

**OSPAR's vision is of a
clean, healthy and biologically diverse
North-East Atlantic ecosystem**

**Annual Report
of the OSPAR Commission
2006/07**

Annual Report of the OSPAR Commission 2006/07

Published by
OSPAR Commission, London 2007

More information about OSPAR

The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the "OSPAR Convention") was opened for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the former Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992. It entered into force on 25 March 1998. Contracting Parties are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Community..

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Cover photograph: Professor David E. Johnson, OSPAR Commission

ISBN 978-1-905859-84-9

Publication Number: 345/2007

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Background

This annual report gives a picture of the work of the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic over the meeting cycle 2006/07. It summarizes intergovernmental efforts towards a healthy and sustainable ocean ecosystem.

The OSPAR Commission implements the **OSPAR Convention**, which was adopted in Paris in 1992 by a joint Ministerial Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the former Oslo (1972) and Paris (1974) Conventions. The aim of the OSPAR Convention is to provide a comprehensive basis for cooperation between the States of north-western Europe, together with the European Community, for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.

The 1992 Convention, which came into force on 25 March 1998, establishes a legally binding framework for cooperation in protecting the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. The central part of the framework are general obligations, in accordance with the terms of the Convention, to prevent pollution, to protect the marine environment against other adverse effects of human activities, to apply the precautionary and "polluter pays" principles and to apply best available techniques and best environmental practice. A further important feature of this framework is the ability of the OSPAR Commission to adopt Decisions - instruments binding in international law on those Contracting Parties that accept them. The Convention further contains Annexes setting out specific requirements in various fields.

These Annexes cover:

- a. **land-based sources:** Annex I lays down criteria for programmes and measures to prevent pollution from land-based sources, and requires the authorisation or regulation, and inspection, of all land-based sources;
- b. **dumping:** Annex II prohibits all dumping or incineration of wastes or other matter, except for the dumping of a limited number of waste categories which may be permitted following authorisation;
- c. **offshore sources:** Annex III prohibits dumping of wastes or other matter from offshore installations, provides for the regulation of the use and discharge of chemicals on offshore installations, and controls the disposal of disused offshore installations;
- d. **monitoring and assessment:** Annex IV institutes cooperative programmes of monitoring and assessment, and requires the production of periodic assessments of the quality status of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic (such as the Quality Status Report 2000, supported by 5 sub-regional quality status reports);
- e. **biodiversity:** Annex V (adopted in 1998) gives the OSPAR Commission the competence to develop programmes and measures for the protection of marine biodiversity and ecosystems and the regulation of human activities that do not introduce substances but exert other pressures on the marine environment (this Annex came into force in 2000).

The **first Ministerial Meeting** of the OSPAR Commission, held at Sintra, Portugal, in July 1998, established four long-term strategies (on hazardous substances, radioactive substances, eutrophication, and marine biodiversity and ecosystems) to guide the work of the OSPAR Commission over the next generation. These strategies contained bold commitments to phasing out discharges, emission and losses of hazardous substances and radioactive

substances and the control of eutrophication. Arrangements were also made to complete the adoption in 1999 of a similar strategy for the offshore oil and gas industry.

The **second Ministerial Meeting** of the OSPAR Commission was held in Bremen, Germany, in June 2003 to review progress on the implementation of the strategies. It agreed unanimously on significant steps in all aspects of OSPAR's work and adopted a series of revised strategies and an additional sixth Strategy on the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP), which provides for periodic assessments of progress on the five thematic Strategies and will be the basis for a further Quality Status Report in 2010.

From the Chairman

2006/07 marks 35 years since the original Oslo and Paris Conventions were negotiated. During that whole period I have been pleased to play an active role in OSPAR work, including 10 years as Head of the Netherlands Delegation, 4 years as Vice Chairman and 7 years as Chairman. In all, this has involved over 100 meetings, 3



Mr Bob Dekker

Ministerial meetings and working with seven different Chairmen and five Executive Secretaries. I am proud of my involvement in OSPAR's achievements during this time including *inter alia* the reduction of oil discharges from refineries, regulations for dismantling of offshore installations, the zero discharge goal for hazardous substances (one generation target), and the list of threatened and declining species and habitats.

The package of measures adopted by OSPAR 2007 will both legitimise carbon capture and storage (CCS) in the OSPAR maritime area and, at the same time, safeguard the marine environment. The meeting recognised CCS as one important pragmatic approach in the portfolio of measures to tackle the challenges of climate change and acidification. This is the culmination of five years of intensive work led by Norway, the Netherlands, France and the UK and a major achievement providing a template for other marine regions worldwide. OSPAR is also working to monitor the effects of climate change on the seas and this will be an important aspect of our Quality Status Report in 2010.

At the same time OSPAR is now at a crossroads:

- Meeting collective targets set by the OSPAR Strategies is proving to be demanding and challenging.
- EC competence and legislation is addressing a growing number of environmental management activities and we cannot afford duplication of effort.
- Increasing loss of marine biodiversity is forcing us to concentrate on managing uses of the sea and marine spatial planning.
- New threats to marine ecosystems, such as noise pollution, need to be understood, evaluated and tackled.
- The EU Marine Strategy Directive may lead to a new orientation of the role of OSPAR and its working structure.

These challenges present opportunities and underline an important future role for OSPAR and for governance at the geographic scale and scope of Regional Conventions. As outgoing Chairman, I congratulate everyone involved with our efforts to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic to date and sincerely wish OSPAR every success for the future.

At a glance: The work of OSPAR in 2006/07

The work of the OSPAR Commission (OSPAR) in 2006/07 has been dominated by addressing the urgent need to reduce atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) globally, as well as continuing to deliver the commitments made in the Ministerial Meetings. The main achievements have been:

Measures

OSPAR 2007 adopted by consensus – Amendments to Annexes II and III of the Convention in relation to the storage of CO₂ streams in geological formations; a Decision to prohibit the storage of CO₂ streams in the water column or on the seabed; a Decision on the storage of CO₂ streams in geological formations, and OSPAR Guidelines for risk assessment and management of storage of CO₂ streams in geological formations including a framework for risk assessment and management.

Strategy implementation

Work within the six OSPAR Strategies during 2006/07 included:

Assessment and monitoring: arrangements for the production of the Quality Status Report 2010; implementation of the JAMP; a 2005 data report on atmospheric monitoring data; a 2005 data report on riverine inputs and direct discharges; a 2006/07 annual assessment of the data on hazardous substances in the marine environment;

Biodiversity and ecosystems: further application of ecological quality objectives (EcoQOs) in the North Sea including an EcoQO handbook; initial consideration of how to develop EcoQOs beyond the North Sea; review of further nominations for threatened and/or declining species and habitats; mapping of cold-water coral reefs; second report on status of OSPAR network of MPAs; guidance on ecological coherence and management effectiveness of the MPA network; MPA stakeholder involvement; human activity impact assessments; arrangements for implementing a regional strategy for managing ballast water; the final report of the marine litter pilot project; a voluntary marine litter monitoring programme; guidelines on fishing for litter; further work on marine spatial management;

Eutrophication: national assessments of the eutrophication status of waters in the OSPAR maritime area; adoption on a trial basis of a guideline for harmonised quantification and reporting of nutrients losses from diffuse sources; implementation reporting under PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 and 89/4 on the reduction of land-based inputs of nutrients; preparations for a workshop on modelling to support predictive assessment; an updated report on the atmospheric supply of nitrogen to OSPAR Convention waters;

Hazardous substances: agreement to screen the List of Substances of Possible Concern; arrangements for the review and revision of Background Documents on chemicals for priority action; guidelines for whole effluent assessment;

Offshore industry: national plans for the phase out of chemicals identified as candidates for substitution; review of the PLONOR list¹; consideration of adverse

effects of offshore activities other than pollution; overview assessments of implementation reports on: OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5 on environmental management systems; OSPAR Decision 2000/2 on Harmonised Mandatory Control System; and OSPAR Decision 2000/3 on Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids;

Radioactive substances: 2nd Periodic Evaluation report on concentrations in the marine environment; a first report on monitoring of discharges of radioactive substances from non-nuclear sectors.

Management initiatives

Throughout the 2006/07 cycle of meetings, OSPAR and its subsidiary bodies have reviewed the ongoing development of the *European Marine Strategy* and the proposed EC Marine Strategy Directive; evidence reflecting the potential implications of global warming; and the need to make the case more clearly to external audiences for the role of OSPAR as an effective Regional Seas Convention. As a result OSPAR 2007 agreed:

- to initiate collaborative discussions between the European Regional Marine Conventions to discuss a more harmonised approach to the future Marine Strategy Directive;
- an expanded structure for the *QSR 2010* seeking to address the assessment needs of the Marine Strategy Directive and strongly reflecting climate change issues;
- an internal Communications Strategy and Business Continuity Plan.

Co-operation with international organisations

During 2006/07 OSPAR was also represented at the following international meetings:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 13-14.10.06 | 8 th Global Meeting of the Regional Seas / 2 nd IGR GPA, Beijing |
| 10.11.06 | Expert Seminar on Managing Resources in the Barents Sea, London |
| 21.11.06 | European Marine Strategy, Ministry of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs, Schleswig-Holstein |
| 20-22.2.07 | UNEP/MAP Expert Meeting on Application of the ecosystem Approach, Athens |
| 9.5.07 | GESAMP future needs and challenges, Paris |
| 18-20.4.07 | Countdown 2010 for Marine Ecosystems, European Expert Workshop, Berlin |
| 13-14.6.07 | NEAFC Extraordinary meeting, London |



Photo: Hartmut Nies

¹ OSPAR List of Substances / Preparations Used and Discharged Offshore which Are Considered to Pose Little or No Risk to the Environment (PLONOR)

Reports adopted by OSPAR 2007 for publication

Implementation reporting

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on OSPAR Recommendation 2000/1 on agricultural pesticides

Overview assessment of implementation report of OSPAR Recommendation 2003/2 on encounters with dumped conventional and chemical munitions

Overview assessment of implementation reports on OSPAR Decision 2000/2 and OSPAR Recommendations 2000/4 and 2000/5 on a Harmonised Mandatory Control System for Offshore Chemicals

Overview assessment of implementation reports on OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5 to Promote the Use and Implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) by the Offshore Industry

Overview assessment of implementation reporting on OSPAR Decision 2000/3 on Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids (OPF)

Hazardous substances

Review of actions on priority substances identified in Background Documents adopted by OSPAR

Revised Background Document on dioxins

2005 Whole Effluent Assessment practical study

Whole Effluent Assessment Guidance Document

OSPAR Report on Losses of Mercury from the Chlor-Alkali Industry

Biodiversity

Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQos) – Working towards a healthy North Sea

