



**Established an operational regional mechanism for mutual assistance for preparedness and response to oil and hazardous & noxious substances spill incidents in the Northwest Pacific**

*Regional co-operation on marine pollution preparedness and response in the Northwest Pacific*

### **What is the RCP?**

Due to one of the world's highest densities of shipping and container traffic, the risk of oil and Hazardous & Noxious Substances (HNS) spills in the North Pacific remains a major regional environmental threat. Between 1990 and 2015, there was a total of 318 oil spill incidents over 10 tons, and 61 HNS spill incidents over 10 tons in the North-West Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) region.

Since 1994, NOWPAP Member States have been working together under the NOWPAP Framework to implement a preparedness and response mechanism to oil and HNS spill incidents. These efforts resulted in the adoption of the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan (RCP) in 2003, which was revised to include HNS spills in 2009. For over a decade, NOWPAP has helped to set up institutional arrangements for regional cooperative activities among competent national authorities, facilitated information exchange, and conducted regular joint preparedness and communication exercises.

### **Member States**

Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation

### **Key achievements**

Since its establishment under NOWPAP in 2000, the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC) – with support from UN Environment and the International Maritime Organization – has been coordinating the RCP activities of relevant national focal points and competent authorities at the regional level; notable successes include:

- Developed appropriate preparedness measures and effective systems for detecting and reporting pollution incidents
- Strengthened knowledge and increased capacities for oil and HNS pollution contingency planning, prevention, response, control and clean-up operations:
  - Over 15 sets of guidelines and assessments have been published addressing sensitivity mapping, shoreline clean-up, use of dispersants, and legislation and practices related to civil liability and compensation

- A database containing information on oil and HNS spills, lists of equipment, institutions and experts, and national performance standards and/or regulations related to marine pollution preparedness and response in the NOWPAP region is regularly updated
- NOWPAP members have been using Pollution Reports as a tool for sharing information
- Conducted regular training courses and practical exercises:
  - NOWPAP Regional Joint Exercises and Guidelines Regarding Oil Spill Preparedness and Response have been adopted and implemented since 2005
  - Three types of exercises – ALPHA, BRAVO and DELTA – are conducted regularly to increase levels of preparedness and response among Member States
- Supported knowledge-sharing and transfer among relevant regional and international organizations such as the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea; the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution; the European Maritime Safety Agency; the Helsinki Commission; and international NGOs (the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation, International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds and Oil Spill Response Limited).

### Elements for successful regional cooperation

- Political will: Members' active support is a key element for successful implementation of regional cooperative activities.
- Workplan for activities with detailed road maps: It is important to implement regional cooperative activities based on detailed road maps and programmes.
- Participation of the Competent National Authorities: Providing a regular forum for the MERRAC Focal Points to meet and have discussions is essential for successful regional cooperation.
- Securing sustainable finance: Securing finance is an important element for an effective regional cooperation.
- Capacities of the Secretariat: The Secretariat plays an important coordinating role in implementing and mediating the activities.



**Contact:**  
Lev Neretin  
[lev.neretin@unep.org](mailto:lev.neretin@unep.org)  
[www.nowpap.org](http://www.nowpap.org)  
[www.unep.org/regionalseas](http://www.unep.org/regionalseas)



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