

OSPAR and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals in the
North-East Atlantic Ocean



SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT **GOALS**

www.ospar.org



OSPAR
COMMISSION



Foreword by Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP

The ocean is vital for our well-being but, as we well know, it is under immense pressure from a wide range of human activities. Overfishing, climate change, ocean acidification, waste

and nutrient runoff, coastal and offshore infrastructure, as well as shipping affect two-thirds of the world's oceans.

The pressure on our oceans will increase unless governments take bold action to ensure its protection and sustainable management. As UNEP's landmark report "Making Peace with Nature" points out, many of the targets for conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ocean, coasts and marine resources will likely not be fully met as marine and coastal ecosystems continue to decline. This is compounded by the impacts of intensifying climate change on our oceans and seas as argued by the IPCC. In this context, sea level rise is now faster than at any time in the last 3000 years. It has become clear that human activity was very likely the main cause of sea level rise since at least 1970. In sum, our relationship with the oceans is broken and there is an urgent need to transform it.

But if we are to make progress we must do so mindful that the oceans know no boundaries. Fish, migratory species and pollution are not confined by administrative

and national frontiers. Collective and collaborative actions are therefore needed between countries. And this is precisely what UNEP's Regional Seas Programme is aiming to promote.

Launched in 1974, this Programme is a crucial regional mechanism for conserving the marine and coastal environment in 18 regions across the world. Bringing together science, governments and civil society, the Programme develops and implements region-specific actions to protect our marine resources.

As a part of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, OSPAR was established independently by 16 Contracting Parties and works closely with other regional bodies to enhance cross-regional cooperation within the Regional Seas framework.

OSPAR plays a critical role in strengthening the work of the Regional Seas Conventions, in demonstrating that it is indeed possible for Contracting Parties to work collectively to safeguard the marine environment on which we all depend. Because together, we can secure the future of our oceans, but it will take the best of science, strong global and regional cooperation, and policies that drive sustainable development in our coastal and marine areas, to get there.

Inger Andersen
Executive Director
UNEP

1

OSPAR's contribution to implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

OSPAR is the Regional Seas Convention responsible for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. It brings together 15 Governments and the European Union to deliver coordinated action to monitor, assess and develop measures to address the pressures impacting the health of the North-East Atlantic.

Our work contributes to the global efforts of the network of Regional Seas Conventions and national governments to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 14 Life Below Water: to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

The network of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans (RSCAPs) has evolved to consist of eighteen unique instruments, including OSPAR, for enhancing marine environmental cooperation. For seven of these eighteen, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is designated as the secretariat whereas OSPAR is an independent Regional Seas Convention that cooperates with and contributes to the Regional Seas Programme. A Regional Seas Strategic Direction (RSSD) has been approved for 2022-2025 the delivery of which will collectively

contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in general and SDG14 in particular. UNEP provides coordination and facilitation of the work including convening the Global Annual Meetings of the RSCAPs to facilitate dialogue between RSCAPs, endeavouring to harmonize and strengthen regional approaches. The UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) provides global policy guidance, helping to bring together the work of the RSCAPs, including facilitating partnering with relevant intergovernmental organisations and other stakeholders.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in September 2015. It contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets aimed at eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development by 2030. In 2017 the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 urged Contracting Parties to strengthen and promote effective and transparent multi-stakeholder partnerships by enhancing engagement of governments with regional bodies such as OSPAR to support and coordinate countries to achieve the goal.

The aim of this document is to highlight OSPAR's role in contributing to the delivery of the SDGs and show that by working collectively through OSPAR its Contracting Parties can have a greater impact than by working in isolation. Furthermore, OSPAR can play an important role in inspiring and supporting work between Regional Seas Conventions so as to strengthen regional approaches thus helping to deliver SDG14 as one.

1. <https://oceanconference.un.org/callforaction>

2

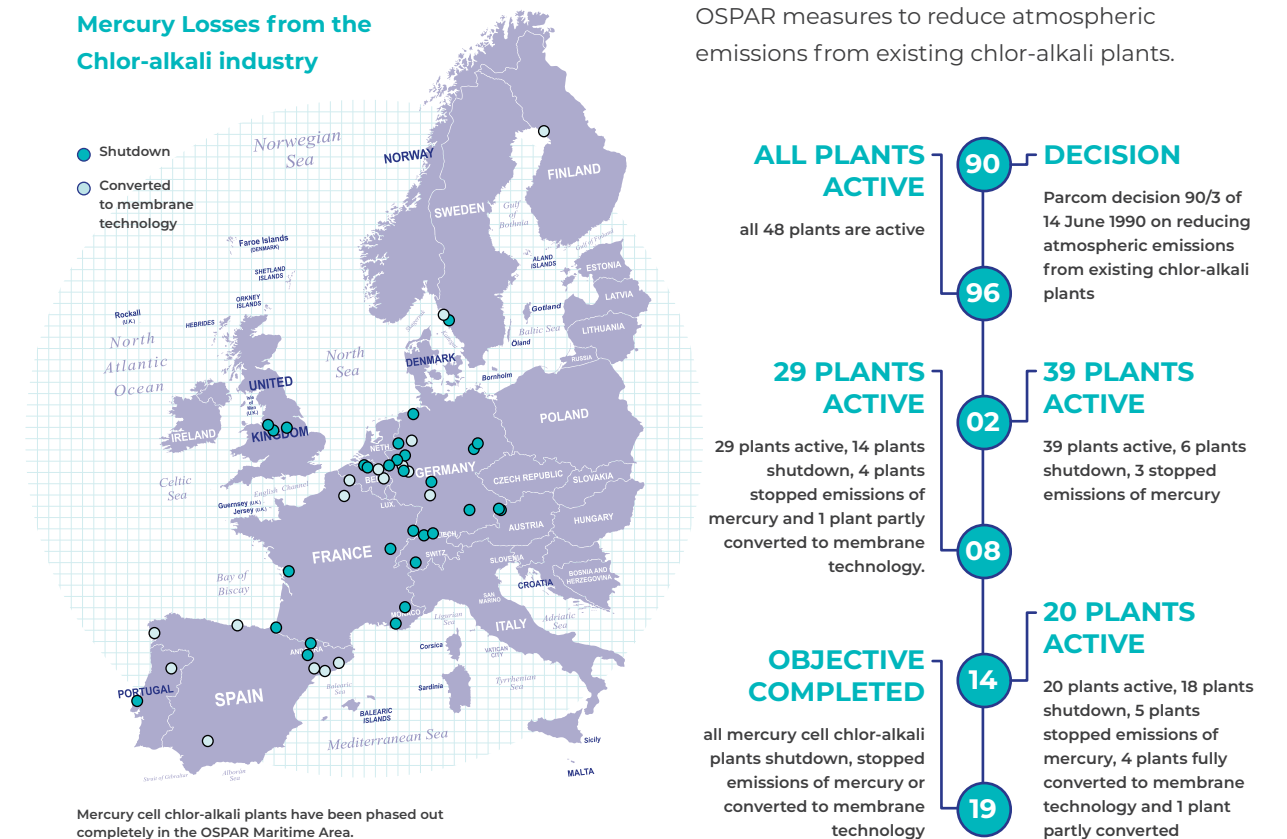
OSPAR successes contribute to SDG implementation