EcoQO Handbook

2007 status report on the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas

Background document to support the assessment of whether the OSPAR Network of Marine Protected Areas is Ecologically Coherent

Background document on management of transboundary Marine Protected Areas

Report on Dumping of Wastes at Sea in 2005, together with the assessment of the 2003-2004-2005 dumping reports

OSPAR Database on Offshore Wind-Farms

Final Report for the OSPAR Pilot Project on Monitoring Marine Beach Litter

Revised Background Report on Fishing-for-Litter

Monitoring and assessment

Overview of 2005 from the Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct Discharges (RID), and an analysis of the reliability, accuracy, comparability and completeness of the data

RID 2004 data report for Ireland (published as addendum to the RID 2004 data report)

Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme: Pollutant deposits and air quality around the North Sea and the North-East Atlantic in 2005

2006/2007 Assessment of data collected under the Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP)

The CEMP monitoring manual

Background Document on the EcoQO on mercury and organohalogens in seabird eggs

Report of third ICES/OSPAR Workshop on Integrated Monitoring of Contaminants and their Effects in Coastal Areas

Background Document on biological effects monitoring techniques under the CEMP

Offshore

OSPAR Inventory of oil and gas installations

2005 Report on Discharges, Spills and Emissions and the assessment of the OSPAR Offshore Reports 2004 and 2005

Overview of available environmental monitoring data of the impact on the marine environment of offshore oil and gas activity

Assessment of the possible effects of releases of oil and chemicals from any disturbance of cuttings piles

Radioactive substances

Second Periodic Evaluation of Progress towards the Objective of the OSPAR Radioactive Substances Strategy

Discharges of radionuclides from the non-nuclear sectors

Annual Report on Liquid Discharges from Nuclear Installations

Belgian implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive Discharges

Spanish implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 on Radioactive Discharges

Eutrophication

Atmospheric nitrogen in the OSPAR Convention area in 1990-2004

General

OSPAR Quality Assurance Handbook

Annual Report of the OSPAR Commission 2006/07

Rapport annuel de la Commission OSPAR 2006/07



Photo: Giles Barkley



Photo: Hartmut Nies



Cuxhaven. Photo: Hartmut Nies

Organisation

Contracting Parties

The Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention, and thus under article 10(1) the members of the OSPAR Commission, are: the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of Denmark, the European Community (represented by the European Commission), the Republic of Finland, the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Iceland, Ireland, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Norway, the Portuguese Republic, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Sweden, the Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Observers

The OSPAR Commission may, by unanimous vote of the Contracting Parties, admit as an observer any State which is not a Contracting Party to the Convention and any international governmental or non-governmental organisations, whose activities are related to the Convention. These observers are entitled to participate in meetings of the Commission, its main committees and its working groups. Observer organisations provide valuable expertise, draw attention to specific issues and facilitate networking with stakeholders. During 2006/07 a total of 6 international governmental organisations, 7 international non-governmental organisations, and 7 specialist non-governmental observers provided representation at OSPAR meetings. Full details of all these observers can be found on the OSPAR website.

The Agreement for Cooperation in Dealing with the Pollution of the North Sea by Oil and Other Harmful Substances 1983 (the Bonn Agreement) and the OSPAR Commission are formally observers at each other's meetings. This extends to the Bonn Agreement's Working Group on Operational, Technical and Scientific Questions Concerning Counter Pollution Activities (OTSOPA). Since all Bonn Agreement Contracting Parties are OSPAR Contracting Parties and since the two organisations share a common secretariat, there has always been close cooperation.

Working Structure

The OSPAR Commission meets regularly – at the level of officials – once every year, usually in late June. OSPAR 2007 was held in Ostend (Belgium) at the kind invitation of the Belgian Government.

The work of the Commission is supported by six main committees: the Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO); the Biodiversity Committee (BDC); the Eutrophication Committee (EUC); the Hazardous Substances Committee (HSC); the Offshore Industry Committee (OIC); and the Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC). Each of these usually meets once in each year's cycle of meetings, and is supported as necessary by working groups, which prepare specific issues.

In addition, there are three other regular subsidiary bodies. The Heads of Delegations of the Contracting Parties to the Commission (HOD) and, where appropriate, their advisers meet usually twice a year to prepare issues for the Commission's meeting, to consider the implementation of the Commission's Decisions and to advise on management and financial issues. The Committee of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen (CVC) consists of the Chairman of the Commission, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Commission and two of the Chairmen of the main committees selected by the Commission (currently the Chairmen of the Biodiversity Committee and the Hazardous Substances Committee). It meets as necessary to advise the Chairman and the Executive Secretary on their functions. The Group of Jurists and Linguists (JL) meets usually once a year to review the drafting of formal Commission instruments and to advise on legal questions.

The North Sea Network (NSN) of Investigators and Prosecutors was established in 2002 following an invitation from the North Sea Ministers to improve understanding and co-operation in the process of detecting, investigating and prosecuting offenders who, deliberately or negligently, breach internationally agreed rules and standards and pollute the North Sea. There are two main reasons for prosecutions: to deter other potential offenders, and to impose penalties on those who do offend. Both reasons are inter-linked, since without meaningful punishments deterrence is diminished. By providing an annual forum for mutual assistance and timely exchange of information the NSN acts as an important link between OSPAR and the Bonn Agreement.

The Chairman of the Commission is elected by consensus by the Commission. He or she serves for a two-year term, which may (in exceptional circumstances) be renewed once. He or she is assisted by two Vice-Chairmen, who serve for the same periods. Mr Bob Dekker (Netherlands) was re-



Meeting of the OSPAR Commission, Ostend 2007

elected by OSPAR 2006 to serve as Chairman for the period 2006/07. OSPAR 2006 elected Mr Knut Kroepelien (Norway) and Ms Teresa Vinhas (Portugal), as Vice-Chairmen for the period 2006/08.

The Chairman presides over the meetings of the Commission, the meeting of the Heads of Delegation to the Commission, the Committee of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and (unless he or she appoints someone else to do so) the Group of Jurists and Linguists. He or she is also authorised to take any initiatives which will promote the work of the Commission.

The chief executive officer of the Commission is the Executive Secretary, who is appointed by the Commission, by consensus, for a term of three years, which is renewable once only. He or she is assisted by four Deputy Secretaries, who are appointed on the same basis. The Secretariat also employs seven Assistants. During 2006/07, the Executive Secretary was Professor David Johnson (United Kingdom). The Deputy Secretaries were Ms Amparo Agraït (Spain), Dr Richard Emmerson (United Kingdom), Ms Hanne-Grete Nilsen (Norway), and Ms Andrea Weiss (Germany). The Assistants were: Ms Sylvie Ashe, Ms Paula Creedon, Ms Hélène Hughes (until February 2007), Ms Corinne Michel, Ms Barbara Middleton, Ms Lise Rossi and Ms Kati Rowson.

From the Executive Secretary

During 2006/07 OSPAR continued to work to conserve marine ecosystems and safeguard human health in the North-East Atlantic by preventing and eliminating pollution; by protecting the marine environment from the adverse effects of human activities; and by contributing to the sustainable use of the seas. This Annual Report provides an insight into the Commission's priorities, the range of work undertaken and the need to continue to adopt an ecosystem approach. It also attests to the hard work and dedication of all those involved.

David Johnson

Professor David Johnson
BSc MSc PhD FRGS FCIWEM



The following individuals chaired OSPAR Strategy Committees and Working Groups during the period 2006/07

Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO)

Professor Colin Moffat (United Kingdom)

Biodiversity Committee (BDC)

Dr Chris Vivian (United Kingdom)

Eutrophication Committee (EUC)

Mr Gert Verreert (European Commission)

Hazardous Substances Committee (HSC)

Ms Jeannette Plokker (The Netherlands)

Offshore Industries Committee (OIC)

Mr Aart Tacoma (The Netherlands)

Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC)

Mr Leif Moberg (Sweden)

Working Group on inputs to the marine environment (INPUT)

Mr Jon L. Fuglestad (Norway)

Working Group on Monitoring (MON)

Dr Ian M Davies (United Kingdom)

Working Group on Concentrations, Trends and Effects of Substances in the marine environment (SIME)

Mr Martin Mørk Larsen (Denmark)

Management Group for the Quality Status Report 2010 (MAQ)

Dr Kees J M Kramer (The Netherlands)

Working Group on marine protected areas, species and habitats (MASH)

Dr Henning von Nordheim (Germany)

Working Group on the environmental impact of human activities (EIHA)

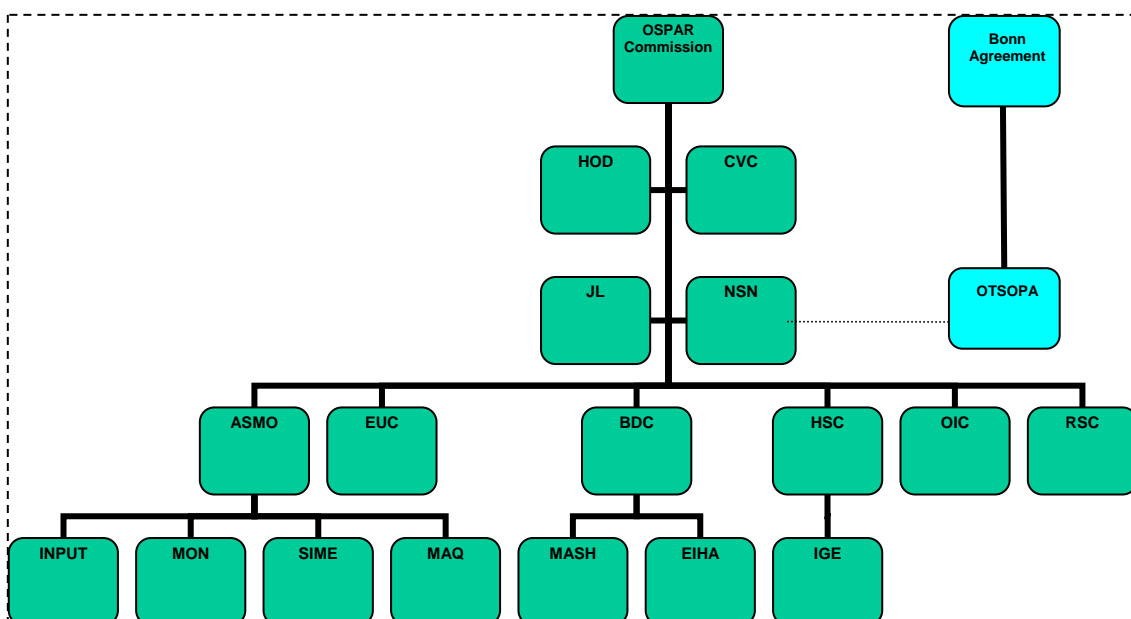
Ms Brigitte Lauwaert (Belgium)

