Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions within the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed Species and Habitats

2017-2025

Action sheet 40

Action 40	Seek advice on the latest knowledge of species and habitats supported by seamounts located within the OSPAR maritime area, then evaluate possible inclusion of these biological communities in the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats. See also, collective action3.2 c in the recommendation for Seamount
Participants	Lead: Norway, Co-lead: UK and France (step 1) and assistance from ICG-POSH (step 2)
Plan:	Step 1. Compile a study on the latest knowledge of species and habitats supported by seamounts located within the OSPAR maritime area. Regions I, IV, V with biogeographic zones and ecological significance. The study includes information on: Species/habitats/communities such as (amongst others): • microbal biodiversity communities associated to hydrothermal vents • deep-sea sponges and corals and other epibenthic suspension feeders • planktonic organisms • crustacean species and communities, • fish assemblages with special adaptations • migrating species and seamount ecological function • species/communities new to science Sensitivity, distribution, vulnerability to environmental and human impact and potential for recovery of species/habitats/communities (pelagic, benthic). Distribution and number of small and large seamounts in the OSPAR area that are known today with associated species, habitats, communities The study will build on scientific publications and available monitoring and assessments. Step 2. First preliminary consideration into the evaluation of possible inclusion to the OSPAR list. Arrange Workshop bringing together results from relevant results from the relevant Actions and evaluation of new species or habitats for a preliminary suggestion

	and possible inclusion to the OSPAR list
Timeline	Study: 2017– 2021 Draft plan, action 40 presented November 2017 Project, start: Spring 2018 – coordinate timeline and knowledge that links to other actions Draft report on updated knowledge: Autumn 2018 Coordination with other relevant actions and ongoing work to evaluate the possible inclusion to the OSPAR list, Workshop 2019 Draft including possible inclusion of new species and habitats: Late 2019 Final: Summer/autumn 2020 Request for ICES advice/ call for national contributions/ regional projects by ICG POSH /BDC 2018, (Response from ICES to BDC 2019) determine whether anything should be on T&D list by ICG POSH 2020 for approval at BDC 2021
Events	• Meeting with ICG-POSH and relevant parties on the draft plan, November 2017. • Second Meeting with ICG-POSH, November 2018, and relevant parties and working-groups for coordination of results from other relevant actions and ongoing work, Spring 2019 • Workshop in autumn 2019 to evaluate possible new species and habitats that could be considered for inclusion
Links to other actions:	**Communication and awareness raising** Action 1 Building on existing material (e.g. OSPAR website) develop and implement a phased communications strategy for OSPAR listed species and habitats to: • Share knowledge including on status and threats to help promote action by others; • Share knowledge and experience on measures that have been implemented and lessons learned, among both relevant management authorities and general public *Lead: Secretariat, Sweden,ICG-POSH,all applicable regions* **Monitoring and assessment** Action 2 Improve the OSPAR habitat mapping database in relation to all Habitats, and publish regularly updated quality assessments and distribution records; in particular to (1) improve the data contained within the database relating to listed habitats; (2) Clearly define the questions that can be asked of the data in the database and

	identify gaps/ what other needs are there to deliver OSPAR requirements?; (3) develop the content of the database to respond to the needs for use of this database *Lead: United Kingdom, supported by France, POSH,ICG-MPA,ICG-COBAM, ICG-C, EIHA,* *OSPAR Action , Links to EMODnet, ongoing next 2017, all regions* Action 8 Compile evidence on the species and habitats that form on carbonate mounds, hydrothermal vents and seamounts in the OSPAR maritime area and assess which are threatened by ongoing and potential human activities *Lead Contracting Party(ies), Supported by France and the United Kingdom* *ICG-COBAM. Included in JAMP 2021, Region V* **Pressures from Human Activities** Action 15 In the context of Article 4 of Annex V of the Convention and in line with the common understanding (OSPAR 13/13), draw to the attention of relevant competent organisations instances where fishing activities constitute a threat to relevant species and habitats and where appropriate encourage those organisations to take appropriate measures *Lead Contracting Party(ies), Supported by France, ICG-POSH, BDC* Action 16 In the context of Article 4 of Annex V of the Convention and in line with the common understanding (OSPAR 13/13), draw to the attention of relevant competent organisations instances where other physical disturbance to seafloor (e.g. mineral extraction, biological and geological sampling, construction) constitute a threat to relevant habitats and where appropriate encourage those organisations to take appropriate measures *Lead Contracting Party(ies), supported by France and Norway, ICG-POSH, EIHA*
Added value of action by OSPAR	Action 1 has already delivered complementary knowledge Action 2 will deliver complementary mapping database and publication of regularly updated in relation to all Habitats, including Seamounts and associated Habitats as *Lophelia perthusa* reefs, Coral Gardens, Deep-Sea Sponge aggregations, Oceanic ridges with hydrothermal vents. Action 8 will deliver evidence on species and habitats on seamounts threatened by human activity, but only from region V. Action 40 may add with updated knowledge to numerous actions on species that are on the OSPAR-list, for instance dolphins, sharks, rays, and loggerhead turtle and fish species as *Hoplostethus atlanticus* and habitats as Carbonate mounds, Coral gardens, Deep-Sea sponge aggregations, *Lophelia perthusa* reefs, Oceanic ridges with Hydrothermal vents. This is a tangible action but question about when it is helpful or necessary. Long term advantage would be to be able to focus on protecting the communities themselves rather than the substrate. EIHA

	ICG-ESA
Resources	• Report: an estimated 3-4 weeks of work for one person, estimated to 300-400 000 NOK • Workshop: Arranging workshop and workshop report, app xxx NOK • There is need for input/assistance from experts within and outside of ICG POSH, and access to data/reports from other contracting parties.
Barriers to Progress	Actions described above is pending funding in future budgets. Progress in this action is partially dependent on the outcome of other actions, not all of which have a lead as of now. See above for details.
Stakeholders to engage	IUCN, Deep-Sea Coalition and other NGOs, International Seabed Authority
Other Competent Authorities:	ICES advice on VME's ICES – generate knowledge National research initiatives/ cruises Institute of Marine Research EU projects
Product(s):	Publication/Report Workshop and workshop report

Links and literature:

NL expertise: in the past, we have collated information on VMEs including seamounts in relation to deep sea fisheries.

Gianni M, Bos OG (2012) Protecting ecologically and biologically significant areas (EBSAs): lessons learned from the implementation of UN resolutions to protect deep-sea biodiversity (http://edepot.wur.nl/210674). IMARES. Report C061/12

Seamounts and geomorph - Updated spatial layer available from Harris et al 2014 http://www.academia.edu/10755297/Geomorphology_of_the_oceans

European Commission, Marine team meeting in Brussels 20'th of September 2017. Horizon2020-SponGES Communication materials for sharing with WG-GES (http://www.deepseasponges.org/).

These were shared at the recent Science-Policy panel/roundtable on North Atlantic deep-sea sponge ecosystems that the project organized on the 20 September 2017 in Brussels.

1: Global and regional policies and strategies, for the identification and protection of VMEs http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7770e.pdf

2: Scoping study on economic linkages and options for ecosystem valuation of deep-sea living marine resources and habitats in ABNJ http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7771e.pdf

3: Procedure for processing and preserving sponge samples http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7772e.pdf

4: Identification of sponge species http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7773e.pdf

5: What are vulnerable marine ecosystems? http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7774e.pdf

6: Sponges and their role in the marine environment http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7775e.pdf