

OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic  
Meeting of the Coordination Group (CoG)

Videoconference: 10 May 2021

---

## 2019-2023 Terms of Reference for the Intersessional Correspondence Group on Managing the Delivery of the Quality Status Report 2023 (ICG-QSR)

### Context

1. ICG QSR is responsible for managing and coordinating the processes around the development and delivery of the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023 as the culmination of the current phase of the Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme 2015 - 2023. Whereas other OSPAR subsidiary bodies (the Committees) are responsible for providing the primary content for QSR 2023.

2. When considering the delivery of QSR 2023 it is essential the ICG-QSR consider the following:

OSPAR Convention Article 6 Assessment of the Quality of the Marine Environment:

*The Contracting Parties shall, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, in particular as provided for in Annex IV:*

- (a) undertake and publish at regular intervals joint assessments of the quality status of the marine environment and of its development, for the maritime area or for regions or sub-regions thereof;*
- (b) include in such assessments both an evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures taken and planned for the protection of the marine environment and the identification of priorities for action.*

*The OSPAR Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2014 - 2021 outlines the following under Paragraphs 5 and 17 respectively:*

OSPAR Joint Assessment and Monitoring Programme (JAMP) 2014 - 2023:

*Section I: Strategy*

5. *The long-term objectives of the JAMP are to provide the strategic direction to:*
- a. the preparation of integrated environmental assessments of the status of the marine environment of the OSPAR maritime area or its regions, including the exploration of new or emerging problems in the marine environment of the North East Atlantic;*
  - b. the preparation of assessments of the implementation of the North East Atlantic Environment Strategy, based on the assessment of the effects of relevant measures (including OSPAR measures) on the improvement of the quality of the marine*

*environment. These assessments will help inform the development and implementation of further measures to protect the marine environment where required;*

*Providing coordination under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)*

17. *In this context, the JAMP will provide the basis for the coordination of the monitoring and assessment by EU Member States in respect of the MSFD within the same marine region or sub-Region. It will deliver assessments that are comparable between them at the same geographic scale so that while the assessment covers an appropriate geographic scale the data can be used also for national needs. Coordination activities within the frame of the JAMP include:*

- a. joint development of methodologies and tools – based on exchange of information by Contracting Parties;*
- b. joint implementation of these methodologies – using risk-based principles, across relevant geographic scales ensuring appropriate data quality and calibration between the different monitoring authorities and institutions;*
- c. joint reporting – in a way that clearly permits individual countries to identify the issues for their waters and to assess whether or not the programme of measures of a specific Contracting Party has helped to deliver the anticipated changes within and beyond their marine waters. JAMP products should be developed so that they can be used and referred to in relevant Contracting Parties formal reporting under the MSFD.*

3. These Terms of Reference (ToR) are for the period 2019 / 2023. It is intended to keep the ToR under review during the development and delivery of QSR 2023 to ensure that the objectives and goals of ICG QSR are in line with OSPAR's overall strategic direction. These ToR will be reviewed annually.

4. The elements of the QSR 2023 have been outlined in the 'QSR 2023 guidance document' [Agreement 2019-02](#) which will have the intention to guide preparation of QSR assessments. ICG-QSR will also be guided by the following:

- a. the JAMP;
- b. the approach taken in delivering the IA 2017;
- c. the discussion on developing a North East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2020 – 2030, and
- d. the annual review of progress in the delivery of QSR 2023.

### **Concept**

5. The QSR 2023 is expected to provide an environmental assessment of the status of the marine environment of the OSPAR maritime area.

6. QSR 2023 will also, identify gaps and priorities for improvement of the status of the marine environment and provide recommendations for measures to fill these gaps and achieve OSPAR's objectives as detailed in the NEAES 2020-2030.

## Scope

7. ICG-QSR will be responsible for outlining and delivering the following elements of QSR 2023 to the Coordination Group (CoG) for their endorsement:

- Program / Timelines;
- Procedures;
- Formats;
- Practical guidance; and
- Quality assurance.

