

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic

Meeting of the OSPAR Commission

Ostend: 22–26 June 2015

Terms of Reference for ICG-Economic and Social Analysis (ICG-ESA), 2015/2016

Background

1. A main strategic direction given in the OSPAR thematic strategy on biological diversity and ecosystems adopted in Bergen 2010 was the further development and implementation of tools such as marine spatial planning, impact assessment and socio-economic assessment, in order to achieve the reduction in pressures which are adversely affecting the marine environment, and the sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services.
2. For those OSPAR Contracting Parties that are EU Member States the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) includes an obligation to carry out an economic and social analysis of the use of their marine waters and the cost of degradation as an integral part of their initial assessments (Article 8, 1c). In addition, they need to ensure that measures that need to be taken in order to achieve or maintain good environmental status are cost-effective and technically feasible, and these Contracting Parties have to carry out impact assessments, including cost-benefit analyses, prior to the introduction of any new measure (art 13.3). The OSPAR QSR 2010 did not include socio-economic assessment.
3. A review of socio-economic data commissioned by EIHA¹ (the “strategic support study”) found that while the OSPAR regional overview² assembled a considerable amount of information and conducted a detailed analysis of the availability and comparability of national data, there were some significant limitations in terms of comparability of methods and data-years. Gaps from unavailable data also restricted its usefulness as a basis for analysis of potential MSFD implementation options.
4. An OSPAR workshop³ organised by EIHA in November 2013 identified opportunities to improve the reporting and coordination of socio-economic data and to support policy development where there was a likelihood of new measures being adopted or a need to make a global analysis of costs and benefits.
5. COG (1) 2015 supported the re-establishment of ICG-ESA to ensure data gathered for the next EU MSFD initial assessment on the economic use of the marine environment was as coordinated as practicable and would therefore contribute to a section to be drafted for the Intermediate Assessment 2017. Since economic and social analysis would need to support the work of several committees including EIHA and BDC, CoG agreed that ICG-ESA should report directly to CoG.

Participants

¹ Strategic Support for the OSPAR Regional Economic and Social Analysis, (OSPAR, 2013; OSPAR Publication 611)

² Overview of OSPAR Regional Economic and Social Analysis Data, (OSPAR 2013; OSPAR Publication 622)

³ OSPAR workshop on Cooperation on Economic and Social Analysis for MSFD implementation (document EIHA 14/6/1)

6 The group will be co-convened by Ms Marilena Pollicino (UK) and Mr Rob van der Veeren (NL) and in accordance with OSPAR Rules of Procedure, all other Contracting Parties and Observers will be invited to participate.

7. The ICG will consist of a network of experts from Contracting Parties, including social scientists (experts and scientists working in the disciplines of economics and environmental economics, also sociology and social-behaviour studies) or experts responsible for economic and social analysis in support of MSFD implementation (and other relevant activities linked to the work of the OSPAR Convention).

Objectives and Scope of work

8. The ICG ESA will provide a platform for national experts to work on questions that need to be addressed at the scale of the North-East Atlantic and its sub-regions. Economic and social analysis of the ICG ESA should not replicate EU level activity and should focus on specific needs. These include ensuring data gathered for the next EU MSFD initial assessment on the economic use of the marine environment is as coordinated as practicable and can contribute to the Intermediate Assessment 2017 and assessing measures in OSPAR, such as regional action plans. The ICG will provide an efficient means to respond to requests for relevant advice from OSPAR Committees or their subsidiary bodies.

9. Specific areas of work, taking into account the work of the EU Working Group on Economic and Social Analysis, will include:

- a. where it is cost-effective and efficient to do so, improving the regional consistency and comparability of relevant social and economic data used for the economic analysis of the use of the marine environment, as part of the update of the Initial Assessment, such as which sectors do we want to describe, what economic indicators, for which years and at what regional scale/boundaries? The conclusions and recommendations of the strategic support study should also be taken into account;
- b. where appropriate share analysis, technical advice and assessment in the development of OSPAR measures;
- c. exchange and collection of available socio-economic information (to support cost benefit analyses when required) on issues of priority importance as agreed at EIHA, in particular litter, noise, marine protected areas and seafloor integrity.

Working procedures

10. ICG-ESA will work primarily by correspondence, and if possible and practicable have back-to-back meetings with the WG ESA (depending on the degree of overlap of experts).

11. ICG-ESA will work in close coordination with ICG-MSFD and the OSPAR committees and report to CoG. It will also coordinate its work with other relevant Regional Seas Conventions and the EU Working Group on Economic and Social Analysis