



# OSPAR's Contribution to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals  
in the North-East Atlantic Ocean

2023



 SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT **GOALS**

[www.ospar.org](http://www.ospar.org)







Foreword by  
Ane-Marie Løvendahl  
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**Chair of the OSPAR  
Commission**

The marine  
environment does  
not recognise national

boundaries. It is therefore essential that countries work together to help deliver a more sustainable future for all in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As we approach the halfway point of their implementation, it is important to reflect on our commitments and progress to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

OSPAR's vision is for a clean, healthy, and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. Our North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030, adopted at the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in 2021, sets out an ambitious programme of work to achieve this vision and reaffirmed OSPAR Contracting Parties' commitment to working with others and contributing to the delivery of the SDGs.

This report provides an overview of the collective actions achieved to date by OSPAR in the implementation of SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 14 on Life Below Water, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. It highlights OSPAR's role in contributing to the delivery of the SDGs and shows that regional cooperation is the cornerstone of effective protection and sustainable use of the ocean. Building on decades of monitoring and assessments, scientific knowledge, and strong cooperation, OSPAR also plays an important role in inspiring and supporting work between Regional Seas Conventions to strengthen regional approaches, thus contributing to delivering SDG 14 as one.

Our collective actions today shape the North-East Atlantic we need for the future we want.

**Ane-Marie Løvendahl Eskildsen**  
**Chair**  
OSPAR Commission





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



**OSPAR is the Regional Sea 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.**

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



**Figure 1:** OSPAR Maritime Area. Region I: Arctic Waters; Region II: Greater North Sea; Region III: Celtic Seas; Region IV: Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast; Region V: Wider Atlantic

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. It contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets aimed at eradicating poverty and achieving sustainable development by 2030. In 2017, the first United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 ('United Nations Ocean Conference') 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 second United Nations Ocean Conference reiterated the importance of international cooperation and partnerships based in science and in line with the precautionary and ecosystem-based approaches to contribute to developing the solutions necessary to tackle these challenges. 2023 marks the halfway point in the implementation of the SDGs. It is an important milestone to reflect on and strengthen the commitments made to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

Through its 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES 2030), OSPAR contributes specifically to SDG 13 on Climate Action, SDG 14 on Life Below Water, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals. OSPAR's objectives include reducing pollution of all kinds (SDG 14.1), restoring

degraded habitats (SDG 14.2), addressing the impacts of ocean acidification (SDG 14.3), and conserving and protecting biodiversity (SDG 14.5). OSPAR has recently published its most ambitious assessments to date on climate change and ocean acidification as part of its Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023. These assessments demonstrate OSPAR's commitment to highlight and address the significant impact of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (SDG 13). OSPAR also fosters international cooperation and partnerships among its member countries, the European Union, and global partners (SDG 17). By addressing these goals, OSPAR ensures the sustainable use and conservation of the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic, fostering resilience, protecting biodiversity, and supporting the well-being of coastal communities and ecosystems.

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 to strengthen regional approaches, thus contributing to delivering SDG 14 as one.

## OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy

At the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in 2021, OSPAR adopted its 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES 2030). This Strategy is the means by which OSPAR's 16 Contracting Parties will implement the OSPAR Convention until 2030. It sets out collective objectives to tackle the triple challenge facing the ocean: biodiversity loss, pollution, including marine litter, and climate change. Its implementation is part of OSPAR's contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs.

The Strategy sets out OSPAR's strategic objectives on eutrophication, hazardous substances, radioactive substances, marine litter, protection, conservation and restoration of species and habitats, sustainable use of the marine environment, underwater noise, protecting the seabed, and climate change and ocean acidification. In turn, each of these strategic objectives is underpinned by operational objectives that set qualitative and quantitative targets. The Strategy emphasises the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring effective protection and sustainable use of the seas and that OSPAR will continue to play a leading role in addressing global ocean issues.

The implementation of this Strategy will help OSPAR to deliver its 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.

1. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/frameworks/ouroceanourfuture>, para. 13c.  
2. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/389/07/PDF/N2238907.pdf?OpenElement>, para. 13.



# OSPAR successes contribute to SDG 14 implementation

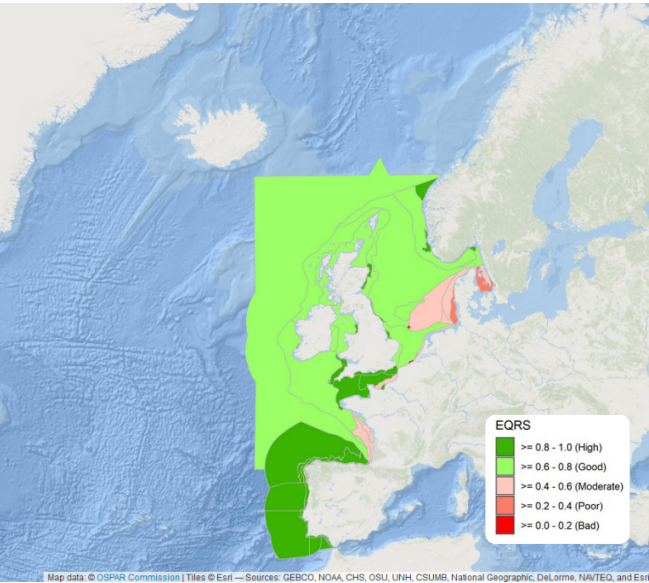
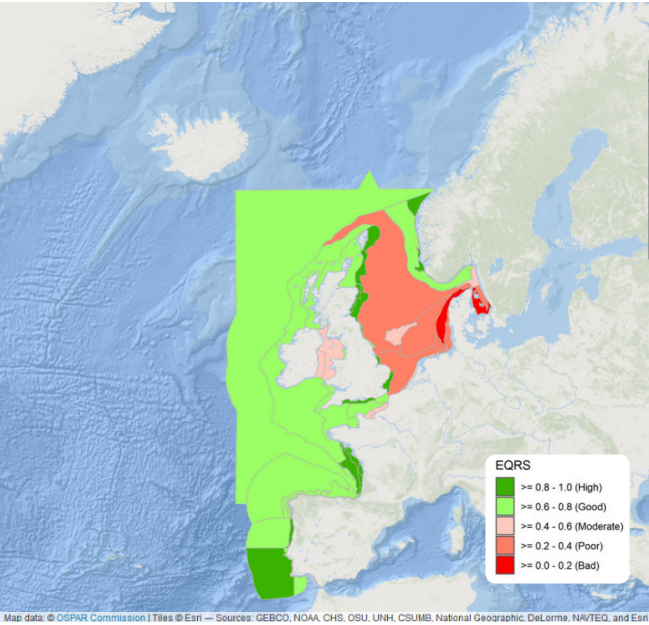
**SDG target 14.1** By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