Informal Group of DYNAMEC Experts (IGE)

Mr Loek Knijff (The Netherlands)

North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors (NSN)

Captain Jeremy Smart (United Kingdom)





SLEIPNER A
BLOKK 15/9

Sleipner A Platform.
Photo: Statoil

Major strategic achievement: Carbon capture and storage

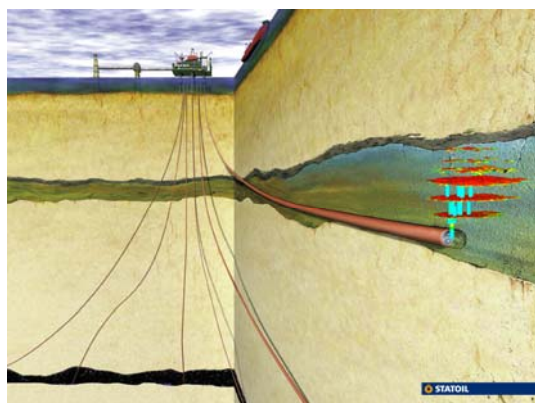
Reducing emissions of CO₂

The OSPAR Commission took decisive action towards reducing the negative effects of climate change at this year's Commission meeting in Ostend by adopting amendments to the Annexes to the Convention to allow the storage of carbon dioxide in geological formations under the seabed. This followed publication by OSPAR in 2006 of a report on ocean acidification, which indicated that high levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere are changing ocean carbon chemistry at least 100 times faster than at any time in the last 100 000 years, and a detailed consideration of technical aspects of CO₂ capture and storage (CCS) in geological formations under the seabed. In association with the amendments to the Convention, OSPAR has adopted a Decision to ensure environmentally safe storage of carbon dioxide streams in geological formations and OSPAR Guidelines for Risk Assessment and Management of that activity. The Commission has also adopted a Decision to legally rule out placement of CO₂ into the water-column of the sea and on the seabed, because of the potential negative effects.

These important developments build on work started in 2002 and follow intensive workshops held during 2006/07 on both the legal and technical/environmental considerations associated with CCS, which was led by the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. Detailed proposals were considered at length by both the Offshore Industries Committee (OIC 2007) and the Biodiversity Committee (BDC 2007) and received advice from OSPAR's Jurists and Linguists (JL).

OSPAR 2007 recognised CCS as one important pragmatic approach in the portfolio of measures to tackle the challenges of climate change and acidification. During the meeting a presentation on the International Polar Year by Professor Liz Morris of the UK Scott Polar Research Institute emphasised the role of CO₂ as the principal forcing component for climate change. Where very long-term storage is achievable, CCS may complement measures to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions at source.

OSPAR 2007 stressed that CCS is only part of a package of measures needed to reduce CO₂ emissions, that should include conservation of energy (demand restraint), renewables and improved energy efficiency. Detailed discussion at the Commission meeting focussed on the need to minimise the risk of leakage over the very long timescales envisaged. As a Regional Seas Convention, OSPAR is contributing to international efforts within the EU and global efforts under the London Protocol.



Sleipner A Platform. Illustration: Statoil

Climate change

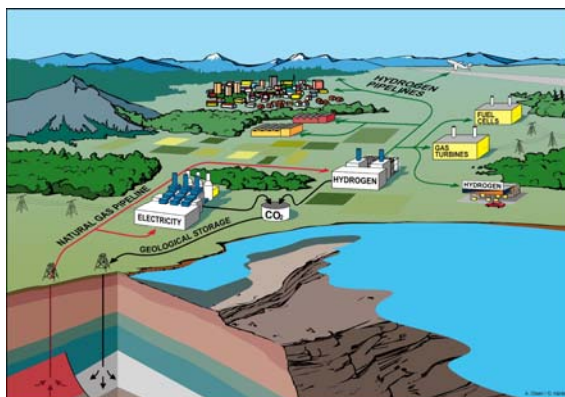
During 2006/07 OSPAR has also considered the relevance of climate change issues in a wider context, acknowledging that the oceanographic characteristics of the North-East Atlantic are closely coupled to fundamental ocean/atmosphere interactions.

Climate change has the potential to affect a number of aspects of the North-East Atlantic ecosystems ranging from physical parameters, such as sea temperature or ocean circulation, to biodiversity and ecological processes. Indirect effects might include acidification of the oceans or changes in land-based inputs to the sea. In its 2005 State of the Environment report the European Environment Agency indicated early signs that Europe's marine and coastal ecosystems are undergoing structural changes due to climate change resulting in the loss of key species, large concentrations of planktonic species replacing other species and a spread of invasive species.

At OSPAR 2007 Contracting Parties highlighted significant national activities considering the impact of climate change on the marine environment. These included research in Denmark showing evidence of oxygen deficits in marine areas, a Special Report by the German Advisory Council on Global Change, the UK Marine Climate Impacts Partnership and a forthcoming National Report by the Norwegian Polar Institute.

OSPAR recognised that climate change impacts are likely to create challenges for implementing the Marine Strategy Directive as the ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic adapt to changing circumstances. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) also set out a progress report on work for OSPAR looking at changes in the distribution and abundance of marine species in relation to changes in hydrodynamics and sea temperature in the OSPAR maritime area.

OSPAR 2007 agreed to consider ways in which to incorporate both climate change and ocean acidification considerations into future work. The Commission concluded that the Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Committee (ASMO) should take this work forward using the latest pan European overview of climate change, produced by the European Science Foundation as one starting point to critically evaluate future science needs and to identify the 'added value' OSPAR might provide in this area.



Sleipner A Platform. Illustration: Statoil

OSPAR Strategy: Monitoring and assessment

Strategy context

The main objective of the 2003 Strategy for a Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) is to provide the arrangements by which OSPAR can prepare periodic assessments of the environmental quality status of the OSPAR Convention area and assessments of the progress in implementing the five thematic strategies.

It provides the framework within which the Contracting Parties work together to fulfil their obligations under Annex IV to the OSPAR Convention to cooperate in carrying out monitoring programmes, developing quality assurance methods, enhancing scientific knowledge and understanding by research, ensuring data collection and providing assessment tools. To this end, it includes the coordinated and repeated measurement and assessment of the marine environment and each of its compartments, that is water, sediments and biota; natural and anthropogenic inputs which may affect the quality of the marine environment; and the effects of such activities and inputs. As its timeframe, the JAMP Strategy lays down detailed schedules for a number of intermediate thematic assessments leading up to a comprehensive environmental quality status assessment of the OSPAR maritime area in 2010 (QSR 2010). Efforts have continued to coordinate JAMP monitoring and assessment activities with requirements set in the European Union under the Water Framework Directive², its Draft Daughter Directive on Priority Substances and the European Marine Strategy³, thereby striving for common approaches and synergies where appropriate.

QSR 2010

During 2006/07 OSPAR established a Management Group (MAQ) for the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2010 to initiate and oversee the work in preparation for publication. The QSR will focus on an ecosystem approach and, in the light of this, will evaluate the implementation of the OSPAR Strategies and their effectiveness in improving the quality of the marine environment. The suite of thematic assessments which are being prepared by OSPAR Committees in the period up to 2010 under the JAMP will form an important body of underpinning and expanding information to the QSR. Critically the QSR 2010 will aim to address the requirements of the future Marine Strategy Directive and MAQ will continue in 2007/08 to closely follow the development of this legislation and to adjust the QSR process if and as necessary.

JAMP Implementation

OSPAR continued its regular activities under the JAMP Strategy to review data collected under its monitoring programmes, namely the Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP), the Comprehensive Study on Riverine Inputs and Direct

Discharges (RID) and the Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP). Two annual reports relating to RID and CAMP data and a second annual assessment of CEMP data on hazardous substances in the marine environment were published on the OSPAR website.

During 2006/07, OSPAR also set up arrangements which allow work to start in 2007 on the preparation of assessments of temporal trends and spatial distribution, of waterborne and atmospheric inputs of selected contaminants to the OSPAR maritime area by 2009. This will be supported by an OSPAR workshop on statistical tools for trend assessments of data collected by OSPAR under RID and CAMP to be held in October 2007. The last assessment of RID and CAMP data was adopted by OSPAR in 2005 and is published on the OSPAR website.

OSPAR 2007 reviewed arrangements for RID data handling and agreed in principle to the operation of a RID data centre for 2 to 3 years to support future RID data reports, the 2009 assessment and any development at pan-European level of indicators for which RID-type data and products from the annual data reports could be used. In the context of a wider OSPAR data policy, a long-term solution to RID data handling is to be developed.

In 2004/05, OSPAR initiated a process of reviewing the existing arrangements for marine environmental monitoring under the CEMP, which had been adopted in 1999. The review considered the existing set of hazardous substances covered by the programme and the need for inclusion of other OSPAR chemicals for priority action. The role of biological effects monitoring techniques within the CEMP was also considered by a thorough review of the range of available techniques undertaken in collaboration with ICES through the WKIMON process on integrated chemical and biological effects monitoring. This fed into the publication of a Background Document on biological effects monitoring techniques on the OSPAR website.

OSPAR 2007 adopted a revised CEMP which extends the set of substances to be monitored to include certain brominated flame retardants, alkylated PAHs, planar PCBs, dioxins, PFOS and monitoring of TBT in biota as an alternative to sediment sampling. The revised CEMP provides a mechanism for selection and inclusion of new components and for excluding others. This addresses some aspects of the need for more flexibility in CEMP monitoring and OSPAR will continue in 2007/08 to consider how such flexibility can be built into the monitoring programme. Work on guidance on the design of CEMP monitoring programmes, and co-ordination with EC monitoring requirements under the EC Water Framework Directive and the emerging Marine Strategy Directive is continuing.

As a result of the review of the CEMP, OSPAR has updated the technical guidance documents to a number of the CEMP monitoring guidelines. These are being published together with the full set of CEMP related monitoring guidance in the form of a CEMP monitoring manual on the OSPAR website to increase accessibility.

The 2006/07 assessment of CEMP data, which forms the second of a series of annual CEMP assessments being prepared in the period up to 2010, focused on certain metals, PAHs, PCBs and TBT in biota and confirmed the widespread downward trend in their concentrations in the OSPAR maritime area, supporting the conclusion that the work of OSPAR together with other organisations is having a

² Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, hereinafter: Water Framework Directive (WFD).

