



OSPAR Annual Report 2020-21

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Welcome to our annual report 2020-21

From our Executive Secretary
Dominic Pattinson

Welcome to this year's annual report which covers the period from 1 July 2020 to 1 October 2021. The report highlights the activities of our Contracting Parties in protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic.

It has been a busy year. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to have an impact on how we worked and like a lot of people we have had to adapt to working online. This has been challenging at times and while virtual meetings have many benefits, for some issues a face-to-face meeting is more effective. It was for this reason that, for a second time, the OSPAR Commission and Ministerial meetings were postponed, finally taking place from 27 September to 1 October 2021. As you will see later in this report, I am delighted, and relieved, that those meetings went ahead in Cascais, Portugal and were a great success. On a personal note, it was my first physical meeting since joining the OSPAR Secretariat in June 2020 and it was a pleasure to finally meet in person colleagues who for the last 14 months I had only seen on screen.

In terms of activity this year, much of our work focused on securing agreement on the deliverables for the Ministerial meeting. In addition, work on OSPAR's flagship product, the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023 has also been ramping up, with experts from across our Contracting Parties working on the assessments that will feed into the report.

This year saw the departure of Jo Foden who, after over 6 years of exemplary support to our Contracting Parties, has moved on to a new role with the United Nations Environment Programme to support them with their next QSR. We also welcomed Alejandro Iglesias Campos, who took over from Jo, to look after our Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee and Julien Favier as the project coordinator for the QSR 2023.

I hope you enjoy reading this report.



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From our Chair Richard Cronin

2020 to 2021 was an important year for OSPAR. We held our first Ministerial meeting for over 10 years at which we agreed a new and ambitious [North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy \(NEAES\) 2030](#) that will guide OSPAR's work until the end of the decade.

As made clear in the NEAES 2030 and the [Cascais Declaration](#), adopted by the OSPAR Ministers and the Commissioner representing the European Union at the meeting on 1 October, the ocean is in crisis. The objectives in the new Strategy will contribute to address the triple threat of biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change and work towards the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

As Chair of the OSPAR Commission, it was a privilege and honour to oversee the agreement of the new Strategy. There were times during the year when it looked as though agreement on some of the deliverables would not be possible. However, I am pleased to say that through the hard work, commitment and determination of the Contracting Parties to find high ambition, consensus-based solutions, OSPAR agreed a series of measures that demonstrate its commitment to protecting and conserving the North-East Atlantic. The challenge now is to ensure that, working together, we implement the Strategy in full.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the two OSPAR vice-Chairs, John Clorley (United Kingdom) and Ane-Marie Løvendahl Eskildsen (Kingdom of Denmark) for their support and advice. John left to take up a new role in February and I am pleased to welcome Jorge Ureta Maeso (Spain) as our new vice-Chair.



Left to Right: Executive Secretary, Dominic Pattinson; OSPAR Vice-Chair, Ane-Marie Løvendahl Eskildsen (Denmark); OSPAR Chair, Richard Cronin (Ireland); OSPAR Vice-Chair, Jorge Ureta (Spain)

Ministerial Meeting of the OSPAR Commission

The OSPAR Ministerial meeting took place in Cascais, Portugal, on 1 October 2021. It was the first OSPAR Ministerial meeting since 2010 and was kindly hosted by the Government of Portugal, supported by the municipality of Cascais, in the beautiful Palácio da Cidadela.

The Ministers of the 15 OSPAR countries and the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries of the European Union came together in person and virtually to recommit, through the adoption of the Cascais Declaration, to meeting their obligations under the OSPAR Convention. The Declaration reaffirms that the Contracting Parties are stronger when they work together and that they will lead by example and intensify their efforts to protect, conserve and restore the North-East Atlantic.

As well as the Declaration a series of concrete measures were adopted at the meeting which will contribute to delivery of OSPAR's vision of a clean, healthy, biologically diverse North-East Atlantic which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to the effects of climate change and ocean acidification.

The key operational deliverable is OSPAR's new North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 which sets out how OSPAR's 16 Contracting Parties will implement the OSPAR Convention for the next decade. It is based around four themes: clean seas; biologically diverse seas; productive and sustainably used seas; and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. The strategic objectives set out OSPAR's overarching goals 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.



The operational objectives set time bound qualitative and quantitative targets to support achievement of the strategic objectives, including:

reducing single-use plastic items and maritime-related plastic items on beaches by 50% by 2025 and 75% by 2030; and

expanding the network of OSPAR Marine Protected Areas (MPA) and other effective conservation measures to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR Maritime Area by 2030.

The Strategy also emphasises the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring the effective protection and sustainable use of the seas and that OSPAR will continue to play a leading role in addressing global ocean issues. In support of this, we signed new Memoranda of Understanding with the Bonn Agreement and the Secretariat of the Cartagena Convention.

The Ministerial deliverables are highlighted throughout the report.

Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 – tackling biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change

Why is this important?

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 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 United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

What is OSPAR doing?

The Strategy sets out OSPAR's vision, strategic and operational objectives. It is based around four themes: clean seas; biologically diverse seas; productive and sustainably used seas; and seas resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. The strategic objectives set out OSPAR's overarching goals 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. The operational objectives set qualitative and quantitative targets to support achievement of the strategic objectives.

The Strategy also emphasises the importance of regional cooperation in ensuring the effective protection and sustainable use of the seas and that OSPAR will continue to play a leading role in addressing global ocean issues.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

The implementation of the 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.



Ministerial Deliverable: The Cascais Declaration

Why is this important?

The Ministerial Declaration is the key political outcome from the OSPAR Ministerial meeting 2021. It aims to reflect the collective ambition of the OSPAR Contracting Parties to recommit to their obligations under the OSPAR Convention to protect, conserve, and use sustainably the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, and to address the challenges facing the ocean. It signals the OSPAR Ministers' and the EU Commissioner's agreement to adopt, implement and resource the delivery of the new OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030.

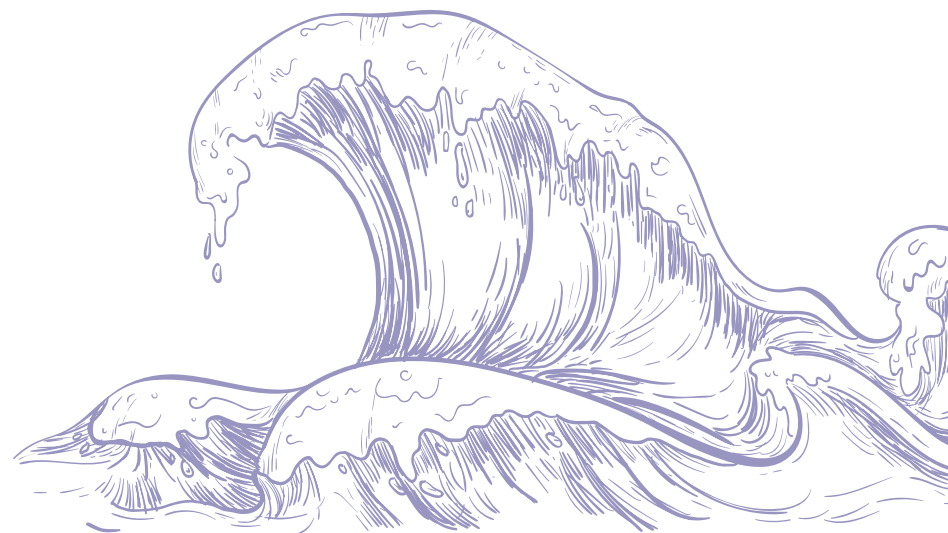
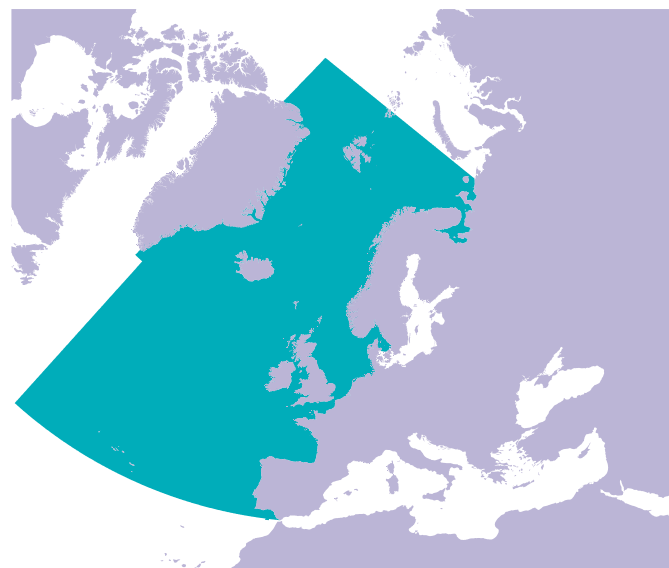
What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR Contracting Parties are demonstrating their continued, shared commitment to the international rules-based order and multilateral regional cooperation in the protection and sustainable use of the North-East Atlantic. The Declaration reaffirms that the Contracting Parties are stronger when they work together and commits them to inclusive, transparent consensus-based decision-making.

