|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Annex 3 |
| OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic |
| Meeting of the Coordination GroupLondon: 22-23 May 2023 |

Terms of Reference for ICG-Ecosystem Assessment Outlook - Cumulative Effects Assessment (ICG‑Eco-C), 2023-2025

**Background and purpose**

1. ICG-Eco-C will continue its work to deliver North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy Strategic Objective 7.01 through tasks:

* + S7.01.T2: Cumulative effect method development (CEMD).

The work will also support regional implementation of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

**Participants**

2. ICG-Eco-C will be convened by the UK (Adrian Judd) and the Netherlands (Sophie Vergouwen) and is open to all OSPAR Contracting Parties and Observers, noting the need to proactively include expertise from across all OSPAR’s thematic work areas.

**Scope of Work**

3. To consider and develop a ‘strategy’ to progress the recommendations from the QSR 2023 CEA analyses (→NEAES S7.01.T2), namely:

* Ensure there is built-in collaboration and engagement across OSPAR Expert Groups and Committees to further develop and progress the work, maintain the momentum achieved in progressing the work for the QSR 2023.
* Improve collaboration and engagement across OSPAR Contracting Parties.
* Improve collaboration and engagement with external bodies, e.g., ICES, HELCOM.
* Improve integration between human activity, pressure, biodiversity assessments and economic / social analyses (Ecosystem Approach - DAPSIR).
* DAPSIR – Natural Capital Accounting continued alignment (working with ICG-ESA).
* Undertake regional scale analyses - the details of this will need to be determined, e.g., ICG-ORED are considering a pilot for birds in Celtic seas and parts of The Bay of Biscay, but the exact bordering depending on species/populations areas.
* Explore options for spatial analyses – mapping human activities, pressures, ecosystem components and impacts.
* Improve methodologies for the identification and quantification of impacts, individually and cumulatively.
* Progress refinements to the persistence and resilience analyses.
* Incorporating management responses and to ‘test’ effectiveness of measures, including working with Action Plan leads (i.e., marine birds, benthic habitats).
* Considering how to use DAPSIR / ODEMM weightings to support OSPAR management measures.

4. In addition to progressing the recommendation in paragraph 4, to progress cumulative effects method development (S7.01.T2) the CEA ‘strategy’ will need to:

1. Specify the OSPAR focus for cumulative effects assessment, e.g., EIA, SEA, MSP, MSFD, Habitats Directive.
2. Identify and agree methodology(s) for assessing and visualizing cumulative effects (for the agreed application(s)), including collaboration with ICG-ORED on their cumulative effects work on offshore renewable energy.
3. Provide guidance on the agreed cumulative effects assessment methodology(s).
4. Provide guidance on how to assess and communicate uncertainty in CEA.
5. Review the implementation of the CEA JAMP product A-6.

5. Progression of this work requires recognition in CoG and support for dialogue and collaboration between related cross-cutting NEAES objectives and workstreams, namely:

* S7.O1: By 2028 OSPAR will further develop methods for the analysis of cumulative effects in the marine ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic, taking into account relevant spatial and temporal information on human activities, pressures, sensitive receptors and habitats, and use the results to inform the establishment of measures and actions to prevent, reduce or otherwise manage impacts – ICG-EcoC lead.
* S7.O3 By 2025 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 – ICG-ESA lead.
* S12.O4: By 2023 OSPAR will develop common principles and by 2024 develop guidance to promote and facilitate sustainable development and scaling up of offshore renewable energy in a way that cumulative environmental impacts are minimised – ICG-ORED lead.
* SX.O2: By 2024 OSPAR will initiate discussions on the development of a practical approach for regional-scale ecosystembased management, including through the ‘Collective Arrangement21’ and in cooperation with fisheries management bodies and other competent organisations, in order to strengthen ecosystem resilience to climate change and to safeguard the marine environment, its biodiversity and ecosystem services – Pilot Project.

6. Given the strategic importance of this work, funding options will be explored by the ICG-EcoC towards developing a specific project to progress the work on ecosystem assessment using cumulative effects assessment for OSPAR.

7. To set the foundation for progressing the issues raised in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 ICG-EcoC will initiate an OSPAR-ICES CEA workshop to compare experiences and methods and identify and agree mechanisms for collaboration.

**Working procedures**

7. The work of ICG-Eco-C reports directly to CoG, but is relevant to all OSPAR Committees, as well as ICG-MSFD, ICG-POSH, ICG-ESA, ICG-COBAM, ICG-ORED.

8. ICG-Eco-C will work by correspondence and meet as and when required (one or two meetings p.a.).

9. ICG-EcoC will proactively engage in exchanging information with other European Regional Seas Conventions, ICES and the European Commission.