

Terms of Reference for the QSR 2023 Climate Change Thematic Assessment Expert Group (CCEG) for the period 2021-2023

Agreed by ICG-QSR(3)2021 – 25th October 2021

Background

1. Successive QSRs and the Intermediate Assessment 2017 have addressed the impacts of climate change on the OSPAR area and the QSR 2023 will also include a thematic assessment on this topic. Climate change should therefore be presented clearly in the QSR 2023 synthesis report and be supported through a dedicated thematic assessment as far as possible. However, none of OSPAR's Committees can oversee the development of this assessment.
2. Recognising the importance of Climate Change within the draft NEAES 2030 and specifically the following draft strategic objectives:
 - Strategic Objective 10. *Raise awareness of climate change and ocean acidification by monitoring, analysing and communicating their effects;*
 - Strategic Objective 11. *Facilitate adaptation to the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification by considering additional pressures when developing programmes, actions and measures; and*
 - Strategic Objective 12. *Mitigate climate change and ocean acidification by contributing to global efforts, including by safeguarding the marine environment's role as a natural carbon store.*

ICG-QSR(1)2021 agreed to establish a climate change thematic assessment expert group (CCEG) to report to ICG-QSR. This group will develop a climate change thematic assessment. The structure of this climate change thematic assessment will be agreed by CoG, based on a recommendation from ICG-QSR.

Scope of work

3. The CCEG will prepare a Thematic Assessment (TA) on Climate Change for the QSR 2023.
4. The CCEG will provide guidance to the Thematic Assessment leads on how to populate the 'Climate Change' element/chapter mentioned in the [TA template and guidance](#).
5. Towards the end of the period of these Terms of Reference, CCEG will present proposals for how to address climate change within OSPAR under the NEAES 2030.

Priority tasks

6. The CCEG will focus on achieving the following high-level priority tasks:
 - i. use the regular thematic assessment template structure to develop a thematic assessment entirely dedicated to climate change; determine to what extent it is possible to answer the five questions and integrate climate change into the DAPSIR structure;
 - ii. assess the change in prevailing conditions (e.g., “ocean warming”, “changes in storms”, “sea-ice loss”) and its impacts across the scope of the NEAES 2030 and OSPAR Committees, by building on the tables of parameters presented in QSR 2010 and IA2017;
 - iii. respond to the key questions: *Did the foreseen change happen? How has the change happened? What has been the impact? How confident are we?*; for those parameters in the QSR 2010 tables which are not covered by other thematic assessments; and
 - iv. build on assessment of change since 2010 and provide a forward look with reference to NEAES 2030.
7. The draft Climate Change thematic assessment is to be agreed by CoG during its spring 2022 session and adopted in principle during the meeting of OSPAR in summer 2022.
8. Link to and identify opportunities for two-way support for other TA leads. Recognise the fact that the implications of climate change are different within each TA and may apply to different components of the DAPSIR framework.

Organisation of work

9. The CCEG will work through correspondence, video and telephone conferences and, when needed and should it be possible in light of the latest health regulations, face-to-face meetings/workshops.
10. Contracting Parties are requested to support an active engagement with the expert group, including dedicating sufficient 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.
11. Intersessional work will be facilitated using the [QSR SharePoint](#) site (accessible from the QSR SharePoint homepage through ‘CoG Assessment / Climate Change’). All nominated experts and observers will have access to this SharePoint library and should contact the Secretariat in case they face any issues.
12. CCEG reports directly to ICG-QSR, and ultimately to CoG.

Delivery of outcomes

13. Working with the QSR Coordinator and the Co-convenors of ICG-QSR, the outcomes of CCEG will be presented to ICG-QSR meetings. An iterative process will be followed, so that ICG-QSR feedback and comments can be integrated in the consecutive drafting stages.

Work Plan for 2021 meeting cycle

14. During 2021 CCEG will:

Theme	Task	Timeline	Owner
Climate Change thematic assessment (CCTA)	Develop the structure of the CCTA and delivery plan	ICG-QSR(3)2021 – 25 October 2021	CCEG
Guidance	Provide further guidance to thematic assessment leads on how to populate their Climate Change element	ICG-QSR(3)2021 - 25 October 2021	CCEG
Membership	Identify and recruit the required expertise.	As soon as possible	Group lead with the support of the QSR Coordinator
Data sharing and testing	If relevant and where necessary build relationships to work with external bodies that have relevant data and products (e.g., Copernicus, ICES)	TBC	TBC
Cross-cutting issues	Work with ICG-OA to identify where there is complementary between Climate Change and the Ocean Acidification other assessments	As soon as possible	Group lead with the support of the Secretariat
Cross-cutting issues	Collaborate with other ICGs – particularly ICG-Eco-C – under the coordination of the Secretariat, to ensure good collaborative working during the QSR process, and a legacy for climate change within the OSPAR structure.	As soon as possible	CCEG with the support of the Secretariat

Participants

15. The CCEG is led by Stephen Dye (UK). All Contracting Parties and Observer Organisations are invited to nominate experts to be part of the expert group.
16. The CCEG will include climate change experts, but also participants with expertise related to the topics covered in the other thematic assessments led by other OSPAR Committees (BDC, HASEC, EIHA, OIC and RSC).
17. An up-to date list of delegates is to be maintained by the Secretariat. Contracting Parties and Observer Organisations are requested to ensure that any changes in delegates and/or their contact details are provided to the Secretariat.