

OSPAR COMMISSION

for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic

CALL FOR TENDER

Technical Assistance to develop a Cumulative Effects Assessment for the OSPAR Region as part of the Intermediate Assessment 2029

Name, addresses and contact point(s):

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Applications must be received by 20 October 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.

1. Title attributed to the contract

Technical Assistance to develop a Cumulative Effects Assessment for the OSPAR Region as part of the Intermediate Assessment 2029

2. Description of the contract

Background

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. The working languages are English and French.

The following background information should be considered:

- a) Commission's website at www.ospar.org
- b) [Terms of Reference for the OSPAR ICG-Ecosystem Assessment Outlook – Cumulative Effects Assessment \(ICG-EcoC\) group](#)
- c) [OSPAR Convention](#)
- d) [North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy \(NEAES\) 2030](#)
- e) [OSPAR Quality Status Report \(QSR\) 2023](#), including the cumulative effects assessment sections in each of the [Thematic Assessments](#).
- f) [OSPAR Bird Pilot Report](#) (incl. [Annex with maps](#))

The marine environment is a complex system of interacting organisms (including humans), their ecological traits, their physical environment and societal benefits. Understanding these interactions and the collective / cumulative effects of human activities on them is critical for effective management.

The [OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy \(NEAES\) 2030](#) describes that ‘... the ecosystem approach takes into consideration cumulative effects and is implemented through a continuous cycle of (i) setting and coordinating ecological objectives and associated targets and indicators, (ii) ongoing management and (iii) regular updates of ecosystem knowledge, research and advice. Monitoring, assessment and adaptive management are essential elements for implementing the ecosystem approach.’

The [NEAES Strategic Objective 7](#) aims to ‘ensure that uses of the marine environment are sustainable, through the integrated management of current and emerging human activities, including addressing their cumulative impacts.’ To achieve this objective, OSPAR agreed that, by 2028, it ‘will further develop methods for the analysis of cumulative effects in the marine ecosystems of the North-East Atlantic, taking into account relevant spatial and temporal information on human activities, pressures, sensitive receptors and habitats, and use the results to inform the establishment of measures and actions to prevent, reduce or otherwise manage impacts.’ ([NEAES Operational Objective S7.O1](#)).

OSPAR’s Intersessional Correspondence Group on Ecosystem Assessment Outlook – Cumulative Effects Assessment (ICG-EcoC) has been looking into how to map human activities, pressures, ecosystem components and impacts so as to have a better spatial understanding of cumulative effects of pressures in the North-East Atlantic, specifically to further the [Thematic cumulative effects assessments](#) undertaken for the [Quality Status Report \(QSR\) 2023](#). OSPAR conducts regular assessments of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. ICG-EcoC’s work is currently focusing on the development of a cumulative impact assessment for OSPAR’s Intermediate Assessment 2029 (IA 2029), contributing to the assessment of the environmental status of the North-East Atlantic against the objectives of the North-East Atlantic Environmental Strategy and identify priority elements for action to achieve OSPAR’s vision of a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification. The IA 2029 will strengthen scientific understanding of marine ecosystems, human activities that depend upon and interact with the marine environment, and the cumulative impacts arising from these interactions.

The 2023 Quality Status Report has described the cumulative effects for each biodiversity theme within the QSR. For the IA 2029, the aim is to perform a regional cumulative effects assessment for the [OSPAR Region](#), progressing the work that has been undertaken to date on cumulative effects assessments in the region.

Aim and objectives

The purpose of this contract is to provide technical assistance to OSPAR via ICG-EcoC on the development of the cumulative impact assessment and a text proposal to be included in OSPAR’s Intermediate Assessment 2029.

The text proposal must contain as a minimum:

- a) a description of the methodology used (short, concise, and understandable to a broad audience) for inclusion in the IA 2029.
- b) a more detailed description of the methodology to be used in [OSPAR’s Coordinated Environmental Monitoring Programme \(CEMP\)](#) for the IA 2029 Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA).

- c) a brief summary of the results for the entire OSPAR area, and conclusions per OSPAR region regarding pressure factors on specific species and habitats for inclusion in the IA 2029 (if there is insufficient information, this must also be indicated, e.g., for certain activities in regions 1 and 5).

