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OSPAR regional plan to improve adequacy and coherence of MSFD implementation 2014-2018

(Source: CoG(2) 14/7/1, Annex 4)

I. Introduction: Towards more regional coherence in 2018 and beyond

1. In February 2014, the Commission published its report on the first phase of the implementation of the MSFD. It subsequently organised four meetings to discuss recommendations from the Article 12 assessment reports on a regional scale with Member States that are contracting parties to the four Regional Sea Conventions active in marine waters of EU Member States. The meeting with the OSPAR-countries took place on 22-23 May 2014.

2. In general, OSPAR coordination for MSFD purposes was proving useful and is paying off. The meeting was a good opportunity to discuss ways to improve MSFD implementation, and ways to better coordinate activities at the level of the Regional Sea Convention. As general conclusions OSPAR EU Member States agreed to:

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| 1 | Continue working together to improve adequacy and coherence of the MSFD implementation addressing the recommendations of the Commission in a coordinated way. |
| 8a | Revisit the existing OSPAR Contribution Document to the EU-CIS, OSPAR ICG MSFD-working plan and parts of the working plans of relevant OSPAR-Committees dealing with matters related to the implementation of the MSFD, based on the conclusions of this regional meeting and a gap analysis to overcome the shortcomings identified in the initial assessments of 2012. An update of these documents, brought together in a regional action plan, will be prepared by the end of 2014 on the basis of already available material and with the view to define coordinated action up until 2018. |

3. This document is the *OSPAR regional plan to improve adequacy and coherence of MSFD implementation 2014-2018*. OSPAR continually aims to improve its engagement with the MSFD implementation process to the benefit of the marine environment and to ensure an efficient use of Contracting Parties' resources. This regional plan, which aims to identify practical actions to address the conclusions reached during the Regional Meeting organised in May, is an example of the effort being made within OSPAR to align the work in OSPAR's subsidiary bodies to better support coordination and cooperation between OSPAR EU Member States for MSFD implementation where practical and appropriate. It should be noted that actions could be adapted depending on developments during the MSFD implementation process.

4. This regional plan aims to take work regarding clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse marine waters forward within the waters covered by the OSPAR Convention. Regarding the initial assessment, GES and targets, coordination within OSPAR will add value to work done where (sub)regional action is necessary and could lead to results most efficiently. In this light it is useful to clearly define on what geographical scale (be it national, sub-regional or regional) actions can be developed most effectively in the implementation by Member States of Articles 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13. The appropriate scale of intervention is dependent on the ecosystem, the existing legislative framework and the application of the risk-based approach (and of the precautionary principle).

5. This regional plan for coherent MSFD implementation transfers the informal conclusions of the 22-23 May 2014 meeting into a regional plan, aiming to define coordinated action at least up until 2018. The plan consists of the following chapters:

II. Common indicators, assessment and determination of GES

III. Environmental targets

IV. Monitoring

V. Addressing knowledge gaps

VI. Programmes of Measures

VII. Cross-cutting issues

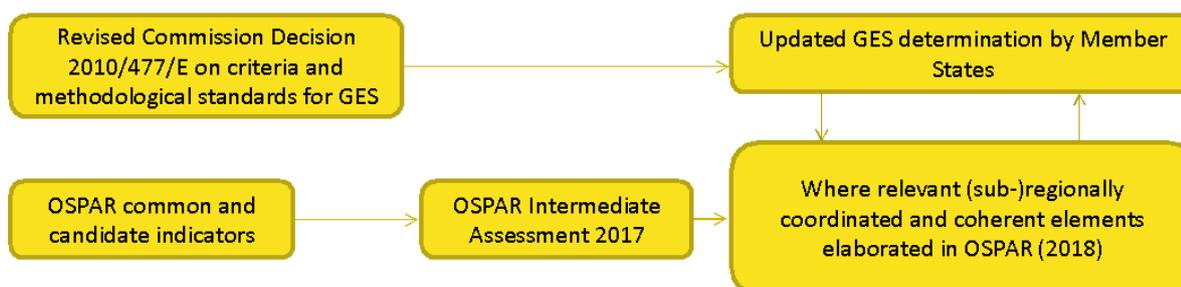
- Annex: an update of the OSPAR ICG-MSFD Forward Work Plan (to be updated and adopted together with this regional plan in OSPAR-CoG/HoD in November 2014)

