

**IOC Regional Secretariat for the Western Pacific**  
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## **IOC/WESTPAC Workshop on**

### **“Enhance the awareness on toxic marine organisms”**

**Nha Trang, Vietnam, 13th – 15th December, 2010**

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **1. Background**

Seafood is one of the most important natural resources in Western Pacific region. People, especially fishermen, consume various types of marine lives as food, which are either caught from the sea or obtained from the market. It is known that some marine organisms possessing natural toxins cause food poisonings. They either produce toxins by themselves or accumulate toxins from known and unknown origins. Some natural toxins produced by microalgae such as PSP, ASP, DSP, CFP, and NSP toxins, could be accumulated into filter feeding organisms and even transferred to other organisms through food web and make the predators become toxic. In contrast, some other natural toxins as tetrodotoxin (TTX) are not derived from microalgae and its origin has not been clear yet. The organisms containing these toxins include puffer fish, goby fish, blue-ringed octopus, marine snails, xanthid crab and horseshoe crab. They are commonly found in almost all Asia countries, and people eat them intentionally or unintentionally in some areas. Consumption of such toxin-possessing organisms leads to food poisonings in people, and sometimes even results in fatal accidents.

The ever-increasing expansion of seafood poisoning episodes in the Western Pacific not only causes huge economic loss to aquaculture activities, but also poses a threat to human lives. According to some preliminary findings, these poisonings occur mainly because of the lack of public awareness on seafood safety and appropriate knowledge in a potential health risk from toxic aquatic animals. It is, therefore, becoming an urgent need for the countries in the region to enhance the awareness of their general public, particularly the coastal communities on the risk of seafood contaminated with toxins, especially those potentially causing health problems.

To this end, the IOC Sub-Commission for the Western Pacific (WESTPAC) established the project entitled “Enhance the awareness on toxic marine organisms” at the Eighth Intergovernmental Session (10-13 May 2010, Bali, Indonesia), aiming to improve the awareness of local community on the natural biotoxins in marine organisms and its risks to human health within the Western Pacific Region through the identification of toxic marine organisms and dissemination of relevant scientific information to public. This project will be

carried out mainly through two workshops, as well as other associated activities in between meetings in 2010-2011.

## **2. Objective and Scope of the Workshop**

The workshop, considered as the starting-up of this project, is designed to exchange current information on the poisonings due to the consumption of seafood contaminated with natural toxins in member states in order to analyze the features of poisonings from various viewpoints such as causative organisms and toxins, their distribution, frequency of occurrence, medical treatment and prevention measures. Importantly, the workshop will aim to prepare some appropriate outreach materials on the toxic marine organisms and discuss the future activities to be carried out in the next year.

## **3. Expected Outcomes**

The workshop is expected to come up with one Project Implementation Plan, together with one outline for outreach materials.

## **4. Date and Venue**

The meeting will be held on 13-15 December 2010 at the Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang City, Khanh Hoa province, Vietnam.

Nha Trang city has a metropolitan area of 251 km<sup>2</sup> and population of about 500,000 (as of 2007). The city is located facing to the beautiful Nha Trang Bay which was chosen by Travel and Leisure in two succeeding years as one of 29 most beautiful bays in the world. Nha Trang is surrounded by mountains on three sides and a large island on the fourth side (directly in front of the city's main area), blocking major storms from potential damage the city. Nha Trang is well known for its pristine beaches, and excellent scuba diving spot and is fast becoming a popular destination for international tourists, attracting large numbers of backpackers as well as more affluent travelers on the Southeast Asia circuit. Being a coastal city, Nha Trang is recognized as the national center for marine science based at the Institute of Oceanography, the unique Institute of Oceanography in Vietnam. Commercial flights to Nha Trang fly to the Cam Ranh International Airport, a former U.S. Air Force Base (built during the Vietnam War) located approximately 45 km (28 miles) south of Nha Trang city. There are 4-5 flights daily both from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

## **5. Organizing Committee**

An organizing committee has been established to facilitate the preparation of this activity with the following members:

Dao Viet Ha (Project Leader, Institute of Oceanography, Vietnam)

Bui Hong Long (Director, Institute of Oceanography, Vietnam)

Pham Xuan Ky (Institute of Oceanography, Vietnam)

Yasuwo Fukuyo (Project Leader for WESTPAC-HAB, University of Tokyo, Japan)

Wenxi Zhu (IOC/WESTPAC Secretariat, Thailand)

## **6. Financial Assistance and Generic Requirements for Participants**

About 10 participants from WESTPAC member countries will be fully or partially funded to attend the workshop with the contribution of the Japanese government under the “UNESCO-Japan Fund-in-Trust for UNESCO Programme”, i.e. the cheapest economy class round trip air ticket between the nearest home international airport and Nha Trang, accommodation during trip and in Nha Trang, and daily subsistence allowance.

Priority will be given to the following applicants in the selection of funded participants:

- those who are working/studying on chemistry of marine toxins and/or biology of toxic marine organisms;
- those who are working on monitoring of toxic marine organisms from fisheries and public health standpoint;
- those who will be able to work continuously with other members of the project;

In addition some seats are also available for self-funded applicants.

All participants are required to present their country reports on current situation on seafood poisonings: causative organisms, toxins, their distribution, frequency of occurrence, medical treatment and prevention measures. It is strongly expected that participants will work closely for the project development as steering group members. The terms of reference of the group will be decided during the meeting.

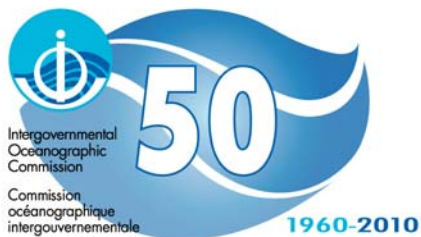
## **7. Deadline for Application Submission**

Kindly note: the deadline for Application Submission is 30 October, 2010.

## **8. Contacting Address for Further Information**

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## Application Form

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**Nha Trang, Vietnam, 13th – 15th December 2010**

First Name:	
Family Name:	
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Nationality:	
Affiliation:	
Full Address:	
Phone:	
Fax:	
E-mail:	
Contact person, in case of emergency	Name: Relationship: Address: Tel:
Dietary Restriction	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> No Pork <input type="checkbox"/> No Beef <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify
Major and/or Research Area	
Highest Degree	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor Graduated from Major Your supervisor/Advisor
Previous Training Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. Please specify the workshop titles:

	(a) (b)
<p>Brief statement of research activities that is linked to the scope of this meeting and indicate your contribution for the meeting (i.e. 400-500 words)</p>	
<p>Please provide with name and E-mail address of two referees whom can be contacted to support your application</p> <p>Referee #1</p> <p>Referee #2</p>	
<p><u>Financial assistance:</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I could cover my travel expense.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I would apply for the financial assistance.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> <input type="radio"/> Fully (including round trip airfare, accommodation, and allowance);  <input type="radio"/> On airfare in the amount of.....;  <input type="radio"/> On accommodation. </p> <p>Please indicate the nearest airport to your residence, and flight route between it and Nha Trang:</p>	

Please fax or e-mail this form with your CV (with a 2-inch photo)

***No later than 30 October 2010 to:***

Dr. Dao Viet Ha

Head of Department of Marine Biochemistry, Institute of Oceanography

Fax: +84 58 3590034; E-mail: ttmp\_vnocean@dng.vnn.vn

**With a copy to:**

Mr. Wenxi Zhu, WESTPAC Secretariat at

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