SDG target 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

OSPAR has made significant efforts to reduce discharges, emissions, and losses of contaminants to both air and water. The effect of these efforts is clearly visible in reduced inputs to the Greater North Sea.

There have been decreases in the release of many contaminant substances from land-based sources and the offshore oil and gas industry. Contaminant concentrations have continued to decrease in the majority of areas assessed and are now below levels likely to harm marine species. Furthermore, mercury cell chlor-alkali plants have been phased out completely in the OSPAR Maritime Area as a result of its Contracting Parties fully implementing OSPAR measures to reduce atmospheric emissions from existing chlor-alkali plants.

Mercury Losses from the Chlor-alkali industry



OSPAR Contracting Parties have made significant efforts to reduce nutrient losses to the marine environment and the extent of the OSPAR Maritime Area classified as either problem or potential problem area has decreased steadily by about 50 000 km² since 1990. Most OSPAR Contracting Parties have achieved the agreed nutrient input reduction of 50% as compared to 1988 and OSPAR will embark on the process of deriving further region-specific nutrient reduction needs.



SDG target 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

The issue of marine litter is relevant to a number of the SDGs such as: SDGs 12 on sustainable consumption and production, 13 on climate action and 14 on life below water. OSPAR's Regional Action Plan (RAP) on marine litter was adopted in 2014 and contributes particularly to the achievement of target 14.1. It includes 32 collective actions to reduce levels of both land-based and sea-based sources of marine litter. The outputs for each of the key areas varies but includes the development of new measures in addition to the development of scoping reports and background documents. All outputs can be accessed via a designated page for each action on the OSPAR Website.

Figure 2: OSPAR's Regional Action Plan (RAP) on marine litter outputs in numbers



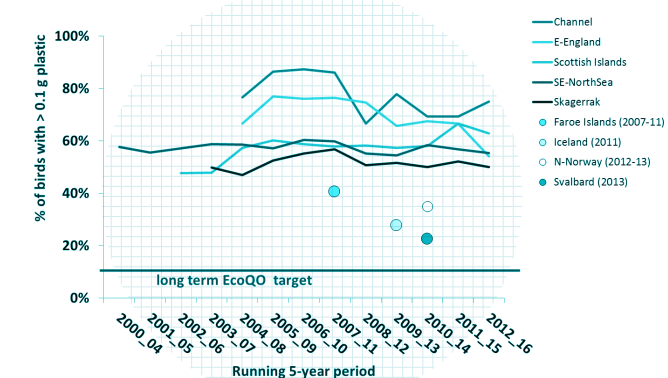
In some locations plastics make up 90% of marine litter on shorelines. A similar predominance of plastics is reported from sampling on the seabed. Litter is abundant on beaches in the OSPAR Maritime Area. Plastic fragments, fishing gear and packaging are the most common types of litter. From December 2009 to January 2018 litter abundance declined significantly on 23% of the survey sites and increased on 9%.

Figure 3: Composition of litter recorded on OSPAR beach litter survey sites April 2012 – January 2018

material/use category	% of total of litter items recorded (includes cotton bud sticks & cigarette butts as plastic)
plastic/polystyrene	89
sanitary waste (includes a number of plastic items e.g. cotton-bud-sticks)	2
paper/cardboard (includes cigarette butts considered to be of artificial polymer material)	1
wood	1
rubber	2
metal	2
glass	1
cloth/textile	1
medical waste	1
ceramic/pottery	<1%
faeces in bags	<1%

Currently 56% of beached North Sea fulmars have more than 0.1 g of plastics in their stomachs, exceeding the OSPAR long-term goal of 10%. This reflects the abundance of floating litter and provides an indication of harm. The amounts of ingested plastics have decreased significantly over the past ten years.

