



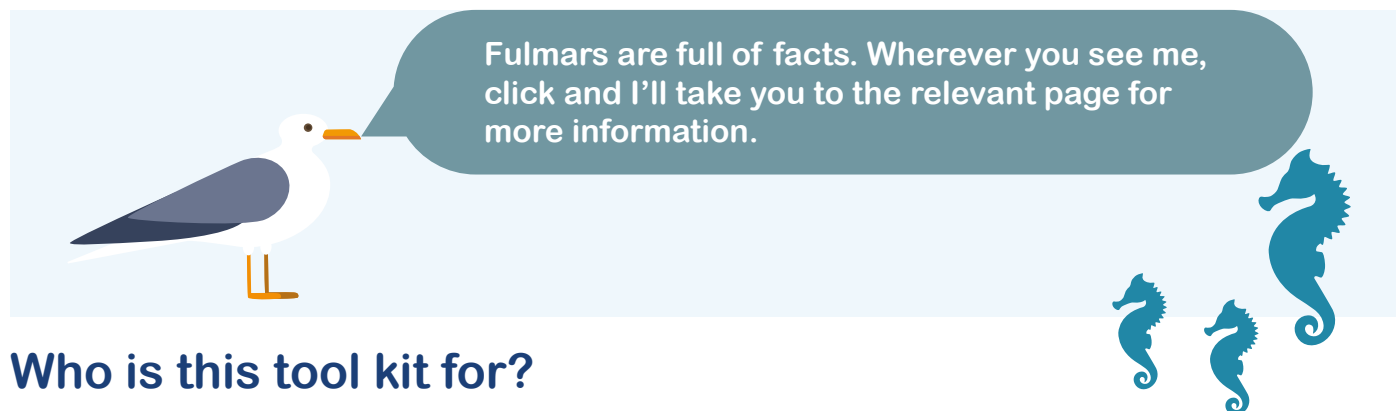
OSPAR
COMMISSION

COMMUNICATION TOOL KIT - Background and key messages

What is OSPAR?

OSPAR is the mechanism by which 15 Governments and the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. OSPAR started in 1972 with the Oslo Convention against dumping and was broadened to cover land-based sources and the offshore industry by the Paris Convention of 1974. These two conventions were unified, updated and extended by the 1992 OSPAR Convention. A new annex on biodiversity and ecosystems was adopted in 1998 to cover non-polluting human activities that can adversely affect the sea.

The fifteen governments are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.



Who is this tool kit for?

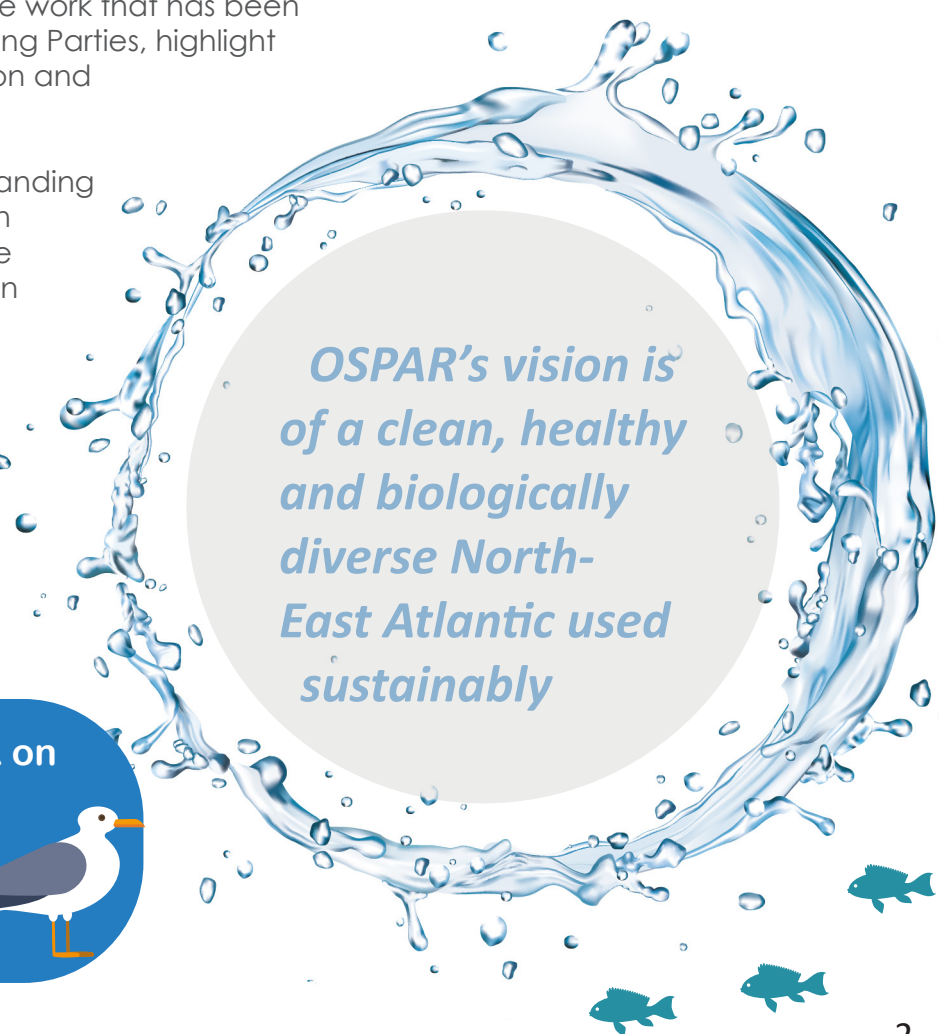
This tool kit has been produced to provide easily accessible resources and consistent messaging to enable all OSPAR Contracting Parties and Observers to communicate and amplify the outcomes of OSPAR's Marine Litter Regional Action Plan 2014-2021 (RAP-ML).

