

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
Meeting of the Biodiversity Committee (BDC)
Reykjavik (Iceland): 04 – 08 April 2022

Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Protected Areas in 2022 - 2023 (ICG-MPA)

Participants

1. ICG-MPA will be convened by Germany (Janos Hennicke, German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)) and is open to all Contracting Parties and Observers, in accordance with the OSPAR Rules of Procedure. A contact list of experts nominated by Contracting Parties and Observers is maintained by the Secretariat to facilitate information exchange between participants. In addition, and as in former years, ICG-MPA may actively seek assistance and contributions by the scientific community on specific tasks.

Organisation of Work

2. Besides working through correspondence, ICG-MPA will have one meeting in the 2022/2023 meeting cycle. Due to uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not yet clear whether ICG-MPA will meet in person or only virtually. The date of the meeting has not yet been set.

Scope of Work

ICG-MPA will aim to carry out the following tasks in the period up to BDC 2023:

Development of the OSPAR Network of MPAs

3. Assist in developing further the OSPAR Network of MPAs:
 - i from a regional perspective, based on the 2021 MPA Status Report and 2021 MPA Assessment Sheet, identify 'gaps' regarding the representativity, resilience, and connectivity of the Network and its components;
 - ii support coastal states in their nomination of any further components of the Network;
 - iii prepare and elaborate scientific cases for MPA proposals in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Elaboration of an approach to assess/evaluate the ecological coherence of the OSPAR Network of MPAs

4. Taking into account the outcomes of the assessment of ecological coherence of the OSPAR Network of MPAs of the Intermediate Assessment 2017 and of the 2021 MPA Status Report and,

considering their implications, continue the work to develop and test a methodology for assessing ecological coherence of the OSPAR Network of MPAs. In addition, ICG-MPA will take into account work on-going in other fora and in research projects (e.g. EU Marine Expert Working Group, HELCOM, Barcelona Convention) and look into potential contributions of Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and non-OSPAR MPAs to the eco-coherence of the OSPAR MPA network.

Data and information management

5. Continue to collate and update relevant information/data held within the OSPAR MPA database on (a) species, habitats and ecological processes within existing OSPAR MPAs; (b) human activities and resulting impacts on species, habitat and ecological processes within existing OSPAR MPAs; and (c) the management of OSPAR MPAs;
6. Improve accessibility by OSPAR Contracting Parties, observer organisations and any interested third party, and implement the use of the MPA database Webtool to provide statistics, e.g. for future assessments;
7. Assist in the preparation of the 2022 Assessment Sheet on the OSPAR Network of MPAs to be presented to OSPAR 2023.

Management of MPAs

8. Compile and report on the implementation of the OSPAR Recommendations on the Management of MPAs in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) by OSPAR Contracting Parties, including taking forward the development of management measures for OSPAR High Sea MPAs and developing options for management actions for Contracting Parties in MPAs in ABNJ;
9. Taking into account the outcomes of the assessment of management of the OSPAR Network of MPAs of the 2021 MPA Status Report to work on the guidance and its application to assess management *effectiveness* of the OSPAR Network of MPAs;
10. Prepare any information exchange needs under the collective arrangements between OSPAR and other competent international organisations;
11. Evaluate the reports on the meetings under the collective arrangement for cooperation in management of ABNJ;
12. Facilitate information exchange on MPA management practices.

Exchange and sharing of information

13. Exchange, as appropriate, information and experiences with the Barcelona Convention, the Helsinki Convention, EU Marine Expert Group and other relevant initiatives on developing networks of Marine Protected Areas;

Relation between the OSPAR MPAs and MSFD requirements

14. Facilitate and discuss contributions of interested Contracting Parties to the regional considerations regarding MPAs under Article 13 of the MSFD;

Review of JAMP Product B-11 on Marine Protected Areas

15. Review of JAMP Product B-11 on Marine Protected Areas/Evaluation of the OSPAR MPA Network based on progress and provide, if appropriate, an updated version to BDC 2023.

North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 implementation plan

16. Overview table of the association between selected NEAES operational objectives, being of particular relevance to ICG-MPA, and the main themes of work of ICG-MPA. ‘Climate change’ presents a new theme of work given by NEAES 2030. Cells marked with a cross indicate association between operational objectives and work themes.

Table 1: Association between selected NEAES operational objectives and main work themes of ICG-MPA.

	Work themes			
	Development of the OSPAR Network of MPAs – spatial coverage	Ecological coherence of the OSPAR Network of MPAs	Management of MPAs	Climate change - how MPAs can contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation
S5.01: By 2030 OSPAR will further develop its network of marine protected areas (MPAs) and other effective conservation measures (OECMs) to cover at least 30% of the OSPAR maritime area to ensure it is representative, ecologically coherent and effectively managed to achieve its conservation objectives.	X	X	X	
S5.02: By 2022 OSPAR will identify barriers to the effective management of MPAs, and by 2024 take steps to address them appropriately to enable all OSPAR MPAs to achieve their conservation objectives.			X	
S11.02: By 2023, and every six years thereafter, OSPAR will assess at a regional scale the OSPAR network of marine protected areas in respect of the resilience of marine biodiversity to climate change, with the aim of ensuring that the network provides a good representation of species and habitats and that its spatial design and management regime remains relevant.		X	X	X
S12.02: By 2025 OSPAR will take nature-based carbon storage into account when reviewing the criteria for the designation of marine protected areas, and reviewing the OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats.	X	X		X