“The Declaration reaffirms that the Contracting Parties are stronger when they work together and commits them to inclusive, transparent consensus-based decision-making.”

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

The NEAES 2030 sets out a series of ambitious new objectives to address the challenges facing the ocean. Delivery of the NEAES will help to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, prevent and eliminate pollution, and address the effects of climate change and ocean acidification on the marine environment.



“ The NEAES 2030 sets out a series of ambitious new objectives to address the challenges facing the ocean. ”



Biological Diversity and Ecosystems

[OSPAR's Biological Diversity & Ecosystems Committee \(BDC\) met online from 12-16 April.](#)

Status assessments of OSPAR Listed species and habitats are a new type of assessment product in OSPAR that BDC has been delivering over the past two meeting cycles. The features on the OSPAR list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats have been identified as requiring priority conservation action. Assessing the status of the features on a regular basis, including assessing whether the threats and pressures affecting the species have changed, provides important information to inform how best to take further protective actions. In 2021, BDC completed status assessments of 2 bird species and 11 species of sharks, skates and rays. Most of these species continue to display declining distribution and abundance, however there were some signs of improvement in, for example, the status of spotted ray. Decreasing levels of threat affecting the species was also shown and may allow for the recovery of species over time.

BDC made good progress in the development of Common Indicators working to extend the spatial coverage to include additional OSPAR Regions, and improving the assessment methodology for the indicators, including the development of thresholds. The meeting cycle also saw an intensive period of data collection for the QSR 2023 ensuring a solid scientific basis for Common Indicator assessments in the coming meeting cycle.

In 2021 BDC welcomed two new MPAs nominated to the OSPAR network. The network now comprises 552 MPAs with a total surface area of 874 127 km² or 6.5 % of the OSPAR Maritime Area. BDC will continue developing assessment methods and management approaches for the MPA network.

BDC thanked Jeroen Vis of the Netherlands for his dedication to the work of the Committee as Chair since 2017. His commitment and enthusiasm to protecting the biodiversity of the North-East Atlantic has been an inspiration. The Committee elected Nina Schröder from Germany to take over the role of Chair for the coming two-year period.



Photo credit: Outgoing Chair of BDC: Jeroen Vis (Netherlands)

Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR extends protection for seabirds

Why is this important?

Worrying declines in seabird numbers shown in OSPAR's 2017 Intermediate Assessment were stark enough for OSPAR to conclude that "seabirds are in trouble". Declines were detected in many species and vulnerabilities shown in all life stages. Whilst many seabird nesting sites are protected, there is a protection gap when it comes to the feeding and foraging grounds at sea.

The North Atlantic Current is a transition zone where large oceanic gyres meet, creating currents that bring nutrients from deep waters. This area also receives influence from the Arctic Ocean, mixing in very cold, fresh, nutrient rich water. Biodiversity is high in such transitional boundary areas, and this Site is an important foraging ground for the OSPAR listed species Black-legged kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*), Thick-billed murre (*Uria lomvia*) and Audubon's shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri baroli*). These species breed throughout the OSPAR Maritime Area, from the coastlines of Greenland in the north to those of the Azores in the south. The Site also provides a vital foraging ground for numerous other seabird species and is known to be frequented by other migratory species such as whales.



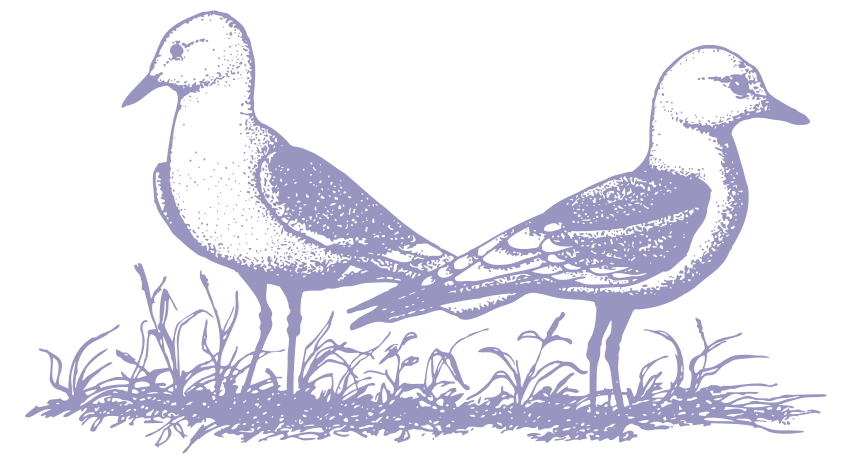
What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a legally binding Decision to establish the 'North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin Marine Protected Area' (NACES MPA) and management actions for the Site. The Site will protect this vitally important area for seabirds covering 595 196 km².

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

The Site is an important feeding and foraging area and is used both by seabirds breeding on the coasts of the North-East Atlantic, and by those migrating across the globe or nesting in other parts of the world. The background document presents many examples of seabirds that have been tracked and found to fly across the ocean to reach this Site. Establishing this MPA will secure a large and important site in the area beyond national jurisdiction for seabirds.

By establishing this Marine Protected Area OSPAR achieves the United Nations Convention for Biodiversity 2020 Aichi target of designating 10% of marine waters as MPAs.



Ministerial Deliverable: Kelp forest: A carbon-sequestering habitat in decline

Why is this important?

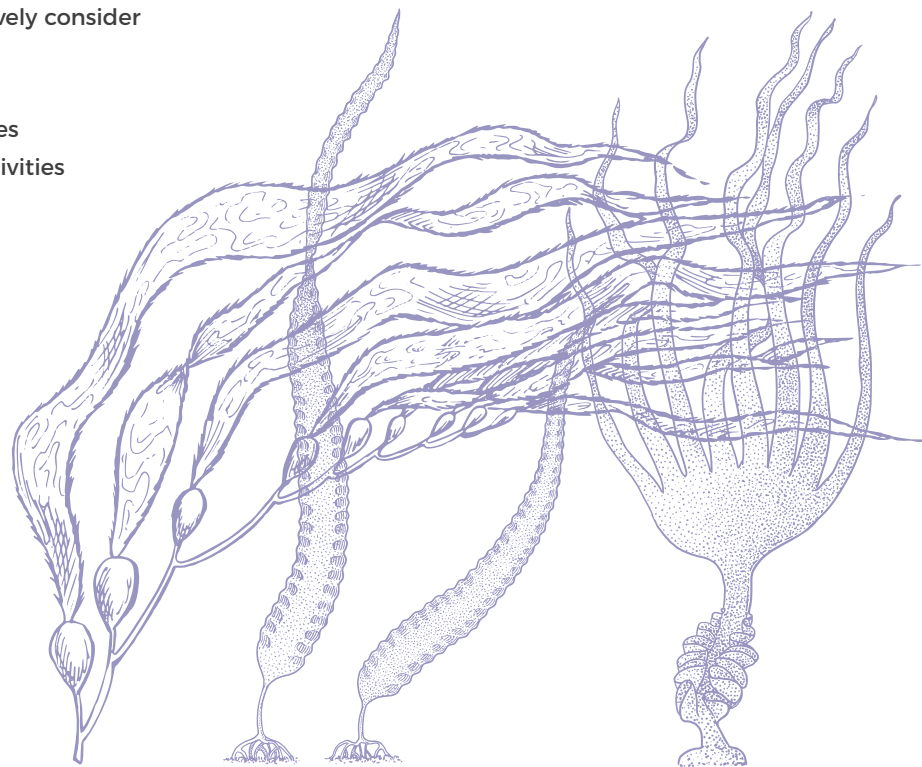
Kelp forests are an important habitat for a range of marine species and they play an important role in the sequestration of atmospheric carbon. Drastic losses of kelp forest habitat have already occurred in the southern part of the OSPAR Maritime Area with significant declines at several locations elsewhere. Kelp forests grow in coastal waters and are made up of several different species of kelp, some of which have shown a drastic decline and are known to be affected by destructive fishing practices and coastal pollution. Climate change is foreseen to add to the multiple pressures already impacting kelp forests.

What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new Recommendation to strengthen the protection of kelp forest habitat. The new measure will encourage relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to take action to protect kelp forests and to collectively consider improving regional habitat maps of kelp forests, and promoting regional management approaches to minimise adverse effects from human activities and climate change on kelp forest habitats.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Kelp forests have the capacity to sequester carbon, filter and bind nutrient run-off and provide important habitats for many species. Projections of climate change show a contraction of the southern distributional limits of kelp forest forming species. Protecting kelp forest and taking coordinated regional action to reduce pressures from human activities will increase the resilience of this important habitat. Healthy kelp forests will help maintain a healthy North-East Atlantic ecosystem and contribute to climate change mitigation.



Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR aims for zero pellet loss across the plastic supply chain

Why is this important?

Litter damages the marine environment through ingestion of plastic particles, entanglement with lost fishing gear and other debris, smothering of benthic habitats, and transport of non-native species. Plastics can form up to 95% of the marine litter that accumulates on shorelines, the sea surface, and the seafloor.

Plastic pellets, flakes and powders are the raw material for all plastic products. Pellet spills can occur during all stages of the production chain, including at production sites and processing plants, and during pellet loading and transport. The mismanagement of accidental or systematic spills during routine operations is one of the reasons why pellets can be found in the environment, particularly in rivers, the ocean and on beaches.

