



**Northwest
Pacific
Action Plan**

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Northwest Pacific Action Plan
Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Center

The Sixteenth NOWPAP POMRAC Focal Points Meeting
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Proposal for the POMRAC activity
“Development of NOWPAP EcoQO targets aligned
(where possible) with SDG indicators, phase 2”

Workplan and budget

1. Background

The 22nd NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) has approved the Programme of Work for 2018-2019 biennium, including the following POMRAC activity: “Development of regional EcoQO targets aligned (where possible) with SDG indicators, phase 1”. During the implementation of EcoQOs activity in 2016-2017, national experts agreed that the following six NOWPAP EcoQO indicators could be applied in their countries:

- Nutrients concentration in the water column (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)
- Nutrient ratios (silica, nitrogen and phosphorus)
- *Chlorophyll a* concentration in the water column (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)
- Harmful algal blooms (HABs)
- Concentration of the contaminants in sediments, water and organisms
- Trends in the amount and composition of litter washed ashore (possible SDG indicator 14.1.1)

During the 2018-2019 biennium (including a regional workshop held in Vladivostok, Russia, in March 2019), nominated national experts have agreed on four EcoQO targets (see Table 1 on the next page). National experts have also agreed on the designated areas within their countries where the agreed EcoQO targets will be tested during the second phase of this activity:

- Jiaozhou bay in China;
- Toyama bay and/or Hakata bay in Japan;
- Masan bay and coastal area near Ulsan (for trace metals only) in Korea;
- Amursky bay in Russia.

At this stage, two proxy SDG-14 indicators are related to the NOWPAP EcoQO targets: 1) *Chlorophyll a* concentrations (might be replaced after 2021 by the Index of Coastal Eutrophication Potential, ICEP); and 2) marine litter washed ashore (might be replaced after 2021 by the floating plastic debris density). Therefore, during the 2020-2021 biennium, close attention should be paid to the development of core SDG-14 indicators and sub-indicators.

Table 1. Summary of discussions at the March 2019 workshop in Vladivostok, Russia

Indicators	NOWPAP EcoQO targets
Nutrients concentration in the water column	<p>Nutrient concentrations in the water column within the designated area do not exceed the baseline values or existing national standards.</p> <p>Note: Baseline values could be decided by each country and will be confirmed by correspondence, taking into account past CEARAC studies on this issue to avoid unnecessary work.</p>
Nutrient ratios	National experts agreed that nutrient ratios could not be used as an indicator related to eutrophication in the NOWPAP sea area.
<i>Chlorophyll a</i> concentration in the water column	<p><i>Chlorophyll a</i> concentrations within the designated areas do not exceed the baseline values.</p> <p>Note: Baseline values will be decided by each country and will be confirmed by correspondence, taking into account past CEARAC studies on this issue. For this particular target, <i>in situ</i> data will be used.</p>
Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)	National experts agreed that HAB frequency could not be used as an indicator related to eutrophication in the NOWPAP sea area.
Concentration of contaminants in water and sediments	<p>During the last 5 years, contaminant concentrations in water and surface sediments within the designated area do not exceed the existing national standards or baseline values.</p> <p>Note: Spatial variability in surface sediments should be taken into account. If stations of different classes exist within the designated area, certain stations could be selected for testing this particular EcoQO target.</p>
Trends in the amount and composition of litter washed ashore	<p>During the last 5 years, there is a decreasing trend (statistically significant) in the amount of marine litter washed ashore.</p> <p>Note: In addition to regular monitoring results, data from annual International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) campaigns (held in the same area every year) might be used at the initial stage. Units might differ in different countries, i.e. it could be weight/volume/number of items per square meter or per 100 meters of shore length. Decreasing trend should be confirmed by common statistical tests.</p>

2. Aim

The aim of this project is to test the agreed EcoQO targets within the designated areas and consider if further adjustments in EcoQO indicators and targets are needed (including through possible alignment, to the extent possible, with the SDG-14 indicators). Implementation of this activity will help NOWPAP to start reporting on progress of achieving the 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”.

3. Main tasks

While testing each of the above mentioned EcoQO targets, different experts from all NOWPAP countries and especially from NOWPAP CEARAC (which has substantial experience with eutrophication studies) should be brought together for the project implementation. For each EcoQO target the following steps are expected to be taken:

- Nominated experts from each NOWPAP member state decide on baseline values for their designated areas to be used for testing agreed EcoQO targets and share their decisions with experts from all other member states (via POMRAC).
- Nominated national experts test the four agreed EcoQO targets using monitoring data within their designated areas, checking if monitoring data in their designated areas are within the agreed targets or not and if agreed EcoQO targets are feasible and easily applicable in practice.
- In 2021 (tentatively), a joint regional POMRAC-CEARAC workshop is held where nominated experts discuss the EcoQO targets agreed upon earlier (together with recent national monitoring data within the designated areas) and consider if any changes in EcoQO targets are needed. Close cooperation between POMRAC and CEARAC in relation to EcoQO targets is strongly recommended.
- While discussing the EcoQO targets agreed upon earlier, nominated national experts might take into account recent developments of proxy/core SDG-14 indicators as well as recent developments in HELCOM, MAP, OSPAR, YSLME-II project and the UNEP Working Groups on indicators, including eutrophication and floating plastic debris.

The results of testing the agreed EcoQO targets will be summarized in the National Inputs. The template (proposed structure) of National Inputs will be prepared by POMRAC Secretariat after the 24th NOWPAP IGM (which is expected to approve the Programme of Work for the 2020-2021 biennium).

4. Expected outcomes and future direction

The regional synthesis prepared after an analysis of these National Inputs (and after a regional workshop) will be the main output of this project. This synthesis report will be reviewed by NOWPAP RACs, RCU, NFPs, and then published and circulated between relevant stakeholders. In 2021, a joint regional POMRAC-CEARAC workshop is planned where National Inputs will be discussed together with possible changes in NOWPAP EcoQO targets. Then, National Inputs and the results of discussions at the workshop will be summarized in the regional synthesis report.

5. Schedule

Time		Actions	Main body
2020	Q1-Q2	Nomination of experts and signing MoUs	POMRAC, POMRAC FPs
	Q3-Q4	Preparation of National Inputs	POMRAC, POMRAC experts
2021	Q1	Workshop to discuss the results of testing EcoQO targets and finalization of National Inputs	POMRAC & CEARAC, POMRAC & CEARAC experts
	Q2-Q3	Compilation of National Inputs and preparation of draft regional synthesis report	POMRAC, POMRAC experts
	Q4	Finalization and publication of regional synthesis report	POMRAC

6. Budget 41,000 USD

Activity	Timing	Output	To be completed	Counterpart	Budget (US\$)
Preparation of National Inputs	2020, Q3-Q4	National Inputs on	2020, December	Expert(s) in China	4,000*
				Expert(s) in Japan	4,000*
				Expert(s) in Korea	4,000*
				Expert(s) in Russia	4,000*
Workshop to discuss possible regional targets and to finalize National Inputs	2021, Q1	Workshop report	2021, March	POMRAC	18,000
Compilation of National Inputs and preparation of draft regional synthesis report	2021, Q2-Q3	Regional synthesis report	2021, September	POMRAC, hired consultant/expert	5,000*
Finalization and publication of regional synthesis report	2021, Q4	Publication of regional synthesis report	2021, November	POMRAC	2,000

* - through the DINRAC SSFA