OSPAR's QSR 2023 reflects the significant advances made by OSPAR Contracting Parties to better understand and limit the negative impacts of human activities on the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Environmental quality has improved in some aspects: releases of the most serious hazardous substances such as PCBs, PAHs and organochlorides have decreased substantially, pollution by radioactive substances has been prevented, discharges by the oil and gas industry have been reduced, marine litter is better tracked and significant steps have been taken to reduce it, and a gradual reduction of the input and availability of excess nutrients has been witnessed in many OSPAR Regions.

Through the application of Best Available Techniques, there have been progressive and substantial reductions of radioactive discharges from the nuclear sector over the period of 1995 to 2018 in the OSPAR Maritime Area. OSPAR continues to identify further opportunities to prevent discharges of radioactive substances or, where that is not practicable, minimise discharges of radioactive substances even further.

There has been a measurable decrease in emissions and discharges from offshore oil and gas installations since 2010 and activities that were once widespread, such as the discharge of oil-based fluids, have ceased. OSPAR continues to implement measures to reduce the effects of produced water discharges and to reduce the use and discharge of offshore chemicals that contain hazardous substances.

## Nutrient pollution



**Figure 2:** Eutrophication assessment results for assessment periods of COMP1 (1990-2000) and COMP4 (2015-2020). Comparison between the different COMP periods shows a decrease in the number and total surface area of assessment areas that do not achieve Good Status.

3. <https://www.ospar.org/convention/strategy>  
4. <https://www.ospar.org/documents?d=32444>

OSPAR Contracting Parties have made significant efforts to reduce nutrient losses to the marine environment from agriculture, aquaculture, wastewater from point sources such as outfalls and riverine discharges, run-off from land and deposition from the atmosphere. As early as 1988, Contracting Parties agreed to reduce nutrient emissions to the Greater North Sea by 50% (PARCOM Recommendation 88/2). Measures to reduce inputs were taken and augmented by European Union Directives and other international agreements.

As a result of these regulations and agreements, wastewater treatment and industrial point sources have reduced their discharges of both nitrogen and phosphorus. Riverine inputs of phosphorus have decreased significantly, as have atmospheric nitrogen inputs. The most dramatic improvements have come from the atmospheric nitrogen input reductions and the reduction in fertilizer use since 1990.

## Marine Litter

The issue of marine litter is relevant to a number of the SDGs, including SDG 12 on Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 on Climate Action and SDG 14 on life Below Water. OSPAR's first Regional Action Plan on marine litter, which was adopted in 2014 and concluded in 2021, contributed to the SDG target 14.1 on the reduction of marine pollution of all kinds. This regional action plan included 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 varied but included 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.

5. <https://www.ospar.org/documents?d=49366>  
6. <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/eiha/marine-litter/regional-action-plan>

## The COMPEAT tool

The Common Procedure is a harmonised and comprehensive approach developed by OSPAR Contracting Parties for assessing eutrophication in the North-East Atlantic. It serves the purpose of identifying, classifying, and evaluating eutrophication status, as well as determining the need for remedial measures, the scale of required actions, and assessing the effectiveness of implemented measures. By incorporating the best available scientific knowledge, the Common Procedure reflects OSPAR's utilisation of both regional and risk-based approaches to interpret and assess eutrophication in the North-East Atlantic.

Based on the rules outlined within the Common Procedure, an assessment of eutrophication status is produced by the Common Procedure Eutrophication Assessment Tool (COMPEAT). This automated classification tool is hosted by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). Besides an assessment of the eutrophication status and its confidence, the tool also allowed an assessment back in time, re-running COMP1 (1990-2000), COMP2 (2001-2006) and COMP3 (2006-2014) and thereby delineating the history of eutrophication from 1990 until today in the Greater North Sea, Irish Sea, Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast. The use of COMPEAT coupled with the refining of specific small-scale assessment areas has led to an objective assessment of status which has a common scientific basis across the whole of the North-East Atlantic.





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### Publications\*

\*OSPAR endorsed documents

3



### Recommendations

Education programmes (2019)  
Fishing for Litter (2016)  
Plastic pellets (2021)

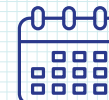
4



### Agreements

Education programmes  
Fishing for Litter (FFL)  
Consistent FFL reporting  
Plastic pellets

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### Engagements

Workshops and seminars across governments, industry, academia and civil society.

Figure 3: OSPAR's first Regional Action Plan (RAP) on marine litter outputs in numbers

A second marine litter RAP was adopted in 2022. This Plan presents 25 collective actions covering issues such as waste management, wastewater, riverine inputs, products and packaging, offshore industries, shipping, fishing and microplastics. Implementation against the objectives set out in the NEAES 2030 is being monitored and new actions will be added when necessary.

OSPAR's marine litter thematic assessment for the QSR 2023 found that, overall, marine litter levels in the North-East Atlantic are still high and further efforts are needed. There is a predominance of plastics among marine litter that is reported across all OSPAR Regions. Also, microplastics have been reported in sediments, surface waters, water column and in biota for the OSPAR Maritime Area at different concentrations. Single-use plastics and maritime-related litter are frequently found beach litter items at OSPAR level, with some important regional differences. Nonetheless, there are some positive signs: a decrease in the quantities of litter found on OSPAR beaches between 2015-2020 and in the floating litter in the North Sea between 2009-2018. When considered against the upward trend in plastic production and use in Europe over a similar period, this suggests that progress has been made on preventing plastics from entering the marine environment.

**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.

Pressure from offshore oil and gas activities is greatest in the Greater North Sea, followed by Arctic Waters and the Celtic Seas. OSPAR is working towards the total removal of disused oil and gas installations, with more installations to be decommissioned during the 2020-2030 decade. In light of the experience with the decommissioning of oil and gas installations, relevant research, and the exchange of information, OSPAR aims to ensure that derogations from the ban on leaving offshore installations in place remain exceptional.



