

PART II – THE THEMATIC STRATEGIES

Biological Diversity and Ecosystems

1. Objectives

1.1 The OSPAR Commission's strategic objective with regard to biodiversity and ecosystems is to halt and prevent by 2020 further loss of biodiversity in the OSPAR maritime area, to protect and conserve ecosystems and to restore, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected.

1.2 To this end, the OSPAR Commission will:

- a. improve the status of threatened and/or declining species and habitats, in particular of those on the OSPAR List, and ensure that they are effectively conserved, working, where appropriate, with other competent authorities;
- b. further OSPAR's work on marine protected areas with the view of achieving a network of marine protected areas which:
 - i. 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 regions³;
 - ii. 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 2012);
- c. aim to ensure that the effects of human activities and pressures on the marine environment, individually or cumulatively, do not adversely affect species, habitats and ecosystems, in particular those on the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats;
- d. substantially reduce marine litter in the OSPAR maritime area to levels where properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment;
- e. endeavour to keep the introduction of energy, including underwater noise, at levels that do not adversely affect the marine environment in the OSPAR maritime area;
- f. endeavour to limit the introduction of non-indigenous species by human activities to levels that do not adversely alter the ecosystems.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 When making assessments and adopting programmes and measures in relation to biodiversity and ecosystems, the Contracting Parties will be guided by the general principles described in section 3 of Part I.

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 focus on the following main strategic directions in the period up to 2020:

- a. ensuring the protection and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning throughout the OSPAR maritime area and, when practicable, restoring marine areas which have been adversely affected. This will be done through the further development and implementation of appropriate programmes and measures within the sphere of competence of the OSPAR

³ Target 1.1 coastal and marine biodiversity in Annex IV of UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/VIII/15.

Commission and, where necessary, engagement and technical cooperation with other authorities;

- b. further developing the OSPAR network of marine protected areas, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction, ensuring that the network is ecologically coherent in the OSPAR maritime area and that effective management is in place at all sites;
- c. integrated management of human activities, through, among other measures, the further development and implementation of tools such as marine spatial planning, impact assessment and socio-economic assessment, in order to achieve the reduction in pressures which are adversely affecting the marine environment, and the sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services;
- d. regional, coordinated development of monitoring and assessment of marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, including the individual and cumulative pressures and environmental impacts from human activities and climate change and ocean acidification.

4. Time frame and implementation

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

4.2 For the implementation of this Strategy the OSPAR Commission will:

Monitoring and assessment

- a. continue to monitor and assess, in accordance with the criteria of Appendix 3 to the 1992 OSPAR Convention and with the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme, the effects of human activities and pressures, individually and cumulatively, on the marine environment, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning;
- b. by 2013, agree on an overall assessment process for marine biodiversity and ecosystem functioning, and develop and agree by 2014 a coordinated monitoring programme for the ongoing assessment of the environmental status with regard to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in the OSPAR maritime area;
- c. assess, based on monitoring data, the current and future impacts of climate change and ocean acidification on species, habitats and ecosystem functioning; establish the timescale(s) for such impacts to take effect and their possible extent; and consider management options suitable for mitigation of, and adaptation to, such impacts;

Targeted actions for the protection and conservation of species, habitats and ecosystem processes

- d. undertake the following actions in further developing appropriate measures for the protection of threatened and/or declining species and habitats on the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats ("the OSPAR List"), in order to improve their status and to ensure they are effectively conserved:
 - (i) identify targeted protective measures for species and habitats included in the OSPAR List on the basis of information contained in the OSPAR background documents for species and habitats, the report of the OSPAR Workshop on defining actions and measures for the threatened and/or declining species listed by OSPAR (Paris, 2009), and any other sources considered relevant;

- (ii) develop and adopt as soon as possible, but no later than by 2013, OSPAR programmes and measures (Decisions or Recommendations and guidance) aimed at improving the protection of the species and habitats on the OSPAR List, or groups thereof, outlining those targeted actions that should be taken by Contracting Parties and the OSPAR Commission;
 - (iii) bring to the attention of relevant competent authorities and international bodies those protective measures that the OSPAR Commission considers necessary and which fall within the competence of those authorities and international bodies;
 - (iv) evaluate by 2016 whether actions and measures being taken are adequate to achieve the objective set out in § 1.2(a), taking into account those being taken by the OSPAR Commission and other competent authorities and international bodies;
 - (v) review the OSPAR List with a view to removing any species or habitats that no longer meet the criteria for listing and adding new species and habitats that fulfil the criteria. Identify any new programmes or measures required to ensure improved conservation status of species and habitats contained within such a revised list;
- e. strengthen knowledge of ecosystem integrity and resilience of the components of marine biodiversity.