Plastic pellets are known to be ingested by a range of animals, to cause harm to wild fauna and to contaminate both land and marine ecosystems.

What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a Recommendation to reduce the loss of plastic pellets into the marine environment by promoting the timely development and implementation of effective and consistent pellet loss prevention standards and certification schemes for the entire plastic supply chain.

The Recommendation specifies minimum requirements which standards and certification schemes should contain. Contracting Parties are encouraged to work towards the development and the implementation of a harmonised accreditation framework within the OSPAR Maritime Area.

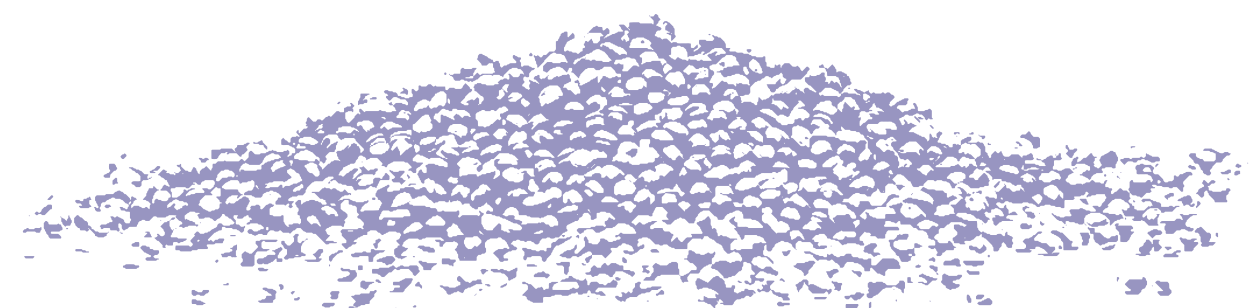
The Recommendation is supported by a set of guidelines for Contracting Parties and industry.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

OSPAR's strategic aim (North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030) is to 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.

This Recommendation will make a significant contribution by tackling pellet loss across the plastic supply chain.

Policy measures should focus on prevention of spills at source. Identifying and instituting preventive measures to reduce the risk of pellet leakage throughout the supply chain should be prioritised before remedial measures to clean up pellets already in the environment.



Ministerial Deliverable: Haploops habitat – critical seafloor habitats

Why is this important?

Healthy and productive muddy seafloor habitats are an essential part of a healthy marine environment. Haploops species are small crustacean amphipods. In areas where they occur in high numbers, the small tubes they build as their homes can create a special structure in the mud sediment that creates a vital habitat for other species which in turn provide an important food source for demersal fish. These Haploops habitats are very sensitive to disturbance from bottom trawling and periodic anoxia. The area covered by this habitat has shrunk substantially from its historical distribution.

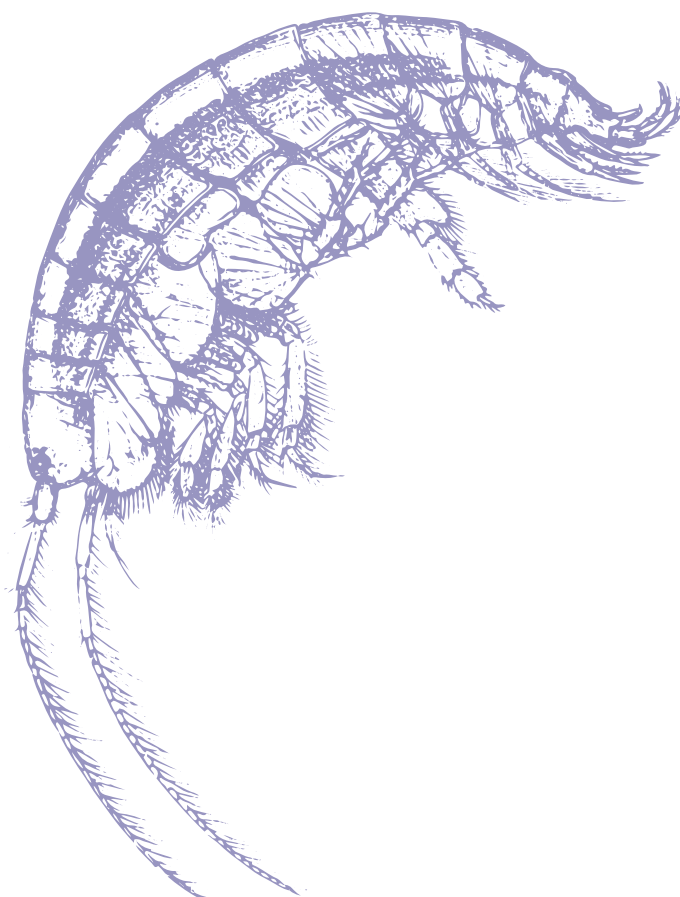
What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new Recommendation to strengthen the protection of Haploops habitat. The new measure will encourage relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to put in place measures to improve information on where Haploops habitats occur, protect Haploops habitat and work collaboratively with HELCOM to ensure coherent management and research of this habitat.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Protecting the Haploops habitat will ensure that beneficial functions for the coastal ecosystems remain intact. The dense mats of Haploops tubes in muddy seafloor sediment provide structure to the overall seascape and filtering, feeding grounds for fish such as cod and flatfish, and increase the primary production of the seafloor community.

“This measure will encourage relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to put in place measures to improve information on where Haploops habitats occur, protect Haploops habitat and work collaboratively with HELCOM to ensure coherent management and research of this habitat.”



Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR on track to adopt new Regional Action Plan on marine litter by 2022

Why is this important?

Marine litter has become one of the defining environmental issues facing modern society. It is not only an aesthetic problem but incurs socioeconomic costs, threatens human health and safety, and impacts on marine organisms.

OSPAR's Regional Action Plan (RAP) on marine litter was adopted by the OSPAR Commission in 2014 and ran until 2021. It comprised 32 collective actions and 23 national actions aimed at addressing both land-based and sea-based sources and pathways of marine litter, as well as education, outreach, and removal activities.

Actions taken under the RAP include the Recommendation on the reduction of plastic pellet loss into the marine environment submitted to OSPAR 2021.

What is OSPAR doing?

The North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 commits OSPAR to developing and agreeing an updated RAP by 2022, to address new and emerging issues and to reduce the impacts of those items causing most harm to the marine environment.

To provide a solid foundation for that work, OSPAR carried out an extensive evaluation of the impacts and effectiveness of the present RAP. The evaluation considered evidence from many sources, including the OSPAR indicator assessments, Contracting Party reporting, and stakeholder and public attitude surveys.

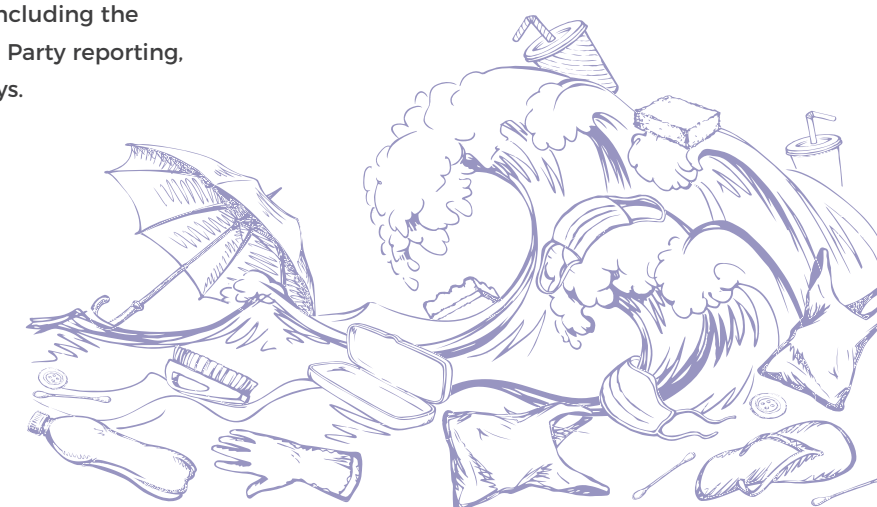
The evaluation report presents conclusions on the impact of the RAP and recommendations for the next phase. Many of these recommendations have already been taken up in the initial drafting of the new RAP.

As of June 2021, OSPAR Contracting Parties had completed 25 out of the 32 collective actions from the current RAP; 3 were still in progress; and 4 had been set aside. Recent OSPAR indicator assessments show some signs of reductions in marine litter levels but there is still a long way to go.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

OSPAR's strategic objective is to 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.

The evaluation of the current RAP will help to ensure that the next phase of work under the NEAES 2030 will be targeted on those issues where OSPAR can most add value.



Ministerial Deliverable: Houting – a migratory fish vulnerable to weirs

Why is this important?