6. The conclusions of the 'Regional Meeting with the Member States parties to OSPAR following the Assessment of the Commission on the MSFD implementation' have been numbered from the top, and have been clustered in text boxes under the chapters listed above. They have each been combined with a plan for their implementation within OSPAR on a short term (2014-2015), medium term (2016-2018) or long term (after 2018) basis. The first two general conclusions to which this regional plan is the answer are cited in the text boxes above (1 and 8a).

II. Common indicators, assessment and determination of GES (Art. 8 and 9 MSFD)

II.1 Short to medium term (2014-2018)

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| 4 | <p>Improve the adequacy, completeness and coherence of the initial assessment by developing the next intermediate assessment for the OSPAR Quality Status Report (IA2017) as an integral part of the initial assessment of all Member States ("roof report") and take into account the draft IA2017 in the national public consultation and the final IA2017 in the report for the initial assessment to the Commission. IA2017 will be based on the common indicators' assessment mentioned above.</p> |
| 2 | <p>Further develop together and revise their definition of GES, building on the Common Understanding Document, the revision of the GES decision, the relevant EU legislation and the OSPAR common and candidate indicators when appropriate and consequently use them at national level as soon as possible and in 2018 at the latest.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Reflect further on the detailed timing of the IA2017 where a draft report would be agreed by mid-2017, taken account of in national public consultations and finalised and adopted by OSPAR, reflecting the feedback from the public consultations and possibly with some updated information that becomes available in the meantime, in mid-2018, in time for inclusion in the national reports to the Commission in October 2018.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Consider the public information and consultation timelines in the further planning, having in mind the necessary involvement of the stakeholders and potential translation issues, and ensure that the regional work is developed in such a way that, at all stages of the MSFD implementation, it can be considered in the national public consultations. In particular the updates of GES and targets and the OSPAR intermediate assessment 2017 will have to be considered for public consultation in the period between mid-2017 and mid-2018.</p> |



A further developed determination of GES will take shape in the following process:

7. OSPAR supports the cooperation between EU Member States towards coherent and measurable determinations of GES where possible, and based on the best available evidence. The ICG MSFD will continue to identify opportunities for further coordination of coherent GES determination. Building on developments in the MSFD Common Implementation Strategy, identify opportunities for the development of common GES determination where appropriate.

8. OSPAR has agreed to engage in the review of the Commission Decision (taking into account a revised Common Understanding Document), and Member States, where resources allow, will participate in expert groups led by ICES and JRC on the review of the criteria underlying the MSFD descriptors. In practice this will mean engagement of experts involved in the OSPAR work on common indicators in the review of the Commission Decision, thus ensuring that regional level work is adequately taken into account in the development of further EU level guidance. The actual GES criteria will be revised in good time before 2018 so as to have them available for use in the next Art. 8 assessment and Art. 9 updating of GES in the next MSFD-cycle due in 2018. This work is closely interlinked with the determination of assessment criteria needed for the common indicators in order to deliver an Intermediate Assessment in 2017, the first flagship of the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2014-2020.

9. Substantial further coordination is needed to achieve a more complete set of indicators for the North East Atlantic, and OSPAR EU Member States have agreed to further develop the OSPAR common and candidate indicators.