³ Cf. Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament COM(2005) 504 final of 24 October 2005 "Thematic Strategy on the Protection and Conservation of the Marine Environment".

substantial beneficial effect on the quality of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. This assessment is published on the OSPAR website.

During 2006/07, OSPAR continued to improve cooperation with other international forums such as ICES as regards, *inter alia*, enhanced data collection, handling and exchange including a future requirement for work on environmental assessment criteria. In 2006/07, OSPAR also continued close co-operation with the European Commission, European Environment Agency (EEA) and with other Regional Seas Conventions in the framework of the European Marine Monitoring and Assessment Group (EMMA). Work in 2006/07 has focussed on the development of a pan-European inventory of indicators to which OSPAR contributed as participant in three EEA-lead workshops. OSPAR is committed to actively support a process of identifying indicators that can be used at pan-European level and will continue its co-operation within EMMA on this issue.

Summary of scientific advice commissioned from ICES during 2006/07

1. An assessment of the changes in the distribution and abundance of marine species in the OSPAR maritime area in relation to changes in hydrodynamics and sea temperature.
2. Development of JAMP monitoring guidelines for brominated flame retardants, PAH and TBT.
3. Development of Background Concentrations for contaminants in biota
4. Peer review of further nominations for threatened and/or declining species and habitats
5. Scoping of an assessment of the environmental impact of fisheries



Photo: Hartmut Nies



Seawater collection in Balbriggan, County Dublin.
Photo: Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland



Seawater collection in Balbriggan, County Dublin.
Photo: Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland



Mussel collection in Carlingford, County Lough.
Photo: Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland

OSPAR Strategy: Marine biodiversity and ecosystems

Strategy context

The overall objective of the OSPAR Biological Diversity and Ecosystems Strategy (the Biodiversity Strategy) is to protect and conserve the ecosystems and the biological diversity of the maritime area which are, or could be, affected as a result of human activities, and to restore, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, including Annex V and Appendix 3. The implementation of the Strategy has two approaches: one addressed to protecting identified species, habitats and marine protected areas; the other addressed to the consideration of the impact of a set of identified human activities.

This gives the Strategy a very broad focus, since it is concerned with all human activities, which can have an adverse effect on the marine environment (excluding those which may cause pollution which are dealt with by other strategies). However, in accordance with Annex V, programmes and measures relating to questions of fisheries management cannot be adopted by the OSPAR Commission. For such questions the attention of the competent authorities and relevant international bodies is to be drawn to OSPAR's concerns. Furthermore, in relation to shipping, preference is given to the adoption of programmes and measures through the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Ecological quality objectives

In order to give more precision to the overall objective of the Biodiversity Strategy in protecting ecosystems and biological diversity, a major effort has been devoted to identifying Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs), which can guide this work. In March 2002, the Fifth International Conference for the Protection of the North Sea (5NSC) committed North Sea Ministers to an approach based on EcoQOs and established a pilot project for the North Sea for their development and application. As part of this pilot project, 10 ecological quality issues were identified and 21 ecological quality elements, with related objectives for 10 of them, were specified. The North Sea Ministers invited OSPAR to take on the further development of this pilot project, which the OSPAR Commission agreed in June 2002.

Following a major review of the EcoQOs published in 2005, Contracting Parties have in 2006/07 been focussing their effort on applying the set of ten pilot project EcoQOs in the North Sea. A first evaluation of the results of this work is due in 2008. OSPAR 2007 approved publication of a document 'Ecological Quality Objectives – Working towards a healthy North Sea' to complement a more technical EcoQO handbook on the first ten EcoQOs. To augment the first ten EcoQOs work is underway to deliver a comprehensive and consistent scheme of EcoQOs. In this context arrangements are in place for the development of EcoQOs on seabird population trends, threatened and/or declining habitats and plastic particles in fulmar stomachs. OSPAR has also begun to give consideration during 2006/07 to the development of systems of EcoQOs and other objectives in areas beyond the North Sea. OSPAR has noted that this work is very relevant to the development and operationalisation of the concept of Good Environmental Status under the emerging EC Marine Strategy Directive.

Protection of species and habitats

The Initial OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats was adopted by OSPAR in 2003 to guide the setting of priorities for OSPAR's work in implementing Annex V. The list was adjusted in 2004 to remove a qualification to the entry on deep-sea sponge aggregations, (to reflect the OSPAR sub-regions where this habitat is threatened or in decline) and to add two fish species – the short-snouted sea-horse (*Hippocampus hippocampus*) and the long-snouted sea-horse (*Hippocampus guttulatus*) – and four habitats – mærl beds, *Modiolus modiolus* beds, *Sabellaria spinulosa* reefs, and intertidal *Mytilus edulis* beds on mixed and sandy sediments. A further adjustment was agreed in 2006 when a qualification on the inclusion of the habitat seamounts in the list was removed.

Since 2003 work has been underway to reach agreement on a programme of priority actions that OSPAR should take with regard to the species and habitats on the list. This work is ongoing and includes consideration of conservation measures, information programmes, monitoring and assessment. An important element is the need to take into account the synergies with protection measures under other international agreements, for example an action plan for the restoration of one of the listed species, the European sturgeon, is under development under the Bern Convention. OSPAR has also been closely following the developments under the fisheries management authorities in the North East Atlantic to protect vulnerable deep water habitats. OSPAR has brought its concerns over the reefs of the cold-water coral *Lophelia pertusa* and seamounts to these authorities and welcomed the closure of certain areas to fishing with bottom trawling gears. In this context OSPAR has developed a valuable dialogue with the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), the regional fisheries management authority for those areas of the North-East Atlantic outside national jurisdiction.

A classification of the habitats to be found in the marine environment is an essential conceptual tool for defining and describing what habitats need protection. On the basis of this information, the United Kingdom, with the assistance of the European Environment Agency and its Water Topic Centre produced a revised classification for use in implementing the Biodiversity Strategy, which was approved in 2004. This has been used as the basis for a programme led by UK to map the distribution of habitats on the Initial OSPAR List. A set of priority OSPAR habitat maps prepared through this programme can be viewed on the website of the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, accessible via a link from the OSPAR website. Data is still being collected to improve these maps. In 2006/07 improved maps showing the distribution of reefs of the cold-water coral *Lophelia pertusa* in the North-East Atlantic were produced and it was agreed that these should be brought to the attention of the competent authorities for fishery management.

During 2006/07 OSPAR has considered, with the assistance of ICES, a further set of nominations for species and habitats for inclusion in the Initial OSPAR List. Extension of the list will not take place until 2008 pending the development of the supporting justification reports.

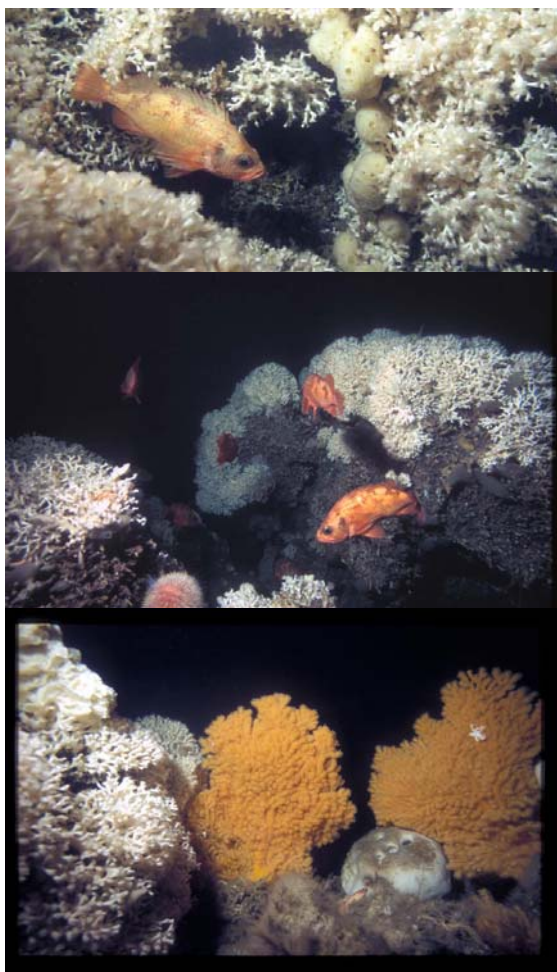
Marine protected areas

Following the adoption in 2003 of the OSPAR Recommendation on a Network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), work in 2006/07 has concentrated on continuing to implement this Recommendation, and on developing the methods to determine whether the resulting network will be ecologically coherent and well-managed – the twin aims of the network to be created under the recommendation.

OSPAR agreed to publish a second report on the status of the OSPAR network of MPAs prepared by Germany, the lead country for MPAs. The network established to date includes 87 marine protected areas selected in the waters of six of the Contracting Parties. Most of these sites are within the territorial waters of the Contracting Parties. Only Portugal has selected a site on the continental shelf beyond the European Economic Zone (EEZ). OSPAR recognises that further progress is needed before the network can meet its aims and OSPAR 2007 called for a substantive increase to the size of the network, selection of sites further offshore, sites beyond Natura 2000 areas and beyond national jurisdiction.

During 2006/07, to assist the development of the MPA network, OSPAR has agreed on two self assessment methodologies for use by Contracting Parties in determining whether the sites they select for the OSPAR network contribute to the network of aims of ecological coherence and being well managed.

Guidance is also being developed, under the lead of Spain, on good practice for communicating with stakeholders about MPAs.



Underwater photos from a live colony of *Lophelia pertusa* around the Tautra reef in the Trondheims fjord, Norway. Photos: Jon L. Fuglestad

Human activities

Assessments of the first candidate list of human activities contained in the Biodiversity Strategy have been proceeding for some time. This includes action in relation to sand and gravel extraction, offshore wind-farms, dredged material, dumped munitions, coastal defence structures, placement of other structures, land reclamation and tourism. Work is also ongoing to finalise the preliminary overview of the impact of underwater noise.

Major issues considered at OSPAR 2007 in relation to other human activities were:

- a. work being undertaken (with the United Kingdom in the lead) to consider a regional strategy for implementing the International Convention on Ballast-Water Management⁴. OSPAR agreed to finalise voluntary guidelines for vessels entering the OSPAR maritime area, to inform IMO accordingly and to develop a Joint Notice to Shipping to inform about these guidelines; and
- b. four initiatives on marine litter comprising publication of a final report on the 6-year Marine Litter Pilot project (led by Sweden and KIMO International); adoption of an agreement on a Voluntary Marine Beach Litter Monitoring Programme to be led by The Netherlands and Belgium; guidelines on how to develop a Fishing-for-Litter Project together with the publication of a Revised Background Report on Fishing-for-Litter, and a collaborative project with UNEP to review and assess the current marine litter situation for the OSPAR maritime area.

