

OSPAR GUIDANCE NOTE – Reporting on the status of Management

Background

At the 2010 OSPAR Ministerial Meeting in Bergen, Norway, OSPAR Ministers committed to ensuring that the OSPAR MPA network¹:

- a. by 2012 is ecologically coherent, includes sites representative of all biogeographic regions in the OSPAR maritime area, and is consistent with the CBD target for effectively conserved marine and coastal ecological regions;
- b. by 2016 is *well managed* (i.e. coherent management measures have been set up and are being implemented for such MPAs that have been designated up to 2010).

At ICG-MPA 2014, a small task group of representatives from the UK, SE, FR, NL, DE and Oceana met to discuss possible options to gather information from Contracting Parties on their implementation of management for OSPAR MPAs in time for the 2016 report against the OSPAR 2010/02 recommendation. The task group developed a short questionnaire, intended to gather information against the different stages in a management cycle of a MPA; Figure 1 is an illustrative example summarising the high level stages in a MPA’s management cycle.

BDC 2015 gave ICG-MPA a mandate to continue developing the approach through a pilot project in summer 2015², with a view to presenting and discussing the results at ICG-MPA 2015 and subsequently BDC 2016.

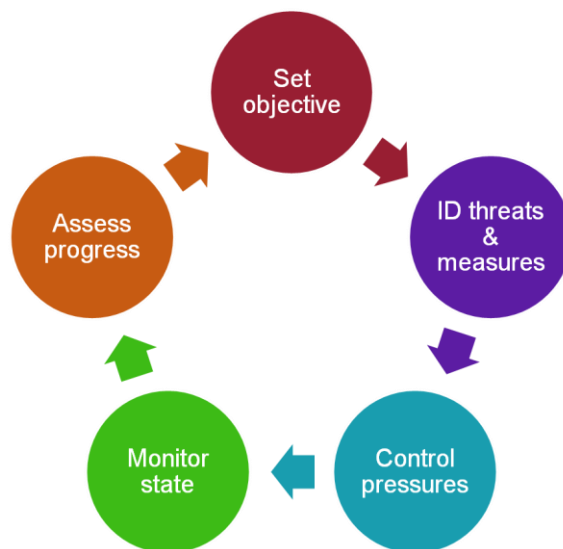


Figure 1. An illustrative example indicating some likely steps in the management cycle of a MPA.

¹ OSPAR Recommendation 2010/02 amending Recommendation 2003/03 on a network of marine protected areas

² A questionnaire approach to report on the effectiveness of management in MPAs in the OSPAR MPA Network in 2016 (BDC/15/5/5-E)

The Management Reporting Questionnaire

Whilst there is no formal agreement on what constitutes 'well managed' in terms of a MPA, the following questions seek information on the main actions involved in the management process. There are two broad themes, each with two main questions:

- **Consider implementation of the MPA management cycle:**
 - a. Is the MPA management documented?
 - b. Are the measures to achieve the conservation objectives being implemented?
- **Review whether the MPA is meeting its conservation objectives:**
 - c. Is a monitoring plan in place to assess if measures are working?
 - d. Is the MPA moving towards or has it reached the conservation objectives?

Contracting Parties should answer each question with a '**Yes/Partial/No/Unknown/No data**' response; the guidance contained in this document is provided to support this assessment. Each question has an accompanying '**comments**' field, which can be used by Contracting Parties to add additional details to support or justify their answers. Comments are encouraged as they provide a better understanding of the outcome reported. Some information is specifically requested in the guidance; however, Contracting Parties must decide on the level of detail at which they report. Contracting Parties should note however that there is a 250 character limit on each comments field.

If Contracting Parties have any questions relating to the questionnaire or guidance, they should contact JNCC (emma.novak@jncc.gov.uk). For any general questions relating to the 2018 reporting please contact the OSPAR secretariat (secretariat@ospar.org).

Guidance for completing the management status questionnaire

Question A - Is the MPA management documented?

The approach to managing MPAs and documenting how it is done varies between Contracting Parties, and is often linked to their domestic legislation and government policy. Documented management does not have to be individual documents; they could form part of a combined document for a site such as a management plan. We recognise management documentation will be in different languages. If a summary of management documentation in one of the OSPAR working languages (English or French) is publicly available, please provide a link to this in the comments section. Note this information is optional and is not a requirement of the management reporting.