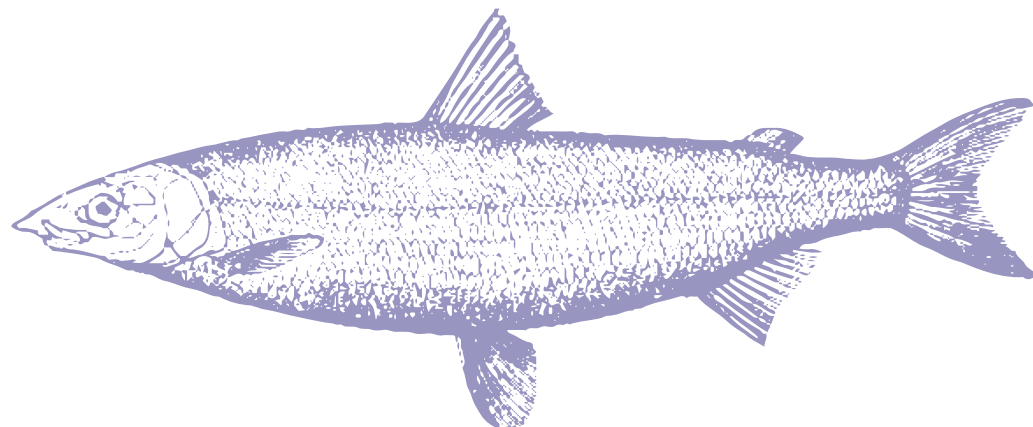
Houting (*Coregonus oxyrinchus*) are vulnerable to habitat modifications and obstruction by weirs and barrages. Only rivers with free passage can be used for spawning. If the Houting cannot reach suitable spawning grounds and nursery areas far enough away from the sea, the newly hatched larvae risk being swept into saline ocean waters where they cannot survive. The number of Houting in the Wadden Sea has declined significantly and the area in which they occur has shrunk. There is an urgent need to improve habitat quality of rivers to ensure this fish continues to migrate along the coasts of the North Sea.

What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new measure to strengthen the protection of the Wadden Sea population of Houting. The new measure encourages relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to take action to protect the Houting throughout all its life stages, to maintain silt-free spawning gravels in rivers that have rich underwater vegetation and to improve free passage of the migratory fish. Collectively OSPAR will consider undertaking tracking studies to determine migration patterns of Houting.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Protection of the Houting will help to ensure that the ecosystem of the North-East Atlantic remains intact. Fish that migrate between freshwater spawning grounds and the salty ocean create a vital link between these ecosystems. This OSPAR measure will contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity.



Ministerial Deliverable: Azorean barnacle – an endemic keystone species

Why is this important?

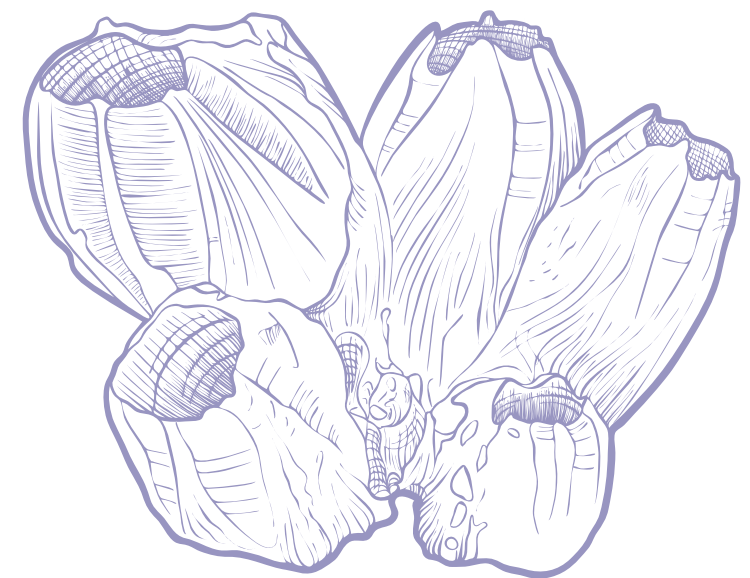
The Macaronesia region is characterised by open ocean several kilometres deep and a few isolated islands. The rocky shores of these islands are home to species found nowhere else in the world, such as the Azorean barnacle (*Megabalanus azoricus*). The Azorean barnacle is a keystone species for these rocky shore communities. Without it, other species would also disappear. The Azorean barnacle population has been decreasing rapidly and is now threatened with extinction.

What is OSPAR doing?

OSPAR is adopting a new Recommendation to strengthen the protection of the Azorean barnacle. The new measure encourages the relevant OSPAR Contracting Parties to take action to protect the Azorean barnacle and OSPAR to take collective action to increase awareness of the species and disseminate information about the threats it faces. For example, tourists visiting the Azores may not be aware that this species, which is often collected for food, is threatened.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Protection of the Azorean barnacle will help to ensure that the very special rocky shore communities of the Azores in Macaronesia remain functional. This will contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity.



“This measure encourages OSPAR to take collective action to increase awareness of the species and disseminate information about the threats it faces. For example, tourists visiting the Azores may not be aware that this species, which is often collected for food, is threatened.”



“ Significant strides have been made in recent years in improving our understanding of the pressures and impacts from underwater noise. ”

Environmental Impacts of Human Activities

OSPAR's Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA) met online on 15-18 March 2021.

As the new NEAES has begun to take shape, EIHA has started to identify more specific tasks to support its implementation. New tasks were defined for marine litter, shipping, subsea cables, deep seabed mining, underwater noise, renewables and cumulative effects assessment. Further tasks will be added during the next year.

On preparations for the QSR 2023, EIHA agreed an indicator assessment on plastics ingested by fulmars and a new Common Indicator on the risk of impact from impulsive noise. The Committee also produced a series of nine feeder reports on human activities affecting the marine environment, including activities such as fisheries, aquaculture, shipping and renewables. Key information from these reports will be integrated into a single QSR human activities thematic assessment.



Chair of EIHA: John Mouat (United Kingdom)

EIHA made good progress in 2021 towards the completion of OSPAR's first Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP-ML). This included agreement to publish reports on fees and sanctions, waste management and plastic bags; agreement of guidelines on plastic pellets; and a set of action briefing notes and technical reports. As of June 2021, 25 out of the original 32 collective actions are considered complete. EIHA has also made good progress with the initial development of the second RAP-ML and has launched a consultation process to collect ideas on the content of the next RAP-ML.

Significant strides have been made in recent years in improving our understanding of the pressures and impacts from underwater noise. Apart from the development of indicators for impulsive noise, EIHA now has the capability to quantify and assess the pressure coming from continuous or ambient underwater noise, most of which is due to shipping, thanks in particular to the EU-funded Jomopans and JONAS projects. First results for the North Sea were examined by EIHA and a first QSR indicator assessment is due to be finalised shortly.

Other important developments from EIHA have been the publication of a technical background paper on deep seabed mining (DSM), agreement to establish an Intersessional Correspondence Group (ICG) on offshore renewables in response to the projected major increase in development and the NEAES objective to ensure that such development is achieved sustainably and does not harm the marine environment. EIHA also reviewed a collation of information on discharges of hazardous substances to the marine environment from open circuit flue gas scrubbers on ships in the OSPAR area which shows a wide disparity in national regulations and a lack of data both on the volume of EGCS discharges and on the area where the discharges take place. OSPAR has agreed to send information on this work for consideration by the International Maritime Organization.

Finally, EIHA elected Jonas Pålsson (Sweden) and Ingunn Lindeman (Norway) to be the new Vice-Chairs of EIHA and thanked Hanne-Grete Nilsen (Norway) who stood down.

Deep Seabed Mining

OSPAR assesses and manages a wide range of human activities, including the extraction of non-living resources, in particular through its Offshore Industry Committee (OIC) and EIHA.

In 2019 the OSPAR Commission agreed to establish a task group on deep sea mining in order, inter alia, to exchange information and positions related to deep seabed mining and help Contracting Parties ensure that obligations under the OSPAR Convention are upheld.

Within the OSPAR Maritime Area several areas have been identified that could become the target of future mineral exploration/exploitation interests (Figure 1).

Under the current Subsea Minerals Act, the Norwegian Government last year initiated an opening process for offshore mineral activity, including an impact study^{1,2,3}. A decision is expected to be made in the beginning of 2023 – at the earliest, possible license applications could be submitted the same year. A Government data acquisition programme has been in place since 2018 (geological and geophysical data).

No other OSPAR Contracting Parties have reported any current or planned prospecting, exploration or exploitation of deep seabed minerals in the OSPAR Maritime Area.

In 2021 OSPAR published a technical report, prepared by the task group and agreed through the EIHA Committee, containing the most current and up-to-date scientific, technological and high-level governance information on deep seabed mining of relevance and interest to the OSPAR Contracting Parties. The report covers global demand for minerals, governance of seabed mining, resources and activity within the OSPAR Maritime Area, mining techniques and technology, environmental effects, environmental management, including mitigation, restoration and monitoring, and knowledge gaps.



The technical report concludes that OSPAR will need to consider how the knowledge gaps and uncertainties identified should be addressed, including consideration of what actions are necessary to ensure that the general obligations and specific measures and approaches agreed under the Convention and its Annexes are upheld.

A second report in this series will provide an overview of which OSPAR principles, measures and approaches are applicable/relevant to deep seabed mining.