Notwithstanding the limited competence of the OSPAR Commission in relation to fisheries, the QSR 2000 identified the environmental impacts of fishing as a major threat to the health of the North-East Atlantic ecosystem. During 2006/07 OSPAR agreed on biennial reporting on these impacts, based on information on fisheries and fish stocks drawn from *inter alia* relevant websites and, if available, the proposed NEAFC annual fisheries status report.

Spatial planning

OSPAR has taken up the invitation from the Fifth North Sea Conference to consider the need for international cooperation on the spatial planning of the North Sea. An initial description of the various control systems of North Sea States over the uses of the North Sea was produced, and a workshop was held in London, on 8/9 January 2004, to exchange information and to consider what was needed.

Subsequently Marine Spatial Management Workshops have been held in 2005 and 2006. The 2006 Workshop considered the aspirations of the EC Maritime Green Paper to integrate sectoral activities. A further workshop has been agreed to look in more detail at international, transboundary and cumulative effects of decisions on the use of the OSPAR maritime area and to consider whether there are any significant gaps in the international obligations and commitments currently in place.

⁴ International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments of 13 February 2004, concluded under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (not yet entered into force).

OSPAR Strategy: Eutrophication

Strategy context

The Eutrophication Strategy's aim is to combat eutrophication in order to achieve and maintain a healthy marine environment where eutrophication does not occur. For the purpose of the Strategy, eutrophication is defined as the anthropogenic enrichment of water by nutrients causing an accelerated growth of algae and higher forms of plant life to produce an undesirable disturbance to the balance of organisms present in the water and to the quality of the water concerned (Appendix 1 to the Eutrophication Strategy).

The Commission has agreed to implement the Strategy progressively by making every effort to combat eutrophication in the maritime area, in order to achieve, by the year 2010, a healthy marine environment where eutrophication does not occur. The implementation of this Strategy is taking place within the framework of the obligations and commitments of the Contracting Parties in this field. This includes commitments relating to the European Marine Strategy in the European Community (EC), the EC legislation addressing land and airborne nutrient discharges and emissions, including *inter alia* the Water Framework Directive⁵, the LRTAP Convention and its Protocols⁶, or the North Sea Conferences⁷.

Assessment under the Common Procedure

The Common Procedure for the Identification of the Eutrophication Status of the Maritime Area was adopted by OSPAR in 1997 and revised in 2005.⁸ It provides the common framework for Contracting Parties to assess and classify the eutrophication status of the waters of the OSPAR maritime area under their jurisdiction. The 2005 revision embraced a consolidation of the procedures previously agreed by OSPAR, including guidance on the characterisation of water bodies for assessment purposes, the further developed guidance on assessment parameters and their associated assessment levels, a common understanding of classification of areas in cases involving transboundary nutrient fluxes, and the alignment of the classification scheme with that of the Water Framework Directive.

Following completion of the first full application of the Common Procedure in 2002/03, Contracting Parties were invited in 2007 to undertake a further assessment of the eutrophication status of their waters in the OSPAR maritime area under the revised Common Procedure and to report the results to

OSPAR. These reports are currently being reviewed and form the basis for an integrated report on the eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area which is being prepared for adoption by OSPAR 2008.

As a result of the second application of the Common Procedure in 2007, EUC will continue in 2007/08 to review the assessment levels for two of the sub-set of five ecological quality objectives (EcoQOs) for eutrophication: EcoQOs for oxygen and phytoplankton indicator species. Further to advice from ICES concerning area-specific (groups of) benthic indicator species in relation to long-term eutrophication, it was concluded that no further work should be undertaken on developing an EcoQO for changes in zoobenthos species that are particularly sensitive to oxygen depletion and eutrophication.

Reporting under PARCOM Recommendations 88/2 and 89/4

PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 on the Reduction in Inputs of Nutrients to the Paris Convention Area set a target of 50%, compared to input levels in 1985, for reduction in inputs of nutrients into areas where these inputs are likely, directly or indirectly, to cause pollution. In order to implement this target, PARCOM Recommendations 89/4 and 92/7 provide for certain measures to be applied to specified OSPAR maritime areas.⁹

The implementation of those measures are followed up and reviewed on the basis of regular reporting by Contracting Parties. Following reporting of the implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 92/7 in 1998/99 and 2005/06, in which nearly all Contracting Parties reported implementation of the measure, OSPAR agreed that future implementation reporting for this measure could cease and future reporting efforts should focus on the 50% reduction target under PARCOM Recommendations 88/2 and 89/4. When last reported on in 2005/06, the 50% target had been achieved by a number of Contracting Parties for phosphorus but had not been achieved by any Contracting Party for nitrogen. The full overview assessments of the reporting rounds are published on the OSPAR website. In 2007, Contracting Parties were invited to report again on their implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 and 89/4. The reports form the basis for an overview assessment which is currently being prepared for adoption by OSPAR 2008.

Review and development of the HARP-NUT guidelines

To facilitate reporting on the implementation of PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 on the reduction target for nutrients input of 50%, OSPAR 2000 adopted, on a trial basis, OSPAR Guidelines for Harmonised Quantification and Reporting Procedures for Nutrients (HARP-NUT). Most of these guidelines were revised in 2003/04. OSPAR 2000 had not been able to agree on a HARP-NUT Guideline 6 for the Quantification and Reporting of Nitrogen and

⁵ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (hereinafter: Water Framework Directive).

⁶ Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) signed under the auspices of UNECE at Geneva in 1979; its 1988 Protocol concerning the Control of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes entered into force on 14 February 1991.

⁷ Cf. Ministerial Declaration of the Fifth International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea at Bergen, Norway 20-21 March 2002 (hereinafter: Bergen Declaration).

⁸ Agreement 2005-3 on the Common Procedure for the Identification of the Eutrophication Status of the OSPAR Maritime Area.

⁹ PARCOM Recommendation 89/4 on a Coordinated Programme for the Reduction of Nutrients; PARCOM Recommendation 92/7 on the Reduction of Nutrient Inputs from Agriculture into Areas Where these Inputs are Likely, Directly or Indirectly, to Cause Pollution.

Phosphorus Losses from Diffuse Anthropogenic Sources, and Natural Background Losses. OSPAR 2000 agreed that the further development of draft Guideline 6 within OSPAR should only start when the results of the EC Fifth Framework Programme EUROHARP project on an intercomparison of quantification models for losses from diffuse anthropogenic sources were available.

During 2006/07 a revised draft HARP-NUT Guideline 6 relating to the quantification and reporting of nitrogen and phosphorus losses from diffuse anthropogenic sources was finally completed. This work had been supported by an OSPAR workshop held in September 2005 and built on the outcome of the EUROHARP project. OSPAR adopted the Guideline on a trial basis for reporting under PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 in 2007/08 and 2009/10.

Tools to help assess eutrophication

OSPAR 2005 initiated further work on modelling that forms part of the wider task to develop an overview of predictive models for eutrophication assessment and nutrient reduction scenarios; including transboundary fluxes within the OSPAR maritime area, and of the possibilities of adopting relevant models for use by OSPAR Contracting Parties. Following a first workshop in September 2005, OSPAR 2006 published an interim report on the use of eutrophication modelling, for predicting the expected eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area following implementation of agreed measures, which identified key elements for further intersessional work to enhance the robustness of model results.

During 2006/07, OSPAR made further detailed arrangements to progress work on model-based nutrient reduction scenarios and quantification of transboundary nutrient fluxes. An OSPAR workshop on eutrophication modelling will be held in September 2007 to support this work and the delivery of a predictive assessment in 2008 of responses of selected eutrophication parameters of the Common Procedure to nutrient reductions, with a view to informing the expected effectiveness of measures agreed by OSPAR to combat eutrophication.

Atmospheric emissions and deposition of nitrogen

During 2006/07, OSPAR commissioned the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP) with the task of updating their 2004 report on the atmospheric supply of nitrogen (emissions and deposition) to OSPAR Convention waters. This report supplements information collected by OSPAR under the Comprehensive Atmospheric Monitoring Programme (CAMP). The estimates of atmospheric emissions of nitrogen and model-based calculations of atmospheric nitrogen deposition in the OSPAR maritime area for the period 1990 – 2004 confirm conclusions that international ship traffic on the OSPAR Convention waters is the largest single source of NO_2 emissions. The full report is published on the OSPAR website. In 2007/08, EUC will continue to explore the need for predictive assessment products on future input levels of nitrogen from shipping and road transport.



Jelly fish on the beach. Photo: Hartmut Nies



Foam in Syt. Photo: Hartmut Nies



Kelp. Photo: Spain

OSPAR Strategy: Offshore oil and gas industry

Strategy context

The OSPAR Offshore Oil and Gas Industry Strategy (the Offshore Strategy) sets the objective of preventing and eliminating pollution and taking the necessary measures to protect the maritime area against the adverse effects of offshore activities so as to safeguard human health, and of conserving marine ecosystems and, when practicable, restoring marine areas which have been adversely affected.

It provides that OSPAR will address the programmes and measures:

- needed to prevent, control and eliminate pollution under Annex III of the OSPAR Convention;
- to be adopted under Annex V of the OSPAR Convention, following the identification of relevant human activities.

In doing so, the Offshore Strategy requires the Commission to collect information about threats to the marine environment from pollution or from adverse effects from offshore activities; establish priorities for taking action; and establish and periodically review environmental goals to achieve the Offshore Strategy's objectives. Implementation has concentrated on those activities that have been identified as being of greatest concern to the marine environment, *inter alia* the use and discharge of hazardous substances and the discharges of oil and other chemicals in water and from well operations.

Disposal of disused offshore installations

One of the main outcomes of the ministerial meeting of OSPAR 1998 was the Decision to prohibit all dumping of steel installations (OSPAR Decision 98/3 on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations). The Decision also provided for a periodic review of the categories of installations for which it is possible to seek derogation from this general prohibition. OSPAR 2003 considered the outcome of the first review and concluded that there was insufficient evidence to justify changes to the categories now, but that a further review should be carried out before the 2008 meeting of OSPAR. In 2007 OSPAR noted views that there was still not sufficient evidence to allow for a revision of the derogation categories in 2008, made a preliminary conclusion that the review should be deferred until 2013, but that this conclusion needed to be supported by an updated review of the evidence in 2008.

OSPAR 2007 approved the publication of an update of the database on offshore installations on the OSPAR website.