Response option	Guidance for response
No	MPA has no associated management documentation that is in use or publicly available
Partial	<p>MPA has associated management documentation that is in use and publicly available. This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation objectives for the protected features of the site, and • Information on known threats and pressures to achieving those conservation objectives. <p>If the MPA has some management documentation which does not include the above, please select 'No' and include more details in the comments section.</p>
Yes	<p>MPA has management documentation that is in use, publicly available. This must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation objectives for the protected features of the site • Information on known threats and pressures to achieving those conservation objectives • Actions and measures have been identified to address known threats and pressures • Spatial information on the location/distribution of protected habitats and species features within the site, which is available to site management organisations.
Unknown	It is not known if the MPA has associated management documentation that is publicly available.
No response	Data not reported

For the purposes of management reporting, '**Protected features**' are those habitats and species that are the reason why the MPA was designated, and will be protected through management actions. For example these could include habitats and species listed in Annex I and II of the EU Habitats Directive for those OSPAR MPAs that are also SACs, features on the OSPAR Threatened and Declining list, species listed on the IUCN red list, or habitats and species listed in national legislation.

Threats and pressures are commonly used terms in many pieces of work related to EU legislation, such as the identification of Threats, Pressures and Activities on Standard Data Forms for Natura 2000 sites. For the purposes of management reporting, '**Threats**' can include activities or impacts *known* to cause damage to a MPA and its protected features. '**Pressures**' can be defined in a number of ways. In the UK, they are defined after Tillen *et al.* (2010)³ as the mechanism through which an activity has an effect on any part of the ecosystem. The nature of the pressure is determined by activity type, intensity and spatial distribution. We recognise other Contracting Parties may use different definitions. The principles stated in Article 8 (b) together with the indicative lists of pressures and impacts provided in Table 2 Annex III of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive should guide Contracting Parties when identifying threats and pressures within their MPAs.

'**Site management organisations**' refer to the organisation(s) that are actively involved in the coordinating and/or delivering the management actions on a site. It also includes organisations that are responsible for regulating human activities occurring in an MPA.

If you selected a '**Yes**' response, please state the year in which your documents were written, and if applicable, when they were last updated in the comments section.

If you selected a '**Partial**' response, please provide details of when actions and measures to address known threats and pressures are likely to be identified, and when spatial information will be made available in the comments section. For the conservation objectives and information on known threats and pressures, please state the year in which your documents were written, and if applicable, when they were last updated.

If you selected a '**No**' response, please provide brief details of why management documentation is not available in the comments section. If possible, please indicate when conservation objectives and information on the known threats and pressures to achieving the conservation objectives are likely to be available.

Question B - Are the measures to achieve the conservation objectives being implemented?

Response option	Guidance for response
No	No required measures are being implemented.
Partial	Some of the required measures are implemented or are in the process of being implemented
Yes	All required measures are implemented.
Unknown	MPA has some measures implemented, but it is not known if these address identified threats or pressures to the site.
No response	Data not reported.

³ Tillin, H.M., Hull, S.C., Tyler-Walters, H. 2010. Development of a Sensitivity Matrix (pressures-MCZ/MPA features). Report to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from ABPMer, Southampton and the Marine Life Information Network (MarLIN) Plymouth: Marine Biological Association of the UK. Defra Contract No. MB0102 Task 3A, Report No. 22

The term **‘measure’** refers to specific management actions that have been identified by site managers to address known threats and pressures (as defined in the guidance to answering question a above) to an MPA and its protected features. Identified actions may include voluntary agreements, codes of practice, or legal mechanism such as a licence or permit. Respondents should only consider those actions to address known threats and pressures that have been identified up to the time of the assessment. All identified actions are considered to be **‘required measures’**, regardless of how long they may take to implement. A measure is considered to be **‘implemented’** when it is put into effect or action in the MPA.

If you selected a **‘no’** response, please include the reasons why no measures are being implemented in the comments section. Reasons could include that an assessment of known threats and pressures has not yet been undertaken and/or that an assessment has been undertaken, but legal/policy/technical issues are preventing the required measures from being implemented.

If you selected a **‘partial’** response, please provide details in the comments section on the progress of outstanding measures, including reasons why not all actions have yet been implemented. Reasons could include that some of the required actions are implemented but others remain pending; or that processes to implement actions are underway, but they are yet to be completed.

If you selected a **‘yes’** response, please provide details of the type of measures implemented at the MPA. Where appropriate, please indicate if measures require legal enforcement in the comments section. You should also answer ‘yes’ if the threats and pressures were reviewed but no specific management actions were necessary in the site; for example, a possible pollution pressure may be managed through regional or national policy.

Question C - Is monitoring in place to assess if measures are working?

