

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
Meeting of the Coordination Group (CoG)
Videoconference: 19-20 November 2020

ICG-Ecosystem Assessment Outlook – Cumulative Effects Assessment (ICG-Eco-C), 2020-2022 Terms of Reference

Background and purpose

1. ICG-Eco-C will continue the work to deliver the Ecosystem Assessment Outlook (cumulative effects assessment) for the Quality Status Report 2023 in 2020-2022 as set out in the North-East Atlantic Strategy. 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 (Rob Gerits) and is open to all OSPAR Contracting Parties and Observers, noting the need to include expertise from across OSPAR's thematic work areas.

Scope of Work

Quality Status Report 2023

3. To progress the application of this work in the Quality Status Report 2023 ICG-Eco-C will:
- a. Apply the common indicator risk-based assessment methodology to the thematic assessments being progressed for the QSR 2023 to consider whether the collective pressures from human activities are at levels compatible with quality status / good environmental status. A modified bow-tie analysis is used to consider associations between drivers, human activities, pressures, state, impacts, ecosystem services and management measures. Initial schema have been produced and are being circulated to the relevant OSPAR committees and ICGs for discussions and to make arrangements for collaboration. Work will progress to further develop these worked through examples to identify the dominant and/or most serious cumulative effects. Where possible, thematic assessments will be supported by spatial representation (to be informed by QSR 2000, 2010, IA 2017, indicator assessments, ICES Ecosystem Overviews, ICES WGCEAM). In the 2020/21 meeting cycle focus will be to deliver case studies, working with thematic assessment leads, reporting on progress to meetings of EIHA, ICG-QSR and CoG.
 - b. Ensure the approach for the QSR 2023 is effectively communicated to the relevant committees, ICGs and expert groups detailing the work required to undertake the assessment to deliver the cumulative assessment (and, as appropriate, discuss how this collaboration can be built into committee / ICG work plans).
4. To progress the general development of cumulative effects assessment (CEA) ICG-Eco-C will:

- a. Investigate quantification of cumulative effects as identified through the bow-tie method (recognising and incorporating any work to develop targets and thresholds for individual indicators) and apply appropriate methods to graphically and / or spatially present the outputs.
- b. Exchange experience with ICES on their work to develop a risk-based methodology for cumulative effects assessment in the context of MSFD and MSP (notably engaging with the Working Group Cumulative Effects Assessment and Management (WGCEAM)).
- c. Exchange experience with HELCOM on their work to progress HOLAS III.
- d. Exchange experience with the [EU RAGES](#) project.

Development and application of CEA approaches for use in EIA, SEA, MSP, MSFD, Habitats Directive etc

5. Cumulative effects assessment needs to be undertaken for a wide range of purposes (e.g. project Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Habitats Directive, MSFD). A range of different methodologies are available, or are in development, however it is not clear whether a single method can meet the requirements of all of these purposes.

6. In addition to its work for the QSR 2023, ICG-Eco-C will (re)open discussion, review and analyses of different CEA approaches. This will include consideration of OSPAR's role in CEA and which applications best fit this role. This work will involve engagement (and collaboration) with contracting parties on their national approaches, ICES, HELCOM and other fora / research projects as necessary. Given the focus of resources for the QSR 2023, detailed work on this is likely to progress in 2023. An ICG-Eco-C WebEx on 26 November consider the initial scope for this work.

7. Given the strategic importance of this work, funding options will be explored by the ICG-Eco-C towards developing a specific project to progress the work on cumulative effects assessment by OSPAR.

Working procedures

8. The work of ICG-Eco-C should be carried out in cooperation with CoG and all other appropriate OSPAR subsidiary bodies, as well as ICG-MSFD, ICG-QSR, TG-MAP, ICG-POSH, ICG-FENIKS, ICG-ESA and ICG-COBAM. Wherever possible, ICG-Eco-C will work by collaboration to ensure efficient use of resources and minimise the risk of duplication.

9. Report to CoG on the implementation of the CEA JAMP product A-6.

10. ICG-Eco-C will work by correspondence and meet as and when required (three WebEx proposed in 2020-22).

12. ICG-Eco-C should engage in exchanging information with other European Regional Seas Conventions, ICES and the European Commission.