Chemicals used and discharged offshore and the establishment of environmental goals

To reduce the overall environmental impact from offshore chemicals, OSPAR 2000 adopted Decision 2000/2 on a Harmonised Mandatory Control System (HMCS) for the Use and Reduction of the Discharge of Offshore Chemicals and the related OSPAR Recommendations 2000/4 and 2000/5. This control system promotes the continued shift towards the use of less hazardous substances (or preferably non-hazardous substances), and will contribute to the

achievement of the cessation target for the priority chemicals identified under the Hazardous Substances Strategy. An overview assessment of implementation of the HMCS and its recommendations have been published in 2007 and work to harmonise the implementation of the HMCS continues. OSPAR 2007 endorsed inclusion of jacking grease in the HMCS, subject to a study reservation by the UK.

OSPAR adopted in 2005 Recommendation 2005/2 on Environmental Goals for the Discharge by the Offshore Industry of Chemicals that are, or Contain Added Substances, Listed in the OSPAR 2004 List of Chemicals for Priority Action. An overview assessment of implementation reports from 2007 will be prepared for OSPAR 2008. Further to the establishment of environmental goals, OSPAR adopted in 2006 Recommendation 2006/3 on Environmental Goals for the discharge of offshore chemicals which are, or which contain, substances identified as candidates for substitution. During 2006/07 OSPAR Contracting Parties continued to develop national plans for the phase out of these chemicals. The OSPAR List of chemicals that are considered to pose little or no risk to the marine environment (the PLONOR list) aims at encouraging operators to use substances that present as little as possible concern to the marine environment. These substances do not need to be strongly regulated. Following revisions of the list in 2002 and 2003 to include criteria for inclusion of new substances on the list and a procedure for amending the list respectively, OSPAR has continued to add new substances to the PLONOR list. A further revision of the criteria for inclusion of substances in 2006 has prompted a full review of the list to check whether the substances that are currently on the list comply with the new criteria.

The use of oil-based drilling fluids has been banned since 1992. To ensure that the alternative drilling fluids are environmentally sound, OSPAR adopted in 2000 a decision regulating the use of organic-phase drilling fluids and the discharge of cuttings contaminated with such drilling fluids¹⁰. Decision 2000/3 requires Contracting Parties to ensure that no OPF is used or discharged without prior authorisation by the national competent authority; reaffirms the existing prohibition on the use of diesel-oil-based fluids and the discharge into the sea of oil based fluids at a concentration greater than 1% by weight on dry cuttings; and allows the discharge into the sea of cuttings contaminated with synthetic fluids in exceptional circumstances only. An overview assessment of implementation reporting for Decision 2000/3 was published in 2006/07 and, on the basis of implementation by all relevant Contracting Parties, OSPAR 2007 agreed that implementation reporting for this measure should cease.



Buzzard Platform. Photo: UK

¹⁰ OSPAR Decision 2000/3 on the Use of Organic-Phase Drilling Fluids (OPF) and the Discharge of OPF-Contaminated Cuttings.

Pollution from produced water

In 2001 OSPAR adopted Recommendation 2001/1 for the Management of Produced Water from Offshore Installations. The overall goal of this recommendation is to reduce the input of oil and other substances into the sea resulting from discharges of produced water from offshore installations, with the ultimate aim of eliminating pollution from those sources. Under the recommendation each Contracting Party should ensure that the total quantity of oil in produced water discharged into the sea in the year 2006 from all offshore installations under its jurisdiction has been reduced by a minimum of 15% compared to the equivalent discharge in the year 2000 from all offshore installations under its jurisdiction at that time. It also recommends that by the end of 2006, the concentration of dispersed oil in produced water from any installation should not exceed 30 mg per litre.

During 2006/07 an Expert Assessment Panel reviewed progress towards the goals for discharges and concluded that the chief means of achieving the 15% reduction used by most Contracting parties had been the re-injection of produced water. An extraordinary assessment report, covering the overview assessment of national reports, will be produced in 2008.

Consideration was also given to inputs of heavy metals in produced water from offshore installations, on the basis of a report from a further one-off exercise led by Norway during 2006/07. OSPAR agreed that reporting of input of heavy metals discharged with produced water from offshore installations should continue under the lead of Norway, and that the methodology and detection limits used should be adequate to ensure comparability of data.

Adverse effects of offshore activities other than pollution

The OSPAR Biodiversity Strategy has identified the exploration for oil and gas and the placement of structures for such exploration among the first candidate list of human activities for assessments. In line with that strategy and the Offshore Strategy, the Commission assessed in 2004 the potential adverse effects, other than pollution, arising from offshore oil and gas activities, and concluded that no further work needs to be undertaken at present on adverse effects of these activities. The basis for this conclusion is published in the OSPAR Background Document on adverse effects of oil and gas activities other than pollution.

OSPAR 2006 adopted Recommendation 2006/5 on a Management Regime for Offshore Cuttings Piles. The regime is divided into two stages: Stage 1 would involve an initial screening assessment of all cuttings piles which should be completed within two years. The results of the screening should be compared against threshold values. If above the thresholds, a stage 2 should be initiated that would involve a BAT/BEP assessment. OSPAR 2007 published an assessment of the possible effects of releases of oil and chemicals from any disturbance of cuttings piles, and agreed to review it in the light of the experience gained in implementing Recommendation 2006/5 on management of cutting piles due in the meeting cycle 2008/09, in time for the contribution to the QSR.

Environmental management systems

The Offshore Strategy called on the Commission to promote the development and implementation by the offshore industry of environmental management mechanisms, designed to achieve both continuous improvement in environmental performance and the objectives of the Strategy. The Commission fulfilled this objective by adopting OSPAR Recommendation 2003/5 to Promote the Use and Implementation of Environmental Management Systems by the Offshore Industry. In 2006/07 the first overview assessment of implementation reports was adopted for publication on the OSPAR website.

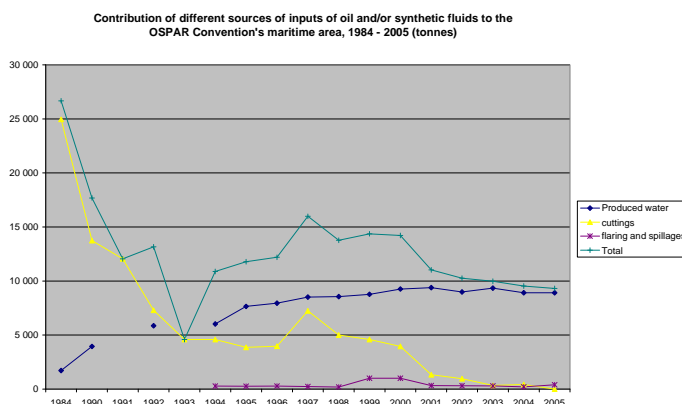
Monitoring and reporting

In 2001, OSPAR adopted Guidelines for Monitoring the Environmental Impact of Offshore Oil and Gas Activities. In 2004, a new technical annex to these Guidelines was adopted so that the Guidelines now describe methods for monitoring physical, chemical and biological parameters both in sediments and in the water column (agreement number 2004/11).

A harmonised reporting format to compile environmental monitoring data and information related to offshore oil and gas activities was adopted by OSPAR 2006 (Agreement number 2006/7). Contracting Parties have been invited to report to the Secretariat by 1 November 2007 environmental monitoring data using this format.

OSPAR 2007 published an assessment of an overview of available environmental monitoring data collected from the UK, the Netherlands and Norway, and agreed that it should serve as the JAMP assessment of the impact on the marine environment of offshore oil and gas activities.

Contracting Parties report annually on discharges, waste handling and air emissions from offshore installations, and these data are assessed biennially. An assessment of the data reported for 2004 and 2005 was published in 2006/07.



OSPAR Strategy: Radioactive substances

Strategy context

The OSPAR Radioactive Substances Strategy sets the objective of preventing pollution of the maritime area from ionising radiation through progressive and substantial reductions of discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for artificial radioactive substances. In achieving this objective, the following issues should, *inter alia*, be taken into account:

- a. legitimate uses of the sea;
- b. technical feasibility;
- c. radiological impacts on man and biota.

As its timeframe, the Radioactive Substances Strategy declares that by the year 2020 the Commission will ensure that discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances are reduced to levels where the additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels, resulting from such discharges, emissions and losses, are close to zero.

The Strategy provides that OSPAR will identify, assess and prioritise radioactive substances and/or human activities which give rise to concern about the impact of discharges, emissions or losses of radioactive substances. Effective action is to be taken when there are reasonable grounds for concern that radioactive substances introduced into the marine environment, or which reach or could reach the marine environment, may bring about hazards to human health, harm living resources and marine ecosystems, damage amenities or interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea, even when there is no conclusive evidence of a causal relationship between inputs and effects.

Review of progress in implementing the strategy

OSPAR has adopted a Programme for the More Detailed Implementation of the OSPAR Radioactive Substances Strategy (reference number: 2001-3). This programme required the establishment of baselines against which to measure progress and national plans by 2002 for the implementation of the Strategy, monitoring and reporting of progress in implementing national plans, and periodic evaluation of progress against an agreed baseline.

In 2003, the Commission adopted a methodology for the establishment of baseline elements for discharges of radioactive substances, their concentrations in the marine environment and resultant doses to the public. Subsequently it has proved difficult to agree an appropriate method for applying the baseline to some specific radionuclides and to further specify the data and the statistical techniques to be used for the assessment of progress in implementing the Strategy.

OSPAR 2006 adopted and published the First Periodic Evaluation of Progress towards the Objective of the Strategy (concerning progressive and substantial reductions in discharges of radioactive substances, as compared with the agreed baseline). Whilst this exercise was limited by the small amount of data available from the non-nuclear sectors the overall general conclusions were that for the non-nuclear sectors there is no evidence whether the Strategy is yet being delivered, whereas for the nuclear sectors there is some evidence that substantial reductions are

being made in line with the Strategy, together with evidence of further reductions.

OSPAR 2007 considered a draft Second Periodic Evaluation concerning concentrations in the marine environment as compared with the agreed baseline including where possible an assessment of the exposure of humans to radiation from pathways involving the marine environment (doses). This Evaluation subdivided the OSPAR maritime area into regions, selected appropriate radionuclides, and accepted that – since sediments were not considered useful for this purpose – it was sufficient to derive baseline values for each radionuclide in seawater and one type of biota over the agreed 7-year period for averaging (1995 – 2001). In addition to regional conclusions, overall conclusions were given for the four radionuclides examined. Decreases in discharges are not always mirrored by decreases in concentrations and remobilization of radionuclides from historic discharges may explain this. No consensus on the inclusion of tritium has delayed the publication of this report.