The aim is to increase awareness of the work that has been implemented by the OSPAR Contracting Parties, highlight where OSPAR is taking collective action and help share the outputs of this work.

In addition it aims to promote understanding of the issues surrounding marine litter in the North-East Atlantic and explain the challenges of managing marine litter in an international context.

This tool kit was produced under the lead of the OSPAR Secretariat as a deliverable against Action 60 "Communications" of the OSPAR RAP-ML 2014-2021.

Scan the QR code to go to the OSPAR RAP-ML...



OSPAR's Marine Litter Regional Action Plan is commonly referred to as the RAP-ML

What is the RAP-ML and why was it adopted?

In 2010 OSPAR Ministers declared *"We note that quantities of litter in many areas of the North-East Atlantic are unacceptable, and therefore we will continue to develop reduction measures and targets, taking into consideration an ambitious target resulting in a reduction in 2020."*

Bergen Statement

The RAP-ML (2014-2021) defined four key areas (themes) of actions:

- 1. Actions to combat sea-based sources;**
- 2. Actions to combat land-based sources;**
- 3. Removal Actions;**
- 4. Education and outreach.**

In 2013 OSPAR agreed to develop a Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter by 2014. The sources of marine litter are diverse and ocean dynamics turn it into a transboundary issue requiring collective action. Therefore, OSPAR examined the feasibility of developing a Regional Action Plan to implement the commitments in the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy as well as to coordinate actions to deliver Good Environmental Status across the MSFD descriptors.

The Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic was adopted by OSPAR in 2014 (OSPAR Agreement 2014-1) and implemented between 2014 and 2021. It sets out the policy context for OSPAR's work on marine litter, describes the various types of actions that OSPAR will work on over the coming years and provides a timetable to guide the achievement of these actions.

Action Areas addressed in the RAP-ML included:

- Harmonised Port Reception Facilities;
- Best practice for managing waste from the fishing industry;
- Analysing use of fines for littering at sea;
- Strengthening Fishing for Litter activities;
- Reduction of abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear;
- Identifying litter hotspots and developing risk assessment for accumulation areas;
- Education and outreach;
- Improved waste management by identifying gaps where litter escapes into the marine environment and compiling best practice examples;
- Reduction of Sewage/storm-water related waste;
- Development of sustainable packaging/reduction of single use items/proposals for alternatives for expanded polystyrene;
- Removal of micro plastics from products/processes & zero pellet loss;
- Redesign of products harmful to the marine environment.



