

## Writing style guide for assessments

This style guide has been developed primarily to enable consistent drafting of common indicator assessments. The guide can also be applied for other assessments contributing to the QSR 2023.

No.	Rule
<b>General comments / rules</b>	
1.	In brief sections, language should be easily understandable for a non-scientific audience – no references and no scientific names. The brief sections must stand alone, and not reference the extended sections. All figure and table number for the brief will be in numerical form. The brief sections are like executive summaries.
2.	The extended sections are for all the technical content, the text must still be readable and scientific terms should still be explained where appropriate. There are no word limits for the extended sections.
3.	Abbreviations to be stated in full on first use in each assessment / chapter, e.g. ‘Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023’, followed by ‘QSR 2023’ thereafter. Each abbreviation in the extended sections must be written in full again first time.
4.	For brief sections – write abbreviations in full in the title, then in full on first mention in either background, results, conclusions, results or knowledge gaps. You <u>can</u> use abbreviations in the key message (provided they are also used in the title).
5.	Text should be impersonal, in the third person passive, i.e. never use ‘we’ studied this, always say ‘it was studied’.
6.	Scientific names should be in italics but not in brackets after English name (the genus of the Latin name always begins with a capital letter). Common species names should be in lower case. E.g. little egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i> Avoid use of scientific names in the brief sections.
7.	Avoid citations should in the brief sections; however, they can be used in the extended version and in underlying assessments. In the extended version all references will be placed at the end of the page, in a separate accordion section.
8.	All references should use the HARVARD system. Many free referencing tools are available online. A guide to Harvard referencing can be found here. <a href="https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing">https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing</a>
9.	Do not refer to OSPAR Regions (I, II, III, IV, V) Refer to names of seas, or sub-divisions, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arctic Waters</li> <li>• Greater North Sea</li> <li>• Celtic Seas</li> <li>• Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast</li> <li>• Wider Atlantic</li> </ul>

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	Or sub-divisions thereof, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern North Sea</li> <li>• Northern North Sea</li> <li>• Dogger Bank</li> <li>• English Channel</li> <li>• Kattegat</li> </ul>
10.	In the brief results, if statements are made about increases or decreases, these should be qualified with actual numbers. E.g. <i>Average annual winter concentrations of dissolved nitrogen offshore in the southern North Sea (18 µM) were more than double the concentrations in the northern North Sea (7.5 µM).</i>
11.	Do not refer to next cycle of MSFD, instead refer to 'next assessment cycle'.
12.	Never use 'about' or 'roughly', 'always say 'approximately'.
13.	If the author wants to show that something within the text should be hyperlinked, the text should be written in <a href="#">blue and underlined</a> (a link should also be provided if the source of the link is not an OSPAR document).
14.	In extended sections, reference EU directives with directive number (we can also hyperlink them), e.g. The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)
<b>Style / terminology</b>	
15.	Numbers One to Ten written as words, all numbers higher than ten written as numbers, e.g. five working days per week, 20 working days per month (unless with units, e.g. 5µg).
16.	No space between number and percentage e.g. 5%
17.	Leave a space between a number and unit, e.g. 32 km, -15.5 CD.
18.	For numbers larger than 999 insert a space to show thousands, e.g. 21 000 (for a decimal point use a comma)
19.	Do not begin a sentence with a number.
20.	Add a space before and after a '/', for example 'chemistry and / or biology' (except for when used in a ratio).
21.	Date format: 17 June 2008
22.	Between '1999 and 2010', not 'between 1999 - 2010'.
23.	From '1999 to 2010', not 'from 1999 - 2010'
24.	1960s not 1960's
25.	Do not use 'etc.'
26.	<u>A</u> ssessment <u>S</u> heet with capitals.
27.	<u>I</u> ndicator <u>A</u> ssessment with capital.
28.	OSPAR <u>C</u> ontracting <u>P</u> arties with capital. Or use countries if appropriate (lower case c).
29.	"sub-regions" with no capital when talking about sub-regions in general
30.	<u>S</u> ub-region X with a capital when talking about a specific sub-region
31.	OSPAR <u>R</u> egions