Figure 4: Running 5-year averages for the percentage of fulmars having more than 0.1g of plastic in the stomach since the year 2000 and / or the start of sub-regional participation in the monitoring programme

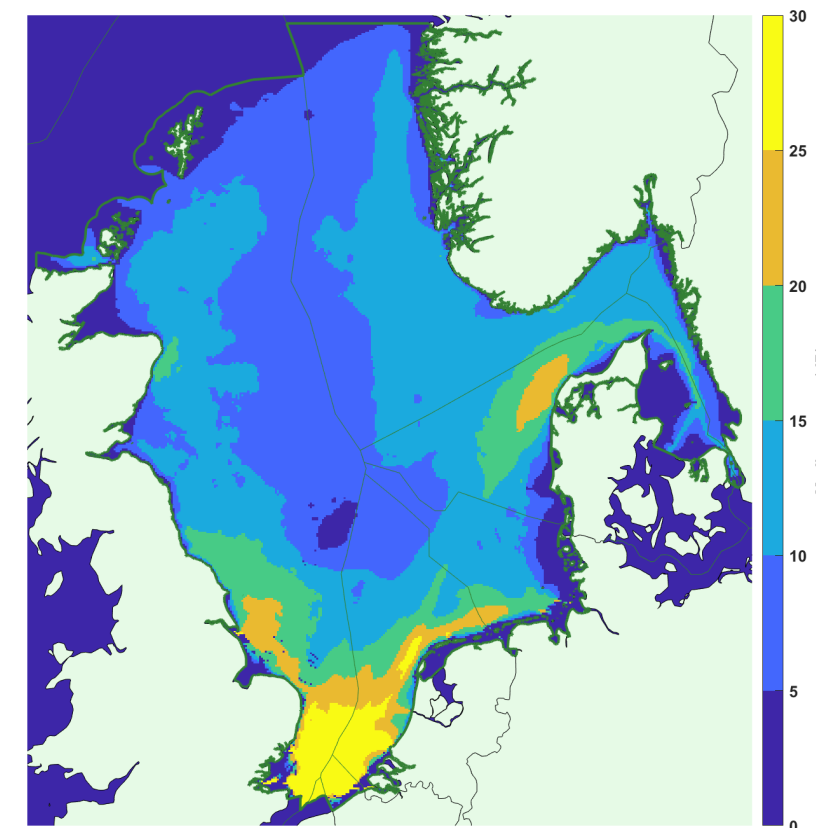


While overall litter levels remain a problem, there are nonetheless some positive signs in the environment that measures are starting to take effect.

SDG target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

OSPAR promotes the sustainable management of its Maritime Area through specialist Committees such as on the offshore industry and through a more generalist Committee covering environmental impacts of human activities. This work includes the provision of guidance on activities such as offshore wind, dredging, and cable-laying, and the assessment of pressures from a wide range of human activities affecting the marine environment, as an integral part of the Quality Status Report.

OSPAR has developed an Impulsive Noise Registry that collects data that is then used in assessments of the pressure from impulsive noise, such as from construction activity and seismic surveys. EU-funded projects have enabled OSPAR to improve the monitoring of ambient noise and develop new indicators which will be able to assess the pressure from activities such as shipping.



Broadband: excess of shipping and wind over instantaneous wind 50 percentile.

IMAGE CREDIT:
Joint Monitoring Programme for Ambient Noise North Sea (JOMOPANS)
www.northsearegion.eu/jomopans/



SDG target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts including by strengthening their resilience and take action for their restoration, in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

The OSPAR Maritime Area is home to a vast range of marine biodiversity and contains globally important populations of many marine species. The OSPAR regional list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats in the North-East Atlantic guides the OSPAR Commission in setting priorities for its further work on the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity in implementing Annex V to the OSPAR Convention. The OSPAR Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions within the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed Species and Habitats, has supported Contracting Parties in implementing protective actions together. Compiling information about sea turtles and seamounts at a regional scale in two respective scoping study are examples of concrete results. These two OSPAR publications² ([773](#) and [772](#)) include detailed lists of further steps and actions to be taken to protect the features which will be actioned in the next phase of work.



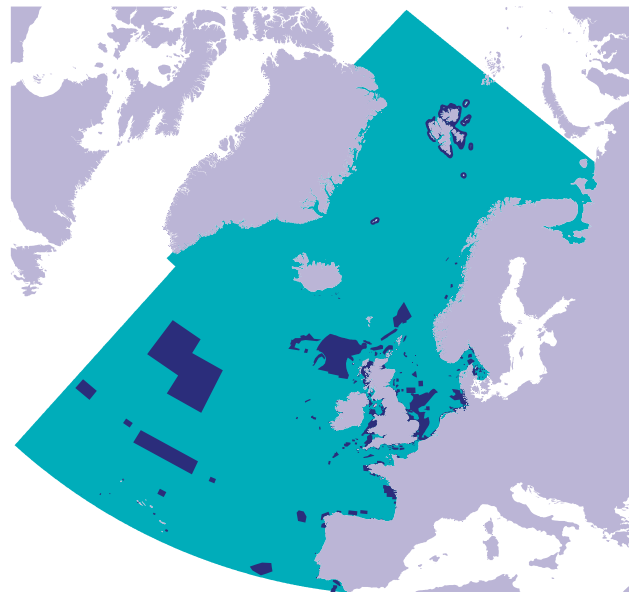
SDG target 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

OSPAR has agreed to make a new voluntary commitment on ocean acidification (OA). Building on our previous work on ocean acidification OSPAR commits to taking forward work by further developing its regional monitoring and assessment programmes, investigating the impacts on the marine environment from current and projected declines in pH and collaborating with other regional organisations and scientific networks in its work on ocean acidification.

2. An overview of anthropogenic impacts on Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) and Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) turtles; measures and strategies for prevention in the OSPAR area - Scoping study (OSPAR Publication [773](#)) and the Seamounts scoping study (OSPAR Publication [772](#))



SDG target 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.



