



## Press statement

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## OSPAR work inspires ‘Good Environmental Status’ advice

OSPAR Commission work on environmental quality criteria and methodologies has been recognised by the scientific groups, developing specifications for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, as technically robust and relevant to determining ‘Good Environmental Status’ as required by the European Commission’s Marine Strategy Framework Directive..

Over the past six months Scientific Task Groups have further developed the 11 Good Environmental Status individual descriptors. There are big differences between the descriptors, both related to background knowledge and earlier experience. However, OSPAR work has proven to be particularly important for descriptors on biodiversity, food webs, eutrophication, contaminants, litter and noise.

In this respect the Task Groups have specifically highlighted different OSPAR approaches developed as part of a joint monitoring and assessment programme. OSPAR experts have made input to the Task Groups as invited observers and many of the descriptor reports make reference to OSPAR publications

Professor David Johnson, Executive Secretary to OSPAR explained ‘we particularly welcome that the Scientific Task Groups have recognised the value of OSPAR Ecological Quality Objectives (EcoQOs), which is recognition of the efforts of many OSPAR experts. These indicators and targets have taken some 15 years to develop and test out for the North Sea. Clearly they are not all applicable to every marine area in Europe but they provide a sound approach that can be adapted where appropriate.’

The European Commission will now finalise the scientific advice with the aim to adopt by 15 July 2010 a Decision on Criteria and Methodology to be used for determining Good Environmental Status (Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Article 9(3)) based on sound scientific knowledge. In September OSPAR will launch a major overview assessment for the North-East Atlantic, the Quality Status Report 2010.

### References

OSPAR publication number 404/2009

[The OSPAR system of Ecological Quality Objectives for the North Sea, a contribution to OSPAR’s Quality Status Report 2010](#)

OSPAR publication number 406/2009

[Evaluation of the OSPAR system of Ecological Quality Objectives for the North Sea](#)

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### Note for editors

1 The [OSPAR Commission](#) was set up by the 1992 OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, which unified and up-dated the 1972 Oslo and 1974 Paris Conventions. It brings together the governments of Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, together with the European Community.

2 The aim of the European Union’s [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) (adopted in June 2008) is to protect more effectively the marine environment across Europe. It aims to achieve good environmental status of the EU’s marine waters by 2020 and to protect the resource base upon which marine-related economic and social activities depend. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive constitutes the vital environmental component of the Union’s future maritime policy, designed to achieve the full economic potential of oceans and seas in harmony with the marine environment.