No.	Rule
32.	OSPAR <u>M</u> aritime <u>A</u> rea
33.	re-used
34.	Common Indicators
35.	Sub-divisions
36.	The North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (The OSPAR Strategy) written in full first use, then thereafter known as 'The OSPAR Strategy' or 'NEAES'
37.	OSPAR's Joint Assessment & Monitoring Programme (JAMP), referred to as 'The JAMP' thereafter
38.	MSFD <u>D</u> escriptors always in numerical form, numbers <u>not</u> written in full
39.	Use UK spelling: e.g. metre, litre, programme, centre, colour, harbour, favourite, harmonise, analyse, organisation, centre
40.	North-East Atlantic (coast) use a hyphen
41.	north-west, south-west, north-western, e.g., south coast of Ireland, not South Coast of Ireland, or South coast of Ireland Only use capital letter if part of proper noun, e.g. Northern Ireland
42.	No &, always 'and'
43.	Socio-economic
44.	Long term not long-term
45.	English Channel – not The Channel
46.	In 'The Sound'
47.	'the Netherlands' not The Netherlands (unless starting a sentence).
48.	United Kingdom not U.K. (unless in a list of other abbreviated countries)
49.	Dataset not data set or data-set Datastream not data stream
50.	Incidental by-catch not Bycatch. By-catch or By catch
51.	haul-out not haul out
52.	cost-effective not cost effective
53.	baseline not base-line
54.	man-made (not manmade)
55.	time series (not time-series)
56.	marine life (not sea life)
57.	food web (not foodweb)
58.	Make sure that <i>Phaeocystis</i> is always in italics as it is a genus
59.	Standard numbering should be used in the brief section e.g. <b>Figure 1, Figure 2</b> etc. Letters should be used in the extended sections e.g. <b>Figure a, Figure b</b> etc.

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60.	<p>All figures to be referred to as '<b>Figure 1</b>' not 'Fig. 1'. Table referencing language as for figures (e.g. <b>Table 1</b>). References to figures and tables to be in bold e.g. <b>Figure a</b>. If more than one is being referred to do not put 'and' in bold e.g. <b>Figure 1 and Table 1</b> (i.e. not Figures). In caption / title use a colon (e.g. <b>Figure 1: Average concentrations of.....</b> or <b>Table a: Average concentrations of....</b>) and <b>bold</b>. Table caption / title above. Figure caption / title below.</p>																																																																
61.	All data should be submitted in Excel files																																																																
62.	Graphs and charts in Excel should be submitted, to enable the Secretariat to re-graph into an aligned format.																																																																
63.	<p>For graphs, please use the following colours for each Contracting Party's data</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contracting Party</th> <th>R</th> <th>G</th> <th>B</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>BE</td><td>199</td><td>179</td><td>211</td></tr> <tr><td>CH</td><td>248</td><td>175</td><td>49</td></tr> <tr><td>DE</td><td>242</td><td>227</td><td>153</td></tr> <tr><td>DK</td><td>122</td><td>63</td><td>145</td></tr> <tr><td>ES</td><td>88</td><td>84</td><td>138</td></tr> <tr><td>FI</td><td>96</td><td>95</td><td>91</td></tr> <tr><td>FR</td><td>255</td><td>134</td><td>67</td></tr> <tr><td>IE</td><td>116</td><td>143</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>IS</td><td>70</td><td>191</td><td>189</td></tr> <tr><td>LU</td><td>15</td><td>116</td><td>175</td></tr> <tr><td>NL</td><td>217</td><td>205</td><td>41</td></tr> <tr><td>NO</td><td>0</td><td>189</td><td>142</td></tr> <tr><td>PT</td><td>160</td><td>203</td><td>216</td></tr> <tr><td>SE</td><td>0</td><td>132</td><td>140</td></tr> <tr><td>UK</td><td>109</td><td>141</td><td>154</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Contracting Party	R	G	B	BE	199	179	211	CH	248	175	49	DE	242	227	153	DK	122	63	145	ES	88	84	138	FI	96	95	91	FR	255	134	67	IE	116	143	30	IS	70	191	189	LU	15	116	175	NL	217	205	41	NO	0	189	142	PT	160	203	216	SE	0	132	140	UK	109	141	154
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64.	Shapefiles to be submitted with corresponding shx, and dbf files.																																																																