Furthermore, OSPAR is developing threshold values for the extent of adverse effects to seabed habitats through OSPAR common indicators, in line with requirements from this SDG target.

Figure 6: The OSPAR network of MPAs as of 1 October 2020

Sea Area	Coverage of MPAs
Territorial waters	19.3%
Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)	2.8%
Beyond the limits of EEZ	8.9%

OSPAR Region	Coverage of MPAs
Arctic Waters: Region I	1.9%
The Greater North Sea: Region II	19%
Celtic Seas: Region III	17.1%
Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast: Region IV	5.9%
Wider Atlantic: Region V	8.3%

Networks of ecologically coherent and effectively managed Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) provide a powerful tool to protect dynamic ocean ecosystems. Recognising this, OSPAR adopted a Recommendation³ to further the conservation of the marine environment, which is central to the work of OSPAR. In 2010, 1.1% of the OSPAR Maritime Area was covered by MPAs. By 2020, 552 MPAs have been nominated to the OSPAR Network of MPAs, representing 6.5% of the OSPAR Maritime Area. OSPAR is continuing its efforts to designate additional MPAs in both national waters and Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction to increase the MPA coverage and thereby support effective protection of the North-East Atlantic Ocean.

Of the 552 MPAs, seven have been collectively designated by all Contracting Parties to OSPAR and are located in ABNJ. These MPAs protect deep-sea coral reef habitats and high seas pelagic habitats. Their conservation objectives are facilitated by a collective arrangement, a forum through which other competent authorities, such as the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), collaborate with OSPAR to implement area-based management in line with their respective mandates.



SDG target 14.a Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacities and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing states and least developed countries.

The [OSPAR Science Agenda](#) (OSA) sets out OSPAR's most important needs in the broad science areas that underpin OSPAR's work and it helps guide research to address science needs and knowledge gaps. The OSA was developed collaboratively by policy makers and experts across OSPAR committees and working groups to identify science and knowledge needs that will support progress towards the achievement of OSPAR's thematic objectives and it outlines a procedure to define science needs based on a common understanding across Contracting Parties. The 2019 OSA sets out a prioritised list of 44 knowledge gaps, with the aim of improving future assessments within the OSPAR Maritime Area, for example Quality Status Reports. The agenda also outlines recommendations for bridging knowledge gaps, including strengthening cooperation with partner organisations, such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The OSA is also used to guide the development of national and regional project proposals to fund innovative scientific research.

“OSPAR’s Science Agenda helps guide research to address science needs and knowledge gaps”



OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 on a network of Marine Protected Areas, as amended by OSPAR Recommendation 2010/2



4 OSPAR works in partnership to deliver sustainable development globally

SDG target 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Inter-regional partnerships

OSPAR cannot achieve success without good regional – and global – cooperation. OSPAR is one of 18 RSCAPs in the world, each with its own autonomous governing body consisting of the countries/Parties in the region, decision-making processes, work plans and budgets. Although OSPAR was established independently by its Contracting Parties, it works closely with other regional bodies to enhance cross-regional cooperation within the UNEP framework. The RSSD 2022-2025 contributes to the implementation of SDG Goal 14, and will be an important element to strengthen the delivery of UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023, particularly regarding activities that address ocean related components of the identified priority areas of climate action, nature action, chemical and pollution action, science-policy, environmental governance, finance and economic transformations and digital transformation. OSPAR plays an important role in the collective work of the RSCAPs which contributes to the implementation of SDG Goal 17

Concrete inter-regional cooperation with our neighbouring independent Convention, HELCOM, covers sea birds, indicators, underwater noise, ballast water and establishing special areas regulating ships’ exhaust gases (Baltic and North Sea NOx Emission Control Areas, NECAs). Cooperation with the neighbouring UNEP managed Barcelona Convention includes sharing lessons learned and best practices on conducting and presenting regional assessments.

The Maritime Areas of the Abidjan Convention and OSPAR together cover the Eastern Atlantic from the North Pole down to South Africa, with the exception of a small gap between the two. Cooperation between the two Conventions is vital not only for sharing of knowledge and experience between regions but also to achieve a coherent implementation of the ecosystem approach which requires both Conventions to look beyond their borders.

The OSPAR Secretariat has become a member of the Advisory Boards and Steering Committees of many scientific and policy related projects in the region. Through such membership, OSPAR can share scientific knowledge to inform discussions and the subsequent development of policies and management measures as well as work towards projects delivering outputs that are tailor-made for being taken up in the OSPAR policy framework.

As an Observer to the Arctic Council, OSPAR contributes primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. OSPAR actively engages with AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme) on ocean acidification, and transport of chemicals, providing collaboration to combat pollution from maritime disasters and chronic pollution from ships and offshore installations that can impact the Arctic from the North-East Atlantic, in cooperation with EPPR (Emergency Preparedness, Prevention and Response). OSPAR also contributes to the work of PAME (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment) on protecting the marine environment.

Cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination

The collective arrangement developed for the North-East Atlantic has facilitated increased cooperation and coordination between OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), as well as information exchange with other authorities and organisations such as the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the Food and Agricultural Organization and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission. For example, in-depth discussions have been undertaken on a new proposal in OSPAR to establish an MPA in ABNJ to protect seabirds where views as well as factual contributions were sought from other authorities at an early stage, increasing the awareness of the proposed new MPA and strengthening the information basis for an eventual designation. Information exchange through the collective arrangement aims to ensure that protective area-based measures taken by several authorities are not undermined by one another’s efforts and to provide a higher degree of protection to those areas while enabling sustainable use of the marine environment.