Environmental quality criteria

According to the Strategy, OSPAR will develop environmental quality criteria for the protection of the marine environment from adverse effects of radioactive substances in the light of the developments in other international forums. The protection of non-human species is receiving much attention in other international forums, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic radiation (UNSCEAR) and in the EC. OSPAR 2007 considered the developments in other international forums and agreed that the development of or need for ecological quality objectives for radioactive substances would have to be based upon progress in these forums.

Monitoring of discharges, emissions and losses

Non-nuclear sector

OSPAR adopted in 2003/04 a procedure for how OSPAR Contracting Parties should report on discharges of radioactive substances from non-nuclear sectors, *inter alia*, the offshore oil and gas industry and the medical sector. In 2006/07, the first official annual report on discharges of radionuclides from the non-nuclear sector for 2005 was produced following the adoption of reporting procedures in 2005. More comprehensive data submission and subsequent evaluation is needed in this area.

Nuclear sector

Contracting Parties report annually their data on liquid discharges of radioactive substances from nuclear installations (nuclear power stations, nuclear fuel reprocessing plants, nuclear fuel fabrication and enrichment plants, and research and development facilities). The reports contain data on discharges of total alpha, tritium, total beta excluding tritium, and individual radionuclides since 1990. The OSPAR report "Liquid Discharges from Nuclear Installations in 2005" shows that there is a downward trend of the total alpha activity discharged from all nuclear installations since 1990. However, while they remain within authorised limits, total alpha releases from the reprocessing plant at Sellafield (UK) peaked in 2003,

and the fuel fabrication plant at Springfields (UK) was also a significant contributor in 2005.

Tritium releases from all installations increased in the period from 1996 to 2005, mainly due to the discharges from the reprocessing plant in La Hague (France). Whilst releases from Sellafield show an apparent drop during the corresponding period, these two reprocessing plants contribute in total approximately 78% (2005) of the overall discharge.

The sum of total beta activity, excluding tritium, from all nuclear installations has fallen significantly over the 15-year period 1990-2005. Total beta discharges are dominated by discharges from the nuclear fuel plant at Springfields and to a lesser extent the reprocessing plants. The total beta discharges from Sellafield were previously mainly attributable to the radionuclide Technetium-99, for which abatement technology was introduced in 2004.

Monitoring of concentrations in the marine environment

Environmental monitoring programme

Work is currently ongoing under the OSPAR Radioactive Substances Committee (RSC) to develop a coordinated monitoring programme on concentrations of radioactive substances in the marine environment. The aim is that the monitoring programme should provide information for the assessments in 2007/08 of the impact on marine biota of anthropogenic sources (past, present and potential) of radioactive substances, and the overall assessment in 2008/09 of impacts, trends, distribution and fate of radioactivity in the marine environment.

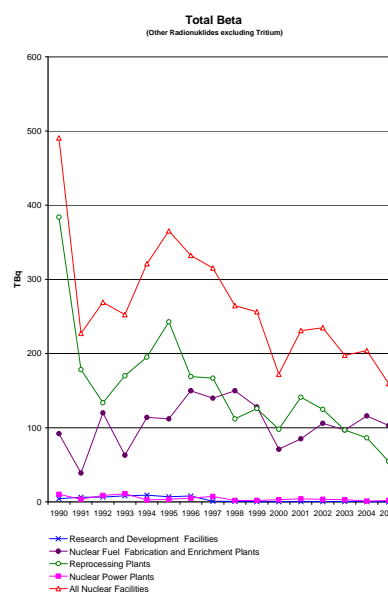
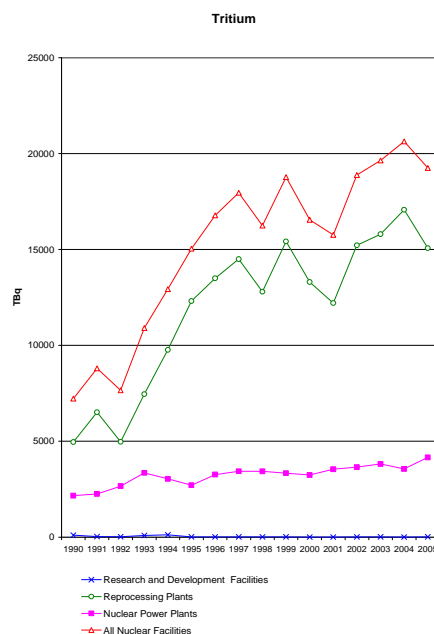
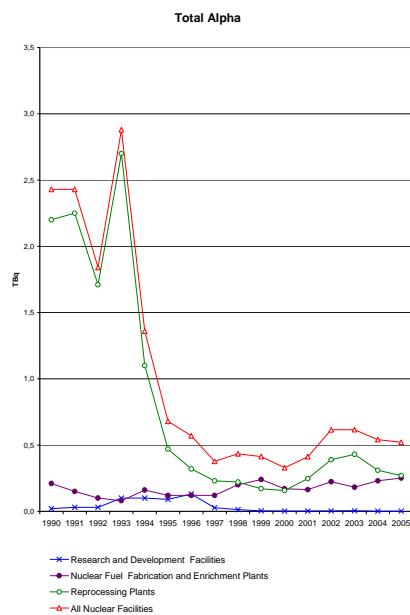
Quality Assurance of monitoring

OSPAR 2007 endorsed the acceptance of an offer from the IAEA for an OSPAR-specific inter-comparison exercise to be undertaken using 11 nominated national laboratories.

Review of existing measures and their implementation

PARCOM Recommendation 91/4 states that Contracting Parties agree 'to respect the relevant Recommendations of competent international organisations and to apply the Best Available Technology to minimise and, as appropriate, eliminate any pollution caused by radioactive discharges from all nuclear industries, including research reactors and reprocessing plants, into the marine environment. Contracting Parties shall present a statement on progress made in applying such technology every four years in accordance with the guidelines annexed to this recommendation'.

After the 3rd round of implementation reporting on PARCOM Recommendation 91/4, OSPAR 2004 agreed revised Guidelines (Agreement 2004-3) on national reporting requirements of the application of Best Available technology (BAT) in nuclear facilities. OSPAR 2007 agreed to publish reports, drawn up on the basis of the new guidelines, from Belgium and Spain. Both indicated that BAT had been applied in the nuclear installations of these Contracting Parties. All completed national reports will be taken into account in the overview assessment of the 4th round of implementation reporting to be prepared for RSC 2008.



OSPAR Strategy: Hazardous substances

Strategy context

The Hazardous Substances Strategy sets the objective of preventing pollution of the maritime area by continuously reducing discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances, with the ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the marine environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances. Its timeframe requires that the Commission will implement the Strategy progressively by making every endeavour to move towards the target of the cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances by the year 2020.

It addresses the following activities:

- identifying the hazardous substances of possible concern to the marine environment and deciding which of these should be selected for priority action;
- develop or adopt, as part of the selection mechanism, a means of identifying substances which give reasonable grounds for concern that they are endocrine disruptors;
- identifying the sources and the pathways by which the priority substances could reach the sea, determining their associated risks to the marine environment, and agreeing on what measures should be taken, either in OSPAR or by other relevant organisations;
- assessing the implementation and effectiveness of existing programmes and measures taken to address the problems identified;
- developing and implementing appropriate tools to demonstrate progress towards meeting the 2020 cessation target for priority substances;
- developing cooperation with industry and other stakeholders.

Identification and selection of priority substances

"Hazardous substances" are substances which either meet cut-off values for persistence, liability to bioaccumulate and toxicity ("PBT criteria") or, falling short of these criteria, give rise to an equivalent level of concern (e.g. endocrine disruptors¹¹).

In 1998, the Hazardous Substances Strategy included 15 substances (or groups of substances) identified for priority action and a list of 246 candidate substances for selection, assessment and prioritisation. To review candidate substances and other relevant lists of chemicals, and to prioritise the substances of highest concern for immediate action, a "dynamic selection and prioritisation mechanism" (DYNAMEC) was developed. This tool was used to establish in 2002 the OSPAR List of Substances of Possible Concern and to revise the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action.

Subsequently, in an ongoing exercise to achieve consistency with the Cut-Off Values for the Selection Criteria Used in the Initial Selection Procedure adopted in 2001, OSPAR has deleted 70 substances from the List of Substances of Possible Concern and 8 from the List of Chemicals for Priority Action on the grounds that they do not fulfil either the persistence or

bioaccumulation criteria. In 2006/07 it was agreed that Hexamethyldisiloxane (HMDS) (CAS No. 107-46-0) should be deselected since new information showed that it does not fulfil the persistency criterion. The revised OSPAR List of Substances of Possible Concern, the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action and the list of deselected substances are published on the OSPAR website.

In the light of developments in the chemicals sector in the European Community (EC), namely developments under the Water Framework Directive (and subsequent negotiations on the WFD Daughter Directive on Environmental Quality Standards), the REACH Regulation and the IPPC Directive, OSPAR agreed in 2004 to intensify collaboration with the EC on the selection and prioritisation of hazardous substances to avoid duplication of work. OSPAR's future focus will be on those substances raising concern for the marine environment, which are not addressed under the relevant EC initiatives, thereby seeking complementary roles of OSPAR and the EC. To this end collaboration with the EC to identify gaps as to the marine dimension of risk assessment procedures under the EC Directives on cosmetics, pesticides, pharmaceuticals and veterinary medicines is ongoing, but an initial conclusion is that adequate account of impacts on the marine environment is being taken. Furthermore OSPAR 2007 approved specifications for screening work, following an initial scan of the 315 substances on the OSPAR List of Substances of Possible Concern. The aim is to identify those hazardous substances which are of concern to the marine environment, and to which therefore the commitments of the Hazardous Substances Strategy should apply, but which are not covered adequately by the EC framework or some other international forum.

Finally, attention is being given to the progress of work with regard to endocrine disruptors in OSPAR, the European Commission and the OECD, and OSPAR considered whether this progress was sufficient to fulfil the obligations of the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Strategy. OSPAR 2007 welcomed a proposal by ICES for joint action to approach OECD with a view to emphasising the urgency of having available an adequate and approved set of test methods for use in the marine environment.



IWW Limburg. Photo: The Netherlands

¹¹ Substances considered to stop the production or block the transmission of hormones, thereby impeding the reproduction of marine fauna.

Development of programmes and measures

Individual priority substances

OSPAR actions and measures on specific priority substances are based on "Background Documents". These documents, prepared by lead countries, encompass information on the production, use and properties of the substance; the identification of pathways and quantities of its discharges, emissions and losses in the marine environment; monitoring data to indicate concentrations of the substance in the marine environment; results of marine risk assessments; review of existing national and international actions and measures on the substance; and recommendations for possible future OSPAR actions.

