

Eutrophication⁶

1. Objectives

1.1 The OSPAR Commission's strategic objective with regard to eutrophication is to combat eutrophication in the OSPAR maritime area, with the ultimate aim to achieve and maintain a healthy marine environment where anthropogenic eutrophication does not occur.

1.2 The Eutrophication Strategy will be implemented progressively by making every endeavour, through appropriate actions and measures, to move towards the targets of:

- a. achieving that human-induced eutrophication is minimised, especially the adverse effects thereof, such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algae blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters, and finally;
- b. achieving and maintaining, by 2020, that all parts of the OSPAR maritime area have the status of non-problem area.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 When making assessments and adopting programmes and measures in relation to eutrophication, the Contracting Parties will be guided by the general principles described in section 3 of Part I. In addition, the actions to implement the Eutrophication Strategy should comprise a combination of a target-oriented and source-oriented approach to combat eutrophication.

3. Main strategic directions

3.1 To achieve its objectives and in accordance with the findings of the Quality Status Report 2010, the OSPAR Commission will carry out, in the period up to 2020, effective regional, coordinated monitoring and assessment in order to evaluate the extent of eutrophication problems in the OSPAR maritime area, taking into account any additional impacts linked to climate change, and to identify actions needed to achieve non-problem area status, and to make progress towards good environmental status and good ecological status as defined under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive respectively.

3.2 To this end, the OSPAR Commission will focus on the following main strategic directions:

- a. ensure that the regional monitoring and assessment requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, using its relevant methodological standards and criteria and associated coordination activities, are fulfilled by the Eutrophication Monitoring Programme and the Common Procedure for the identification of the eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area ("the Common Procedure");
- b. evaluate and report on the effectiveness of measures addressing eutrophication problems;
- c. cooperate to set appropriate nutrient reduction targets for problem areas;
- d. coordinate the development of measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate anthropogenic eutrophication in marine waters.

⁶ A number of terms used in this strategy are defined at Annex 1.

4. Timeframe and implementation

4.1 The Eutrophication Strategy will be implemented and further developed in line with the OSPAR Commission's commitments to an Ecosystem Approach and detailed in the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme and the periodic Programmes of Work, which will establish priorities, assign tasks and set appropriate deadlines for completing these tasks.

4.2 The OSPAR Commission will assess the extent of eutrophication in the OSPAR maritime area under the Common Procedure and the effectiveness of implemented measures on the quality status of the marine ecosystems, and evaluate, from time to time, through model scenarios of nutrient reductions the situation in the OSPAR maritime area that is expected following the implementation of measures. Building on the QSR 2010 and future eutrophication assessments, the following actions are required:

- a. When and where it is established that an area has achieved non-problem area status, measures should be kept at a level that ensures that this status is maintained;
- b. In the case of potential problem areas, preventive measures should be taken in accordance with the precautionary principle.

There should be urgent implementation of monitoring and research in order to enable a full assessment of the eutrophication status and their final classification as problem or non-problem area by 2014;

- c. In the case of problem areas, measures shall be taken to reduce or to eliminate the anthropogenic causes of eutrophication.

4.3 In support of this, the OSPAR Commission will:

- a. further develop its tools for monitoring and assessing the eutrophication status of the OSPAR maritime area and progress towards the objectives of this strategy, and adopt a revised Common Procedure at the latest by 2013;
- b. promote the use of modelling and remote sensing to improve the knowledge on the extension and impact of eutrophication on marine ecosystems within the OSPAR Regions;
- c. adopt an integrated assessment of the eutrophication status of the maritime area in time to support Contracting Parties' reporting obligations under the Water Framework Directive in 2015;
- d. review the situation of nutrient inputs for eutrophication problem areas and coordinate with Contracting Parties, by 2012, the setting of nutrient reduction targets required for the eutrophication problem areas to move to non-problem area status. Recognising that approaches may differ according to size and nature of catchments contributing to eutrophication problem areas, the OSPAR Commission will:
 - (i) by 2011, quantify the reduction of nutrients to the maritime area required for individual eutrophication problem areas to achieve non-problem area status;
 - (ii) by 2012, identify and quantify the main contributing sources for individual eutrophication problem areas and river basins, including transboundary nutrient loads;
 - (iii) by 2013, implement a revised reporting system for nutrients which coordinates data collection on sources, pathways and environmental status;
- e. improve knowledge about interactions of eutrophication with climate change and, where possible, consider impacts of climate change in monitoring and assessing eutrophication;
- f. promote consideration of marine eutrophication to be taken into account in:
 - (i) setting emission targets for nitrogen under the EU National Emission Ceilings Directive and the Gothenburg Protocol to the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP);

- (ii) the revision of standards for ship emissions of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- g. carry out an assessment of the impact of shipping on the eutrophication status of the North Sea and, if decided by the OSPAR Commission, elaborate a document, in line with Appendix III to Annex VI to the MARPOL 73/78 Convention, providing the basis for a joint submission to IMO justifying the case for designating the North Sea as a NO_x Emission Control Area.

4.4 The Eutrophication Strategy will support the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive by feeding the programmes of measures identified under § 4.3(c) into the first review of the river basin management plans under the Directive.

4.5 Contracting Parties that are likely, directly or indirectly, to contribute nutrient inputs to problem areas will:

- a. where national obligations exist under EU legislation, fully implement the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Water Framework Directive and associated legislation (e.g. the Nitrates Directive, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the IPPC Directive) in order to reduce nutrient discharges to water and emissions to air, supported e.g. by the Rural Development Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005. In implementing those measures, Contracting Parties will take into account marine eutrophication;
- b. continue to implement PARCOM Recommendation 88/2 on the reduction in inputs of nutrients to the Paris Convention area and to reduce nutrient inputs to eutrophication problem areas by 50% relative to input levels in 1985, until new nutrient reduction targets are set under § 4.3(c) for problem areas to move to non-problem area status;
- c. where no national obligations exist to implement more specific EU legislation, continue to implement 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, and PARCOM Recommendation 89/4 on a coordinated programme for the reduction of nutrients;
- d. take additional measures, if necessary, to address relevant sources contributing to problem areas. Such further measures should take into account their feasibility, cost-effectiveness, and region-specific and seasonal factors.

5. Interrelation with other international institutions

5.1 The implementation of the Eutrophication Strategy will take place within the framework of the obligations and commitments of the various Contracting Parties, individually or jointly, in this field, in particular:

- a. the obligations of EU Member States and, in some cases, the states of the European Economic Area (EEA) to implement measures under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC), the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), and other relevant EU legislation to reduce nutrient discharges to water and emissions to air from point sources and diffuse sources (e.g. agriculture), including the National Emission Ceilings Directive (2001/81/EC), the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), the Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) and the Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) Directive (2008/1/EC) and the Rural Development Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005;
- b. measures stipulated in the Protocol Concerning the Control of Emissions of Nitrogen Oxides or their Transboundary Fluxes adopted within the framework of the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), and;
- c. measures stipulated in the MARPOL 73/78 Convention.