC)

#### 4. Conserve marine and coastal biodiversity

<p>4.1. NOWPAP countries are provided with reliable information and analysis of the status of biodiversity and</p>	<p>This priority area responds directly to Objectives 3, task (e), (f); Objective 4 (g) of the Action Plan that focus on biodiversity conservation measures. The expected 2030 Impacts are</p>	<p>4.1.1. NOWPAP member states are provided with information and data, including on the status and major threats to Red List species and invasive alien species and sensitive habitat mapping in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of national data on IUCN Red List of species (DINRAC)</li> <li>• Regular data and information sharing on status of invasive alien species (DINRAC)</li> <li>• Assessment of the status and threats to identified Red List species of regional</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--

---

<p>conservation measures and recommendations for action as expressed in the Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation</p>	<p>as follows:</p> <p><i>SDG 14.2: By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and taking action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans;</i></p> <p><i>SDG 14.5: By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information;</i></p> <p><i>NOWPAP EcoQO 1: Biological and habitat diversity are not changed significantly due to anthropogenic pressure;</i></p> <p><i>and</i></p> <p><i>NOWPAP EcoQO 2: Alien species are at levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems.</i></p>	<p>region;</p> <p>4.1.2. NOWPAP member states effectively address marine and coastal biodiversity conservation through planning and application of area-based management tools, including marine protected areas (MPAs) and Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs);</p> <p>4.1.3. NOWPAP member states adopt Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation.</p>	<p>concern (CEARAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development of habitat maps using remote-sensing methods (focused on seagrass beds, CEARAC)</li> <li>● National reports and Regional overview of area-based tools used to protect coastal and marine biodiversity in the region (MPAs, IBA, EBSAs, NOWPAP environmental sensitive areas, fishing closures, MSP zoning and etc.) (ICARM WG and CEARAC supported by POMRAC)</li> <li>● Regional map of important biodiversity areas (CEARAC)</li> <li>● Development of migratory species conservation strategies (relevant RACs supported by external partners and funding and led by RCU)</li> <li>● Development of relevant guidelines and capacity building measures for prevention of alien species introduction with ballast waters (fulfilling obligations under IMO Ballast Water Convention, MERRAC)</li> </ul>
---	---	--	--

---

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDGs 6, 11, 14, and 15.

- Development of Regional Action Plan for Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation (CEARAC)

### 5. Strengthen regional cooperation through partnership building and resource mobilization

5.1. Through NOWPAP mechanism member countries strengthen regional cooperation, complemented by partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise and financial resources to support the achievement of Action Plan objectives.

This priority area responds directly to Objective 5, tasks (b), (d), and (e). The expected 2030 Impact are as follows:  
*Strengthened and effective regional framework for collaboration in the management of coastal and marine environment to support achievement of relevant SDGs in the NOWPAP region.*

Implementation of activities under this priority area will also contribute to the achievement of several targets of SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the

5.1.1. NOWPAP network of Regional Activity Centers is managed effectively and complemented by well-functioning multi-stakeholder partnerships;

5.1.2. NOWPAP Trust Funds are managed efficiently and effectively through improved administrative, financial and human resources management;

5.1.3. NOWPAP communications, public advocacy and digital engagement products better inform, influence and mobilize stakeholders and resources for the protection of marine and

- NOWPAP contributions at various global, regional, national and sub-national meetings and events increase visibility and attract new partners (led by RCU with RACs)
- Establishment and regular presence of NOWPAP online through website and digital communication tools (led by RCU with RACs)
- NOWPAP engagement in global relevant environmental campaigns (RCU)
- Effective and regular dialogue, information exchange and communication between RCU and RACs and between RACs themselves (RCU)
- Number and quality of joint activities among

---

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

coastal environment;  
 5.1.4. External capacity and financial resources are mobilized for the implementation of NOWPAP activities.

RACs

- Effective and efficient NOWPAP trust funds management, including administrative, financial support and reporting (RCU)
  - Effective organization of Intergovernmental meetings and meetings of RAC Focal Points (RCU and all RACs)
  - Establishment of monitoring and evaluation processes, including monitoring and reporting on the MTS 2018-2023 Results Planning and Performance Reporting Framework
  - Development of new projects and initiatives supporting MTS priorities (RCU and RACs)
  - Mobilization of external technical and financial resources for NOWPAP core activities and projects (member states, RACs and RCU)
-