Response option	Guidance for response
No	No monitoring is in place for the MPA.
Partial	Some monitoring is being implemented or it is in the process of being implemented.
Yes	All monitoring that is required at the site is implemented.
No response	Data not reported

When answering this question, respondents should only consider **‘Monitoring’** that captures information on the effectiveness of measures implemented at an MPA. For example, this can include monitoring of condition (ecological status) of the MPA’s protected habitats and species, or monitoring the compliance of site users with a voluntary code of practice or legal mechanism (as described in the guidance to question b). Ideally monitoring should focus on ecological status, however if compliance monitoring is used as a surrogate for assessing ecological condition, that should also be included. Contracting Parties can either state what type of monitoring has been implemented in the comments section, or provide more detail in the summary of assumptions that is submitted to ICG-MPA with the completed questionnaire as discussed in the management reporting questionnaire section above. Monitoring is considered to be **‘implemented’** when it is clearly happening within the MPA.

Monitoring often requires a long-term commitment by the appropriate authorities, and the comments section could be used by Contracting Parties to give an indication of the likely long-term commitment to monitor MPAs. Note this information is optional and is not a requirement of the management reporting.

If you selected a ‘no’ response, please include the reasons why no monitoring is taking place for the MPA in the comments section.

If a ‘partial’ response was selected, please state what is being monitored (for example, ecological status of the protected features, or the compliance with a measure) and any barriers to implementing monitoring for an MPA in the comments section.

A ‘yes’ response should be selected when all monitoring that is considered necessary as part of a monitoring plan for the site is fully implemented.

Question D - Is the MPA moving towards or has it reached its conservation objectives?

Response option	Guidance for response
No	No indication of improvement in the condition of protected features. Some protected features may be declining in condition. If there are not sufficient data available to be able to make this judgement select “Unknown”
Partial	Some protected features are improving in condition, or have reached their conservation objectives. Other protected features are static, and/or declining in condition, or their condition is unknown.
Yes	All protected features are improving in condition and some protected features may have met their conservation objectives. OR All protected features have reached their conservation objectives.
Unknown	Data are not available to make any judgement if the protected features of the MPA are moving towards their conservation objectives.
No response	Data not reported.

Ideally, there will be recent or regularly collected data from a monitoring programme available that will enable the direct assessment of the ecological condition (state) of the MPA and/or its protected features. Proxy assessments could be used where direct assessments of habitat and species within the site are not available. For example, there may be information on the presence of threats and/or the intensity of activities (creating pressures) that will affect the features that could to give a likely indication of the status of a MPA.

If monitoring data are not available but other information is available, a qualitative response will be required and this should be noted by respondents in the ‘**comments**’ section. The type of information used to determine the response (such as knowledge on the sensitivity and intensity of features to potentially harmful activities) should also be included. It may not

be possible to even make a qualitative judgement if no suitable information is available for some MPAs and therefore an ‘**unknown**’ response should be recorded.

Annex I: Examples of OSPAR MPA management status assessment comments

These examples across various Contracting Parties from the 2016 reporting provide good examples of reporting and relevant supporting comments for the questions.

Question a- Is the MPA management documented?

Response	Comment
Yes	Conservation objectives have been documented; Main threats have been identified; Actions and measures to address threats have been outlined; Management Plan exists and is being implemented (Verordnung Nr. 59 Part I, 2005, only German)
Partial	Conservation objectives, information on pressures and threats, and details of the habitats and species are contained within the Regulation 33 package published in 2006. Scottish Natural Heritage has yet to submit formal advice in relation to the management requirements for mobile species (harbour or grey seals) only SACs

Question B - Are the measures to achieve the conservation objectives being implemented?

Response	Comment
Partial	Fisheries measures have been implemented, additional measures are still being discussed with stakeholders and aim is to finalise Fall 2016
No	Fisheries conservation measures are not in place yet, but a delegated regulation has been adopted by the Commission and expected to be in place by 1 Jan 2017.

Question C - Is monitoring in place to assess if measures are working?

Response	Comment
Partial	Some condition monitoring of protected features is being implemented or in the process of being implemented. Compliance monitoring of conditions for licensable activities and management measures in place where applicable by responsible authorities.

Question D - Is the MPA moving towards or has it reached its conservation objectives?

Response	Comment
No	Single marine feature (Atlantic salt meadow) unfavourable at last assessment 2009.
Partial	Limited condition monitoring is available; vulnerability assessment suggests feature should be maintained as opposed to restored and therefore feature may be achieving or moving towards conservation objectives.
Unknown	Because the implementation of measures has only recently started there are currently no monitoring data that already prove a move towards the objectives.