1. Compilation and layout: Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, Stavanger, Norway

2. Backdrop bathymetry: <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/metadata/landing-page/bin/iso?id=gov.noaa.nodc:0150537>

3. Resource information: <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/future-ocean-resources/>

4. Resource information: Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, Stavanger, Norway

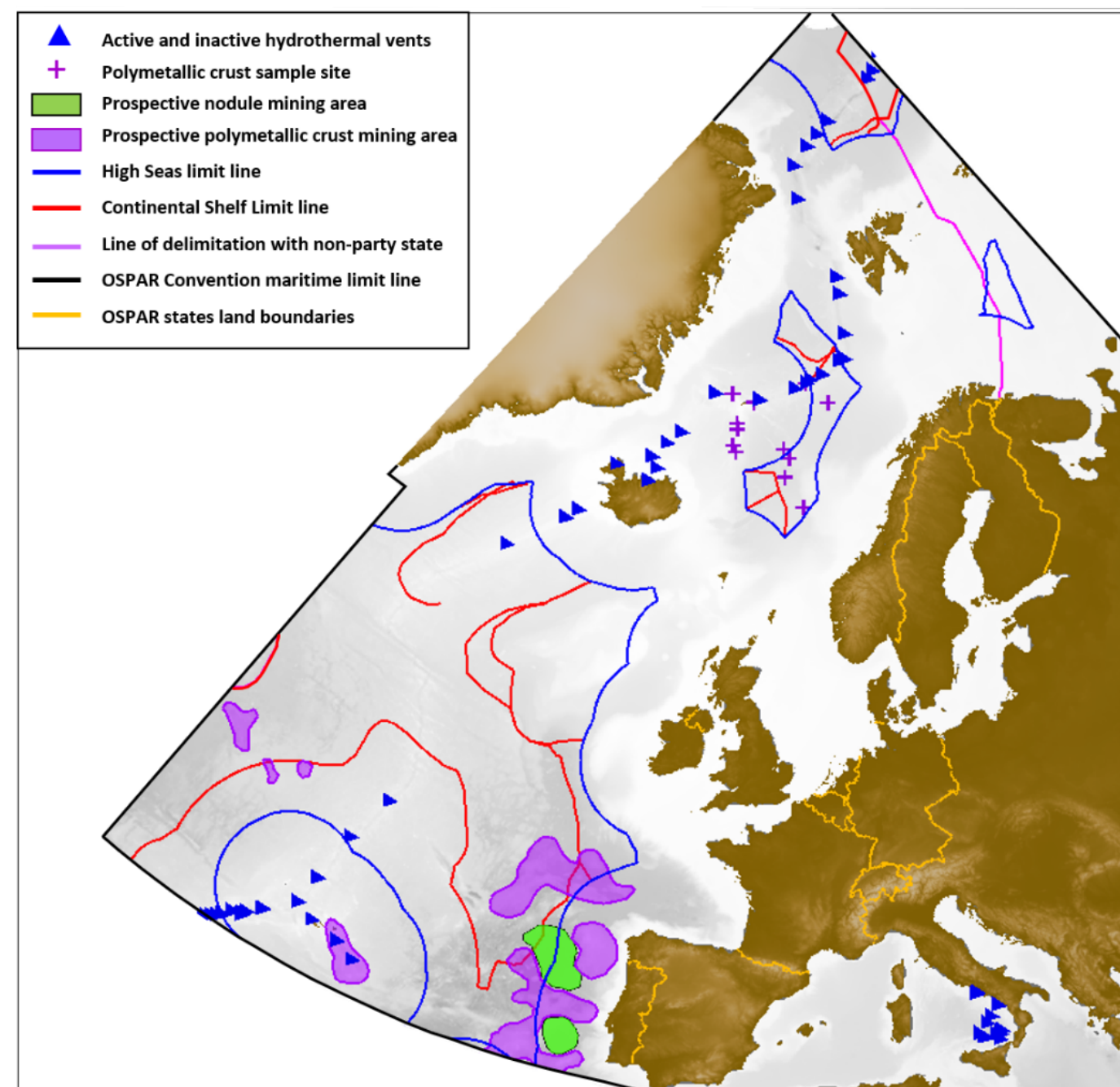


Figure 1. Compilation of confirmed and potential metallic deep sea mineral deposits within the OSPAR area¹. Ocean areas are cut along the limits of the OSPAR Maritime Area (black lines). The limit of the High Seas (blue lines) is the boundary between the Area and the combined Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of all coastal States within and adjacent to the OSPAR Maritime Area. The red lines indicate coastal States' outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles as submitted to, or recommended by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS). Data credits; bathymetric data are SRTM15_PLUS extracted from NOAA²; resource data and information are extracted from the Royal Society³ and the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate⁴.

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication

OSPAR's [Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee \(HASEC\)](#) met from 5-7 October 2020 and 22-25 March 2021, these meetings focused on the progress of work on the assessments of hazardous substances identified for priority action and contributions to the QSR 2023.

HASEC has developed a roadmap to formalise the process towards the development of the OSPAR list of Chemicals for Priority Action (LCPA) and the list of Substances of Possible Concern (LSPC); the Committee continues to review its actions in an ongoing process and has established an ICG on Actions and Recommendations (ICG-MaRE).

The Working Group on Inputs to the Marine Environment (INPUT) highlighted the need for timely and accurate riverine input data, including information on Contracting Parties' flows, for the QSR indicators and thematic assessments. A working group has been established to draft the indicators and thematic assessment reports for the QSR 2023, including the treatment and use of sewage sludge, environmental practices for the reduction of inputs to the environment of pesticides from agricultural use or the in-water cleaning for vessels.

In this context, further options for collaboration with monitoring and assessment programmes of neighbouring regional seas conventions have been strengthened. The growing cooperation with HELCOM benefits the exchange of best practices between both regions and helps OSPAR to channel efforts into the modernisation of the Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) database by ensuring its effectiveness and continuity in the future.

HASEC continues to work with ICES on the harmonisation of the Common Procedure among Contracting Parties, through the semi-automated eutrophication and hazardous substance assessment tools: the Common Procedure Eutrophication Assessment Tool (COMPEAT) and the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Assessment Tool (OHAT).

The Working Group on Monitoring and on Trends and Effects of Substances in the Marine Environment (MIME) has established a contact group between experts supported by the AMAP, HELCOM, ICES and OSPAR Secretariats to explore ways to operationalise the data and assessment processes, including the coding and development of the three linked Hazardous Assessment Tools hosted by ICES for the Arctic, the Baltic Sea and the North-East Atlantic.

The meetings were chaired by Philip Axe (Sweden) who will continue as Chair until 2022. HASEC thanked Deputy Secretary Jo Foden for her support and dedication to the work of the Committee over the past six years.



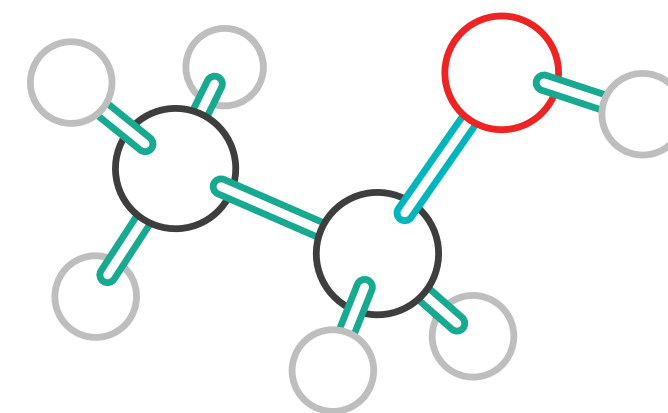
Chair of HASEC: Philip Axe (Sweden)

Offshore Industry

OSPAR's [Offshore Industry Committee \(OIC\)](#) met online from 9-11 March 2021.

On produced water, OIC amended OSPAR Agreement 2012/7 on the Guidelines in support of Recommendation 2012/5 for a Risk-based Approach to the Management of Produced Water Discharges from Offshore Installations. An ad hoc group led by the United Kingdom was established to consider the Joint Industry Project recommendations on the use of online oil in water analysers for oil in produced water discharge reporting.

On offshore chemicals, OIC reviewed the [OSPAR List of Substances/Preparations Used and Discharged Offshore which are Considered to Pose Little or No Risk to the Environment](#) (PLONOR) and agreed to remove ethanol because of its reprotoxicity potential. Discussions were held on the recommendations from ICG-REACH on harmonisation of OSPAR [Harmonised Mandatory Control System](#) (HMCS) and the REACH Regulation and no objections were raised to [EOSCA](#) and [IOGP](#) progressing with their tender proposal. A consolidated Agreement on Guidance on the Assessment of the Toxicity of Substances used and discharged offshore under OSPAR Recommendation 2017/01 (as amended) on the Harmonised Pre-Screening Scheme for offshore chemicals (OSPAR Agreement 2021-07) was adopted. Finally, OIC amended OSPAR Recommendation 2010/3 on a Harmonised Offshore Chemical Notification Format to assess the extent of the use and discharge of plastic substances contained in chemicals from offshore sources.



OIC considered carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects in the North-East Atlantic presented by Contracting Parties and the industry (IOGP); and agreed to work on reviewing existing reporting requirements on environmental monitoring from CCS projects.

