NORTHWEST PACIFIC ACTION PLAN (NOWPAP)

1 Norio Baba, 2 Jianguo Wang
1 Administrative Officer, NOWPAP RCU Toyama Office
2 Director, NOWPAP DINRAC

1. Goal

The Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP, http://www.nowpap.org/) is an integral part of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme (RSP) initiated in 1974. The overall goal of NOWPAP is “the wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment so as to obtain the utmost long-term benefits for the human populations of the region, while protecting human health, ecological integrity and the region’s sustainability for future generations”. NOWPAP was adopted in 1994 and currently has four member states: the People’s Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. The RSP covers in total 18 regions across the world at present.

2. Structure

For effective management and implementation of individual NOWPAP activities and projects, the member states at the Fourth Intergovernmental Meeting in 1999 decided to establish Regional Activity Centres. Each member state hosts one Regional Activity Centre (RAC). With support of experts and concerned organizations from four countries, RACs carry out activities and projects approved by the Intergovernmental Meeting. Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) is a secretariat of NOWPAP and it is co-hosted by Toyama (Japan) and Busan (Korea).

3. Role and activities of Data and Information Network Regional Activity Centre (DINRAC)

DINRAC is one of Regional Activity Centres of NOWPAP. It is hosted by the Policy Research Center for Environment and Economy (PRCEE) of State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) in Beijing, the People’s Republic of China. The objectives of DINRAC are to develop a region-wide data and information exchange network, to promote regional cooperation, and to exchange of information on the marine and coastal environment in the NOWPAP region.
In order to achieve its objectives, DINRAC has carried out a variety of activities on data and information management under the guidance of DINRAC Focal Points Meeting and the decisions made by the NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting. DINRAC is working in close cooperation with other RACs and the existing regional and national data and information centres.

DINRAC serves as a NOWPAP Clearing-House, providing information about all NOWPAP-related activities. The DINRAC website was envisioned as a gateway of environmental data and information for the NOWPAP region, providing links to resources available in the NOWPAP region. In addition, several databases available through the DINRAC website contain the results of the other RAC activities.

DINRAC has finished the following projects so far:

- Development of general NOWPAP policy on data and information sharing,
- Publications of national reports on data and information management,
- Development of guidelines for NOWPAP meta-database establishment,
- Establishment of NOWPAP Clearing-House - storage and easy retrieval of data resulting from all NOWPAP activities (oil spills, HABs, atmospheric and river inputs of contaminants, biodiversity data, legal issues, etc.),

DINRAC has also developed the following databases (which are available at its website):

- Reference database on River and Direct Inputs of Contaminants into the Marine and Coastal Environment in the NOWPAP Region (joint activity with POMRAC), [http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapReferenceRDI.php](http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapReferenceRDI.php)
- Reference database on Atmospheric Deposition into the Marine and Coastal Environment in the NOWPAP Region (joint activity with POMRAC) [http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapReferenceAD.php](http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapReferenceAD.php)
- Database on Marine Litter related information and data provided by NOWPAP member states and from the GPA Clearing-house, [http://dinrac.nowpap.org/MALITA_WhatIs.htm](http://dinrac.nowpap.org/MALITA_WhatIs.htm)
- Database of institutions in the NOWPAP region, [http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapInstitution.php](http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapInstitution.php)
- Database of GIS-type products and applications in the NOWPAP region [http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapGIS.php](http://dinrac.nowpap.org/NowpapGIS.php)

4. Activities of Other RACs

4.1. Special Monitoring and Coastal Environment Assessment Regional Activity Centre (CEARAC)

CEARAC ([http://cearac.nowpap.org](http://cearac.nowpap.org)) is located in Toyama, Japan. Its main activities are to monitor and assess harmful algal blooms and to develop new monitoring tools using remote sensing.

The following documents were published and distributed recently:

- Integrated Report on Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB),
- Integrated Report on Ocean Remote Sensing (RS),
• Pamphlet on *Cochlodinium*.

The following databases and homepages are maintained by CEARAC:

• HAB reference database: http://www.cearac-project.org/wg3/hab-ref-db/,
• *Cochlodinium* homepage: http://www.cearac-project.org/wg3/cochlo-entrance/,
• RS Information Network: http://www.cearac-project.org/wg4/portalsite/,
• Oil spill monitoring by RS: http://cearac.poi.dvo.ru/en/,

4.2. Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC)

MERRAC (http://merrac.nowpap.org) is located in Daejeon, the Republic of Korea. It is a joint effort of UNEP and IMO to develop effective regional cooperative measures in response to marine pollution incidents. MERRAC is responsible for the implementation of the NOWPAP Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan which was signed by the member states in 2004/2005.

