



OSPAR
COMMISSION

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**for the protection and conservation of the marine environment of
the North-East Atlantic**

CALL FOR TENDER

**“OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Benthic Habitats and OSPAR
Regional Action Plan for Marine Birds - technical assistance
2026/2027”**

1. Name, addresses and contact point(s):

Official name: OSPAR Commission

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Applications must be received by 4 September 2026.

The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of your response by email. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within a few days, please contact the Secretariat by phone to check that your response has been received.

Please note that the Secretariat does not actively review quarantined emails.

2. Title attributed to the contract

OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Benthic Habitats and Regional action Plan for Marine Birds – technical assistance 2026/2027

3. Description of the contract

Overview

The OSPAR Commission is an international intergovernmental organisation established to protect the marine environment in the North-East Atlantic Ocean. It consists of representatives of the Contracting Parties: that is, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. The Commission is administered by a Secretariat based in London.

To deliver the aims of the [OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy](#) (NEAES 2030) OSPAR is developing Regional Action Plans as coordinated frameworks to reduce or eliminate anthropogenic pressures in the OSPAR maritime area and work on the protection and recovery of marine species and habitats. To date OSPAR has issued Regional Action Plans on [marine litter](#), [underwater noise](#), [marine birds](#), and, most recently, benthic habitats. The OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Benthic Habitats in the North-East Atlantic ([RAP-Benthic](#)) was adopted by OSPAR Contracting Parties in June 2026, and the OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Marine Birds in the North-East Atlantic ([RAP-Bird](#)) was adopted in June 2024.

The RAP-Bird identifies the main pressures and activities impacting marine birds and the eleven actions recommend specific action to reduce and eliminate them, where possible. The RAP-Benthic has been developed as a framework of coordinated regional actions bringing together existing work related to the

protection and recovery of benthic habitats work across OSPAR, focussing on six overarching themes. The RAP-Benthic also introduces eleven new actions within those themes to address identified gaps.

The actions are intended to complement existing efforts at national and EU levels and within other regional initiatives, ensuring that OSPAR actions maximise added value. The RAP-Benthic and RAP-Bird are adaptive and flexible so that, as and when necessary, new actions and national leads can be introduced. Progress is reported into OSPAR's [Implementation Plan](#) for the NEAES 2030.

The implementation of the RAP-Benthic and RAP-Bird are coordinated through an Intersessional Correspondence Group on the implementation follow up of measures for the protection and conservation of species and habitats (ICG-POSH) which reports to the OSPAR Committee on Biodiversity (BDC). ICG-POSH generally meets once a year, where it will also review progress on the implementation of the RAPs. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the RAP-Benthic and, to a lesser extent, the RAP-Bird, coordination and collaboration with other OSPAR groups (including Intersessional Correspondence Groups, Working Groups and Committees), will be an essential part of the successful implementation of the RAP-Benthic and RAP-Bird. ICG-POSH is supported by the OSPAR Secretariat as far as resources allow.

The provision of technical assistance is considered by ICG-POSH members to be essential in the delivery of the RAP-Benthic and RAP-Bird. While each action of each RAP is, or will be, led by one or more Contracting Parties, the technical assistance function will help deliver meeting documents and draft OSPAR measures to the agreed format and timeline and to ensure that actions are well coordinated and reported to OSPAR. The Co-convenor of ICG-POSH looks to the technical assistance team, along with the Secretariat, to ensure that ICG-POSH meetings are efficiently prepared and managed.

Further background on the assessment, status and knowledge gaps for benthic habitats and marine birds in the North-East Atlantic can be found in the thematic and indicator assessments provided for OSPAR's 2023 Quality Status Report [here](#). Additional information on the status of OSPAR Listed Threatened and/or Declining benthic habitats and marine birds is reflected in the [OSPAR List of Threatened and Declining Species and Habitats](#). Further information on the RAP-Bird actions, that are already being implemented, can be found [here](#). Further information about the OSPAR Commission can be obtained from the Commission's website at www.ospar.org.

Aim and objectives

The aim of this project is to provide a technical assistance service to the convenor and members of ICG-POSH to facilitate the implementation of the OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Benthic Habitats (RAP-Benthic) and the OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Marine Birds (RAP-Bird). The period of the assistance will cover the period 01 October 2026 to 31 December 2027.