> Goals:

- Further development and operationalisation of Common Indicators and (where possible) Priority Candidate Indicators (and thematic assessments planned), to be used by OSPAR Contracting Parties in the Intermediate Assessment 2017 (Roof Report for 2018 initial assessment).
- Conclusion on a representative and adequate set of Common Indicators with a view to their use after 2018.
- (Sub)regionally coherent GES determinations where possible before 2018, and common GES determinations where appropriate¹ inter alia on the basis of the agreed Common Indicators²

> Actions:

Short term 2014-2015:

- ICG-COBAM, ICG-ML, ICG-Noise and all other relevant ICG's active under the Committees to further develop and operationalise the Common, and, where possible, Priority candidate indicators.
- ICG-MAQ and Indicators Officers Network to document the content of the Intermediate Assessment 2017. See JAMP target product A-1 on the basis of the expected delivery of assessment sheets for common indicators and priority candidate indicators (and thematic assessments planned) for each of the three sub-regions (so that any gaps arising can be identified)
- OSPAR Commission 2015 to decide, in the context of the process to make the agreed common indicators operational, on any corrective action in case the development of indicators does not progress according to plans reported by the Committees.

Medium term 2016-2018:

- ICG-MSFD to discuss in 2016 based on input of Contracting Parties within a sub-region whether the set of Common Indicators yields a complete picture, or whether crucial gaps in the indicators remain. If necessary, ICG-MSFD and the Indicators Officers Network to reassess the Common Indicator set, to identify remaining gaps and to further complete the set towards a representative set of indicators by 2018.

¹ With reference to Art.3 of MSFD

² to be considered further and possibly adapted based on developments in Brussels in the EU Common Implementation Strategy

- ICG-MAQ (in cooperation with all relevant Committees) to assess in 2016-2017 by means of the IA2017, based on the indicator assessment sheets and specifically identified thematic assessments (see specification of OSPAR JAMP product A-1), to what extent progress is being made at (sub-)regional scale.
- All relevant Committees (especially BDC, EIHA, HASEC) to decide in 2017 on new common indicators (where possible drawing upon the Priority candidate indicators), including identification of gaps remaining on crucial transboundary issues for which (common or candidate) indicators are missing.
- All relevant Committees to agree on their contributions to the content of the IA2017 by spring 2017.
- OSPAR Commission 2017 to agree on the content of the IA2017. Subsequent (web-based) publication by OSPAR of IA2017. The IA2017 will be published as a roof report to be used by EU Member States for the review of their initial assessment in 2018 with a view to assess progress towards the achievement of GES in their marine waters.
- ICG-MSFD to possibly revisit in 2018 points of interest for the second MSFD-cycle derived from national public consultations finalised up until that moment. The IA2017 will not be revised in 2018 taking account of national public consultations.
- OSPAR EU Member States to update their initial assessment and determinations of GES in 2018, based on, inter alia, the OSPAR common and candidate indicators, the revision of the Commission Decision 2010/477/EU and the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment (IA) 2017 (Roof Report).

II.2 Long term (after 2018)

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In a long term perspective, start to reflect further on the timing of the QSR2021 recognising that it will coincide with the preparation of the next cycle of programme of measures and making sure that the requirement to prepare the next initial assessment under the MSFD will only be necessary in 2024. It would require some further reflection within OSPAR on how the current planning of the QSR2021 could most effectively contribute to the regional component ("roof report") in 2024 where, at least some of, the 2021 assessments may not be up to date anymore.

10. The QSR is the second flagship product of the JAMP 2014-2020 (product A-2), the timing of which needs to (1) avoid clashes in work peaks for EU MS concerning MSFD implementation, and (2) support the next MSFD-cycle starting in 2024. Plans for this QSR still need to be finalised (cf. OSPAR 2014 adoption of JAMP). Experience with the previous cycle may indeed indicate that a later date would be better. There is a need for early agreement on methodologies to be used in the QSR, so that it will be a genuine ecosystem approach.

> Goals:

- An integrated assessment (QSR) as a contribution to the third MSFD implementation cycle in 2024 (roof report for the review of the 2018 MSFD assessment).
- The workload and results associated with the QSR timed in such a way as to minimise peaks and maximise effective use of the product, and ensure the use of an ecosystem approach.