OSPAR has developed an Impulsive Noise Registry that collects data that is 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 are able to assess the pressure from activities, such as shipping. A first pilot assessment on ambient noise in the North Sea was produced for the QSR 2023. It found that shipping noise is dominant in the underwater soundscape of the North Sea. In the southern part and along the major shipping routes, the noise exceeds the natural sound by more than 20 dB for more than 50% of the time.

OSPAR is also developing a Regional Action Plan on underwater noise that will tackle pressures from both impulsive and continuous noise and will identify and address gaps. This action plan aims to develop harmonised targets, standards, and approaches towards the reduction of anthropogenic noise as well as sub-regional approaches for noise management to reduce both pressure and exposure. It also aims to share best practices and collaborate internationally with other regional and international organisations to improve protection of the North-East Atlantic and promote effective regional implementation of globally agreed measures and guidelines.

In 2021, OSPAR agreed to establish a new group to work on offshore renewable energy. One of the objectives in the NEAES 2030 is to develop guidance to promote and facilitate sustainable development of this rapidly expanding sector in a way that ensures cumulative environmental impacts are minimised. OSPAR is currently in the process of commissioning an assessment of the cumulative impacts of offshore windfarm developments on bird populations in the North Sea, Celtic Seas, and Bay of Biscay.

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.

As of 2019, the OSPAR regional list of threatened and/or declining species includes 42 species and 16 habitats. OSPAR Recommendations have been adopted for almost all of the species and habitats on the OSPAR List. These Recommendations have helped OSPAR Contracting Parties to take collective or national actions to further the specific protection and conservation of these species and habitats and to reduce the main threats from human activities and pressures. Overall, the 2019 implementation reporting indicates that there is a good level of engagement to implement the national actions within the Recommendations, in particular, within the areas where the species and habitats are considered to be under threat and/or in decline. OSPAR is now working to develop action plans to support the recovery of marine birds and coastal benthic habitats.

7. [https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1169/pages\\_from\\_ospar\\_convention\\_a5.pdf](https://www.ospar.org/site/assets/files/1169/pages_from_ospar_convention_a5.pdf).

8. <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/other-assessments/overview-assessment-implementation-ospar-recommendations-protect>.



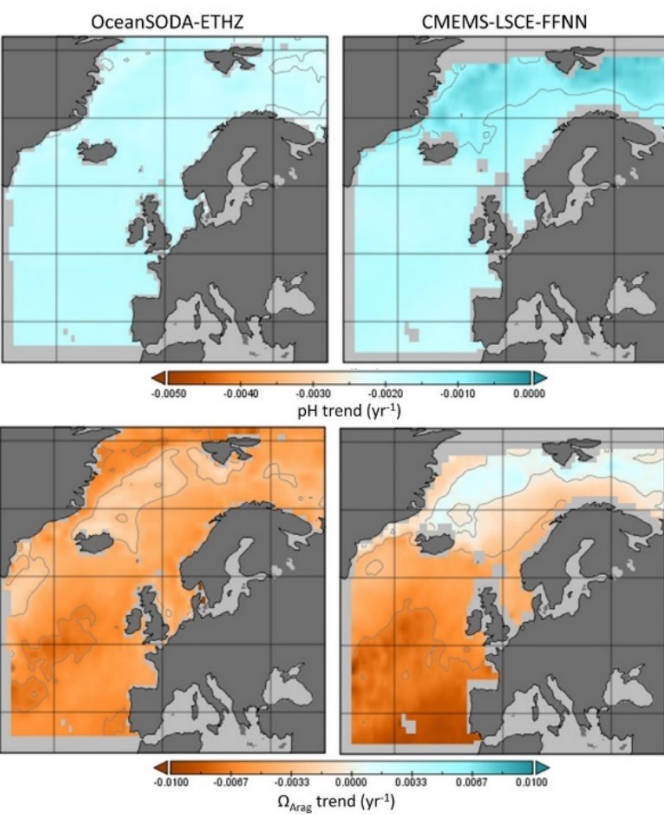


**SDG target 14.3 Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.**

Ocean acidification is a major threat to marine species and marine ecosystems, with direct consequences to ecosystem services. Effects from ocean acidification interact with other pressures, which negatively impacts the marine environment. Threatened and/or declining species and habitats are particularly vulnerable to changing environmental conditions, including ocean acidification.

Ocean acidification has been observed in all OSPAR Regions during the past decades, with rates of occurrence varying geographically and throughout the water column. Ocean acidification is projected to keep occurring in the OSPAR Maritime Area, and even accelerate under the higher carbon dioxide emission scenarios predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

To acknowledge the urgency of this issue, OSPAR Contracting Parties added climate change and ocean acidification as a key pillar of OSPAR's NEAES 2030. OSPAR also put forward a voluntary commitment on ocean acidification (Ocean Action #46914), which commits OSPAR to take 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. In support of this commitment, the first in-depth OSPAR assessment of ocean acidification was published as part of OSPAR's QSR 2023 and provides an important basis for OSPAR's work to address the impacts of ocean acidification in the OSPAR Maritime Area.



**Figure 4:** Mean trends (1985 – 2020) across all OSPAR Regions for surface water pH (top panels) and aragonite saturation state ( $\Omega_{Arag}$ ; bottom panels) from OceanSODA-ETHZ (left) and CMEMS-LSCE-FFNN (right).

**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.**

Networks of ecologically coherent and effectively managed marine protected areas (MPAs) provide a powerful tool to protect dynamic ocean ecosystems. In 2010, only 1.1% of the OSPAR Maritime Area was covered by MPAs. By 2022, 592 MPAs have been nominated to the OSPAR Network of MPAs, representing 10.9% of the OSPAR Maritime Area. By nominating more than 10% of marine and coastal areas as MPAs, OSPAR has reached both this SDG 14.5 target and the target set by the Convention on Biological Diversity (Aichi Target 11: to protect at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020). OSPAR is continuing its efforts to designate additional MPAs in both national waters and in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) to increase the MPA coverage and thereby support effective protection of the North-East Atlantic. In 2021, OSPAR agreed that by 2030 it would further develop its network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)

to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR maritime area to ensure it is representative, ecologically coherent and effectively managed to achieve its conservation objectives. The target was subsequently agreed as part of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Coverage of about 20% in some OSPAR Regions shows good progress towards the 30% target but more needs to be done.

