

Summary report of the second meeting of the RWG-P

The second meeting of the Regional Working Group on Pollution Reduction (RWG-P) of the UNDP/GEF YSLME Phase II Project was held in the Busan headquarter of KOEM in the afternoon of June 4 and June 5, 2019. Chaired by Dr. Jae Ryoung OH, Vice Chair of the RWG-P and National Coordinator of RO Korea, the meeting was attended by over 20 participants from the National Marine Environmental Monitoring Center of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (NMEMC/MEE), Korean Institute of Ocean Science and Technology (KIOST), West Sea Fisheries Research Institute of the National Institute of Fisheries Sciences of the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (WSFRI/NIFS/MOF), Korean Maritime Institute (KMI), Korea Environment Management Corporation (KOEM), ChungNam Institute, Chungcheongnam-do of RO Korea, DydroCore LTD of RO Korea, Our Sea of East Asia Network (OSEAN) of RO Korea, NOWPAP and Project Management Office. The meeting reviewed the progress of activities under the YSLME II Project in relation to marine pollution reduction, and made recommendations. Issues, discussion highlights and recommendations are suggested below.

Artificial Wetland as Nutrient Sinks: The NMEMC introduced the regional strategy for the use of wetland as nutrient sinks which includes the integration of wetland in urban planning to increase the regulating services, designation of marine parks, restoration, increase in investment and awareness-raising. The meeting suggested PMO to (re)distribute the report to ROK for review and inputs and initiate discussion on ways and means to proceed with either adoption of the strategy for implementation or as a reference material for consideration by the two countries.

Addressing Marine Litter and Microplastics: the NMEMC introduced the results of baseline study of marine litter and microplastics of Yellow Sea in China based on the data from National Marine Environmental Status Bulletin from 2010 to 2018. Identified challenges in marine litter and microplastics monitoring include seasonal variations, sources of the marine litter, etc. OSEAN of RO Korea introduced the the status of marine litter of the Yellow Sea in RO Korea based on its own data and methodologies. Impact on wildlife in particular birds through ingestion and entanglement, navigation of commercial and navy ships and associated economic loss are highlighted in OSEAN's report. The meeting observed the difference in methodologies in terms of frequency of monitoring, availability (i.e. surface water, beach, underwater, etc.) and scope (impact, etc.). The meeting was also informed of the status, comprehensive coordination mechanism, policy framework and mitigation measures in the management of marine litter by Weihai City of China and Chungcheongnan-do of RO Korea. The meeting was encouraged by the vision of zero marine litter and commitment of reducing 5 percent of marine litter each year by Chungcheongnan-do and the interest of Teaan City to establish a city alliance to reduce marine litter to be facilitated by the Project Management Office of the Project.

The meeting reaffirmed the interest of the RWG-P to produce the joint YSLME marine litter baseline report to base the actions in the update of the YSLME Strategic Action Programme. In this regard, the PMO is requested to circulate the baseline report produced by NMEMC to ROK for providing comparable information by national authorities or designated institutions to finalize the baseline report.

To facilitate the process of establishing the city alliance, the PMO and the UNOPS-contracted consulting firm were requested to visit the Mayor of Teaan County together with KOEM to introduce the initiative and roles and responsibilities of the three cities serving as founding members of the alliance.

Regional Marine Environmental Monitoring Program: the meeting reviewed the proposed regional marine environment monitoring program prepared by an external consultant and appreciated the efforts of ROK in providing the necessary information and data for the consultant to finalize the program. Further consultation on the adoption and implementation of the monitoring program will be discussed by the regional working group.

NSAP review as a process to contribute to the update of the TDA and SAP: Both China and RO Korea experts presented the results of review of the implementation of the National Strategic Action Programme in relation to targets related with pollution.

Compliance with ocean-related agreements: The meeting reviewed a study to assess the compliance of China and RO Korea with international ocean-related legal agreements and programs. The review is suggested to be completed in June 2019 and the contract not be further extended after June, 2019. Moreover, the review should focus on compliance and results of the study can be discussed and considered in update the actions and relevant targets of the YSLME SAP.

Atmospheric, Riverine and sea-based sources of nutrients to marine and coastal marine environment: the meeting was only able to hear the progress of nutrient loading study in Haizhou Bay of Lianyungang City, and a presentation on modelling of nutrients in Han River of RO Korea.

Knowledge management: the microplastics training module and program of the training course were introduced by NMEMC, targeting to organize a three-day workshop from July 29-31 in NMEMC consisting of class-room instruction, sample collection on-site training and pretreatment and identification of microplastics with a total of 20-30 participants from Jiangsu, Shandong and Liaoning. The meeting suggested to also consider the skill requirements of trainees and the availability of relevant equipment in the organization they represent in the selection of trainees. English version of the training modules will be distributed by PMO for comments within the week of June 3 and feedback should be provided on or before June 28, 2019 for consolidation and printing at the training.

Workplanning: On the next steps towards implementation of the project, the PMO would organize a consultation meeting preferably participated by NWG-P members with Weihai on 1) engagement of Weihai to establish the city alliance and 2) discuss the development of options of policy and regulatory measures to support Weihai in addressing marine litter.

On the visit of RO Korean experts to NMEMC, the RO Korea is suggested to visit NMEMC and Shandong Ocean Resources Research Institute of Yantai. RWG-P will inform NMEMC the interest and names of the participants as soon as possible so as to initiate the invitation.