



OSPAR
COMMISSION

OSPAR 1992 - 2022

30 achievements for 30 years





The first decade 1992 - 2001

As OSPAR celebrates 30 years of international cooperation to protect and conserve the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic, we have compiled a list of 30 achievements. Here's to another 30 years!

1. **The Convention is born!** [The Convention](#) for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the 'OSPAR Convention') was opened for signature at the Ministerial Meeting of the Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris on 22 September 1992.

2. **Dumping of radioactive waste banned.** OSPAR 1998 agreed [OSPAR Decision 98/2](#) banning the dumping of radioactive waste under the Convention.

3. **Disused oil installations.** [OSPAR Decision 98/3](#) on the Disposal of Disused Offshore Installations banned the dumping, or leaving wholly or partly in place, of disused offshore installations.

4. **Biodiversity added to the Convention.** In 1998 Ministers agreed to strengthen the Convention's framework by adopting an Annex on the Protection and Conservation of the Ecosystems and Biological Diversity of the Maritime Area.

5. **OSPAR Ministers commit in 1998 to establish a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).** To implement this commitment a Recommendation was adopted in 2003 ([OSPAR Recommendation 2003/03](#), as amended by Recommendation 2010/02). The OSPAR Network of MPAs now protects more than 10% of the OSPAR Maritime Area (meeting the CBD Aichi Target 11) with a commitment to increase to 30%.

6. **OSPAR publishes its first comprehensive assessment of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.** In 2000 OSPAR published the first Quality Status Report (QSR) for the whole North-East Atlantic. The [QSR 2000](#) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken or planned for the protection of the marine environment and identify priorities for action. A further QSR to assess the state of the whole North-East Atlantic was published in 2010 with another due to be published in 2023.

7. **Use and discharge of offshore chemicals harmonised.** [OSPAR Decision 2000/2](#) (as amended by OSPAR Decision 2005/1) established a Harmonised Mandatory Control System for the Use and Discharge of Offshore Chemicals to regulate the use and reduction of the discharge of offshore chemicals.



The next 10 years 2002 - 2011

8. **First North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) published.** To guide the work of fulfilling the Convention, OSPAR published its first North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy in 2003. The strategy contained objectives on biodiversity and ecosystems; eutrophication; hazardous substances; offshore oil and gas; and radioactive substances.

9. **Reporting encounters with munitions.** 2003 saw the adoption of an OSPAR framework for reporting encounters with conventional and chemical munitions in the OSPAR Maritime Area ([Recommendation 2010/20](#)).

10. **42 species and 18 habitats identified as needing protection.** OSPAR 2003 agreed on an initial OSPAR List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats. In 2008, a further 13 species and 2 habitats were added to the List which was then considered to be established. It was amended in 2021 and the List now covers the protection and conservation of 42 species and 18 habitats ([Agreement 2008-06](#)).

11. **Ecological quality objectives for a healthy ocean developed and assessed.** OSPAR's [QSR 2010](#) assessed ten ecological quality objectives developed for the North Sea which focused mainly on the interactions between mobile species and human pressures. This work initiated the development of common biodiversity indicators to better understand changes in species, habitats and food webs.

12. **OSPAR decides on measures to control greenhouse gas emissions.** OSPAR [Decision 2007/2](#) on the Storage of Carbon Dioxide Streams in Geological Formations was adopted to add the storage of carbon dioxide in geological formations as a measure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

13. **OSPAR's second NEAES agreed.** In Bergen in 2010, OSPAR Ministers met to agree OSPAR's NEAES 2010 – 2020 and adopted targeted measures to improve protection and conservation of threatened and/or declining habitats and species, including the world's first network of marine protected areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).



The past decade 2012 - 2022

14. **OSPAR data made available to all.** The [OSPAR Data and Information System](#) (ODIMS) went live. ODIMS is an online tool providing a single point of access to all the data and information gathered through OSPAR across the different thematic work areas of the Convention. It will help ensure that data is readily accessible for OSPAR assessments, but also help a broad range of users to find data held by OSPAR, to facilitate access to it and make use of it.