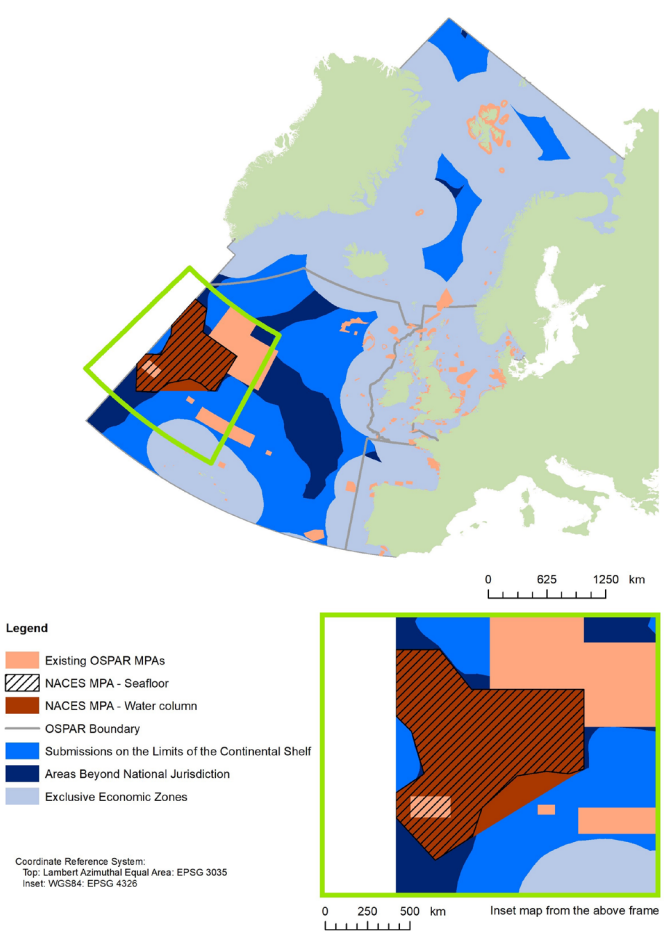
Of the 592 OSPAR MPAs, twelve have been designated in ABNJ. They cover 1 055 043 km<sup>2</sup>, representing 19.5% of OSPAR's Maritime Area beyond national jurisdiction. Their conservation objectives are facilitated by the Collective Arrangement, a regional platform to facilitate cooperation and coordination on area-based management as well as the sharing of information between competent authorities, such as the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), addressing the management of human activities in the North-East Atlantic region.

In June 2023, OSPAR Contracting Parties agreed to extend its largest MPA, the North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin (NACES) MPA located in ABNJ, to include the seabed and additional species and habitats, such as coral gardens and deep-sea sharks, within the scope of the MPA. 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 14.5 target.

Despite this good progress, the OSPAR MPA network is not complete and further efforts will be required to ensure that the network is considered ecologically coherent.



**10. In 2021, OSPAR Contracting Parties committed to “further develop its network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective conservation measures (OECMs) to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR Maritime Area to ensure it is representative, ecologically coherent and effectively managed to achieve its conservation objectives” by 2030.**



**Figure 5:** The OSPAR network of MPAs as of October 2022

Sea Area	Coverage of MPAs
Territorial waters	21%
Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ)	2.9%
Beyond the limits of EEZ	19.5%

OSPAR Region	Coverage of MPAs
Arctic Waters: Region I	2%
The Greater North Sea: Region II	20.3%
Celtic Seas: Region III	20%
Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast: Region IV	6%
Wider Atlantic: Region V	17.4%





**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**

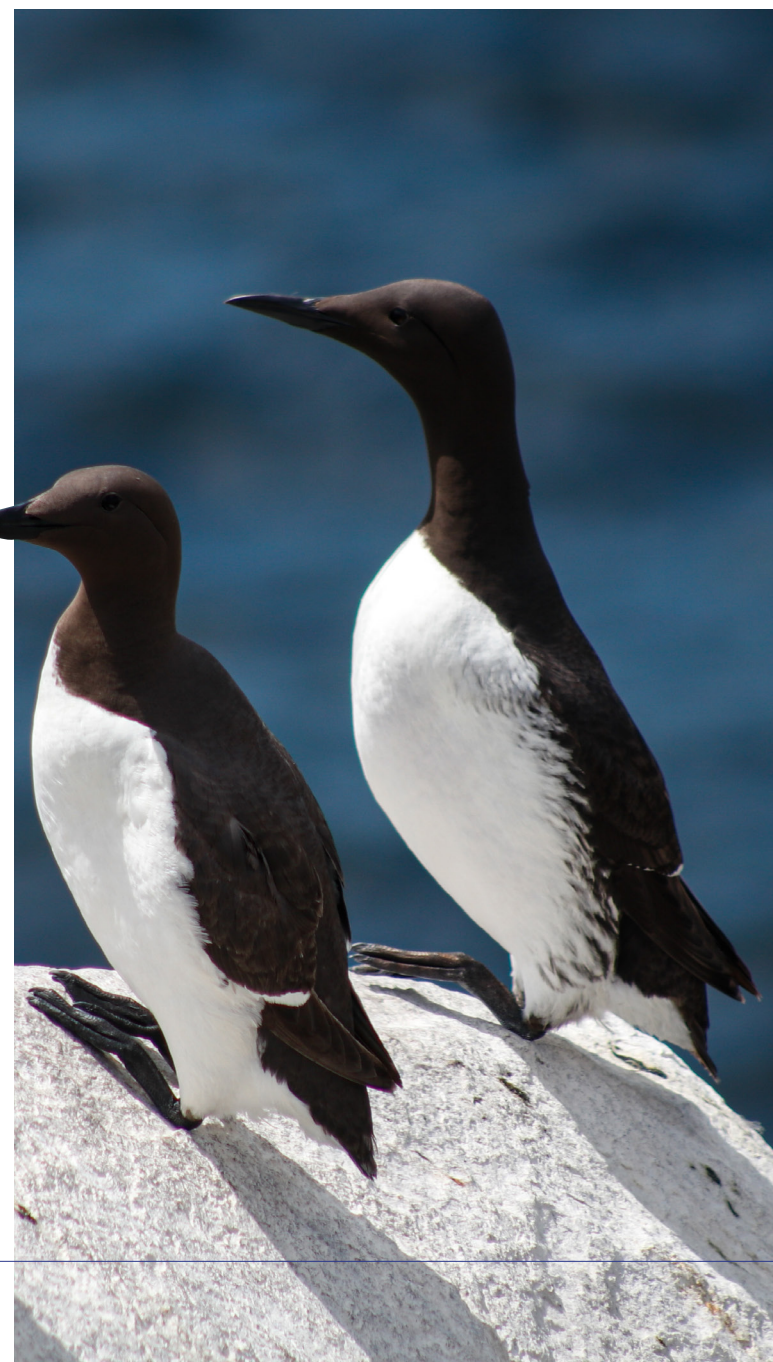
Once every decade, OSPAR publishes a comprehensive assessment of the overall status of the marine environment in the OSPAR Maritime Area, known as the Quality Status Report (QSR). The latest QSR was published in September 2023. It assessed the status of ecosystems, the main pressures and their impacts, evaluated the changes since the last assessments, and produced assessments to inform an ecosystem-based approach to management. It furthermore evaluated the implementation of previous OSPAR Strategies and their effectiveness in improving the quality of the marine environment in the five OSPAR Regions.