The project has 4 main objectives:

- a. Maintaining a programme management plan and meetings to monitor and support delivery of actions
- b. Support the implementation of specific actions
- c. Support production of meeting documents and communication materials
- d. Enhance coordination between OSPAR Committees, including through representation at meetings

4. Tasks and products

Tenderers are required to demonstrate in the response how they will fulfill the following tasks:

- a. Programme management plan
 - Keeping the RAP-Benthic and the RAP-Bird programme management plan up to date, and reporting to ICG-POSH and other OSPAR groups, such as the informal habitat restoration group, as applicable;
 - Supporting the Secretariat in reporting relevant information into the NEAES Implementation Plan.
- b. Implementation of individual RAP actions
 - Supporting action leads in the implementation of RAP actions;
 - Providing administrative and technical support, including record keeping, for the organisation of meetings and workshops in relation to the RAP actions;
 - Supporting the processes for collecting and collating information (e.g. questionnaires, literature research, etc.);
 - Supporting the drafting of technical reports;
 - Supporting stakeholder dialogues with specific industries addressed by RAP actions;
 - Helping to prepare OSPAR documentation;
 - Ensuring efficient communication and coordination between actions.
- c. Support of ICG-POSH meetings and provision of other advice and support
 - Support on-going coordination with other European regional seas conventions – information exchange and alignment of actions;
 - Act as liaison point for relevant international research projects and initiatives, e.g. GNSBI;
 - Provision of other advice and support to the ICG-POSH Convenor if required, subject to the availability of resources within the contract.
- d. Coordination between OSPAR Committees
 - Support coordination between OSPAR groups for cross-cutting actions and actions that concern OSPAR groups, other than ICG-POSH;
 - Act as liaison point for coordination, including through representation at meetings;
 - Provision of other advice and support to co-convenors of OSPAR groups if required, subject to the availability of resources within the contract.

5. Duration of the contract and timing of deliverables

Start date: 01/10/26

End date: 31/12/27

6. Type of tender:

Open

7. Estimated level of provision of technical assistance

The agreed level of support will be based on an average number of person-days assistance per month. It is envisaged that the number of days support in any given month would be 5 and not exceeding in the region of 60 days per annum, and up to an expected maximum value of £48,750. The exact limit will depend on the level of financial contributions from Contracting Parties and will be defined in the contract. The consultant will be expected to maintain time sheets providing evidence of the support provided.

The assistance should be provided by one or two individuals to maximise synergies across all the RAP-Bird and RAP-Benthic activities. However, it is recognised that there could be a need for additional back-up to ensure a consistent and adequate level of support throughout the contract period.

Where travel is necessary for the purposes of the delivery of the technical assistance it shall be agreed with the Secretariat. Reasonable travel costs and subsistence shall be reimbursed by the Secretariat and should not be included in the tender.

8. Exclusion criteria for selection of offers

Contracts may only be awarded when the tender comes from a tenderer who is not excluded from access to the market due to a situation of exclusion and who meets the selection criteria set out in these contract documents.

The contracting authority may carry out an early examination of tenders.

The tenderer shall submit a UK or a UK equivalent Procurement Document such as an European Single Procurement (ESPD) with their tender. A form is available on the website for those bidders who do not have an ESPD or equivalent.

Mandatory and discretionary exclusions criteria set out as in Schedule 6 and 7 of the Procurement Act 2023 (Act), England and Wales will apply.

9. Selection criteria and weighting:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Weighting (%)</i>
Understanding of, and relevance to OSPAR's requirements	25
Clarity and content of proposed assistance services	25
Contractor's expertise, experience	25
Value for money	25

10. Management, delivery and completion of the work

The OSPAR Secretariat will act as project manager. The ICG-POSH Co-Convenors will act as steering group.

The contractor will be required to attend the annual meetings of ICG-POSH (24-27 November 2026 and similar dates, TBC, in November 2027).

All deliverables must be submitted to the OSPAR Secretariat. The consultant will be expected to provide a full financial report summarising the assistance provided in relation to the above tasks and providing evidence of effectiveness (for example, feedback from action leads).

11. Information required in the tender response

The response to this call should incorporate the following elements:

1. Demonstration of understanding of the issue and requirements;
2. Description of how technical assistance would be provided;
3. Examples of relevant previous experience;
4. Skills and expertise;
5. Project budget breakdown;
6. Name, address, full details of a primary contact;
7. Copy of the Ultimate Beneficial Ownership or equivalent.