8. ICG-QSR will have the mandate to guide the Committees in delivery of products and assessments to the format and standard required for QSR 2023. The work to deliver QSR products should be seen as integrated, regular work of the Committees, and ICG-QSRs direction is to facilitate and coordinate overall OSPAR work in order to deliver the harmonised products which will constitute QSR 2023.

9. ICG-QSR will further develop advice for CoG on the following issues, as required, which will guide work over the upcoming meeting cycles:

- The detailed application of a peer review and a regional stakeholder consultation;
- Technical and editorial guidance to contributors to facilitate the drafting process;
- Guidance on data handling, including one-off data collection and relationship to ICG-Data;
- Quality assurance requirements and an outline of contents, presentation and publication of the QSR 2023;
- Specifications for drafting, online publication, printing and copy editing, including for external support with respect to science-journalist and copy-editing requirements;
- Guidance and templates to facilitate the drafting of assessments, with the emphasis on standardised electronic reporting and regular editorial guidance (building on OSPAR Agreement 2007-4); this should also include guidance on formats of information that will be shown in illustrative materials (data, maps, graphs, figures, photos, clips, ...) - where appropriate applying the OSPAR Data and Information Management System (ODIMS) approaches;
- Common guidance on presentation of information so that it is, where appropriate, suitable for the scales required for reporting in the EU MSFD Article 8 for those Contracting Parties that are also EU Member states. In this respect it needs to be recognised that the OSPAR internal boundaries are currently not aligned with EU MSFD boundaries, and that indicator results may require aggregation or dis-aggregation rules to be in place in order to present information at the appropriate scales;
- Guidance for Thematic Assessments, i.e. content, structure and style;
- Consider in close association with the OSPAR Secretariat, and present to CoG on an on-going basis the developing content of QSR 2023 for final agreement; and

- Support the update of the JAMP (Theme A) to ensure that work relating to QSR 2023 is organised and prioritised according to ICG-QSR requirements.
- Maintaining the [QSR Master Plan in SharePoint](#) which will track the development and delivery of assessments and reports to be utilised in the QSR process. The QSR 2023 Master Plan is used to track progress and plan delivery and approval of QSR 2023 components.
- Main responsibility for drafting the synthesis report based on drafting completed by a science writer in collaboration with ICG-QSR.

## **Practical Arrangements**

### *Organisation:*

10. ICG-QSR will report to the Coordination Group.
11. ICG-QSR will be convened by Lisette Enserink (Netherlands) and Patrick Roose (Belgium). Participation is open to all Contracting Parties and Observers in accordance with the OSPAR Rules of Procedure. In addition the Committee Chairs and Convenors of ICG's will be encouraged to attend ICG QSR meetings as required and they will be copied in on proceeding so ICG-QSR to keep them informed of progress and issues. All Contracting Parties are encouraged to engage in the ICG.
12. ICG-QSR will work through correspondence, making use of appropriate electronic communication means and hold face to face meetings on a regular basis to ensure timely delivery of QSR 2023. It is anticipated that there will be 1 or 2 face-to-face meetings each year, in accordance with the ongoing workload. The number of these meetings increasing as the activity required for the production of QSR 2023 advances and ramps up.
13. ICG-QSR have facilitated a process of coordination between ICG-EcoC and ICG-ESA towards all Committees on the production and content of the thematic assessments. The ICG-EcoC and ICG-ESA contributions have been the structuring and pre-populating of the thematic assessment templates, as well as drafting of initial input in the section on Drivers and Impacts-Welfare. The aim of this work is tying together information about status, pressures and measures on specific topics to ensure that the envisioned outputs are compatible with the objectives of QSR 2023. The approach supports a holistic ecosystem-based approach to assessing the topics of the thematic assessments.
14. The QSR Master Plan serves the role of being a detailed Project Plan for QSR 2023. The Master Plan serves some of the needs for project management, including timeline of delivery of products. Other documentation can be developed as required on a critical path program and a detailed process outline for the delivery.