Through these assessments, the QSR 2023 identified the priority elements for actions to achieve 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. It also identified knowledge gaps and provided recommendations for measures to fill these gaps to ensure progress towards the achievement of OSPAR's strategic objectives and inform other relevant bodies about status and possible need to take actions.

The assessments that make up the QSR 2023 and the information and data that underpin them are available in the OSPAR Data and Information System (ODIMS). This online tool provides a single point of access and ensures that data are readily accessible. Increasing accessibility to scientific knowledge is a key issue for OSPAR and provides

a strong basis for collaborating with others to ensure that human activities impacting on the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic are managed sustainably.

The OSPAR Science Agenda (OSA) sets OSPAR's most important needs in the broad science areas that underpin OSPAR's work and helps to guide research to address science needs and knowledge gaps identified by the QSR. The 2018 OSA set out a prioritised list of 44 knowledge gaps, with the aim of improving future assessments within the OSPAR Maritime Area. It outlined 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 will be updated in 2024 with the science needs and knowledge gaps identified in the QSR 2023.



11. <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/cross-cutting-issues/qsr2023>.  
12. <https://odims.ospar.org/en/>.  
13. <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=40399>



## OSPAR takes action to combat climate change and ocean acidification

**SDG target 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.**

Through its North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030, OSPAR is committed to taking action to combat climate change and ocean acidification. It will do this by raising awareness and facilitating adaptation to and mitigation of the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification and, including by safeguarding the marine environment's role as a natural carbon store.

In June 2023, the OSPAR Commission established the Working Group on Changing Ocean Climate and Ocean Acidification (COCOA), to support this work. Through this working group, OSPAR is dedicated to monitoring and assessing the nature, rate and extent of climate change and ocean acidification and their impacts on the marine environment, particularly on species, habitats, ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services, and to considering appropriate ways of responding.

As part of the QSR 2023, OSPAR published its most comprehensive assessments of climate change and ocean acidification of the North-East Atlantic. These assessments demonstrate OSPAR's commitment to highlight the significant impact of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment and serve as a scientific basis for the work undertaken by the Working Group COCOA.



14. <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/thematic-assessments/climate-change/> and <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/other-assessments/ocean-acidification/>.





## OSPAR works in partnership to deliver sustainable development globally

**SDG target 14.1** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

### Inter-regional partnerships

International engagement and cooperation are a cornerstone of OSPAR's work, as OSPAR cannot achieve success without good regional and global cooperation.

OSPAR is one of 18 Regional Seas Conventions, the majority of which are established within the framework of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). UNEP's Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2022-2025 contributes to the implementation of SDG 14 and will be an important element to strengthen the delivery of UNEP's Medium-

Term Strategy 2022-2025 and its Programme of Work, including for fostering an integrated response to combat the ecological, climate, pollution, and health crisis for achieving long-term health of the ocean.

Although OSPAR was established independently by its Contracting Parties, it works closely with other Regional Seas Conventions to enhance cross-regional cooperation within the UNEP framework and plays an important role in the collective work of the Regional Seas Conventions, thus contributing to the implementation of SDG 17. OSPAR has strong links with the other Regional Seas Conventions, particularly with the Helsinki Convention, the Barcelona Convention, and the Cartagena Convention. Inter-regional cooperation with these conventions includes sharing lessons learned and best practices on topics of common interest, such as on seabirds, indicators, underwater noise, ballast water or special areas regulating ships' exhaust gases with the Helsinki Convention, on conducting and presenting regional assessments with the Barcelona Convention, and on marine protected areas (MPAs), marine litter, and nutrient pollution with the Cartagena Convention.

The OSPAR Secretariat has become a member of the Advisory Boards and Steering Committees of many scientific and policy-related projects in the North-East Atlantic 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 and can thus be taken up in the OSPAR policy framework.

As an observer to the Arctic Council since 2017, OSPAR contributes primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. OSPAR actively engages with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) 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 Emergency Preparedness, Prevention and Response. OSPAR also contributes to the work of the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) Working Group on protecting the marine environment.

### Cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination

Through the Collective Arrangement, which aims to establish a regional platform to facilitate cooperation and coordination on area-based management as well as the sharing of information between competent authorities addressing the management of human activities in the North-East Atlantic region, OSPAR has been working closely with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) to ensure more effective protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Other competent international organisations, such as the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO), are invited to join this Collective Arrangement, and several of them attend the yearly meetings as observers. The adoption of the agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national

jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) in June 2023 has given an impetus to strengthen the work under the Collective Arrangement, which could play a role as a regional platform for collaboration and cooperation to support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement in the North-East Atlantic region. 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.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also ensures that OSPAR measures are compatible with the application of the international system for radiation protection reflected in national, regional (EU) and international safety standards.

### 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 marine environment of the North-East Atlantic and its resources. The observers not only take part in OSPAR meetings 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 OSPAR Convention and translating its principles into practical action at local, national, and regional level.

