Development of a Second OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP ML 2): Online Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Background

1. To support and inform the development of the second OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP 2), ICG-ML agreed a project plan which included provisions for a stakeholder consultation event. The event was planned and organised by the RAP 2 Development Project Team[1], and ICG-ML were invited to nominate appropriate stakeholders to be contacted and asked to participate. The stakeholder event took place online in the afternoon of Monday 13 September 2021.

Attendees

2. A total of 29 stakeholders attended the meeting, with representation from international and national eNGOs, industry and other international intergovernmental organisations, including regional sea conventions and UN bodies. The list of stakeholders who attended the meeting is provided below:

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBAMS)
- Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM)
- The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC)
- European Association of Fish Producers Organisations (EAPO)
- Seafish
- Greenpeace International
- Flora and Fauna International
- Environmental Investigation Agency International
- KIMO International
- Marine Conservation Society (MCS)
- CPRM North Sea Commission
- Centro Technologico del Mer (CETMAR)
- Coastwatch
- Keep Sweden Tidy
- Fidra
- Keep Ireland Beautiful
- Keep Wales Tidy
- NRK (Dutch Rubber and Plastics producers)
- Swedish West Coast Trust

[1] Germany, Netherlands and Belgium

3. In addition, a number of OSPAR Contracting Parties also joined the discussions, these included France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Also present was the OSPAR Secretariat, and the RAP Technical Assistance consultant team.

Format of the meeting

4. The stakeholder meeting was chaired by Mareike Erfeling, co-convenor of ICG-ML. A number of presentations were made to the meeting to set the scene for discussions. These covered: an introduction to OSPAR, its mandate, and the types of action that can be taken under the OSPAR Convention; a review of the first RAP ML and a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations from that review; and finally an overview of the development process for RAP 2, including the aspirations for the new RAP ML, as well as an outline of the key themes and actions that have been identified as important for consideration.

5. Following the opening plenary session, the meeting was split in to three groups to discuss the key themes and concept areas for action. Each group was provided with the following guiding questions:

- What do you think is the most important issue to you?
- What do you think of the areas of focus identified by ICG-ML?
- Are there any key issues to pick up within them – what should the output be?
- How can OSPAR best add value, what links are there to existing work?
- Are there any challenges/risks in implementing these actions?
- Do you have ideas on how actions can be implemented?
- Are there other issues, not already identified, that OSPAR needs to address?

Summary of discussions

6. The following section summarises the opening discussions held in each of the three breakout groups, and **Table 1** presents the comments and ideas raised by each group specifically in regard the concept themes.

Fields of action that were well supported

7. In discussions, the following areas of action were identified by stakeholders as the most important issues for OSPAR to be looking to address:

a. There was good support for action to consider and address the contribution that rivers make in transporting plastic to the seas, and support for taking action to address the land based (upstream) sources of litter (e.g. urban littering and poor waste management practices), which become riverine litter, and eventually marine litter.

b. There was also much importance given to addressing the sources of marine litter on land, e.g. through looking at products and packaging, taking the lead from work that has happened in the OSPAR Hazardous Substances & Eutrophication Committee (HASEC).

c. A number of stakeholders were keen to see further OSPAR action that builds on the OSPAR Recommendation to reduce pre-production plastic pellet loss, looking further at the manufacturing chain.

d. There was support to align marine litter implementation and reporting between the different European Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs), as well as support to jointly develop marine litter indicator assessments, and look for further opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge both with other RSCs but also towards the development of the new global agreement on marine plastics.

e. Stakeholders also supported the need to consider the impact of derelict fishing gear (ALDFG), and guidelines for responsibilities for the breakdown of fishing gear (manufacturers and fishers).

Potential new areas for action

8. In discussion, the following new areas were highlighted for consideration by OSPAR for including actions in the RAP 2:

a. Stakeholders suggested that OSPAR should consider the leakage of plastics from agriculture 'agriplastics', and its role as a source of marine litter. This could be linked to work already completed in Spain on intensive agriculture, and a report produced by Eunomia.

b. Another emerging area stakeholders highlighted was the use of geotextiles, in urban areas and at the coast, and the subsequent release of microplastics as the geotextiles breakdown or erode.

c. It was highlighted that climate change will increase extreme events, and heavy rainfall, leading to increased water from cities, sewage outflows, sludge and stormwater runoff. This in turn could increase the quantities of litter released in to the environment, and work could be done to consider this in conjunction with local municipalities.

d. Some stakeholders felt the RAP 2 should consider action to understand behavioural drivers and people's relationship with plastic.

