

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
Meeting of the Coordination Group (CoG)
Videoconference: 10 May 2021

Terms of Reference for ICG-Economic and Social Analysis (ICG-ESA), 2021/2023

Background

1. One of the main strategic directions given in the North East Atlantic Environment Strategy is the further development and implementation of tools such as marine spatial planning, impact assessments and socio-economic assessments, in order to achieve the reduction in pressures which are adversely affecting the marine environment, and the sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services.
2. For those OSPAR Contracting Parties that are EU Member States the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) also includes an obligation to carry out an economic and social analysis of the use of their marine waters and the cost of degradation as an integral part of their initial assessments (Article 8, 1c). In addition, they need to ensure that new measures that need to be taken in order to achieve or maintain good environmental status are cost-effective and technically feasible, and these Contracting Parties have to carry out impact assessments, including cost-benefit analyses, prior to the introduction of any new measure (art 13.3).

Participants

3. The group will be co-convened by Mr Philip James (UK) and Mr Rob van der Veeren (NL) and, in accordance with OSPAR Rules of Procedure, is open to all Contracting Parties and Observers.
4. The ICG will consist of a network of nominees from Contracting Parties, including social scientists (experts and scientists working in the disciplines of economics and environmental economics, also sociology and social-behaviour studies) or experts responsible for economic and social analysis in support of MSFD implementation (and other relevant activities linked to the work of the OSPAR Convention).

Objectives and Scope of work

5. The ICG ESA will provide a platform for nominees from Contracting Parties to work on questions that need to be addressed at the scale of the North-East Atlantic and its sub-regions. Economic and social analysis of the ICG ESA should not replicate EU level activity and should focus on specific needs. The most important one being to try to come to more coordinated and coherent economic analyses and data for the marine environment, and to support the assessment of measures in OSPAR – such as contained in regional action plans – by providing an efficient means to respond to requests for relevant advice from OSPAR Committees or their subsidiary bodies, including preparing contributions to QSR 2023 and NEAES.

Working procedures

6. ICG-ESA will work primarily by correspondence, and if possible and practicable have back-to-back meetings with the WG POMESA (depending on the degree of overlap of experts).
7. ICG-ESA when relevant will work in close coordination with ICG-MSFD, ICG Eco-C, and the OSPAR committees (and particularly EIHA) and report to CoG. If possible and relevant, it will also attempt to coordinate its work with other relevant Regional Seas Conventions and the EU Working Group on Program of Measures, Economic and Social Analysis (POMESA).
8. ICG-ESA will continue to exchange information with HELCOM by having somebody from ICG-ESA attending their meetings on economic analyses, and having Denmark, Sweden and Germany, who are also member of HELCOM at the ICG-ESA meetings, and ask them to report back at the ICG ESA meetings (standard agenda item). ICG-ESA will also aim to strengthen links to UNEP MAP.
9. The co-conveners Mr Philip James (UK) and Mr Rob van der Veeren (NL) will act as contact points for other ICGs when they have questions with respect to economic analyses that they want to perform, or when they would like to invite OSPAR economists to their meetings. The co-conveners will then further distribute those requests.

Work plan for 2021/2023

Contributions towards the QSR 2023

10. Early 2021 a workshop was organised on scenarios on possible future developments in various economic activities and their impacts on the marine environment. Also a report on this topic was published. Information from this report will be used, notably to populate the 'Drivers' section of the thematic assessments. In order to be able to also include some information on the wealth effects of impacts, at the ICG QSR meeting of February 2021 ICG ESA was invited to:

- develop an ecosystem services concept that could be applied consistently throughout the thematic assessments, and to present any further development and thinking at upcoming ICG-QSR meetings;
- consider how the ecosystem services information could be brought together from the various thematic assessments as a contribution for the synthesis report, recognising this would likely require a qualitative approach.

ICG ESA will work on this in autumn 2021 – spring 2022.

Contribution to NEAES: Work on natural capital accounting

11. The most recent version of NEAES S7.03 (outcome STG(2) 2021) reads:

'By 2025 [or 2028] OSPAR will start accounting for ecosystem services and natural capital by making maximum use of existing frameworks in order to recognise, assess and consistently account for human activities and their consequences in the implementation of ecosystem-based management.'

At the last ICG ESA meeting, The participants agreed that 2025 can be chosen as date for this objective. To contribute to this objective, in 2021 ICG ESA will prepare a document which describes what natural capital accounting is and what could one do with it, together with an overview of relevant activities in various countries and a first attempt to fill in the relevant tables (based on easily available data) and some first analyses with those. Based on discussions on the results of this first attempt, a discussion will take place to

determine potential next steps. More details and future updates of progress will be included in the Implementation Plan.

Support to OSPAR Committees

12. ICG-ESA will provide advice and support to OSPAR Committees, mainly upon request, and subject to available resources. However, in order to be able to support OSPAR Committees in the best way possible, other ICGs are requested to actively engage ICG ESA to identify future opportunities to enhance their work with economic and social assessments as required by e.g., MSFD and NEAES operational objectives.

Sharing of good practice

13. ICG-ESA will promote the sharing of good practice on the application of economic and social analysis, including approaches relating to ecosystem goods and services and natural capital.