



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF CLIMATE CHANGE
& ENVIRONMENT



الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة التغير المناخي
والبيئة



ROPME/WD/EBM-5

Toward the Development of a Regional Ecosystem Based Management Strategy (EBM) for ROPME Sea Area

Dubai, UAE, 4-7 April 2016

Terms of Reference of the Working Group on a Regional EBM Strategy for the ROPME Sea Area

Background

In April 1978 the eight Governments of the Region (Bahrain, I.R. Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE) agreed on the Kuwait Convention and the Action Plan. Subsequently in 1979 the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) was established to coordinate the Member States' efforts towards protection of the water quality in ROPME Sea Area and protect the environment system as well as marine life and to abate pollution caused by development activities of the Member States. Since then, ROPME has been playing an essential role to unify the exerted efforts of the Member States towards protection of marine environment and to follow up the procedures of each Member State.

Pursuant to Decision CM16/7 of the 16th ROPME Council, the ROPME Secretariat has been promoting a shift towards more integrated ecosystem-based approaches to the management of the ROPME Sea Area (RSA). Traditional sector-based management often overlooked connectivity and interaction of different activities conducted in the same ecosystems. The current environmental status shows that the sectoral approach has not been successful in preventing degradation of the marine and coastal ecosystems. The ecosystem-based management, on the other hand, takes the ecosystem as whole and recognised interactions of various human activities with the environment. This approach, thus, calls for cooperation of various sectors sharing the same ecosystem in order to move towards a more sustainable management. Today, the ecosystem-based ocean management is seen as a prerequisite for maintaining health of oceans and seas.

The ROPME Secretariat identified the need for cooperation at the regional level to take a consistent approach towards the implementation of the ecosystem-based management in the ROPME Sea Area. Sustainably managed, healthy ROPME Sea Area will in turn continue the delivery of ecosystem goods and services essential for the life of people in the region. Thus the ROPME Secretariat has proposed to develop a Regional EBM Strategy for the ROPME Sea Area, which will be shared between all the eight Member States of the Kuwait Convention.

The first workshop “*Toward the Development of a Regional Ecosystem Based Management Strategy for ROPME Sea Area*” is thus organised from 4 to 7 April 2016 in Dubai, UAE, in order to explore opportunities and processes for the development of a regional strategy, identifying gaps of existing policies and mechanisms. At the meeting, the representatives of Member States agreed to form a Working Group for the development of the Regional EBM Strategy.

Scope

The Working Group will prepare a draft Regional EBM Strategy for the ROPME Sea Area to be submitted to the ROPME Council.

Activities

The Working Group, in relation to the development of a Regional EBM Strategy will:

1. Collect and compile information on relevant national and regional policies, plans and projects relevant to development of a future Regional EBM Strategy with particular attention to the relevant EBM national and regional sectoral policies and strategies whenever possible. Initially, environment and fisheries sectors will be the focus with future participation of other sectors.
2. Identify gaps in the existing national and regional mechanisms in developing an integrated ecosystem-based and cross sectoral strategy and methods to address the gaps;
3. Prepare with the support of the ROPME Secretariat, an outline of the Regional EBM Strategy to be discussed among relevant stakeholders;
4. Conduct a consultation on the draft outline with relevant stakeholders;
5. Prepare the first draft of the Regional EBM Strategy incorporating inputs from stakeholders;

6. Prepare a proposal on potential monitoring of the Strategy and its implementation mechanisms;
7. Form a Scientific Review subgroup for the Regional EBM Strategy to review monitoring of the Strategy and its implementation mechanisms;
8. Conduct a wider public consultation on the Regional EBM Strategy in respective countries involving local authorities, academia, private sectors and non-governmental organisations;
9. Finalize the Regional EBM Strategy document to be submitted to the ROPME Ministerial Council Meeting.

Membership

Each of the eight Member States of the Kuwait Convention will nominate members to the working group. Each Member State may designate two representatives one from environment sector and one from fisheries sector.

In addition, inter-disciplinary experts will be suggested by the Working Group or by the ROPME Secretariat to provide specific inputs.

All members will participate in the Working Group with an equal footing.

Coordination

The Working Group members as and when selected by their respective countries will decide on coordination mechanisms.

Secretariat /Administrative support

The ROPME Secretariat will function as the secretariat for the Working Group. Within the available resources, the secretariat will provide administrative and secretarial services to the Working Group, including maintenance and distribution of meeting documents.

Modality of communication

The Working Group will agree on a schedule, frequency of meetings and workplan. The Working Group will conduct all the meetings through telephone conferences during the inter-sessional period with potential in-person meetings depending on the availability of funds.

The Working Group will start working as a Plenary. It is proposed to organize a Scientific Review subgroup, and in addition to this group, the Working Group may organize other activity groups for specific activities. External experts may be involved to facilitate activities of the Working Group and its activity groups.