On decommissioning, an update was given by the United Kingdom and IOGP on the advancement of technologies for removal of offshore installations to deal with those derogation categories listed in Annex I of Decision 98/3. During 2020-2021 a consultation process under OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations on the UK's intention to issue a derogation for leaving in-situ the footings of the Brae Bravo Steel Jacket was undertaken. A Special Consultative Meeting to discuss the objections raised by some Contracting Parties to the derogation proposal is expected to be held later in 2021.

OIC amended OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5 to Promote the Use and Implementation of Environmental Management Systems by the Offshore Industry.

OIC finalised the Assessment of impacts of discharges of oil and chemicals in produced water on the marine environment prepared by Denmark and the Assessment report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations for 2009 - 2019. Both publications will be used to prepare OIC's Overall and Thematic Assessments which feed into the QSR 2023. Additionally, OIC updated the OSPAR Inventory of [Offshore Oil and Gas Installations](#) in the OSPAR Maritime Area.

Saravanan Marappan (United Kingdom) chaired a fruitful meeting. OIC said goodbye to Kurt Machetanz (Germany), Thomas Collette (the Netherlands), Wendy Brown (IOGP), and Jo Foden (Secretariat), and thanked them for their contributions and engagement.

Radioactive Substances

OSPAR's [Radioactive Substances Committee \(RSC\)](#) met online from 9-11 February 2021.

RSC agreed that the ICG to produce and test a method for assessing "additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels are close to zero" (ICG-CTZ) will update the Agreement 2016-07 on the methodology for Environmental Assessment Criteria to include the Close to Historic Levels assessment, already agreed by RSC and used in the preparation of the 5th Periodic Evaluation.

RSC agreed that the ICG on the "modelling of additional concentrations of NORM in seawater from discharges of produced water from the offshore oil and gas sector" (ICG-MOD) will prepare a publication on modelling approaches in the near and far field to be used in the 5th Periodic Evaluation.

RSC 2021 started the 8th round reporting of OSPAR Contracting Parties on the implementation of the Best Available Technology / Best Environmental Practice on Radioactive Discharges under [OSPAR Recommendation 2018/01](#) with a presentation from Sweden.

RSC prepared the 2019 annual report and assessment on discharges from the nuclear sector and on the non-nuclear sector as well as the 2019 annual data for environmental concentrations of radionuclides in the marine environment.

RSC agreed to update the OSPAR Agreements 2013-10 and 2013-11 for the reporting of discharges of radioactive substances from the nuclear and non-nuclear sectors.

An ICG on cooperation between the RSC and OIC was established to maintain the good cooperation and progress the dialogue between the two Committees.

The 5th Periodic Evaluation and RSC thematic assessment which will feed into the QSR 2023 are being prepared by the ICG for the 5th Periodic Evaluation (5PE) which will assess discharges, environmental concentrations and the radiological impacts on man and biota in the 2012-2018 period. RSC revised the statistical analysis of discharge data and environmental concentration data and adopted an outline for the 5PE as well as a timeline for the preparation of the 5PE and the RSC thematic assessment.

The meeting was chaired by Justin Gwynn (Norway). Kins Leonard (United Kingdom) retired as Vice-Chair after many years of dedicated service and was thanked for his support and enthusiasm. Adam Stackhouse (United Kingdom) was elected Vice-Chair of RSC.

Data - New ODIMS

In accordance with the [OSPAR Rules of Procedure](#) "The OSPAR Commission is committed to making as much information as possible publicly available...". The OSPAR [Data and Information Management System](#) (ODIMS) and OSPAR [Assessment Portal](#) (OAP) are the tools used to deliver on this commitment. Maintaining a system that is robust and relevant is key and recently it was necessary to upgrade the backbone to ODIMS to the latest versions of supporting software. We also took this opportunity to carry out a number of upgrades making use of the latest software functionality. There is an improved homepage with simplified navigation, filtering by a number of different categories (from a fine scale and to individual submissions, up to coarse scale data themes) and a new user led map creation tool.

Behind the scenes there are several data management tools that will improve the Secretariat's ability to support Contracting Parties in delivering data that underpin OSPAR work.

Not all data streams are managed by the OSPAR Secretariat, so to ensure ODIMS serves as a single point of entry for OSPAR data it relies on the use of web services; these can be difficult to manage, especially with the increasing size of data and reliance on computer-to-computer communications. New tools allow the data team to see when a service is not responding and take measures to get the data back online.



International Cooperation

Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Why is this important?

As one of the leading Regional Seas Conventions, OSPAR is committed to addressing the challenges faced by the ocean. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. In 2017 the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water) 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.

What is OSPAR doing?

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

OSPAR made two voluntary commitments in 2017 focused on work to deliver SDG 14 in addition to the comprehensive scope of regular work by OSPAR which also contributes to the delivery of the objectives. In 2021 OSPAR Contracting Parties will add a further commitment to "minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels".



The new voluntary commitment commits OSPAR to:

- further develop its regional ocean acidification monitoring and assessment programmes;
- investigate the impacts on the marine environment from current and projected declines in pH; and
- collaborate with other regional organisations and scientific networks in its work on ocean acidification.

In addition, OSPAR has produced a document demonstrating how OSPAR's wider work contributes to the delivery of SDGs. The aim of the document is to highlight to others the action that OSPAR is taking to share its knowledge, data, and experiences to help build capacity around the globe.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

The health and future prosperity of the North-East Atlantic relies on good regional and global cooperation. Working closely with those that share our seas provides cost effective and efficient means of tackling transboundary issues facing the ocean.

Ministerial Deliverable: OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement: working together to protect the marine environment

Why is this important?

OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement have complementary competences and responsibilities for protecting the marine environment within the North-East Atlantic and the North Sea Area, respectively.

The Bonn Agreement for Co-operation in Dealing with Pollution of the North Sea area by Oil and Other Harmful Substances is the mechanism by which its Contracting Parties come together to combat pollution in the Greater North Sea and its approaches from maritime disasters and chronic pollution from ships and offshore installations. Prevention, preparedness, and response are the three main pillars of the Bonn Agreement Strategic Action Plan aiming to minimise as far as possible the threat of pollution from accidental and illegal pollution from ships and other maritime activities.

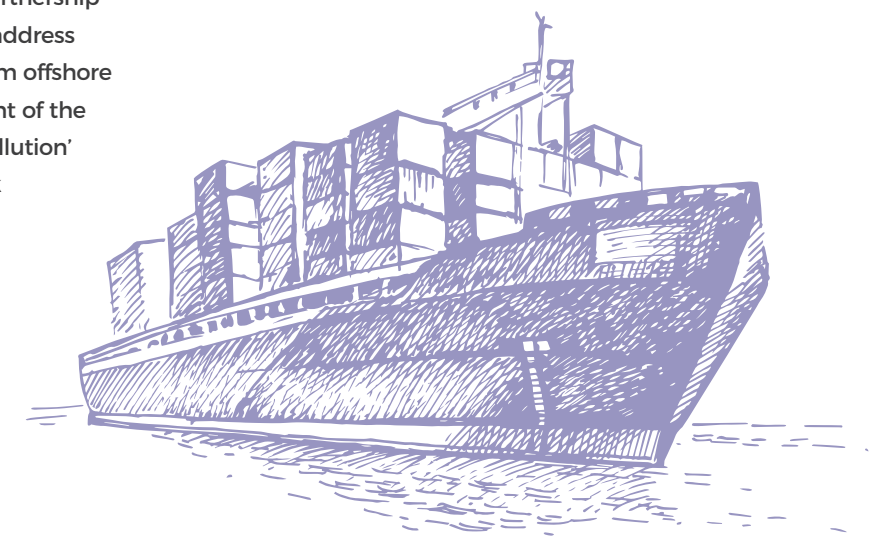
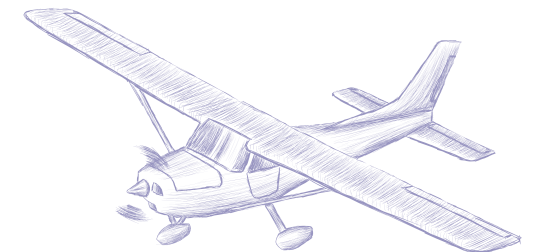
By working together, OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement can deliver better, more joined-up and cost-effective protection of the marine environment.

What is OSPAR doing?

By signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), OSPAR commits to strengthening collaboration and partnership with the Bonn Agreement. Both organisations address common areas of interest such as: pollution from offshore oil and gas activities; monitoring and assessment of the environmental impact of a 'significant acute pollution' event under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive; marine litter from shipping; enforcement, investigation, and prosecution of MARPOL maritime pollution offences; risk assessment, etc. Several OSPAR Committees as well as OSPAR's North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors work on these issues in liaison with the Bonn Agreement.

How will this benefit the North-East Atlantic?

Closer working between the two organisations will help them to meet those objectives of the OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 and the Bonn Agreement Strategic Action Plan which could benefit from mutual collaboration. Through the MoU, OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement will exchange information and share experience on common areas of interest to promote cleaner and healthier seas and conserve the marine ecosystem, specifically through the prevention of, and combatting, marine pollution incidents, threats, and risks to the marine environment.