OSPAR Observers

OSPAR also works with a variety of stakeholders and observers. The observer organisations play an essential role in OSPAR and include other intergovernmental organisations working in similar fields, and international non-governmental organisations. The non-governmental observer organisations are environmental protection and nature conservation organisations, industry and trade organisations and organisations of regional and local authorities.

While the primary responsibility of implementing the OSPAR Convention lies with the Contracting Parties, the observer community has a key function in the promotion of protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic and its resources. The observers not only take part in the various meetings of the OSPAR Commission but also contribute actively to its work and to shaping policy development. In this way, non-governmental organisations are essential partners in the implementation of the Convention and translating its principles into practical action at local, national and regional level.





Regional cooperation in an EU context

Working in close cooperation with those that share our seas provides cost effective and efficient means of tackling transboundary issues facing the ocean. To support this, OSPAR acts as a forum for those Contracting Parties who are EU Member States to cooperate to enable delivery of the common Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) objectives in a coordinated action, using the mechanisms and structures of OSPAR.

OSPAR has aligned the data and information requirements of OSPAR's next full assessment of the North-East Atlantic, the Quality Status Report 2023, to those of the MSFD wherever possible.

OSPAR cooperates through voluntary commitments

OSPAR made two voluntary commitments in 2017 on focused work to deliver SDG 14 in addition to the comprehensive scope or regular work by OSPAR which also contributes to the delivery of the objectives. In 2021 OSPAR added a further commitment on ocean acidification.

Voluntary commitment: Cooperation with the Cartagena Convention on SDG Goal 14 Oceans (#OceanAction17198)

OSPAR Commission (OSPAR) and the Cartagena Convention (UNEP-CEP) collaborate across the Atlantic and the voluntary commitment explores opportunities for inter-regional cooperation (#OceanAction17198). Regional Seas Programmes are a global network of governance platforms where Contracting Parties work together to ensure the sustainable management and use of coastal, marine and ocean resources. Programmes such as OSPAR and CEP, provide sustainable mechanisms for enhancing cooperation and collaboration on joint programmes, projects and activities.

OSPAR and CEP share experiences and best practices beneficial to all parties across the Wider Caribbean Region and the North-East Atlantic. Cooperation is based on the ecosystem approach involving integrated and sustainable management of marine and coastal resources, representing an important regional oceans governance framework. This framework assists parties in both regions in the implementation of activities for achieving the SDG 14 on preserving life below water.

Several initial areas for cooperation among the Wider Caribbean Region and the North-East Atlantic have been identified where OSPAR and CEP can collaborate to provide technical and programmatic support to parties.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) play a critical role for our well-being and that of future generations. Sharing knowledge to build the capacity of MPAs can be mutually rewarding for both OSPAR and CEP. This covers a range of issues such as management methods, assessments of management effectiveness, status of the MPAs, and regional database development and management.

Marine litter is a significant pollution issue, damaging valuable natural resources and affecting the quality of lives of local inhabitants. It is known to negatively impact on economies and affects sustainability of regions. Connected by ocean currents, marine litter spreads across the Wider Caribbean Region and North-East Atlantic hence joint measures to reduce the pollution through assessment and improved management are also essential.

Nutrient pollution is another challenging environmental problem that can also be jointly addressed. Information exchange on the sources, impacts and potential solutions, including how to influence policy development and decision-making through data and information, are additional areas for collaboration.

It is through such partnerships that our oceans will be sustainably managed, healthy and productive.

Voluntary commitment: Commitment between the Secretariats of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and the OSPAR Commission under the collective arrangement (#OceanAction21204)

The collective arrangement is a novel approach to ocean governance enabling cross-sectoral cooperation. OSPAR and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) reinforced regional and sectoral cooperation under the collective arrangement in 2014, by promoting a constructive multilateral dialogue. The collective arrangement allows for information exchange and other modes of cooperation to reinforce regional collaboration in the North-East Atlantic. The voluntary commitment to promote this approach has resulted in wide dissemination of the approach, with global interest in learning lessons from the North-East Atlantic and exploring the application of this approach in other regions of the world's oceans.

NEAFC and OSPAR are engaging with each other under the collective arrangement on area-based management in areas beyond national jurisdiction. This helps deliver respective objectives on protection and sustainable use of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic. SDG 14 on oceans provides further global context to share this model for cooperation and share experience and lessons learnt with other relevant organisations.

The document of the collective arrangement <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=33030> sets out the principles of the arrangement between OSPAR and NEAFC.

Through this commitment in the context of the aims of SDG 14, the Secretariats of OSPAR and NEAFC will continue to promote the benefits of the cross-sectoral work through the collective arrangement model. We will aim to work with our sister intergovernmental organisation Secretariats in other regions and other sectors to promote such collaboration.

Voluntary commitment: Commitment to SDG 14.3: minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels (#OceanActiontbc)



Building on the chapter on climate change and ocean acidification in the Intermediate Assessment 2017 and work by the Joint OSPAR/ICES Study Group on Ocean Acidification (SGOA) 2012-2014, OSPAR commits to taking forward this work, through the following actions:

a) OSPAR will further develop its regional monitoring and assessment programmes.

The aim is for a coordinated observation programme, collecting data on OA variables, including; pH, dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC), partial pressure of carbon dioxide (pCO₂), alkalinity and temperature. Regional maps of OA parameters and trend analyses will be made using the results of monitoring and research programmes and other global initiatives. An assessment of OA will be important contributions to OSPAR's next Quality Status Report (QSR) in 2023.

b) OSPAR commits to investigating the impacts on the marine environment from current and projected declines in pH.