Marine protected areas (MPAs)

- f. undertake the following actions in further developing an ecologically coherent OSPAR network of well-managed marine protected areas ("the OSPAR Network") to complement the actions of Contracting Parties under the revised OSPAR Recommendation on a Network of Marine Protected Areas:
- (i) identify, on the basis of reports from Contracting Parties and observer organisations, further possible components of the OSPAR Network in areas beyond national jurisdiction in order to achieve the purposes of the network, as described in paragraph 2.1 of OSPAR Recommendation 2003/3 and taking due account of guidance provided in the OSPAR agreements 2003-17 (selection of MPAs) and 2006-3 (coherent network of MPAs);
 - (ii) in accordance with UNCLOS, and in consultation with the relevant competent international organisations, develop and implement the management framework adopted by the OSPAR Commission for those MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction already included in the OSPAR Network and, if appropriate, consider how such protection could be achieved for any further areas identified under (i) and how to integrate such areas into the network;
 - (iii) evaluate in 2012 whether the components of the OSPAR Network that have been selected by that date fulfil the OSPAR target at § 1.2(b), the commitment of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) of representative networks, and the target of the Convention on Biological Diversity to have at least 10 per cent of each of the world's marine and coastal ecological regions effectively conserved;
 - (iv) identify any gaps which need to be filled, especially in offshore areas and areas beyond national jurisdiction, in order to achieve, by 2012, an ecologically coherent OSPAR Network and maintain it thereafter, and take steps towards filling any such gaps in areas beyond national jurisdiction as soon as possible;
 - (v) evaluate by 2016, whether OSPAR MPAs are well-managed, working, where relevant, in cooperation with competent authorities;

- (vi) if so requested by a Contracting Party concerned, consider whether any action by the OSPAR Commission, or concerted action by the Contracting Parties, is needed to support efforts by Contracting Parties to achieve the institution of management measures by an international organisation for any component of the OSPAR Network.

Management of human activities in the context of Annex II and Annex V/Appendix 3 to the OSPAR Convention

- g. on the basis of continued monitoring and assessment of human activities, keep under review, and, if necessary, draw up, programmes and measures for the management of human activities with a view to:
 - (i) controlling the effects of human activities and pressures, individually and cumulatively, on the marine environment, and;
 - (ii) restoring, where practicable, marine areas which have been adversely affected.

Management of human activities in the context of Article 4 of Annex V to the OSPAR Convention

- h. collaborate and exchange information (e.g. on vulnerable marine ecosystems) with fisheries management authorities, advisory organisations, the fishing industry and other relevant stakeholders, so as to promote and support the integration of fisheries management with ecosystem-based management of the North-East Atlantic, the sustainable management of fisheries consistent with OSPAR Ecological Quality Objectives, and an improved assessment of fisheries which supports measures to achieve good environmental status;
- i. encourage the ratification, implementation and enforcement of relevant instruments of the IMO, and collaborate with the IMO and other competent organisations and relevant stakeholders (e.g. Bonn Agreement and North Sea Network of Prosecutors and Investigators) on actions addressing impacts of maritime transport on the marine environment.⁴

Management of specific human pressures

- j. develop appropriate programmes and measures to reduce amounts of litter in the marine environment and to stop litter entering the marine environment, both from sea-based and land-based sources, to complement the actions of Contracting Parties such as under OSPAR Recommendation 2010-XX on the reduction of marine litter through the implementation of 'Fishing for Litter' initiatives, including:
 - (i) by 2012, based on an evaluation of progress made and available data, establish regionally⁵ coordinated targets for marine litter;
 - (ii) by 2014, a coordinated monitoring programme for marine litter;
 - (iii) promotion of research to improve the evidence base with respect to impact of litter, including micro-particles, on the marine environment;
- k. foster, in cooperation with the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors, enforcement and prosecution of offences under Annex V on garbage to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL 73/78 Convention);
- l. consider, identify and implement appropriate measures for the reduction of the adverse effects of underwater noise on the marine environment.

⁴ This includes actions addressing the 'clean ship approach', air pollution (e.g. NO_x, SO_x), ship noise and ship strikes, the introduction and spread of non-indigenous species, effective port waste reception facilities, pollution prevention, preparedness and response, and transboundary enforcement and prosecution of maritime pollution offences.

⁵ "Sub-regionally" for the purposes of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

Integrating management actions

- m. further develop appropriate measures, in line with the Ecosystem Approach as set out in section 4 of Part I, to facilitate marine spatial planning in the OSPAR maritime area, including:
 - (i) cooperation on transboundary issues that are arising from marine spatial planning;
 - (ii) where necessary, additional mechanisms for transnational consultations on marine spatial plans and issues arising from them;
 - (iii) region-specific, tailor-made approaches to applying marine spatial planning to support the Ecosystem Approach;
 - (iv) exchange of best practices and experiences with regard to marine spatial planning.
- n. further develop cumulative effect assessment methodologies to support the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach and facilitate the fulfilment of requirements under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, particularly in relation to the assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning;
- o. by 2012, prepare an economic and social analysis of the uses of the OSPAR maritime area and of the cost of degradation of the marine environment, consistent with the requirements of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

5. Interrelations with other international institutions

5.1 The implementation of the Biodiversity and Ecosystems 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 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 Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Port Waste Reception Facilities Directive (2000/59/EC).

5.2 To promote consistency, other relevant measures which have been agreed or are being negotiated by some or all Contracting Parties in other forums are taken into account in the light of their applicability to different geographical areas. Such measures are taken under the Bern Convention, the Bonn Convention (including its regional agreements) and the Ramsar Convention, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Helsinki Convention, the Barcelona Convention, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas, the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation, the Bucharest Convention, the Bonn Agreement, the Lisbon Agreement when entered into force, the Arctic Council, the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the International Conferences on the Protection of the North Sea.

5.3 The OSPAR Commission will cooperate:

- a. with other competent authorities, as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding between the OSPAR Commission and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, the Memorandum of Understanding between the OSPAR Commission and the International Seabed Authority, and the Agreement of Cooperation between the International Maritime Organization and the OSPAR Commission, and will endeavour to establish further cooperation arrangements with other relevant international organisations, as appropriate;
- b. with relevant scientific institutions including the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the European Environment Agency (EEA).