15. <https://www.ospar.org/about/international-cooperation/collective-arrangement>.  
16. <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-06/SDG-Report-WEB.pdf>.





## 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 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 its QSR 2023, to those of the MSFD wherever possible. The first Voluntary Review of the European Union on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development shows that the EU is fully committed to delivering the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



## OSPAR cooperates through voluntary commitments for the implementation of SDG 14

To date, OSPAR has made a total of five voluntary commitments for the implementation of SDG 14, which are listed below.

### Voluntary Commitment Ocean Action #17198: Cooperation with the Cartagena Convention on SDG 14

This commitment between OSPAR and the Cartagena Convention (UNEP-CEP) was announced in June 2017 at the first UN Ocean Conference and aims to explore opportunities for enhancing cooperation and collaboration on joint programmes, projects, and activities across the Atlantic. Areas of cooperation between the Wider Caribbean Region and the North-East Atlantic have been identified on marine protected areas, marine litter, and nutrient pollution. Through this commitment, OSPAR and UNEP-CEP collaborate to exchange knowledge, build capacities, and provide technical and programmatic support to their Contracting Parties.

### Voluntary Commitment Ocean Action #21204: Commitment between the Secretariats of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and the OSPAR Commission under the Collective Arrangement

The Collective Arrangement was established in 2014 and is a novel approach to ocean governance enabling cross-sectoral cooperation and allows for information exchange and other modes of cooperation to reinforce regional collaboration among competent organisations in the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR and NEAFC work together under the Collective Arrangement on area-based management in ABNJ and discuss also other issues of relevance to the management and conservation of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Through this voluntary commitment, announced at the first UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, OSPAR and NEAFC

continue to promote the benefits of cross-sectoral work through the Collective Arrangement model. This has resulted in global interest in learning lessons from the North-East Atlantic region and exploring the application of this approach in other regions of the world's ocean.

### Voluntary Commitment Ocean Action #46914: Commitment to SDG 14.3: minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

In its 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, OSPAR commits to take measures to combat climate change and ocean acidification, including through awareness raising, facilitating adaptation, and mitigating their impacts by contributing to global efforts, including by safeguarding the marine environment's role as a natural carbon store. For this voluntary commitment, announced at the second UN Ocean Conference in June 2022, OSPAR commits to further develop its regional monitoring and assessment programmes, to investigate the impacts on the marine environment from current and projected declines in pH; and to collaborate with other regional organisations and scientific networks in OSPAR's work on ocean acidification.

### Voluntary Commitment Ocean Action #47413: Commitment to implement the Second Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter

OSPAR continues to work to prevent and significantly reduce marine litter in the North-East Atlantic. The Second Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter sets out the policy context for OSPAR's work to address marine litter within the North-East Atlantic and directly contributes to delivering the marine litter objectives of OSPAR's 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy, which sets out strategic objectives for achieving good environmental status in the marine environment including to prevent inputs of and significantly reduce marine litter, including

17. <https://www.ospar.org/documents?v=33030>.

microplastics, in the marine environment to reach levels that do not cause adverse effects to the marine and coastal environment, with the ultimate aim of eliminating inputs of litter. This voluntary commitment, announced at the second UN Ocean Conference in June 2022, contributes to the implementation of this Regional Action Plan, which will be done in cooperation with other relevant work and initiatives from regional and global organisations, including UNEP and other Regional Seas Conventions, the International Maritime Organisation, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the European Union, Fisheries Regional Advisory Councils, North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission and River Basin Commissions. Partnerships with the private sector and with non-governmental organisations will also be part of the working approach.

### Voluntary Commitment Ocean Action #47414: Commitment to implement the 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy

The North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 is the means by which OSPAR's 16 Contracting Parties will implement the OSPAR Convention until 2030. It sets out OSPAR's vision, strategic and operational objectives and is based around four themes: clean seas; biologically diverse seas; productive and sustainably used seas; and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. This voluntary commitment to implement the NEAES 2030, announced at the second UN Ocean Conference in June 2022, will help OSPAR to deliver its 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 NEAES 2030 also emphasises the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring the effective protection and sustainable use of the ocean and that OSPAR will continue to play a leading role in addressing global ocean issues.





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



**In 2021, OSPAR launched its 2030 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES). One of OSPAR's overarching commitments is to contribute to the delivery of the SDGs by acting as a regional cooperation platform for the implementation of the SDGs and taking them into account in OSPAR programmes, actions, and measures, while recognising that the primary responsibility for the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda lies with OSPAR's 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 Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators.

OSPAR's 2023 Quality Status Report also includes direct linkages between the regional assessments created by OSPAR and the most relevant SDG and their 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 indicators will assess progress being made in achieving a good environmental status and a healthy marine environment in the North-East Atlantic. The OSPAR common indicator assessments published as part of QSR 2023 include a metadata field identifying the corresponding SDG indicator.

18. <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/indicator-assessments/>.







OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
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	S1.01 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	OSPAR common indicators: <a href="#">Winter nutrient concentrations</a> ; <a href="#">Growing season concentrations of chlorophyll-a</a> ; <a href="#">Concentrations of dissolved oxygen near the seafloor</a> ; <a href="#">Waterborne &amp; atmospheric nutrient input trends</a>	OSPAR assessments: Feeder report: <a href="#">Agriculture</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Aquaculture</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Waste water</a> ; <a href="#">Atmospheric and riverine inputs other assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Case study on the CONNECT project</a> ; <a href="#">Integrated eutrophication assessment</a>
	S1.02 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				
	S1.03 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				
	S1.04 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				
	S1.05 By 2030 OSPAR will ensure that nutrient reduction targets and measures are sufficient to avoid adverse eutrophication effects in a changing climate				
	S1.06 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				





OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
<b>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</b>	<b>S2.01</b> 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	<b>SDG 14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution			
	<b>S2.02</b> 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			<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Inputs of heavy metals via water and air</a> ; <a href="#">Status and trends for heavy metals (mercury, cadmium and lead) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a> ; <a href="#">Status and trends in the concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in shellfish &amp; sediment</a> ; <a href="#">Status and trends in the levels of imposex in marine gastropods (TBT in Shellfish)</a> ; <a href="#">Status and trends of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a> ; <a href="#">Status and trends of TBT in sediments</a> ; <a href="#">Trends in concentrations of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a>	<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">Hazardous substances thematic assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Status and Trend hazardous substances using CHASE</a> ; <a href="#">Dumping of waste or other matter at sea</a> ; <a href="#">Modelling of discharges to the marine environment from open circuit flue gas scrubbers on ships</a> ; <a href="#">Overall assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Offshore industry overall assessment</a> ; <a href="#">OIC Thematic Assessment</a>
	<b>S2.03</b> 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			<b>OSPAR candidate indicators:</b> <a href="#">Trends and Status of persistent chemicals in marine mammals</a>	
	<b>S2.04</b> 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				





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<b>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</b>	<b>S3.O1</b> 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	<b>SDG 14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution			<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">5th Periodic Assessment</a> ; <a href="#">RSC Thematic Assessment</a>
	<b>S3.O2</b> 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				
	<b>S3.O3</b> 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				
	<b>S3.O4</b> 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				





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<b>Strategic Objective 4: Prevent inputs of and significantly reduce marine litter, including microplastics, in the marine environment to reach levels that do not cause adverse effects to the marine and coastal environment with the ultimate aim of eliminating inputs of litter</b>	<b>S4.01</b> 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	<b>SDG 14.1</b> By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution	<b>14.1.1 (b)</b> plastic debris density	<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Ingestion by Fulmars</a> ; <a href="#">Ingestion plastic particles by turtles</a> ; <a href="#">Seabed litter</a> ; <a href="#">Abundance, composition and trends of beach litter</a>	<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">Marine Litter</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Production and consumption of plastics</a> ; <a href="#">Review on evidence of harm by marine litter</a>
	<b>S4.02</b> 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				
	<b>S4.03</b> By 2025 OSPAR will reduce by at least 50% the prevalence of the 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), and by at least 75% by 2030				
	<b>S4.04</b> 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				
	<b>S4.05</b> 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				
	<b>S4.06</b> 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				
	<b>S4.07</b> 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				
	<b>S4.08</b> 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				





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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	<b>S5.01</b> By 2030 OSPAR will further develop its network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR maritime area to ensure it is representative, ecologically coherent and effectively managed to achieve its conservation objectives	<b>SDG target 14.5</b> 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	<b>14.5.1</b> Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas		<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">Status of OSPAR MPA Network</a> ; <a href="#">Annual assessment sheet of MPA network</a>
	<b>S5.02</b> 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				
	<b>S5.03</b> By 2024, OSPAR will establish a mechanism to provide that where Contracting Parties are authorising human activities under their jurisdiction or control that may conflict with the conservation objectives of OSPAR MPAs in the ABNJ, these activities are subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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	<b>14.2.1</b> Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Recovery in the population abundance of sensitive fish species</a> ; <a href="#">Change in average trophic level of marine predators in the Bay of Biscay</a> ; <a href="#">Proportion of large fish (Large Fish Index)</a> ; <a href="#">Size composition in fish communities</a> ; <a href="#">Marine bird breeding success</a> ; <a href="#">Marine bird abundance</a> ; <a href="#">Trends in New Records of Non-Indigenous Species Introduced by Human Activities</a> ; <a href="#">Typical species composition</a> ; <a href="#">Assessment of coastal habitats exposed to nutrient and organic enrichment</a> ; <a href="#">Condition of Benthic Habitat Communities: the Common Conceptual Approach</a> ; <a href="#">Benthic multimetric index quality assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Extent of Physical Damage to Predominant and Special Habitats</a> ; <a href="#">Seal Abundance and Distribution</a> ; <a href="#">Abundance and distribution of cetaceans</a> ; <a href="#">Grey seal pup production</a> ; <a href="#">Marine mammal bycatch</a> ; <a href="#">Plankton biomass and/or abundance</a> ; <a href="#">Changes in plankton functional types (life form) index Ratio</a> ; <a href="#">Size composition in fish communities</a>	<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">Allis shad</a> ; <a href="#">Angel shark</a> ; <a href="#">Balearic shearwater</a> ; <a href="#">Basking shark</a> ; <a href="#">Blue whale</a> ; <a href="#">Bowhead whale</a> ; <a href="#">Carbonated mounds</a> ; <a href="#">Common skate</a> ; <a href="#">Coral gardens</a> ; <a href="#">Deep-sea sponge aggregation</a> ; <a href="#">European Eel</a> ; <a href="#">Flat oyster (species)</a> <a href="#">Ostrea edulis beds</a> ; <a href="#">Gulper shark</a> ; <a href="#">Iberian guillemot</a> ; <a href="#">Leafscale gulper shark</a> ; <a href="#">Leatherback turtle</a> ; <a href="#">Lesser black-backed gull</a> ; <a href="#">Loggerhead turtle</a> ; <a href="#">Lophelia pertusa</a> ; <a href="#">Maerl beds</a> ; <a href="#">Northern right whale</a> ; <a href="#">Oceanic ridges with hydrothermal vents/fields</a> ; <a href="#">Overview assessment of implementation reporting</a> ; <a href="#">Porbeagle shark</a> ; <a href="#">Portuguese dogfish</a> ; <a href="#">Salmon</a> ; <a href="#">Sea lamprey</a> ; <a href="#">Seamounts</a> ; <a href="#">Sea-pen and burrowing megafauna</a> ; <a href="#">Spotted ray</a> ; <a href="#">Spurdog</a> ; <a href="#">Intertidal mudflats</a> ; <a href="#">Intertidal Mytilus edulis beds on mixed and sandy sediments</a> ; <a href="#">Sturgeon</a> ; <a href="#">Thick-billed murre</a> ; <a href="#">Thornback ray/skate</a> ; <a href="#">Black-legged kittiwake</a> ; <a href="#">White skate</a> ; <a href="#">Zostera beds</a> ; <a href="#">Integrated biological effects approach</a> ; <a href="#">Impact of Human Activities</a> ; <a href="#">Pelagic Habitats</a> ; <a href="#">Benthic Habitats / Sea Bed Disturbance</a> ; <a href="#">Marine Mammals</a> ; <a href="#">Marine Birds</a> ; <a href="#">Food Webs</a> ; <a href="#">Fish</a>
	<b>S5.04</b> 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				
	<b>S5.05</b> 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				
	<b>S5.06</b> 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			<b>OSPAR candidate indicators:</b> <a href="#">Ecological Network Analysis indices</a> ; <a href="#">Production of phytoplankton</a> ; <a href="#">Mean maximum length of demersal fish and elasmobranchs</a> ; <a href="#">Marine bird abundance (at-sea data)</a> ; <a href="#">Marine bird bycatch</a> ; <a href="#">Marine bird habitat quality</a> ; <a href="#">Area of habitat loss</a>	



OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
Strategic Objective 6: Restore degraded benthic habitats in the North-East Atlantic when practicable to safeguard their ecosystem function and resilience to climate change and ocean acidification	S6.01 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	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	<p>OSPAR common indicators: <a href="#">Condition of Benthic Habitat Communities: the Common Conceptual Approach</a>; <a href="#">Benthic multimetric index quality assessment</a>; <a href="#">Extent of Physical Damage to Predominant and Special Habitats</a>; <a href="#">Seabed litter</a>; <a href="#">Status and trends for heavy metals (mercury, cadmium and lead) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a>; <a href="#">Status and trends in the concentrations of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in shellfish &amp; sediment</a>; <a href="#">Status and trends of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a>; <a href="#">Status and trends of TBT in sediments</a>; <a href="#">Trends in concentrations of polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) in fish and shellfish &amp; sediment</a></p> <p>OSPAR candidate indicator: <a href="#">Area of habitat loss</a></p>	OSPAR assessment: <a href="#">Benthic Habitats / Sea Bed Disturbance</a>
	S6.02 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				





OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
<b>To achieve productive and sustainably used seas we will:</b>					
<b>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</b>	<b>S7.01</b> 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	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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	<b>14.2.1</b> Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Trends in New Records of Non-Indigenous Species Introduced by Human Activities</a>  <b>OSPAR candidate indicator:</b> <a href="#">Area of habitat loss</a>  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	<b>OSPAR assessments:</b> <a href="#">Non Indigenous Species</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Extraction of living resources - Fishing</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Extraction of non-living resources</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Renewables</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Tourism and recreation</a> ; Feeder report: <a href="#">Transport - Shipping</a> ; <a href="#">Impact of Human Activities</a> ; <a href="#">Exploring the future together; a scenario analysis for the OSPAR region</a> ; <a href="#">The report on the consequences of Covid19 on the marine environment</a>
	<b>S7.02</b> 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				
	<b>S7.03</b> 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				
	<b>S7.04</b> 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				
	<b>S7.05</b> 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				
	<b>S7.06</b> 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				





OSPAR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OSPAR OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
<b>Strategic Objective 8: Reduce anthropogenic underwater noise to levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment</b>	<b>S8.01</b> By 2025 OSPAR will agree a regional action plan setting out a series of national and collective actions and, as appropriate, OSPAR measures to reduce noise pollution	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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	<b>14.2.1</b> Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Impulsive noise impacts</a> ; <a href="#">Impulsive noise pressure</a>  <b>OSPAR candidate indicator:</b> <a href="#">Ambient noise</a>	<b>OSPAR assessment:</b> <a href="#">Underwater Noise</a>
	<b>S8.02</b> 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				
<b>Strategic Objective 9: Safeguard the structure and functions of seabed/marine ecosystems by preventing significant habitat loss and physical disturbance due to human activities</b>	<b>S9.01</b> 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	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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	<b>14.2.1</b> Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas	<b>OSPAR common indicators:</b> <a href="#">Condition of Benthic Habitat Communities: the Common Conceptual Approach</a> ; <a href="#">Benthic multimetric index quality assessment</a> ; <a href="#">Extent of Physical Damage to Predominant and Special Habitats</a> ; <a href="#">Seabed litter</a>  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	
	<b>S9.02</b> 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				
	<b>S9.03</b> 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	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS	OSPAR QSR 2023 INDICATORS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE	OSPAR QSR 2023 ASSESSMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SDG OBJECTIVE
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	S10.01 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; SDG target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; SDG target 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations		OSPAR assessments: <a href="#">Ocean acidification</a> ; <a href="#">Climate Change</a>
	S10.02 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				
	S10.03 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	S11.01 By 2025 OSPAR will develop a coordinated management approach to strengthening ecosystem resilience, including to the consequences of climate change and ocean acidification	SDG target 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries			OSPAR assessments: <a href="#">Ocean acidification</a> ; <a href="#">Climate Change</a>
	S11.02 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				
	S11.03 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	SDG target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning			
	S11.04 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				





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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	<b>S12.01</b> 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	<b>SDG target 13.1</b> Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries		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 Strategy	OSPAR assessments: <a href="#">Ocean acidification</a> ; <a href="#">Climate Change</a>
	<b>S12.02</b> 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				
	<b>S12.03</b> By 2024 OSPAR will review the results of monitoring that is undertaken in relation to carbon dioxide storage to assess whether the monitoring techniques deployed are adequate to demonstrate that carbon dioxide streams are retained permanently in the storage complex. By 2026 OSPAR will evaluate the effectiveness of OSPAR measures to ensure that carbon dioxide streams are retained permanently in the storage complex and will not lead to any significant adverse consequences for the marine environment, human health and other legitimate uses of the maritime area				
	<b>S12.04</b> By 2023 OSPAR will develop common principles and by 2024 develop guidance to promote and facilitate sustainable development and scaling up of offshore renewable energy in a way that cumulative environmental impacts are minimised	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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	<b>14.2.1</b> Number of countries using ecosystem-based approaches to managing marine areas		



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Cross cutting issues	<b>SX.O1</b> 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 sub-regions				
	<b>SX.O2</b> By 2024 OSPAR will initiate discussions on the development of a practical approach for regional-scale ecosystem-based management, including through the ‘ <i>Collective Arrangement</i> ’ 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	<b>SDG target 14.2</b> 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; <b>SDG 17.14</b> Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development	<b>14.2.1</b> 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 Strategy	



“ The marine environment does not recognise national boundaries. It is therefore essential that countries work together to help deliver a more sustainable future for all in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

Ane-Marie Løvendahl Eskildsen  
Chair of the OSPAR Commission







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OSPAR Publication 987/2023

Our vision is a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.

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