OSPAR engagement with other international organisations

North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO)

OSPAR and [NAMMCO](#) are considering the development of a Memorandum of Understanding, with a view to improving information sharing and communication. Work is still ongoing on developing the agreement, and it has not been possible to conclude on drafting in the past meeting cycle due to the challenging circumstances and timelines regarding postponed meetings.

Sargasso Sea Commission

HOD agreed to invite the Secretariat to engage with the [Sargasso Sea Commission](#) with a view to developing a proposal for an MoU. The Secretariat has not been able to prioritise this action in the past meeting cycle but will attempt to further this work in the year 2022. It could be of particular interest to OSPAR to develop information sharing on topics related to the area beyond national jurisdiction with the Sargasso Sea Commission.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

HOD agreed to invite the Secretariat to engage with the [CBD](#) Secretariat with a view of developing a Letter of Cooperation as a priority given the importance of OSPAR engagement in delivering work of relevance towards the CBD post-2020. In communication with the CBD Secretariat, it has been agreed that such a letter could focus on how the Tasks of the OSPAR implementation plan of the NEAES 2030 could contribute to the achievement of the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework. Further concrete steps in developing a Letter of Cooperation would be timely once the NEAES 2030 has been agreed and the CBD has launched the post-2020 GBF.

The Secretariat has followed the development of the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework by participating in a number of webinars organised by the CBD over the past meeting cycle. The webinars have been focussed on various topics and have aimed at a wide range of stakeholders.

Collective arrangement

In agreement with the [North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission \(NEAFC\)](#) Secretariat, it was agreed that to be effective, meetings under the [Collective Arrangement](#) should be held as physical meetings. As a result, no meetings have taken place in the 2020/2021 meeting cycle. The collective arrangement meetings are a forum for dialogue and information exchange. Several topics have been proposed for the agenda of the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for January 2022, including further collaborative measures on the protection of deep-sea elasmobranchs and a discussion on possible shared interest in other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs).

Arctic Council

The Secretariat attended (virtually) the [Arctic Council](#) Ministerial meeting on 20 May 2021. The meeting agreed the first ever Arctic Council Strategic Plan and celebrated Iceland's successful Chairmanship and welcomed the beginning of the two-year Russian federation Chairmanship. Earlier in the year the Executive Secretary wrote to the Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials with a view to strengthening cooperation and collaboration between OSPAR and the Arctic Council. Discussions on how best to take this strengthened engagement forward will continue in the next meeting cycle.

The Arctic Council Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Radiation Expert Group (EPPR RAD EG) meeting was held on 15-16 June 2021 and Justin Gwynn, Chair of the Radioactive Substance Committee (RSC), participated giving an update on the radiation work under OSPAR to explore possible synergies between RSC and EPPR RAD EG.

The Plenary meeting of the Arctic Council Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) was held on 22-23 June 2021 and was attended by the Secretariat. The future EPPR activities and its planning were discussed in light of the recent Ministerial Declaration and new Arctic Council Strategic Plan. An update on ongoing projects was given including New Low-Sulphur Fuels and the meeting agreed to undertake new projects such as radiation capabilities and consequences analysis.

United Nations

UN General Assembly

OSPAR provided a report of its main activities as a contribution to the annual report of the Secretary-General on oceans and the law of the sea, pursuant to [United Nations General Assembly](#) resolution 75/239 of 31 December 2020, entitled “Oceans and the law of the sea”.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The Secretariat has attended online meetings and contributed to the development of [UNEP's](#) Regional Seas Strategic Directions (RSSD) 2022-2025 which aim to enhance cooperation between UNEP and the Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans to more effectively mainstream ocean policies and programmes. The official launch of the RSSD will be at a meeting planned for 19th January 2022.

European Union

The Secretariat joined the final conference of the EC commissioned study on coordinated assessments of marine species and habitats under the [Birds and Habitats Directives](#) (BHD) and the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) (MSFD). The overall objective of the study was to establish an evidence-based understanding of the current level of coordination, alignment and efficiency of the BHD and MSFD monitoring, assessment and reporting on marine species and habitats.

The final conference meeting was organised with a view of exchanging reflections on the recommendations from the meeting. Further steps would be taken based on the findings to reach the goal of assessing once and using many times.

The Secretariat attended the second meeting of the MSFD Core group on significant oil spills which was held online on 28 May 2021 organised by DG JRC. This group was established under the MSFD Expert Network on Contaminants to address the GES assessment for D8C3 and impact monitoring under D8C4. Discussions were held on minimum thresholds for reporting spills under MSFD; reporting spills under MSFD/other frameworks;

significance of the spills and substances to be covered. The meeting agreed on the next steps to draft a guidance document including further discussions on the issue of ‘significance’ and use of a reporting threshold.

The EU has funded several major projects of importance to the work of EIHA. The JOMOPANs project on ambient noise in the North Sea held its end event on 30 June but had already been informed of a one year extension. This will enable it to support the transition phase towards the establishment of a joint OSPAR monitoring programme for the North Sea. The Clean Atlantic project on marine litter held its final conference online on 15 June. Clean Atlantic products have contributed significantly to several of the OSPAR marine litter actions. In a similar vein the INDICIT II project – developing tools to monitor marine litter impacts on marine fauna - held its final meeting on 8 July. The INDICIT projects have contributed to the development of a first OSPAR indicator assessment on the ingestion of marine litter by sea turtles.

HELCOM

The OSPAR Chair and Executive Secretary continued to work with the Chair and Executive Secretary of [HELCOM](#) to strengthen collaboration and develop joint initiatives. A joint opinion piece from the Chairs and Executive Secretaries to highlight the value of the two organisations and the upcoming Ministerial Meetings has been produced.

The OSPAR/HELCOM/ICES Joint working group on seabirds have successfully completed the first 3-year work programme. The group has benefitted greatly from sharing lessons learned and developing joint common indicator assessment methodologies. In 2021 a further 3-year work programme was agreed to further improve coordination and synergies of work. A special effort under the group in 2021 will relate to developing work to protect migration corridors of seabirds.

A new OSPAR/HELCOM expert group to work collaboratively on the assessment of non-indigenous species is in the process of being established. The group would aim to develop comparable common indicator assessment methods and explore possible synergies in handling data on non-indigenous species jointly. A 3-year work programme would set out the tasks of the group.

As part of the process to develop a new Regional Action Plan on marine Litter, members of ICG-ML arranged a meeting on 1 June with HELCOM, Barcelona Convention, Black Sea Convention and the European Commission in order to compare notes on the development of new or updated action plans. It was noted that there were many areas for potential collaboration and agreement since issues are common across the regions. If collaboration is to add value, it will need to be focused and practical, ensuring that there is clear benefit to all and does not become a process that adds resource pressure. HELCOM will organize another informal online meeting towards the end of 2021.

North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)

OSPAR and [NEAFC](#) Secretariats have continued to provide updates on work of relevance to meetings of either organisations. NEAFC provided an update of work on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and their advice request to ICES on seabird bycatch at the BDC 2021 meeting.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

The Secretariat attended the seventy-sixth session of the [IMO's](#) Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 76) which was held online on 10-17 June 2021.

Barcelona Convention

Offshore Oil and Gas Group

OSPAR participated at the Third Meeting of the [Barcelona Convention Offshore Oil](#) and Gas Group (OFOG) Sub-Group on Environmental Impact which was held online on 3-4 June. Saravanan Marappan, the Chair of OIC, gave a presentation to explain how OSPAR and its Offshore Oil & Gas Industry Committee (OIC) work.

Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials

The Chair of the NSN and the Secretariat attended the Fourth Meeting of the Mediterranean Network of Law Enforcement Officials relating to MARPOL within the framework of the Barcelona Convention (MENELAS) was held online on 21-22 April 2021.

The meeting discussed the use of common marine oil pollution detection/investigation reports; the common minimum level of administrative fines for all MARPOL Annexes; and the establishment of a MENELAS database on illicit ship pollution discharges in the Mediterranean in liaison with NSN and EU/EMSA.

The Chair of NSN introduced the activities of the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors and referred to the MARPOL Annex VI enforcement cases presented and discussed within the Network. The Bonn Agreement/OSPAR Secretariat presented the outcome of the MARPOL Annex VI Experts Workshop held in February 2021. MENELAS will liaise with NSN and OTSOPA to share experience and best practices on MARPOL Annex VI monitoring and enforcement activities.

The meeting concluded that regular exchange of information between MENELAS and the relevant regional and international organisations was key to progress on the enforcement of MARPOL violations. In this regard, the MENELAS Secretariat participated in the NSN 2021 meeting.

Bonn Agreement

The Secretariat updated OSPAR Committees on the main outcomes of the 2020 meeting of the [Bonn Agreement](#). Additionally, some Committees were requested for feedback on a common (sub-) regional approach to MSFD-D8 “Significant acute pollution” prepared by the Bonn Agreement.

OSPAR participation at international events

MEDREGION

[MEDREGION](#) supports EU Member States in the Mediterranean in the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, decision making in relation to good environmental status and the programme of measures and contributions to strengthen regional cooperation. The OSPAR Commission has supported the implementation of the project as member of the advisory committee, where good practices of cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic have been shared.