> Actions:

- 2015-2016: ICG-MAQ to develop assessment methodologies for an integrated assessment to be used in the next QSR that better reflect the progressive implementation of the ecosystem approach. ICG-MAQ is to do so taking into account evolving EU requirements or guidance, and wherever practical in cooperation with other regional seas conventions bordering the OSPAR maritime area.
- 2017-2018: ICG-MSFD to provide advice to CoG on the optimal timing of the next QSR within the time range 2021, 2022, 2023, synchronising with of MSFD timelines, decision to be taken by OSPAR 2017.
- 2018-2019: Contracting Parties to implement new common indicators to fill information gaps defined in IA2017.
- 2018-2020/2022: Progressively improved coordination of monitoring and assessment activity, CoG updating the JAMP as necessary.

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| 7 | <p>Reflect at EU level under the CIS process upon the further development of a "nested assessment approach" similar to the one in HELCOM with the view to facilitating coherence and assessment preparation at all governance levels, including the preparation of the EU evaluation report according to article 20 MSFD.</p> |
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11. Based on discussions at the EU level under the CIS process and the development of OSPAR common indicators, which is now reaching the stage where expert groups are considering the geographical scale of the assessment outputs and how the indicators should be visualised, it is recognised that OSPAR needs to take a strategic approach to nested geographic assessment scales.

> Actions:

- Secretariat together with ICG-MAQ and other subsidiary bodies to develop a proposal for a nested approach, taking into account any emerging guidance from the EU CIS process, as a basis for Committees to act upon.

II.3 Facilitating actions

12. The Intermediate Assessment 2017 and the Quality Status Report 2021 will be the two flagship products of the OSPAR Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme 2014-2021. Further developing common and candidate indicators and preparing the IA2017 and the next QSR takes place in the Committees (for MSFD mainly in the reimits of BDC, EIHA and HASEC). The ICG-MSFD is engaged with facilitating this process and on advising to CoG.

13. In order for the draft IA2017 to be as useful as possible to the Contracting Parties in their update of their initial assessments, and to allow for national public consultation, during the OSPAR 2014 Commission meeting the Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Correspondence Group to manage Preparation and publication of the Intermediate Assessment 2017 and the QSR 2021 (ICG-MAQ) have been adopted. The ICG-MAQ will be responsible for the process around the flagship products, while the other OSPAR subsidiary bodies will provide input in the form of the actual content. The OSPAR Secretariat will consider organising a web-based public consultation preceding the OSPAR Commission 2017. A large part of the IA2017 will consist of assessment sheets for agreed common and candidate indicators, thus improving coherence, completeness and adequacy of the initial assessment.

> Goal:

→ Practical guidance on the Intermediate Assessment 2017.

> Actions (short term 2014-2015):

- ICG-MAQ to prepare guidance and templates, with the emphasis on standardised electronic reporting and regular editorial guidance (working closely with ODIMS).
- ICG-MAQ to prepare common guidance on presentation and aggregation of information so that it is suitable for the MSFD at the scales required for reporting.
- ICG-MAQ to prepare guidance on content, structure and style for thematic assessments.
- ICG-MAQ to consider, in close association with the OSPAR Secretariat, and present to CoG in May 2015, an example of the electronic format of an indicator assessment sheet for final agreement.

The ICG-MAQ will provide further guidance on timelines, as based on the JAMP 2014-2021 and discussion within the CoG.

> Goal:

- Timing for the IA2017 that enables Contracting Parties to include relevant parts of the IA2017 in their national reports to the Commission in October 2018.