General principles / statements

9. The following general points were made during discussions:

a. Actions should be considered and implemented with an understanding of the role of Governments (including local and regional) and local communities, with each player taking action / being responsible to implement at their own level.

b. Stakeholders supported the need for further monitoring and quantitative targets to support RAP 2, with CP implementation checks.

c. OSPAR should act as an example through practical action (implementing actions) to encourage other organisations to take action.

d. OSPAR could look to increase visibility of marine litter data collection techniques to support additional data comparability and harmonisation.

e. OSPAR should align with recent ministerial declaration to address all negative impacts along the whole lifecycle of plastic;

f. OSPAR should also seek to highlight the gaps that cannot be filled by OSPAR, and call for action from other relevant bodies, e.g. through the UNEA global agreement on marine plastics process.

g. OSPAR should consider the final GESAMP global review of sea-based marine plastics in undertaking its work.

Table 1 - Stakeholder feedback on the specific concept themes

RAP-ML 2 theme (from skeleton)	Sub-theme (from skeleton)	Draft action (concept – the text below attempts to capture the core idea, but more detail in the full table from ICG-ML(1) 2021)	Comments/ideas from stakeholders
Land-based	Waste management	• Work with coastal municipalities to promote and disseminate best practice around waste and marine litter prevention, and design of infrastructures and processes to reduce marine litter • Address waste from construction / demolition (including geotextiles, foamed materials, EPS, PVC, detonation cords, et)	• [NEW issue] Potential for a new action that considers the impacts of waste from agriculture • Potential scope for guidance in terms of reducing waste from construction / demolition works; raising awareness of those working on site: ▪ Important to work closely with coastal municipalities – construction is often done under the supervision of municipalities – pilot project Finland – national guidance on stormwater management from construction sites ▪ There is a UK 'label' called Considerate Construction but not sure what is included around waste management ▪ Programme from Zero waste Scotland - Best practice guide to improving waste management on construction sites https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/Improving%20waste%20management%20on%20construction%20site%20%E2%80%93%20best%20practice%20guide_0.pdf ▪ HELCOM developing Rec wrt XPS /EPS including targeting waste from construction and demolition sites (DK lead) ▪ Alliance for sustainable building products https://asbp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Intro-guide-v2-April-21.pdf • Suggestions for action on waste: ▪ 1) highlight waste prevention before going to waste management/treatment ▪ 2) take a precautionary principle and holistic view of some controversial waste management proposals (e.g. Chemical recycling) which is polluting and also capital intensive and therefore diverts limited resources away from more efficient solutions (e. g. Upstream prevention and reduction)
	Wastewater and stormwater	• Reduction of marine litter entering the marine environment through stormwater	• DK lot of sewage related waste on beaches – would be interesting to map

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	management	• Addressing use and impact of biocarriers	where this litter is coming from and link to associated infrastructure; • Could investigate what infrastructure measures (e.g screens) CPs have for stormwater discharge, and could document effects from these measures (e.g. amount of litter caught for example). • Sewage sludge – regional coherence (and linking back to use for soil enrichment) • There is lack of monitoring on many CSO discharges, so improvement here could help target interventions • Integrated management of stormwater – wider scope than technical measures – taking stormwater into account from planning >>> maintenance (examples of work within HELCOM – new Rec to be adopted at ministerial) The HELCOM stormwater Rec: https://helcom.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Rec-23-5-Rev.1.pdf • Nature based solutions also relevant and being discussed in the Baltic context. • Important to work with other committees within OSPAR (e.g. HASEC) as the work is wider than marine litter. Important to collaborate across.
	Riverine input of marine litter	• Understand the contribution of riverine sources of marine litter and the pathways, contribute to the development of harmonization of monitoring and identify best practices for prevention of riverine litter, in collaboration with River Commissions and relevant national authorities • *NEAES objective S4/07*	• HELCOM – regional pilot project with river basin authorities. Potential for joint project? • Clean Europe Network did some preliminary work on aquatic pathways for litter, and looked at measurement/monitoring - not sure of status of this work? • Work with observers on this topic
	Products and packaging design	• Action/measures to tackle SUPs not covered by EU Directive (e.g. balloons, shot wads)	• SUP Directive Gaps: ▪ Are return/refund deposit systems (drinks) - part of SUP Dir? ▪ Is there a complete list of SUPs not covered by the EU Dir – or should we prepare one? (check – may have this already from beach litter group – there is a check list on what is on the SUP and not)