Since 2000, the Commission has published Background Documents for 28 priority substances or groups of such substances. The actions agreed by the Commission for each individual substance, and a review of progress on these actions, are published on the OSPAR website jointly with the Background Documents. Since 2003/04 the emphasis has shifted from adopting specific OSPAR measures to supporting activities in other frameworks like the EC's IPPC Directive¹² or the Pesticides Directive¹³.

In reviewing actions agreed in Background Documents, OSPAR 2007 noted that several actions had been successfully completed and a considerable number were being followed by HSC as integral part of other activities, mainly the implementation of the monitoring strategies for priority chemicals. In the light of this, OSPAR endorsed that there was no need to continue a systematic review of progress of actions agreed in Background Documents. The latest progress report of 2006 is published on the OSPAR website.

OSPAR also confirmed that periodic reviews of Background Documents should be undertaken. Review Statements will be produced, supplementing the Background Document, where full revisions are not required. These would include information on progress on actions agreed in Background Documents.

A revised Background Document on dioxins was adopted and is published on the OSPAR website.

Point and diffuse sources

OSPAR's work on point and diffuse sources of hazardous substances, namely on control measures relating to their discharges, emissions and losses, is particularly characterised by a cooperation with the EC. In order to achieve internationally harmonised approaches and to avoid duplication of work on hazardous substances, regular overviews have been prepared of measures and other information (e.g. principles and methodologies, specific targets and work related to best available techniques (BAT) and best environmental practice (BEP)) which have already been agreed in the EC framework. These have been considered by the OSPAR Commission, as appropriate, in the development of measures and initiatives to control substances within OSPAR.

A focus in recent years has been on the review of BAT Reference Documents (BREFs), which have been agreed in the EC for the implementation of the IPPC Directive. These documents are intended to guide national authorities in issuing operating permits for activities covered by the IPPC Directive, thereby ensuring that best available techniques are applied and a high level of protection of the environment as a whole is achieved. The aim of the review process was to identify whether marine aspects are adequately addressed in BREFs and to assess implications for future and existing OSPAR measures on BAT/BEP.

A review of the evidence from the BREF reviews carried out so far showed clearly that:

- the Contracting Parties that were involved in developing the BREFs were ensuring that the aspects of the various industrial sectors which might affect the marine environment were taken into account in the development of BREFs;
- there would rarely be scope for additional OSPAR measures to supplement the IPPC controls applied in the light of the BREFs;
- there was little need to revise or up-date the OSPAR descriptions of BAT/BEP in the fields covered by the BREFs, because the needs that had been met by the OSPAR descriptions were now being met by the BREFs;
- equally, little value would be added by up-dating OSPAR measures that had been overtaken by technical progress embodied in the BREFs, because that progress would be applied in the industrial sector concerned through the EC IPPC process.

OSPAR 2006 concluded that no further systematic review of BREFs should be undertaken.

OSPAR 2007 confirmed that a systematic review of BAT/BEP measures should cease for those measures covered by BREFs, those taken over by more recent OSPAR measures, and/or those where the implementation of EC/EEA legislation ensured that OSPAR requirements were met.

Review of existing measures and their implementation

Contracting Parties are committed to report to the Commission at regular intervals on the national measures adopted for the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and of Decisions and Recommendations adopted thereunder, on the effectiveness of those measures, and on problems encountered in the implementation of OSPAR measures (Article 22 of the OSPAR Convention).

Accordingly, a programme has been set up for the assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing programmes and measures adopted to control discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances. Contracting Parties are required to submit structured information on their national implementation of OSPAR measures. Overview assessments on the implementation of a specific measure are drawn up by a lead country and, after agreement by the Commission, published on the OSPAR website. More than 70 overview assessments have been published in the period 1998-2006.

In 2005/06, OSPAR reviewed those reporting obligations and agreed to cease implementation reporting for a number of measures. This decision was based on several considerations, including the successful implementation of measures by Contracting Parties, and the implementation of, and information collection under, EC/EEA legislation which in recent years had overtaken OSPAR measures and which

¹² Council Directive 96/61/EC of 24 September 1996 concerning integrated pollution prevention and control (hereinafter: IPPC Directive).

¹³ Council Directive 91/414/EEC of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market.

ensured that OSPAR requirements are met and that consistent data and information are collected that could be used by OSPAR to assess progress towards the cessation target for hazardous substances. OSPAR adopted an information collection mechanism to ensure that this information will become available for OSPAR assessments.

In 2006/07, OSPAR updated the 2006 overview assessment on implementation reporting on OSPAR Recommendation 2000/1 on BEP for the Reduction of Inputs of Agricultural Pesticides to the Environment through the use of Integrated Crop Management Techniques with information submitted by Contracting Parties that had not reported in 2006. As some Contracting Parties have yet to forward their information to OSPAR, the review of progress in implementing Recommendation 2000/1 will continue in 2007/08.

Assessment, monitoring and reporting

The 2003 Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) includes a number of future activities on monitoring hazardous substances and information collection, with a view of enabling a more thorough assessment, using an integrated approach. Strategies for monitoring progress towards the objectives of the OSPAR Hazardous Substances Strategy for 19 substances or groups of substances on the OSPAR List of Chemicals for Priority Action have been published on the OSPAR website as addendums to the Background Documents of those substances or group of substances. OSPAR has adopted an agreement setting out how the monitoring strategies will be implemented. The outcome of this work will provide input to the assessment of impact of discharges, emissions and losses in 2008, and to the QSR 2010.

OSPAR 2007 recognised work led by the Netherlands to develop guidelines on Whole Effluent Assessment as an added value to the substance-by-substance approach. The result is a robust tool to assess PBT properties and adverse effects of complex effluents and combinations of chemicals. The Guidance, published on the OSPAR website, is perceived as a useful tool both within EU policy and for use by HELCOM.

Finally, OSPAR 2007 adopted for publication on the website the report on losses of mercury from the chlor-alkali industry in 2005 and the expert assessment of data reported for 2004 and 2005.

Finance

The Commission is financed by the Contracting Parties. The Commission's financial year is the calendar year. After a contribution from the United Kingdom of 80% of the rent of the Secretariat's offices, contributions to the General Budget are apportioned between Contracting Parties as follows:

a. Tranche 1:

five-sixths of the amount to be contributed, or basic budget, is divided first in equal contributions of 2,5% by all Contracting Parties, and then, for all Contracting Parties except the European Community, according to the UN Scale of Assessment (which is based on GNP), subject to a maximum share of 22% of Tranche 1;

b. Tranche 2:

the remaining sixth, North Sea budget, is divided equally between the 8 North Sea riparian States.

Since the Secretariat is based in London, the General Budget is denominated in pounds sterling. In addition to the General Budget, there is regularly a Special Budget for the work done by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) (denominated in Danish kroner, since ICES is based in Copenhagen), and there can be other special budgets. The apportionment of contributions to a special budget is determined according to its purpose.

In 2006, the total expenditure was £942 189, and in 2007 the General Budget is £1 005 050 including Working Capital Funds (WCF). The General Budget approved for 2008 is £1 031 353. The ICES Special Budget was DKK 1 057 132 for 2006, and DKK 1 072 780 for 2007 and is DKK 1 087 756 for 2008 including WCF. A Special Budget for the QSR 2010 was approved at £51 150 for 2007 and £126 700 for 2008.

The accounts of the OSPAR Commission are audited by the National Audit Office of the United Kingdom. All statements of accounts of the OSPAR Commission for 2006 have been certified as presenting fairly the state of affairs of the OSPAR Commission and as having been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Commission. The audit certificates have also stated that, in all material respects, the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by the Commission and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.



Dredging tests. Photo: Spain



Filtering seawater. Photo: Hartmut Nies

OSPAR Commission accounts for the year ended 31 December 2006

OSPAR COMMISSION GENERAL BUDGET

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006

	<u>Notes*</u>	<u>2006</u> £	<u>2006</u> £	<u>2005</u> £
INCOME				
Contributions	2		947 058	943 716
Other Income	3		14 100	12 646
			<hr/> 961 158	<hr/> 956 362
EXPENDITURE				
Staff Costs	4	696 553		678 229
Other Operating Costs	4	<hr/> 242 771		<hr/> 252 530
Total Expenditure			939 324	930 759
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)			<hr/> 21 834	<hr/> 25 603
APPROPRIATIONS				
To Working Capital Fund	7		2 865	3 671
To General Fund	7		18 969	21 932
			<hr/> 21 834	<hr/> 25 603

OSPAR COMMISSION GENERAL AND SPECIAL BUDGETS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2006

	<u>Notes*</u>	<u>2006</u> £	<u>2005</u> £
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors and Prepayments	2/5	57 060	66 378
Cash in hand and at bank		449 238	470 941
		<hr/> 506 298	<hr/> 537 319
Less CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors and Accruals	2/6	(241 994)	(286 304)
Special Funds*		(8 733)	(10 062)
Bank account held on behalf of ICES		<hr/> (16 953)	<hr/> (24 169)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	8	<hr/> 238 618	<hr/> 216 784
Financed by:			
General Fund	7	138 113	119 144
Working Capital Fund	7	100 505	97 640
		<hr/> 238 618	<hr/> 216 784

*Explanatory notes are not included within this Annual Report.



David Johnson
Executive Secretary

May 2007

Independent Auditor's report to the Contracting Parties of the OSPAR Commission

I have audited the financial statements of the OSPAR Commission for the year ended 31 December 2006. These comprise the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them.

Respective responsibilities of the Executive Secretary and Auditor

The Executive Secretary is responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the OSPAR Commission and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. These responsibilities are set out in the Statement of the Responsibilities of the Executive Secretary.

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements to be audited in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

I report to you my opinion as to whether the financial statements present fairly the state of affairs of the OSPAR Commission and its income and expenditure for the year, and whether the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the OSPAR Commission. I also report whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by the OSPAR Commission and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

In addition, I report to you if the OSPAR Commission has not kept proper accounting records, or if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I read the Introduction and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my report if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements. My responsibilities do not extend to any other information.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the OSPAR Commission's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by error, or by fraud or other irregularity and that, in all material respects, the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by the OSPAR Commission and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements appropriate to

the OSPAR Commission's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

Opinions

Audit Opinion

In my opinion:

- the financial statements present fairly the state of affairs of the OSPAR Commission at 31 December 2006 and its income and expenditure and surplus for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Commission.

Regularity opinion

In my opinion, in all material respects the income and expenditure have been applied to the purposes intended by the OSPAR Commission and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.



Helen Dixon
Director
For Comptroller and Auditor General

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