

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
Meeting of the Intersessional Correspondence Group on the implementation follow up of measures
for the protection and conservation of species and habitats (ICG-POSH)

Videoconference: 6 – 9 December 2021

Terms of reference and preliminary work plan for the POSH Sea Turtle Expert Group (STEG) calendar year 2022

Background

1. Under its North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAE Strategy) OSPAR is taking forward work related to the implementation of the Ecosystem Approach (NEAE Strategy Part I). For biodiversity, work is undertaken in relation to the monitoring and assessment of the status of the marine environment, the results of which are used to follow up implementation of the strategies and the resulting benefits to the marine environment.
2. OSPAR also takes a key role as a platform for EU member states to coordinate their approaches in implementing the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) in the Northeast Atlantic. For the Biodiversity aspects of the Directive (i.e. with a focus on descriptors D1, D2, D4, D6).
3. The development of assessment and monitoring methods (indicators) is advanced by intersessional Expert Groups (EG).
4. BDC 2019 agreed:
 - a. to establish an OSPAR expert group on turtles that would be separated from the current “Mammal and reptiles” expert group under ICG-COBAM;
 - b. that France would take on the lead for the group;
 - c. to place the Turtle expert group under ICG-POSH (but could also take on tasks from other ICGs as relevant); and
 - d. to request the lead and the Secretariat to approach the Barcelona Convention with an invitation to join the group.

Scope of ICG POSH Sea Turtle Expert Group (STEG) work

5. Under the guidance of the Biodiversity Committee, ICG-POSH is responsible for the implementation follow up of measures for the protection and conservation of species and habitats, while ICG-COBAM is responsible for the coordination of OSPAR's biodiversity assessment and monitoring work.
6. The expert group is intended to respond to the requirements of:
 - a. The OSPAR Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2014 – 2023 under the Theme B “Biodiversity and Ecosystems” (in particular, product B-3 [and B-10])
 - b. [the OSPAR Regional Plan to achieve adequacy and coherence of MSFD Implementation 2014-2018 (COG(2) 2014, Annex 4). It has a particular focus on JAMP Product B-10 and coordination in relation to the requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) for biodiversity aspects (D1, 2, 4 and 6);]

7. The STEG will focus its work on the 2 species of sea turtles listed on the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-06), i.e. the Loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and the Leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*).

Priority tasks of STEG

8. The priority tasks of STEG are:

- a. to regularly assess the status of Loggerhead turtle and Leatherback turtle according to the OSPAR Guidance on the Development of Status Assessments for the OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats' (Agreement 2019-5) (JAMP B3).
- b. to develop harmonized methods for assessing and monitoring sea turtles so that they can be applied by OSPAR , MSFD and Barcelona convention.
- c. to advise BDC and other OSPAR bodies on gaps in the coverage of sea turtle indicators, including with respect to the implementation of the MSFD, and how to complete a representative set of sea turtle indicators
- d. to identify possible common initiatives for the conservation of sea turtles and advice competent OSPAR bodies on the development of a strategy for monitoring and implementing conservation measures in the OSPAR area regarding anthropogenic pressures impacting these species.
- e. to contribute to the implementation the collective action 26 of ICG-POSH's "Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions within the Recommendations for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed species and habitats" (BDC 18/5/2).

9. STEG also contributes and takes account of progress on other related European agreements relevant to OSPAR Contracting Parties (e.g. Barcelona Convention, ICES (WGBYC), NAMMCO), and on DG Env /JRC work. There is high overlap of nominated experts in STEG and other Expert Groups for sea turtles.

Organisation of STEG work

10. STEG will work through correspondence, video and telephone conferences and, when needed, face-to-face meetings (workshops), with a view to deliver the work programme presented for the group and additional actions that might be required by ICG-POSH/COBAM.

11. Contracting Parties are requested to support an active engagement with the EG, including sufficient dedicated time and resources for intersessional works and to attend workshops, to ensure a scientifically robust, transparent and representative process and facilitate appropriation for management issues. Preferably this should be supported by national experts that can provide a national perspective and assist in the delivery of work.

12. Intersessional work will be facilitated using the **STEG** SharePoint site. All nominated experts and observers should have access.

Delivery of results

13. An annual report, in the form of documents or presentations at ICG-POSH meetings, providing updates of the work completed during the year against the agreed ToRs and work plan.