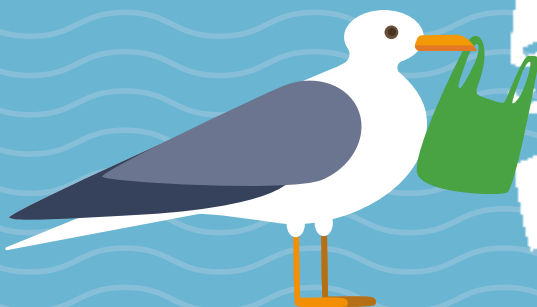
Setting the RAP-ML in the wider policy context

The OSPAR objective and this RAP are supportive of the Rio+20 global commitment to “take action to, by 2025, based on collected scientific data, achieve significant reductions in marine debris to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment” in the “The Future We Want” and with the 2013 UNGA resolution A/RES/68/70 in which States noted concern on marine debris.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015. The issue of marine litter is relevant to a number of the goals such as: SDGs 12 on sustainable consumption and production, 13 on climate action and 14 on life below water. The implementation of the RAP-ML contributes particularly to the achievement of target 14.1 “By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”.

At a regional scale, the OSPAR objective is also in line with the definition of Descriptor 10 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, where Good Environmental Status can be seen to be achieved when “Properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment.

It also contributed to the EU wide ambition of a “quantitative reduction headline target” for marine litter, as agreed in the 7th Environment Action Programme.



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



To conserve and sustainably
use the world's oceans, seas
and marine resources



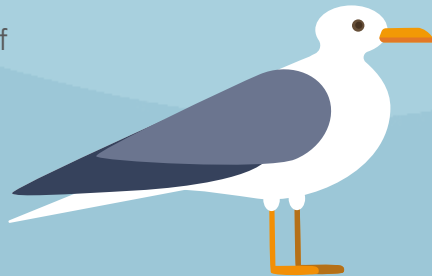
 [click to go to the UN SDG page](#)

Key messages

The messaging guidance provided below will support you in developing outreach on your website, social media, and during in-person events to ensure consistent communications relating to the RAP-ML across the OSPAR community.

What is marine litter? Marine litter is any solid material which has been deliberately discarded, or unintentionally lost on beaches and on shores or at sea, including materials transported into the marine environment from land by rivers, drainage, sewage systems or winds. It includes any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material.

Marine litter consists of a wide range of materials, including plastic, metal, wood, rubber, glass, and paper. Although the relative proportions of these materials vary regionally, there is clear evidence that plastic litter is by far the most abundant type. In some locations plastics make up 90% of marine litter on shorelines. A similar predominance of plastics is reported from sampling at the sea surface and on the seabed.