15. **OSPAR leads the way on marine litter.** In 2014 OSPAR agreed its first action plan to address marine litter ([Agreement 2014-01](#)). Implementation of the plan was completed and [reviewed](#) in 2021 and the 2nd plan adopted in 2022 targeting issues such as riverine litter, microplastics and fishing gear ([Agreement 2022-05](#)).

16. **Working with others.** The [collective arrangement](#) was adopted in 2014 to support liaison between those international organisations with competence for the management of human activities in ABNJ.

17. **Supporting implementation of the MSFD.** Seven years on from the QSR 2010, and with the benefit of significant developments in monitoring and assessment methodology, OSPAR published its [Intermediate Assessment](#) (IA) in 2017. The report built on the QSR 2010 but included a number of new indicator assessments and advanced assessment methodologies paving the way to the QSR 2023.

18. **Improving access to OSPAR assessments.** The [OSPAR Assessment Portal](#) (OAP) was first used to host the IA 2017 and has been upgraded and developed to host all OSPAR assessments in a fully traceable, interrogative way - from input data through to final assessment products.

19. **Reducing inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances.** OSPAR continues to implement a wide range of international instruments with the objective of controlling nutrient discharges to surface waters and the atmosphere by controlling discharges, emissions and losses at source and setting environmental targets, in line with the NEAES 2030.

20. **Levels of contaminants continue to decrease.** OSPAR monitoring shows that the concentrations of contaminants assessed have continued to decrease in the majority of areas assessed and are generally below levels likely to harm marine species in the areas assessed.

21. **Mercury plants phased out.** In 2020 OSPAR announced that it had completely phased out all mercury cell chlor-alkali plants in its Maritime Area fully implementing PARCOM [Decision 90/3](#) on reducing atmospheric emissions from existing chlor-alkali plants. Measures in place have also significantly reduced the loads of mercury from crematoria entering the OSPAR Maritime Area.

22. **OSPAR has significantly reduced the input of hazardous substances to the marine environment.** OSPAR Contracting Parties have moved towards the objective of cessation of discharges, emissions and losses of hazardous substances. OSPAR's work on hazardous substances focuses on those that are considered to be of concern to the marine environment, including substances covered within the EU framework and global conventions.

23. **Latest North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy agreed.** OSPAR launched its [NEAES 2030](#) at a [Ministerial meeting](#) in Cascais (Portugal) on 1 October 2021. The Strategy included a new focus on climate change and is supported by an implementation plan, ensuring that progress is monitored and reported in a transparent way.

The past decade 2012 - 2022

24. **Pellet loss tackled.** OSPAR 2021 adopted [Recommendation 2021/06](#) on the reduction of plastic pellet loss into the marine environment by promoting the timely development and implementation of effective and consistent pellet loss prevention standards and certification schemes for the entire plastic supply chain.

25. **Important habitats and species in need of protection.** In 2021 OSPAR added 2 species and 2 habitats to its List of threatened and/or declining species and habitats ([Agreement 2008-06](#)). Houting and Azorean barnacle were added to the List along with kelp forest habitats and haploids communities.

26. **Protecting seabirds in ABNJ.** In 2021 OSPAR added the high seas North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Sea basin MPA to its network. OSPAR [Decision 2021/01](#) was adopted along with a management plan ([Recommendation 2021/01](#)) and roadmap ([Agreement 2021-08](#)). The Site, covering nearly 600 000 km², was identified through tracking data and was found to be an important feeding and foraging area for seabirds breeding on the coasts of the North-East Atlantic, and by those migrating across the globe or nesting in other parts of the world.

27. **Enhanced focus on climate change.** 2021 saw the first meeting of OSPAR's Climate Change Expert Group.

28. **OSPAR to address underwater noise.** In 2022 OSPAR agreed a joint monitoring programme on underwater noise in the North Sea ([Agreement 2022-06](#)), paving the way for the development of a regional action plan.

29. **Evidence in support of the QSR 2023.** As we move to a process of continuous assessment, OSPAR has already published a number of assessments and other publications including [feeder reports](#) on: aquaculture, agriculture, extraction of non-living resources, fisheries, offshore renewable energy generation, recreation and tourism, shipping and ports, and tourism.

30. **OSPAR reaches 30!** On 22nd September 2022 OSPAR celebrates 30 years since The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (the 'OSPAR Convention') was opened for signature.