> Actions:

- ICG-MAQ and all relevant committees to present before the end of 2016 final drafts of assessment products for agreement by OSPAR Committees in spring 2017.
- ICG-MAQ to finalise in spring 2017 the OSPAR assessment products for inclusion in the Intermediate Assessment 2017(Roof Report). Contracting Parties could use a web-based publication of the IA2017 for their public consultation, in order to allow OSPAR EU Member States to refer to it in national MSFD reporting.
- OSPAR Commission 2017 to finalise agreement on the IA2017 (Roof Report).
- ICG-MAQ to finalise by June 2017 the publication version of the assessment product (and any associated underlying datasets, metadata, ...) which is suitable for use by Contracting Parties in their national consultations and in EU reporting by June 2017.

III. Environmental targets

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| 3 | Prioritise further areas where greater regional convergence can be achieved in relation to environmental targets by 2018. Such an overview will be prepared by OSPAR and communicated to the European Commission by the end of 2014. |
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> Goals:

Strengthening regional coordination and ensuring coherence with regard to Art. 10.

> Actions (short term 2014-2015):

- During 2015 ICG-MSFD to identify opportunities for enhanced coherence of environmental targets, based on the revision process of the Commission Decision 2010/477/EU and the OSPAR Development of Measures Programme (DOMP).

> Actions (medium term 2016-2017):

- ICG-MSFD to identify during 2015-2016 the pressures that could benefit from regional targets or from a regional approach to coherent national targets.
- ICG-MSFD to develop in 2016-2017 activities to pursue enhanced coherence of environmental targets by 2018.
- OSPAR Commission 2017 to conclude on the activities above, and where necessary to provide further guidance.

IV. Monitoring

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| 10 | Report the agreed coordinated regional monitoring programmes using, where possible, regionally agreed fact sheets as part of the national reporting. Ongoing support projects will be requested to assist in the technical preparation of this coordinated monitoring "roof report". A particular effort will be done for developing and coordinating noise monitoring. |
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14. As follow-up to the development of common indicators and as part of the JAMP 2014-2020 joint documentation on monitoring coordination was finalised in May 2014 for use by Contracting Parties in their national reporting on Art.11 MSFD monitoring programmes. This information includes fact sheets providing information at sub-programme level in relation to OSPAR coordinated monitoring for agreed common indicators (joint documentation) that can be used by OSPAR EU Member States as a reference in their MSFD reporting to the European Commission.

15. ICG-Noise work in 2014-2015 will include the further development of a common register on impulsive noise and a proposal for a jointly designed and implemented ambient noise monitoring programme, in accordance with the outcome of the work of the EU TG Noise.

> Goal:

- Agreement on regionally coordinated monitoring programmes addressing MSFD aspects where necessary.

> Actions (short term 2014-2015):

- Contracting Parties to implement and monitor in 2015 common indicators³, including working towards a coherent assessment, e.g. by defining common assessment criteria where possible (important step towards coordinated and measurable GES determinations at (sub-) regional scale).
- Review existing monitoring guidelines with a view to their need for adjustment to MSFD needs and develop guidelines for new aspects to ensure coordinated monitoring.
- EIHA to make proposals and reach agreement in 2015 for coordinated driver-pressure monitoring where possible (important step to assessing the achievement of targets and measures) [existing EIHA task.
- ICG-MSFD to consider how the information related to the OSPAR Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme (CEMP; under revision) can best be managed with a view to its use for MSFD implementation and subsequent reporting under article 11 [e.g. to include monitoring aspects such as arising from biodiversity assessment requirements.
- ICG-Noise to develop a common register on impulsive noise in 2014-2015 based on, inter alia, EU TG Noise guidance.
- ICG-Noise to propose a jointly designed ambient noise monitoring programme in 2014-2015 based on, inter alia, EU TG Noise guidance.

³ As agreed at OSPAR 2013, including the possibility of opting out of the implementation of Common Indicators

V Addressing knowledge gaps

8 This action plan will contain the OSPAR Science Agenda, which identifies short-term and long-term issues. In 2017 consideration will be given to the need to review this regional action plan, on the basis of the revision of Commission Decision 477/2010/EU, the assessment by the Commission of member states' monitoring programmes and programmes of measures and the findings of the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment 2017.