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			▪ Are caps and lids on the Directive? ▪ HELCOM also have looked at this – recognise that there may be some regional variation; noted that border shops/ passenger ships identified as slipping through the net; • [NEW issue] Gap in knowledge in behaviour on degradable plastics in the environment. Hard to find detailed information on whether/ quantities of how much in the marine env. Coordinated research on bio and oxodegradable plastics in the marine environment. ▪ Further education of people conducting litter monitoring / beach cleans may be needed to recognise biodegradable litter (Question – is this possible or would it be more chemical analysis? Is it possible to recognise these?) can be very difficult to recognise bioplastics. Some danger to rely on labelling. For oxodegradable and biodegradable numbering can be confusing. Worth investigating. Could focus on improving labelling? ▪ Need to be clear if looking at biosourced plastics or biodegradable – should consider both but be clear regarding distinction ▪ For both types of bioplastics, their use should be considered through an holistic approach, including e.g. Impact on climate change, land use change, easier fragmentation to microplastics in ocean, and circular economy, if either of them are to be promoted ▪ EU guidelines on biodegradable microplastics are in preparation ▪ Suggest a work stream on 'essentiality check' even before design and production. And like REACH, can shift the burden to the producer to justify if any of them are essential.
	Products and packaging design	• Reduce the impact of expanded polystyrene and extruded polystyrene (EPS / XPS) in the marine environment – development of OSPAR products [task has been defined in task template agreed by EIHA 21]	*No points recorded on this topic*

Annex 2 – RAP 2 Development Stakeholder Questionnaire Summary

RAP-ML 2 theme (from skeleton)	**Sub-theme (from skeleton)**	**Draft action (concept – the text below attempts to capture the core idea, but more detail in the full table from ICG-ML(1) 2021)**	**Comments/ideas from stakeholders**
	Products and packaging design	• To better inform industry and authorities on alternative options for products that commonly become marine litter [could be subsumed within SUP action?]	• Key action – but would need delving into the formulation - Recommendations on alternative materials; reuse; sharing resources on measuring re-use
	Microplastics – land based	• Action/measures to address the most common sources of microplastics (tackle selected sources, e.g. textiles, tyres)	• Interesting to look at what measures the EU will be taking; • Stakeholder workshop taking place in the context EU – on unintended microplastics – good to follow up on First stakeholder workshop for study 'Cost-benefit analysis of policy measures reducing unintentional releases of microplastics'. Link to study: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/plastics/microplastics_en • HELCOM RAP there are 3 actions, 2 more specific; one re possible rec microplastics from waste water treatment plants; guideline on artificial turfs; 3rd is more general - evaluations on the more significant products and processes producing primary and secondary microplastics and if they are covered by microplastics
Sea-based	Shipping/boating	• Encourage harmonized practices related to the provision/use of PRF within the OSPAR area and identify possible needs for further action [category 2 action?] • Reduce illegal discharges of litter - information sharing / agenda setting [category 2 action?]	• consider the scale of impacts – e.g. loss of 1 container could cause more litter than all of the littering from recreational boating • Key consideration is how to encourage behaviour change • Cooperating with maritime stakeholders re recycling systems on board and phasing out single use plastics (HELCOM has something on this); • Look at standardising recycling systems on board and port reception facilities could be useful and identified as a challenge (esp in fishing harbours)
	Shipping/boating	• Best practice for enforcement of existing measures to prevent recreational craft littering	• Extending reporting requirements of litter loss could be extended to smaller vessels
	Shipping/boating	• Prevent abandoned end of life recreational vessels from becoming marine litter	• Good to see this is being looked at by OSPAR – no organisation tackling this currently and hard to understand scale of the problem. • Also an important issue for HELCOM RAP

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			• Solutions regarding circular economy (e.g. polyester recycling) and creating monetary value of abandoned vessels. • Is a workstream under IMOs London Convention /London Protocol • Linked with microplastic pollution from antifouling and ship breaking activities.
	Shipping/boating	• Prevent litter as a result of container loss at sea	• Work must complement other processes – e.g. IMO action plan – GPS tracking and mandatory declaration of container losses being considered • IMO texts focus on compulsory reporting of container loss, rather than clean up. Pellets as a topic is not a focus. • Question – are there regional guidelines on accident management at sea? • Currently, the responsibility for clean up and ongoing costs is with municipalities, so no deterrent to prevent littering from lost containers. • Challenge: Possible conflict for OSPAR getting involved in shipping legislation, Bonn agreement and EMSA. However, OSPAR could provide evidence to get CP's to act.
	Shipping/boating	• Prevention/clean up of accidental loss of pellets at sea	• Accidental loss of pellets: aim should be to get classification under IMO codes as hazardous, MARPOL annex 5 (pellets as material of concern), standards in supply chains (best practices for ship transport and role of investment and insurance companies) • IMO texts focus on compulsory reporting of container loss, rather than clean up. Pellets as a topic is not a focus. However, there are some efforts underway [through IMO processes] to apply international maritime dangerous good (IMDG) code to pellets to classify as hazardous material (to alter ways stored and transported etc.) • Challenge: As above, possible conflict for OSPAR getting involved in shipping legislation, Bonn agreement and EMSA. However, OSPAR could provide evidence to get CP's to act.
	Shipping/boating	• Litter from Tourist vessels: to understand the extent of the issue, provide best practice	*No points recorded on this topic*