STEG Work Plan for calendar year 2022

14. During the 2022/2023 period ICG-POSH's activities will be guided by the needs of the NEAE Strategy, the POSH Roadmap for the implementation of collective actions, the QSR 2023 and OSPAR regional coordination in relation to the European Commission Decision on criteria and methodological standards for good environmental status:

I. Assessment

a. work with BiTA on how best to present the results from the 'other assessment' status assessments of turtle species in the thematic assessment level of QSR 2023, for example by extracting the main messages and presenting them in the 'status' chapter of the pelagic habitat thematic assessment.

b. work with Barcelona Convention and their SPAW on species to tell a joint OSPAR-BarCon story about sea turtles that circulate between Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic ocean and face various threats and impacts in the different phases of their lifecycle where/when they occur in North East Atlantic or in the Mediterranean. This could be presented a stand-alone output, or it could be integrated in some other QSR 2023 assessment

II. Indicator development

a. with the aim to deliver in ca 2029 OSPAR candidate indicator proposals for **future** Intermediate Assessments of QSR assessments of sea turtle population and habitat, STEG will:

i) work through correspondence (email), basecamp tool and 2 online conferences in cooperation with EU JRC and UNEP MAP. Experts will be proposed to investigate the feasibility and constraints in OSPAR areas of the indicator proposed for the MSFD (abundance, demography, distribution, impact of anthropogenic pressures, habitat...) after data sharing testing and expert regional workshops conducted in 2019-2020 under France leadership, in cooperation with JRC, and aiming to harmonizing MSFD and CMRs approaches.

Further data sharing and tests specifically needed for OSPAR in the perspective of defining *candidate* indicators will be proposed when needed, as well as a reflexion on developing assessment values (e.g. thresholds, boundaries, ranges or trends as appropriate), against which the indicators could be assessed;

ii) provide proposals of candidate indicators for sea turtles and recommendations of acquisition of knowledge and standardized monitoring guidelines and procedures

b. STEG will examine proposals of actions that might be required by ICG-POSH/COBAM including Collective actions for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed species and BDC, and provide advice.

III. Coordinated data sharing and testing

c. if relevant to use MoU for data sharing in order to implement test analysis

IV. Collective actions for the protection and conservation of OSPAR listed species

d. To prepare the resources requested for defining a work plan for defining the strategy

V. Cross-cutting issues

e. to collaborate with other ICGs, under the coordination of the OSPAR Secretariat, towards an integrated assessment between indicators for sea turtles and biodiversity components (e.g. D8 contaminants, PCB levels in sea turtles); discuss relevant data products;

VI. Communication with other international processes

f. to work and communicate with JRC and UNEP MAP Barcelona convention on sharing knowledge about indicators and realizing opportunities for cooperation or joint works;

g. to communicate with ICES working groups, where relevant via the respective secretariats and chairs, to maximize synergies

Participants

The following Contracting Parties have nominated experts to be part of the network; An up-to date list of delegates are to be maintained at the Secretariat in the dedicated Sharepoint site. Contracting Parties are requested to ensure that any changes in delegates and/or their contact details are provided to the Secretariat.

COUNTRY	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	INSTITUTE
France	Claro	Françoise	PatriNat (OFB/MNHN/CNRS)
France	Dell'Amico	Florence	Aquarium La Rochelle-CESTM
France	Girard	Fanny	PatriNat (OFB/MNHN/CNRS)
France	Rivet	Jehanne	PatriNat (OFB/MNHN/CNRS)
Germany	Mueller	Miriam	BfN
Ireland	ÓCadhla	Oliver	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Ireland	Marnell	Ferdia	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Portugal	Pham	Christopher Kim	IMAR
Portugal	Vandeperre	Frederic	IMAR
Portugal	Garcia	Sophia MF	Azores Government
Portugal	Marques	Nuno	Madeira Whale Museum
Portugal	Santos	Marco AR	Azores Government
Portugal	Dellinger	Thomas	University of Madeira
Portugal	Cavaleiro	Barbara AM	Madeira Government
Portugal	Colaço	Ana	Okeanos University of Azores
Spain	Baez	Jose Carlos	Instituto Español de Oceanografía (Malaga)
United Kingdom	Taylor	Nikki	JNCC
United Kingdom	Richardson	Peter	Marine Conservation Society UK