16. During the OSPAR Commission 2014, the OSPAR Science Agenda has been adopted, which will be updated when needed. In 2014, the focus will be on establishing common priorities.

> Goals:

- A coordinated science base for monitoring, assessment and measures.
- Coordinated action in relation to financing opportunities in support of MSFD implementation.
- Maximised synergies with other with regional sea conventions (HELCOM and Barcelona Convention) for closing knowledge gaps.

> Actions (short term (2014-2015):

- ICG-MSFD to advise CoG on shortlist of top-priorities for MSFD in November 2014 with a view to improve the external scientific support, at the most appropriate level, for the main common MSFD needs experienced by Contracting Parties.
- CoG to mandate the Secretariat to seek project funding which should be designed to deliver results that can be taken up in the IA2017 and the QSR 2021 and which support ongoing work on monitoring, assessment and management.
- ICG-MSFD to invite the TG OSPAR Science Agenda to elaborate for CoG a version of the Science Agenda, which reflects a synthesis of the ICG-MSFD prioritisation findings, with 'anonymised' annotation of the items on the basis of the comments received.
- TG OSPAR Science Agenda to pass on in 2015 the ICG-MSFD comments and priorities to the OSPAR Committees as information they can take into account when addressing the review of their section(s) of the Science Agenda.
- The OSPAR Committees to check and potentially further prioritise the list of research needs, taking into account the JAMP 2014-2021, the work on common indicators and coordination of measures;

Ongoing (2014-2018 and beyond)

- The Committees to keep their parts of the OSPAR Science Agenda up to date, also reflecting the needs coming from coherent MSFD-implementation (e.g. development of common indicators, monitoring and assessment, the Intermediate Assessment (IA2017), coordination of GES and targets, coordination of measures and assessment of MSFD-products by the European Commission);
- The Committees to continue further elaboration of their science needs to a level that can be brought forward for one or more joint projects, liaise with related OSPAR groups where

applicable and investigate options for EU-funding. Investigate lead partners and supporting partners among the Contracting Parties;

- The CoG and the Committees to encourage the Contracting Parties to communicate and promote the contents of the OSPAR Science Agenda to potential interested organisations, partners and EU-programmes, and encourage co-financing projects that meet the science needs.

VI. Programmes of Measures

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| 11 | <p>work towards developing coordinated and if possible joint programmes of measures and elements of programmes of measures, taking into account OSPAR work, and develop, as a first step, a regional programme of measures on marine litter in the form of an Action Plan. Other areas to further discuss coordinated action within the 1st MSFD implementation cycle are marine protected areas and the establishment of a NECA (NOx Emission Control Area). Furthermore, a discussion will take place for which issues a coordinated OSPAR programme of measures would be meaningful and desirable in the subsequent planning cycle (2021) to allow the necessary preparation including (economic) evidence gathering to take place. Such a discussion should be concluded in time to be incorporated in the OSPAR "roof report" on the programme of measures in 2015.</p> |
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17. Prior to the coming into force of the MSFD OSPAR had adopted several decisions and recommendations to combat marine pollution. In the period 2010-2014 44 recommendations have been adopted by OSPAR to protect species and habitats. A coordinated approach to Marine Protected Areas is necessary to ensure that future assessments of MPA networks within OSPAR and by the EU are compatible. Biodiversity and Habitats are topics that may be suitable for further coordinated action in the future (after 2018), as a follow-up to the IA2017. The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was adopted during the OSPAR 2014 Commission. Cross-sectorial cooperation is very important in order to reduce marine litter in the OSPAR maritime area. The Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter should therefore be implemented in close cooperation with other relevant organisations and initiatives, among which other Regional Seas Conventions. A Regional Action Plan on Noise may be developed following the conclusions from the IA2017.

> Goal:

- Coordinated programmes of measures of Contracting Parties, and development of, as appropriate, joint regional programmes.