Executive Secretary, Dominic Pattinson and Deputy Executive Secretary, Alejandro Iglesias Campos, attended the final stakeholders, competent authorities and expert final event on 12 July 2021 and the Final General Assembly on 13 July 2021.

The project partners presented the progress in the availability and management of data and information from different sources for the implementation of the assessment of the marine good environmental status. Coherence between the different European and national policies being implemented in this context was also extensively discussed.

During the General Assembly, participants highlighted the need for collaboration between Member States and third countries in the region, as well as effective coordination for the implementation of the proposed measures and recommendations.

Monaco Blue Initiative

Executive Secretary, Dominic Pattinson, attended the [Monaco Blue Initiative](#) 12th Edition which was held online on 22 March 2021. Participants welcomed keynote speeches from HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, John Kerry (US Special Envoy for Climate) and Ms Annick Girardin (French Minister of the Sea). The session focused on the role of international negotiations for better ocean governance. The keynote speakers all highlighted the important international events due to be happening this year (BBNJ, IUCN, CBD, COP26, UN DECADES, etc) and reflected on how to create synergies between these processes to increase their effectiveness.

Pre project Decommissioning Regulation and Contractual Implications

Under the PRE-DECOR project, the University of Bergen and the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) organised a webinar on 19 May 2021. The Secretariat gave a presentation on OSPAR regulatory framework of decommissioning of offshore energy structures and the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum. The “PRE-DECOR: Pre project Decommissioning Regulation and Contractual Implications” is a research project financed by the

Norwegian Research Council. This project aims at researching some critical aspects connected to decommissioning from a regulatory and economic perspective (how do we do decommissioning, what needs to be removed, where, what are the financial implications of decommissioning, are there differences between oil and gas and offshore wind, etc) and from both a national, comparative and international law perspective.

Project Western Mediterranean Region Marine Oil and HNS Pollution Cooperation (West MOPoCo)

The final event of the [Project West MOPoCo](#) was held online on 14 April 2021 with the participation of the project beneficiaries and stakeholders.

This 2 year project (2019-2020), coordinated by the SGMer (FR) and co-funded by DG ECHO (EU), aimed to enhance emergency decision-making capabilities, assess contingency planning and strengthen cooperation and national emergency procedures. The deliverables under these objectives were presented as well as the achievements and possible ways forward. Although the project had focused on Alegria, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Spain, and Tunisia, its outcomes could also be beneficial for the rest of the Mediterranean countries and at inter-regional level.

The Inter-regional HNS Response Manual was prepared by experts from Cedre, ITOPF and ISPRA and agreed jointly by the Bonn Agreement, REMPEC and HELCOM. The Manual includes a methodological approach, operational information, and regional specifications; and is available in English and French. A word version was prepared to be updated by the regional agreements if necessary.

The Manual has been published in the Bonn Agreement webpage as part of the Counter Pollution Manual.



Other Agreements, publications and data streams

Other Agreements

Cross-Cutting
Agreement 2021-01: North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (replacing Agreement 2010-03)
Agreement 2021-02: NEAES Implementation Plan – status and guidance
Agreement 2021-03: MoU with Cartagena Convention
Agreement 2021-04: MoU with Bonn Agreement
Agreement 2013-02: Rules of Procedure
Agreement 2019-02: Quality Status Report 2023 Guidance
Agreement 2014-02: Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme
Agreement 2016-01: Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme
Agreement 2019-01: Guidance for the preparation of draft OSPAR Decisions, Recommendations and other Arrangements, draft OSPAR Background Documents and Other Reports
Agreement 2001-13: Procedure for publication of reports
Biodiversity Committee
Agreement 2008-06: OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats
Agreement 2008-07: Descriptions of habitats on the OSPAR list of threatened and/or declining species and habitats
Agreement 2019-05: Guidance on the development of status assessments for the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats
Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee
Agreement 2021-05: CEMP Guidelines on ambient noise

[Agreement 2021-06: OSPAR Guidelines in support of Recommendation 2021/x on the reduction of plastic pellet loss into the marine environment](#)

Offshore Industry Committee
Agreement 2012-05: Guidelines for completing the HOCNE
Agreement 2012-07 on the Guidelines for the Risk Based Approach to the Management of Produced Water Discharges from Offshore Installations
Agreement 2021-07: Guidance on the Assessment of the Toxicity of Substances used and discharged offshore under the Harmonised Pre-Screening Scheme for offshore chemicals of OSPAR Recommendation 2017/01, as amended by OSPAR Recommendation 2019/04

[Agreement 2013-06: OSPAR List of Substances Used and Discharged Offshore which Are Considered to Pose Little or No Risk to the Environment \(PLONOR\) – \(Removal of Ethanol\)](#)

Radioactive Substances Committee
Agreement 2013-10: Guidance and reporting format for the collection of data on liquid discharges from nuclear installations

[Agreements 2013-11: Reporting procedures for discharges of radioactive substances from non-nuclear sectors](#)

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee
Agreement 2016-04: Hazardous Substances CEMP Guidelines
Agreement 2016-05: Eutrophication, CAMP & RID CEMP Guidelines

Publications

Cross-Cutting
Implementation of OSPAR measures - A progress report
OSPAR and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
Biodiversity Committee
Haploops Case report
Haploops Background document
Kelp Case report
Kelp Background document
Status Assessment of European flat oyster and Ostrea edulis beds
Status Assessment of Thick-billed murre
Status Assessment of Lesser Black-backed gull
Status Assessment of Gulper shark
Status Assessment of Leafscale gulper shark
Status Assessment of Portuguese dogfish
Status Assessment of Angel shark
Status Assessment of Common skate
Status Assessment of Spotted ray
Status Assessment of Thornback ray
Status Assessment of White skate
Status Assessment of Basking shark
Status Assessment of Porbeagle shark
Status Assessment of Spurdog
Assessment Sheet MPA network

Environmental Impact of Human Activities Committee
Review of national reporting on the implementation of OSPAR Recommendation 2010/5 on the Assessment of Environmental Impacts on Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats
OSPAR Document: Deep Seabed Mining Technical Background
Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Agreement 2014-1)
Background document on sanctions, penalties and fines issued by OSPAR and HELCOM Contracting Parties for waste disposal offences at sea
Background Document on loopholes and best practice in waste management that contribute to marine litter
Scoping study for plastic carrier bags
OSPAR Quality Status Report: feeder report on offshore renewable energy generation
Updated indicator assessment of plastics ingested by fulmars in the North Sea
OSPAR quality status report: feeder report on fisheries
OSPAR Quality Status Report: feeder report on aquaculture
OSPAR quality status report: feeder report on shipping and ports
OSPAR quality status report: feeder report on extraction of non-living resources
OSPAR Quality Status Report: feeder report on: Agriculture
OSPAR quality status report: feeder report on production and consumption of plastics
Quality status Report 2023: Feeder report on Wastewater
Quality status Report 2023: Feeder report on recreation and tourism in the North-East Atlantic Ocean

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee
Background document on Background Assessment Concentrations for Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDE) in fish and shellfish
Updated audit trail of OSPAR EACs and other assessment criteria used to distinguish above and below thresholds
Atmospheric deposition of nitrogen to the OSPAR Maritime Area, 1995-2018
Comprehensive Study and assessment of Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID) – 2019 data report
Levels and trends in marine contaminants and their biological effects – CEMP ‘roll over’ assessment 2021

Offshore Industry Committee
OSPAR Report on discharges, spills and emissions from Offshore Installations in 2019
Assessment report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations for 2009 – 2019
Report on impacts of discharges of oil and chemicals in produced water on the marine environment

Offshore Industry Committee
OSPAR Report on discharges, spills and emissions from Offshore Installations in 2019
Assessment report on discharges, spills and emissions from offshore oil and gas installations for 2009 – 2019
Report on impacts of discharges of oil and chemicals in produced water on the marine environment

Data

Biodiversity Committee
Marine Protected Areas - 2020
Trophic level data – QSR Dataset
Cetacean data – 2009-2019, QSR Dataset

Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee
Dumping and placement of Wastes - 2019
Offshore renewable developments - 2020
Encounters with Munitions - 2019
Impulsive noise - 2019
Plastic Particles in Fulmar Stomachs (published but restricted) - 2019
Fishing for litter - 2019
Sand and gravel extraction - 2019
Litter from DATRAS trawl surveys - 2019
Beach litter monitoring – 2019

Hazardous Substances and Eutrophication Committee
Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges - 2019
CEMP data – marine contaminants - 2021
Atmospheric Inputs of Contaminants and Nutrients – 2019

Offshore Industry Committee
Discharges, spills and emissions from Offshore Installations - 2019
Inventory of Offshore Installations - 2019

Radioactive Substances Committee
Swedish implementation Report of OSPAR Recommendation 18/01 on radioactive discharges
Annual report and assessment of liquid discharges from nuclear installations in 2019
Annual report and assessment of discharges of radionuclides from the non-nuclear sectors in 2019



OSPAR Secretariat
The Aspect
12 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1AS
United Kingdom
OSPAR Publication 784/2021

+44 (0) 20 7430 5200

Secretariat@ospar.org

www.ospar.org