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		guidance	
	Microplastics – seabased sources	• Preventing release of microplastics from seabased sources (ship paints and antifouling) [offshore element could be picked up under offshore sub-theme]	• [NEW issue] consideration of greywater releases and possible contribution to microplastics • REACH regulations/ briefly refer to marine paints but don't' go into detail – scope to look at this more.
	Fishing	• Fishing gear actions/measures [support for one larger action, or grouping the following concepts?]: o Dolly rope alternatives; o net cutting (best practice / education); o design (standardisation / best practice / use of biodegradable material); o net / gear marking (FAO guidelines); o ALDFG – prevention / reporting gear loss / retrieval / economic impact; o EOL fishing gear (disposal & recycling); o Coordination of EPR; o Update of management practices report; • NEAES task has been defined on entanglement of sea turtles • *NEAES objective S4.08*	• Most key issues covered - list is very extensive. Important to consider Where value can be added by OSPAR CP's? • For gear design: ▪ include issues of mix of polymers and ease of dismantling for recycling (of higher relevance than use of biodegradable) - may already be part of the standard being developed by EC? ▪ Need to avoid duplication of efforts on design of fishing gear (development of standard) & other processes (PRF)with EU etc. ▪ Biodegradable material cannot be standardised throughout fishing industry (health and safety issues) ▪ Be cautious of unintended consequences, e.g. biodegradability in the marine environment is not guaranteed, biodegradable materials may shed microplastics during use rather than at EOL. • For gear marking: ▪ Opportunity to look at gear marking and reporting (not being looked at by EU) – work underway at IMO to revise MARPOL Annex V and reporting component will link to this ▪ Gear marking guidelines by FAO and EU rules are currently limited (only mark on one part/piece of equipment – one idea is to apply signature in rope) ▪ Gear marking: OSPAR can (possibly) take on a role • Retrieval of FG: ▪ Consideration of environmental impact of retrieval action (i.e. damage to habitat by removal, verses just living in situ) ▪ Passive gears loss – ghost gear to be retrieved (engage with IE fishermen to get this knowledge and get practical ideas) • Recycling of FG:

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			▪ Lack of adequate recycling facilities for EOL gear. OSPAR scoping study to see what facilities there are? ▪ Look to existing best practice examples for recycling of fishing gear in Sweden, where examples are proving to be profitable / successful already. • Dolly Rope: Funding for dolly rope alternatives, link to Seafish work on alternatives and cutting down amount used Net Cuttings: for trawls – clipping and cuttings are on deck (so behavioural issue if overboard) • ALDFG is also being worked on by LC/LP (for some time) – important to link up with that work
	Fishing	• To understand the extent of the problem of litter coming from recreational fishing and take action if appropriate	• Use of lead weights – transition to alternatives and assessment of impacts of alternatives (e.g. steel) • Issue of how to reach recreational fishers as a stakeholder group (no formal organisation), taken from experience in Sweden on national project on this topic
	Aquaculture / Mariculture	• Prevent waste from aquaculture and mariculture	• GGGI – best practice framework toolkit and guidance on aquaculture recently published GGGI+Best+Practice+Framework+for+the+Management+of+Aquaculture+Gear+(A-BPF).pdf (squarespace.com) • Growing concern and major source of pollution to be worked on
	Litter from offshore industry	• To understand the extent of the issue, provide best practice guidance • NEAES objectives S4.05, S4.06	• Loss of expanded EPS from maritime infrastructure (e.g. floating pontoons in marinas). Clean Marina scheme in UK. https://cms.fauna-flora.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FFI_2020_Breaking-Down-Ocean-Polystyrene_Summary-.pdf • HELCOM has action on EPS in RAP ML
Removal	Hot spot mapping	• To understand locations of litter accumulation	• Importance to map areas of derelict fishing gear – to help actors know where to act or where to intervene • Could be very helpful if mapping is precise • [NEW issue] retrieval of litter (not just fishing gear) where it's found in high

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			quantities (hot spots)
	Retrieval of ADLFG	• [to be dealt with under single fisheries action?]	• MARLITT project in Baltic – blueprint recommendations on retrieval actions & hotspot mapping • Should we differentiate between recreational and commercial?
	Fishing for litter	• Encourage uptake of fishing for litter schemes	• How to achieve sustainable FFL activities, to ensure FFL activities don't cease once a specific project has ended (a way to decouple FFL from specific projects) • Has been a successful scheme and offers opportunities to target other forms of litter
Cross-cutting	Evidence on harm	• Action to develop an evidence base on items that cause harm to the marine environment and then develop and agree measures; (text could draw from op objective) [task has been defined in task template agreed by EIHA 21] • *NEAES objective S4.02*	*No points recorded on this topic*
	Reduction targets	• *NEAES objective S4.03, S4.04*	*No points recorded on this topic*