The following reports were published by MERRAC as the result of three specific projects:

• Sensitivity Mapping, MERRAC Technical Report No. 1,
• Guideline for Shoreline Clean-up, MERRAC Technical Report No. 2,
• Guideline for the Use of Dispersants, MERRAC Technical Report No. 3.

Currently, MERRAC experts are preparing the regional contingency plan for hazardous and noxious substance (HNS) spills. MERRAC is also implementing the following specific projects:

• Regional Oil Spill Prediction Model (led by Korea),
• Regional Mapping of Vulnerable Resources (led by Japan),
• Minimum Level of Preparedness (led by China and Russia).

4.3. Pollution Monitoring Regional Activity Centre (POMRAC)

POMRAC (http://pomrac.nowpap.org) is located in Vladivostok, the Russian Federation. It is responsible for cooperative measures related to atmospheric deposition of contaminants and river and direct inputs of contaminants into the marine and coastal environment.

POMRAC has prepared two Regional Overviews as the main outcomes of Working Groups 1 and 2, respectively:

• Atmospheric Deposition of Contaminants,
• River and Direct Inputs of Contaminant to the Marine and Coastal Environment.

In 2007, POMRAC is being started, in collaboration with other RACs, two new activities: a report on the state of marine environment in the NOWPAP region and a project on integrated coastal zone and river basin management.

5. Decisions of latest NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meetings

The 10th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (Toyama, Japan, 24-26 November 2005) decided:
to start the Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) in the NOWPAP region,
• to expand the geographical coverage of the NOWPAP Oil Spill Regional Contingency Plan to cover Sakhalin Island shelf,
• to initiate new directions of work for the NOWPAP RACs (including, among others, integrated coastal zone and river basin management; state of marine environment report; chemicals spills preparedness and response), in addition to the present NOWPAP activities.

The 11th NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meeting (Moscow, Russia, 20-21 December 2006) approved:
• the revised Terms of Reference of the NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) and the Focal Points Meetings of CEARAC, MERRAC and POMRAC,
• the general NOWPAP Policy on Data and Information Sharing to facilitate information exchange among the member states and related organizations.

The meeting also decided to carry out the evaluation of the performance of RACs in 2007 in order to further enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

NOWPAP is working on finalizing of a Global Environment Facility project proposal to address land-based activities with the focus on persistent toxic substances. The meeting reiterated its endorsement of the GEF project concept by the member states. The meeting also welcomed and encouraged cooperation and partnerships with relevant organizations, programmes and projects in the region.

6. Possible cooperation with IOC/IODE

Since the establishment of NOWPAP in 1994, long-term partnerships with relevant organizations, programmes and projects working on environmental issues in the Northwest Pacific have been sought and developed, encouraged by the decisions of the NOWPAP Intergovernmental Meetings (IGM). The 11th NOWPAP IGM adopted the General NOWPAP Policy on Data and Information Sharing which was prepared by DINRAC adopting the IOC/IODE policy of “timely, free and unrestricted international exchange”. In the General NOWPAP Policy, “Utilization of the Existing Oceanographic and Meteorological Data Exchange Systems” is mentioned.

Some cooperation on data and information management between NOWPAP and IOC has already been started. Several DINRAC Focal Points have been appointed from representatives of National Oceanographic Data Centres and from the North-East Asian Regional - Global Ocean Observing System (NEAR-GOOS) Database management institutes of the NOWPAP member states. At the 11th Session of IOC/WESTPAC Co-ordinating Committee for NEAR-GOOS (Bangkok, Thailand, January 2007), it was agreed to link the remote sensing database operated by NOWPAP CEARAC to NEAR-GOOS Databases, and to co-organize the training course on remote sensing data analysis by NOWPAP and NEAR-GOOS.

The IOC/IODE has a long history and many resources related to data management and services in the world to support research and development activities in the sea. Assistance by the resources of IOC/IODE would provide substantial contribution to the effective implementation of NOWPAP activities with high quality results, and further to the sustainable development of the Western Pacific region.

The following contributions by IOC/IODE to NOWPAP will be appreciated:
• assistance and cooperation on the development of data and information management tools for the NOWPAP activities,
• enrichment of data and information to be available for the NOWPAP activities through the network of IOC/IODE,
• assistance and cooperation on permanent depository and dissemination of the data and information resulting from the NOWPAP activities.

Data, information, databases and portal sites of NOWPAP mentioned above might be considered as contribution to IOC/IODE and other international programmes. Co-organizing workshops, symposia or capacity building activities in the NOWPAP region with IOC/IODE and other international programmes might be another possibility to work together efficiently.

With regard to the pilot project of the Ocean Data and Information Network for the Western Pacific (ODINWESTPAC), which will be proposed at IODE-XIX, NOWPAP, through DINRAC, is willing to cooperate with, and would appreciate if DINRAC could be involved in the implementation of the pilot project in the early stage.

[end of document]