This will include, for example, consideration of impacts on; marine protected areas (MPAs), pelagic and benthic habitats and the consequences of OA on sensitive species. OSPAR's measures to protect species, habitats and ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic, for example through the designation of MPAs, can contribute to enhancing resilience of ecosystems/habitats that may be sensitive to climate change and OA.

c) OSPAR commits to collaboration with other regional organisations and scientific networks in its work on ocean acidification.

This includes in particular HELCOM, the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), the Barcelona Convention and the Cartagena Convention. OSPAR will also work cooperatively with other initiatives, in particular the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network (GOA-ON) through its regional hubs in the North-East Atlantic and the Arctic, to support and increase the quantity and quality of ocean acidification monitoring in the OSPAR Maritime Area.

5 OSPAR's NEAES 2030 is geared towards SDG implementation, which includes strengthening partnerships and contributing to the global process

In 2021 OSPAR launched its North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030. One of our overarching commitments is to contribute to the delivery of the UN SDGs by acting as a regional cooperation platform taking the SDGs into account in OSPAR programmes, actions, and measures, recognising that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda lies with the Contracting Parties.

The NEAES 2030 sets out 12 Strategic Objectives that contribute to the delivery of OSPAR's vision of a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. The following table sets out how these align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators.

The next Quality Status Report (QSR) foreseen to be published in 2023 will include direct linkages between the regional assessments created by OSPAR and the most relevant SDG goals and targets. OSPAR has developed a set of common indicators that assess topics ranging from

abundance and distribution of highly mobile species, to amounts of litter in the environment and concentrations of hazardous substances, among others. These regionally agreed indicators⁴ will assess progress being made in achieving a good environmental status and a healthy marine environment. The OSPAR common indicator assessments will include a metadata field identifying the corresponding SDG indicator.

“OSPAR's vision is of a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.”

4. www.ospar.org/work-areas/cross-cutting-issues/ospar-common-indicators

OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES		UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR COMMON INDICATORS OR OTHER INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF SDG INDICATOR
To achieve clean seas we will:					
Strategic Objective 1: Tackle eutrophication, through limiting inputs of nutrients and organic matter to levels that do not give rise to adverse effects on the marine environment	S1.O1: By 2022 OSPAR will implement an automated eutrophication assessment tool to deliver harmonised and transparent assessments for OSPAR and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and to provide support for the development of the SDG 14.1.1 Index of Coastal Eutrophication in 2025.		SDG 14.1. By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.	14.1.1 (a) Index of coastal eutrophication	"Nutrient input Nutrient concentration Chlorophyll-a Phaeocystis Dissolved oxygen "
	S1.O2: By 2022 OSPAR will determine the maximum inputs of nutrients for relevant assessment areas which prevent deterioration and enable the achievement of non-problem area status throughout the North-East Atlantic.				
	S1.O3: By 2024 OSPAR will identify and quantify relevant sources, including transboundary transport, and agree nutrient reduction needs for each Contracting Party to stay at or below the maximum input levels, reporting on progress towards these in 2025 and regularly thereafter.				
	S1.O4: By 2028 OSPAR will ensure that sufficient measures are taken to achieve the necessary input reductions to prevent coastal and offshore eutrophication in the North-East Atlantic, working where appropriate with national and international organisations and authorities concerned with managing nutrient emissions, discharges and losses.				
	S1.O5: By 2030 OSPAR will ensure that nutrient reduction targets and measures are sufficient to avoid adverse eutrophication effects in a changing climate.				
	S1.O6: By 2030 OSPAR will develop and implement a regional approach to applying nature-based solutions to reinstate and safeguard the natural capacity of the ecosystem to sequester nutrients through conservation and restoration of estuarine, coastal and marine habitats, where this is practicable.				
Strategic Objective 2: Prevent pollution by hazardous substances, by eliminating their emissions, discharges and losses, to achieve levels that do not give rise to adverse effects on human health or the marine environment with the ultimate aim of achieving and maintaining concentrations in the marine environment at near background values for naturally occurring hazardous substances and close to zero for human made hazardous substances	S2.O1: By 2022 OSPAR will introduce a revised approach to managing the OSPAR Lists of Chemicals for Priority Action and Substances of Possible Concern (LCPA and LSPC). By 2022 and regularly thereafter, OSPAR will identify contaminants of emerging concern for the marine environment and prioritise them for action, including promoting and where necessary supplementing measures under relevant EU legislation and international organisations.				
	S2.O2: OSPAR will develop and identify marine-relevant assessment criteria for hazardous substances, for use in the Quality Status Report 2023 and subsequently further develop these, including for emerging contaminants], working closely with relevant experts, particularly in the Working Group Chemicals under the Water Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy.				
	S2.O3: By 2027 OSPAR will ensure that measures to eliminate discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances are in place to achieve or maintain good environmental status for hazardous substances, including through working regularly with other organisations.				
	S2.O4: By 2026 OSPAR will further develop the Harmonised Mandatory Control System for the use and discharge of offshore chemicals to improve coherence with other relevant international requirements such as the EU REACH Regulation and the Biocidal Products Regulation.				
Strategic Objective 3: Prevent pollution by radioactive substances in order to safeguard human health and to protect the marine environment with the ultimate aim of achieving and maintaining concentrations in the marine environment at near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for human made radioactive substances	S3.O1: On an ongoing basis OSPAR will further prevent, progressively reduce or, where that is not practicable, minimise discharges of radioactive substances through the application of Best Available Techniques (BAT), taking into account technical feasibility, radiological impact and legitimate uses of the sea.				
	S3.O2: By 2025 OSPAR will identify and consider any obstacles in achieving further reductions in environmental concentrations of radioactive substances in the marine environment and examine possible solutions where appropriate.				
	S3.O3: By 2025 OSPAR will identify the different types of loss of radioactive substances that may contribute to pollution of the marine environment. By 2027 OSPAR will determine if any additional measures are required to prevent such pollution, to the extent that such pollution is not already the subject of effective measures agreed by other international organisations or prescribed by other international conventions.				
	S3.O4: By 2028 OSPAR will, following the outcome of the Quality Status report 2023, address, where appropriate, any uncertainties by reviewing and updating methodologies to better determine the possible impact of releases, emissions and losses of radioactive substances on marine ecosystems.				
Strategic Objective 4: Prevent inputs of and significantly reduce marine litter, including microplastics, to reach levels that do not cause adverse effects to the marine and coastal environment with the ultimate aim of eliminating inputs of litter	S4.O1: By 2022 OSPAR will agree an updated Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter including a set of prioritised "SMART[!]" objectives to address new and emerging issues and to reduce the impacts of those items causing most harm to the marine environment.			14.1.1 (b) plastic debris density	"Beach litter Plastic particles in Fulmar stomachs Composition and spatial distribution of litter on the seafloor Litter ingested by sea turtles "
	S4.O2: By 2023 OSPAR will improve the evidence base on harm in relation to marine litter with the aim of developing and agreeing actions and measures to reduce harm by 2025.				
	S4.O3: Reduction in the prevalence of most commonly found single-use plastic items and of maritime-related plastic items on beaches in order to contribute to the achievement of relevant regional and EU threshold values building upon requirements for EU Member States in the EU Single Use Plastics Directive (Directive 2019/904) - Draft text to be finalised				
	S4.O4 : By 2023 OSPAR will develop additional regionally coordinated quantitative reduction targets for all marine litter on beaches, and as soon as possible for other relevant environmental compartments, taking account of relevant regional and EU threshold values.				
	S4.O5: By 2025 OSPAR will adopt programmes and measures to control and, where appropriate, phase out plastic from materials placed at sea for the purposes of marine infrastructure developments.				
	S4.O6: By 2027 OSPAR will develop measures to control, and where possible, phase out discharges of plastic substances, including microplastics, contained in chemicals from offshore sources -Draft text to be finalised				
	S4.O7: By 2025 OSPAR will develop approaches to prevent and reduce riverine marine litter inputs in cooperation with the relevant international river or river basin commissions, and other appropriate authorities and organisations.				
	S4.O8: By 2025 OSPAR will develop and implement measures to substantially reduce marine litter from fishing and aquaculture gear, in collaboration with those sectors, as appropriate, and by 2027 will determine the need for, and where appropriate adopt, targets or other actions for the separate collection of end-of-life fishing and aquaculture gear coherent with relevant EU directives and the update of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.				

OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES		UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR COMMON INDICATORS OR OTHER INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF SDG INDICATOR
To achieve biologically diverse seas and healthy seas we will:					
Strategic Objective 5: Protect and conserve marine biodiversity, ecosystems and their services to achieve good status of species and habitats, and thereby maintain and strengthen ecosystem resilience	S5.O1: Coverage of marine protected areas - Draft text to be finalised		SDG target 14.5 By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information	14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas	Biennial staus report of the OSPAR network of MPAs and Annual assessment sheets of the OSPAR network of MPAs
	S5.O1 Alt 1: Ecological coherence of marine protected areas - Draft text to be finalised				
	S5.O2: By 2022 OSPAR will identify barriers to the effective management of MPAs, and by 2024 take steps to address them appropriately to enable all OSPAR MPAs to achieve their conservation objectives.				
	S5.O3: By 2025 at the latest OSPAR will take appropriate actions to prevent or reduce pressures to enable the recovery of marine species and benthic and pelagic habitats in order to reach and maintain good environmental status as reflected in relevant OSPAR status assessments, with action by 2023 to halt the decline of marine birds.		SDG target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	The OSPAR Commission's work is guided by the ecosystem approach to identify and take action on drivers, activities and pressures that adversely affect the health of marine ecosystems.
	S5.O4: By 2025 OSPAR will have implemented all agreed measures to enable the recovery of OSPAR Listed threatened and/or declining species and habitats and will take additional measures as needed.				
	S5.O5: Where the knowledge base is insufficient to achieve OSPAR's biodiversity objectives, OSPAR will take action to improve regional coordination for collection and sharing of data, information and knowledge, with elasmobranchs as a priority by 2023.				
Strategic Objective 6: Restore degraded habitats in the North-East Atlantic when practicable to safeguard their ecosystem function and resilience to climate change and ocean acidification	S6.O1: By 2023 OSPAR will identify habitats suitable for restoration, and develop a common knowledge base on the most appropriate and effective methods for restoration of degraded habitats.				
	S6.O2: By 2025 OSPAR will develop a regional approach, including relevant qualitative and/or quantitative targets for restoration of degraded habitats suitable for restoration, and will then implement actions to achieve the targets as appropriate.				
To achieve productive and sustainably used seas we will:					
Strategic Objective 7: Ensure that uses of the marine environment are sustainable, through the integrated management of current and emerging human activities, including addressing their cumulative impacts	S7.O1: By 2028 OSPAR will further develop methods for the analysis of cumulative effects in the marine ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic, taking into account relevant spatial and temporal information on human activities, pressures, sensitive receptors and habitats, and use the results to inform the establishment of measures and actions to prevent, reduce or otherwise manage impacts.				
	S7.O2: By 2025 OSPAR will develop a coordinated management approach to ensure the number of non-indigenous species introduced via human activity is minimised and where possible reduced to zero.				
	S7.O3 By 2025 OSPAR will start accounting for ecosystem services and natural capital by making maximum use of existing frameworks in order to recognise, assess and consistently account for human activities and their consequences in the implementation of ecosystem-based management.				
	S7.O4: By 2023 OSPAR will assess, review and potentially revise the OSPAR criteria, guidelines and procedures relating to the dumping of wastes or other matter and to the placement of matter.				
	S7.O5: By 2024 OSPAR will review the risks from new, emerging and increasing pressures on the marine environment, taking account of OSPAR's Quality Status Report 2023, and prioritise them for action and the adoption of measures where necessary.				
	S7.O6: OSPAR will work with relevant competent authorities and other stakeholders to minimise, and where possible eliminate, incidental by-catch of marine mammals, birds, turtles and fish so that it does not represent a threat to the protection and conservation of these species and will work towards strengthening the evidence base concerning incidental by-catch by 2025.				
Strategic Objective 8: Reduce anthropogenic underwater noise to levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment	S8.O1: Collective actions to reduce noise pollution - Draft text to be finalised				
	S8.O2: By 2022 OSPAR will develop and implement a coordinated monitoring and modelling programme for continuous sound to support an assessment of anthropogenic underwater noise in the OSPAR maritime area.				
Strategic Objective 9: Safeguard the structure and functions of seabed/marine ecosystems by preventing significant habitat loss and physical disturbance due to human activities	S9.O1: By 2023 OSPAR will deliver a quantitative evidence base on pressures from human activities causing physical loss and disturbance to seabed habitats. On this basis, OSPAR will address and, where possible, reduce these pressures from human activities within its competence and regularly engage with other competent authorities with a view to reducing these pressures within their respective areas of competence in order to help achieve or maintain good environmental status.				
	S9.O2: By 2023 OSPAR will review and, if appropriate, amend the categories of disused offshore installations where derogations may be considered under OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations, aiming to reduce the scope of possible derogations. The review will be based, inter alia, on the advancement of decommissioning technologies and on the best available scientific knowledge.				
	S9.O3: By 2023 OSPAR will agree on an approach and on actions to promote and advance decommissioning technologies under the framework of Decision 98/3 with the aim of reducing the scope of possible derogations.				

OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES		UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR COMMON INDICATORS OR OTHER INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF SDG INDICATOR
To achieve seas resilient to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification we will:					
Strategic Objective 10: Raise awareness of climate change and ocean acidification by monitoring, analysing and communicating their effects	S10.O1: By 2025 OSPAR will implement a coordinated long-term monitoring programme for ocean acidification variables.		SDG target 14.3 minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels	14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations	Assessment of ocean acidification physicochemical indicators, modelled products and biological impacts case studies
	S10.O2: By 2023 OSPAR will develop assessments of ocean acidification and climate change and will take the impacts of ocean acidification and climate change into account in relevant OSPAR indicators and assessments.				
	S10.O3: In 2023, and every 6 years thereafter, OSPAR will assess the current and projected impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on the OSPAR maritime area and its uses, to inform the development of national and international actions.				
Strategic Objective 11: Facilitate adaptation to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification by considering additional pressures when developing programmes, actions and measures	S11.O1: By 2025 OSPAR will develop a coordinated management approach to strengthening ecosystem resilience, including to the consequences of climate change and ocean acidification.				
	S11.O2: By 2023, and every six years thereafter, OSPAR will assess at a regional scale the OSPAR network of marine protected areas in respect of the resilience of marine biodiversity to climate change, with the aim of ensuring that the network provides a good representation of species and habitats and that its spatial design and management regime remains relevant.				
	S11.O3: From 2021 OSPAR will ensure that revisions to the OSPAR list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats and status assessments take account of any relevant impacts of climate change and ocean acidification.				
	S11.O4: From 2021 OSPAR will consider the additional pressures from climate change and ocean acidification both now and under future climate conditions in its regular review of measures and actions and update them as appropriate.				
Strategic Objective 12: Mitigate climate change and ocean acidification by contributing to global efforts, including by safeguarding the marine environment's role as a natural carbon store	S12.O1: By 2025 OSPAR will develop a regional approach to applying nature-based solutions for carbon storage and implement specific measures to protect and restore relevant carbon sequestration and storage habitats, such as seagrass beds, kelp forests and saltmarshes.		SDG target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	The OSPAR Commission promotes the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the North-East Atlantic within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity by means of programmes and measures developed under its Strategies.
	S12.O2: By 2025 OSPAR will take nature-based carbon storage into account when reviewing the criteria for the designation of marine protected areas, and reviewing the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats.				
	S12.O3: Carbon dioxide storage - Draft text to be finalised				
	S12.O4: Guidance on regional based approaches to promote and facilitate sustainable development and scaling up of offshore renewable energy in a way that cumulative environmental impacts are minimised- Draft text to be finalised				
Cross cutting	SX.O1: By 2023 OSPAR will implement the regional coordination requirements arising from Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848* for those Contracting Parties that are EU Member States, including regional lists of elements, aggregation and assessment methods and threshold values for the North-East Atlantic region or its subregions.				
	SX.O2: By 2024 OSPAR will initiate discussions on the development of a [practical] [plan/strategy/approach]- [framework] for regional-scale ecosystem-based management, including through the 'Collective Arrangement*' and in cooperation with fisheries management bodies and other competent organisations, in order to strengthen ecosystem resilience to climate change and to safeguard the marine environment, its biodiversity and ecosystem services.		SDG target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans	14.2.1 Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	The OSPAR Commission promotes the implementation of the ecosystem approach in the North-East Atlantic within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity by means of programmes and measures developed under its Strategies.



OSPAR Secretariat
The Aspect
12 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1AS
United Kingdom

+44 (0) 20 7430 5200

Secretariat@ospar.org

OSPAR Publication 2021/781

www.ospar.org