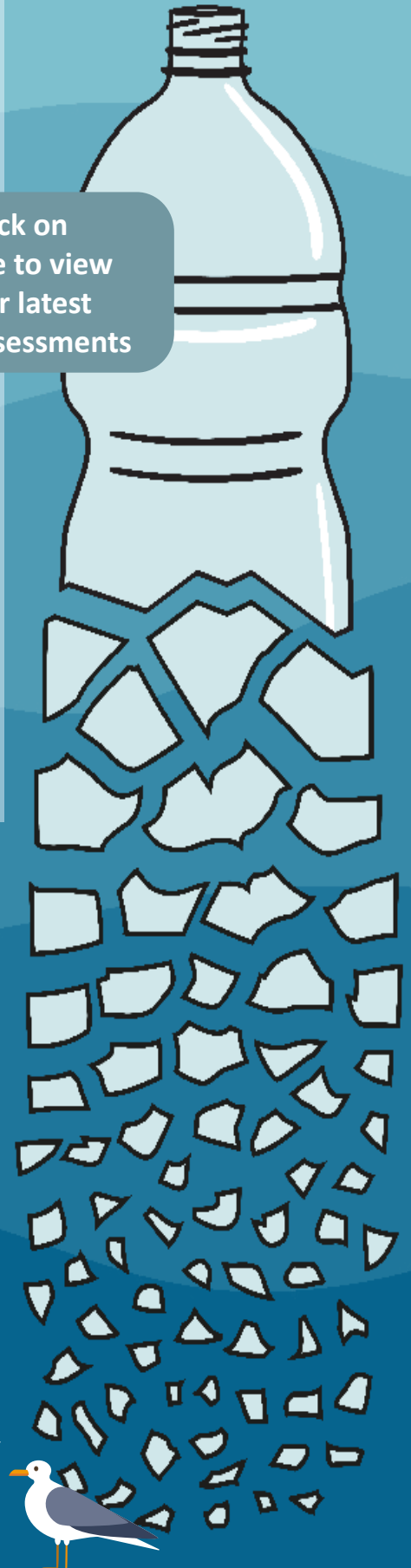


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Why is marine litter a problem? Marine litter is not only an aesthetic problem but incurs socioeconomic costs, threatens human health and safety, and impacts on marine organisms. Entanglement in, or ingestion of, marine litter can have negative consequences for the physical condition of marine animals and even lead to death. Ingestion of micro plastics is also of concern as it may provide a pathway for transport of harmful chemicals into the food web. Additionally, marine litter is known to damage and degrade habitats (e.g. in terms of smothering) and to be a possible vector for the transfer of alien species.

Marine litter also has a significant economic cost for a range of marine industries, such as: aquaculture, fisheries, harbours, industrial seawater users, marinas, municipalities, power stations, rescue services, shipping and water authorities. These costs can include cleaning, blockages, entanglement and contamination. The social impacts of marine litter relate to the ways in which marine litter affects people's quality of life and include reduced recreational opportunities and loss of aesthetic value. You can find out more about the impacts of marine litter and access further information on OSPAR's work on marine litter, including monitoring and assessment by following the fulmar.



Key messages

Is marine litter still a problem in the North-East Atlantic? Levels of marine litter remain a problem and OSPAR's objective for marine litter has not yet been met. The latest beach litter indicator assessments (2019) show some signs of reductions; however, there are sub-regional differences. Overall the latest assessment of ingestion of plastic by fulmars for the whole of the North Sea indicates a statistically significant decreasing trend; sub-regional or national analyses tend to support this, but often lack sufficient bird numbers to be statistically significant.



OSPAR's work on marine litter OSPAR takes a broad-based approach to tackling marine litter, including coordinating region-wide monitoring and assessment as well as the identification of national and collective actions through the RAP-ML, and engagement with stakeholders and other international bodies.

The activities under the RAP-ML were driven forward under the leadership of the OSPAR Contracting Parties, in partnership with other key stakeholders including industry associations and NGOs.

What did the RAP-ML intend to do? The RAP-ML intended to deliver on the following elements:

- a focus on specific sources or items of marine litter that are of most concern in each OSPAR region or the OSPAR maritime area as a whole;
- the development of regional measures, taking into account the socioeconomic aspects including cost effectiveness, for reducing the input of marine litter from sea-based and land-based sources, and for removing litter from the marine environment. These measures should be based on an assessment of the OSPAR Marine Litter Checklist, the measures identified at the Berlin Conference and any existing and new initiatives within Contracting Parties;
- regionally coordinated SMART reduction/operational targets, including those linked to sources, taking into account the MSFD targets submitted by EU Member State Contracting Parties to the European Commission;
- monitoring and necessary arrangements required to assess progress towards reaching the targets, taking into account any outputs from the EU Technical Group Marine Litter, and including the work in progress for the MSFD monitoring programmes;
- cooperation with other relevant regional and international organisations, including Regional Seas.

The RAP-ML ends in 2021 - what happens next? OSPAR has conducted a detailed evaluation of effectiveness the RAP-ML programme, to be published later in 2021. This will also inform the preparation of a second phase of the Regional Action Plan that is in development and due to be considered for adoption in 2022.

Who has been delivering the RAP-ML? Each of the actions has been driven by lead Contracting Parties or groups of Contracting Parties, and progress on actions is assessed each year at the meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Litter (ICG-ML), under the Committee on the Environmental Impacts of Human Activities (EIHA).

Key messages

What were the results of the OSPAR RAP-ML and where can I find them?

The outputs for each of the key areas varies but includes the development of new measures in addition to the development of scoping reports and background documents. All outputs can be accessed via a designated page for each action on the OSPAR Website.



RAP-ML outputs in numbers



Click on an Agreement or Recommendation title and I'll take you to it.