> Actions:

Short term (2014-2015)

- ICG-MSFD/CoG to agree in spring 2015 on an inventory of the OSPAR acquis of existing measures, prepared by the Netherlands in consultation with all OSPAR Committees.
- All relevant committees to continue to examine opportunities – on the basis of (draft) national Programmes of Measures becoming available from Autumn 2014 – Spring 2015 – for
 1. further cross-border coordination concerning programmes of measures, and

2. the development of additional regional measures (comparable with RAP Litter) and
 3. coordinated action on issues that lie in responsibility of other regional or international responsibility (e.g. fisheries/shipping/issues under international river commissions).
- OSPAR Commission 2015 to adopt joint documentation on coordination of measures for use by Contracting Parties in their national reporting on Art. 13 MSFD programmes of measures.
 - ICG-MSFD to discuss in spring 2015 the (emerging) EU CIS guidance on exemptions (draft due for discussion at the MSCG on 10 and 11 November 2014).
 - HASEC 2015 to report, on the basis of the North Sea consultation on a possible NECA (lead by the Netherlands in IMO), on how best to proceed taking account of the state of play in IMO (see HASEC 14/14/1, § 8.12.g).
 - EIHA, the ICG-ML and lead Contracting Parties to implement in 2015 and beyond the actions of the RAP Marine Litter, e.g. in the form of background documents, recommendations, decisions as appropriate, and further recommended actions, to be adopted by the OSPAR Commission.
 - CoG (2/2014) and/or ICG-MSFD (1/2015) to discuss a first concept for an OSPAR Development of Measures Programme (DOMP) (taking account of experiences in developing the RAP Marine Litter).

Medium term (2016-2017)

- ICG-MPA to support development of coherent criteria between OSPAR and EU (MEG) to establish a coherent network of MPAs.
- ICG-Noise to prepare/develop a possible RAP Noise.
- BDC in cooperation with EIHA to prepare/discuss further action on pressures/activities affecting marine biodiversity, such as physical damage and loss of seabed habitats.
- OSPAR intersessional group on species and habitats (ICG-POSH) to draw together recently agreed actions and measures under OSPAR Recommendations on species and habitats into a package possibly as part of a regional plan on biodiversity.
- Continued work on the OSPAR Development of Measures Programme (DOMP)

Long term (after 2018)

- ICG-Noise to possibly finalise a RAP Noise.
- ICG-COBAM to conclude the discussion on further coordinated action on biodiversity and habitats as follow-up to the IA2017.
- ICG-MSFD to further coordinate MSFD measures for the 2nd MSFD cycle.

VII. Cross-cutting issues

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Promote further coherence between the four marine regions where required by the Directive, in particular between OSPAR and HELCOM and between OSPAR and Barcelona Convention with the view to fostering a coherent level of ambition across the EU, taking into account the regional specificities.

18. On a practical level, OSPAR wants to align work programmes with other Regional Sea Conventions where feasible and practical; to share information on work plans and mutually adjust when needed. The aim should be to have explicit plans with clear targets and outputs so that work programmes complement each other rather than duplicate.

> Goal:

- Increased coherence between the four marine regions.

> Actions:

- 2014-2015: Preparation of a document on cross-regional cooperation, to be presented to the European Commission in 2015.
- Coordinate the implementation of the RAPs Marine Litter under OSPAR, Barcelona Convention and HELCOM, and further develop and implement measures jointly, where possible.
- Further cooperation between OSPAR indicator groups, HELCOM CORESET and the Barcelona Convention on common indicators [to share workloads and increase cross-regional coherence (as initiated with the COREBAM meeting)].
- Further investigate opportunities to cooperate on data management (e.g. PLC/RID)
- Cooperate on the development of integrated assessment methodologies (e.g. IA/QSR with HOLAS)
- Cooperate on EU calls and other funding and cooperation (e.g. ICES) opportunities to strive for joint and complementary (work sharing) activities where feasible.
- Find practical arrangements for cooperation between OSPAR, ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS, HELCOM and the Barcelona Convention in the field of underwater noise