The aim is for the outputs of this project to be directly used as a section in the IA 2029. As such it is important for (a) and (c) to follow the agreed style and writing guidance for the IA 2029 to ensure coherence and accessibility to the target audiences. Guidance and assistance on this will be provided by the Steering Committee. The methodology in (b) should be written in sufficient detail for practitioners to be able to understand and reproduce the analyses.

To this end, the consultant will perform a regional scale cumulative effects assessment for the OSPAR region, making use of the [SCAIRM approach](#)¹, to inform on the cumulative effects of different pressures relevant to [OSPAR Indicators](#) and propose measures for management / mitigation.

Note that the Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) performed under ICG-EcoC needs to be compatible with and inform the regional implementation of the [EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#), by incorporating the MSFD Descriptors in the output of the CEA. This will enhance understanding of the ecosystem components which experience the highest pressures and therefore require most attention from an MSFD perspective for OSPAR Contracting Parties that are also EU Member States. OSPAR will aid the consultant with this via a Steering Group.

Note also that the geographic coverage of the assessment (e.g. [OSPAR regions](#)) chosen for the IA 2029 will be dependent on the availability of evidence, resources and time to undertake the CEA. The expectation is that for more data rich areas (e.g. the Greater North Sea, Celtic Sea) such an assessment may be more straightforward than for data poor areas (e.g. the Arctic), so whilst the aim is for an assessment of the North East Atlantic Regions the decision on the specific region will be taken together with the ICG-EcoC Steering Committee for the assignment.

Tenders demonstrating knowledge and expertise of the OSPAR North East Atlantic Region are preferred.

Study Criteria

The following criteria should be taken into consideration in the development of this assessment:

- a. Apply the [SCAIRM approach](#) for the analysis, thus building on the [ICES scientific advice to the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative \(GNSBI\)](#) on Cumulative Impacts for GNSBI, the work done for the [QSR 2023](#) and experience with the [OSPAR Bird Pilot Report](#) (incl. [Annex with maps](#)) including the draft lessons learned;
- b. Included all relevant human activities/pressure in the analysis as well as all relevant species and habitats (ecosystem components). This should be explained in the quotation, especially if pressure factors and/or species and habitats are not included in the analysis.
- c. Alignment with the [OSPAR suite of Common Indicators](#) thus ensuring clear incorporation of the [MSFD Descriptors](#) in the output of the work;
- d. Building on the recommendations from the QSR 2023 CEA analysis (see Box 1 below);

¹ ICG-EcoC recognises the existence of different Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA) methodologies that each have their own characteristics and could be relevant for OSPAR. While no finite choices for future work and development of CEA are made, for the OSPAR 2029 Intermediate Assessment, ICG-EcoC has made the decision to work with the SCAIRM approach, building on the work and lessons learned from the [ICG-ORED Bird Pilot](#), incorporating [ICES advice](#) to the [Greater North Sea Basin Initiative \(GNSBI\)](#) and building on the [QSR 2023](#) work.

- e. Progressing on spatial presentation of CEA results, where possible; and
- f. The visualization of results must be easily understandable at policy maker level and for a broader public. The manner in which the results were obtained, and the data processing choices made, must also be clearly and transparently explained.

Box 1: Recommendations from the QSR 2023 CEA analyses

1. Ensure there is built-in collaboration and engagement across [OSPAR Expert Groups and Committees](#) to further develop and progress the work, maintain the momentum achieved in progressing the work from the QSR 2023;
2. Improve collaboration and engagement across [OSPAR Contracting Parties](#);
3. Improve collaboration and engagement with external bodies, e.g., [ICES](#), [HELCOM](#), [GNSBI](#);
4. Improve integration between human activity, pressure, biodiversity assessments (Ecosystem Approach – [DAPSIR](#));
5. DAPSIR – Natural Capital Accounting continued alignment (working with [ICG-ESA](#));
6. Undertake regional scale analyses;
7. Explore options for spatial analyses – mapping human activities, pressures, ecosystem components and impacts;
8. Improve methodologies for the identification and quantification of impacts, individually and cumulatively;
9. Consider refinements to the persistence and resilience analyses; and
10. Consider management responses and effectiveness of measures, including working with OSPAR Regional Action Plan leads (i.e., [marine birds](#), [benthic habitats](#)).

Data and spatial scale

Data collection is to go hand in hand with delivery of best available data from OSPAR groups (e.g. [ICG-ORED](#), [ICG-COBAM](#)) and relevant EU projects. Final agreement on spatial scope for the regional scale spatial analysis for the IA 2029 will be based on the chosen consultant's capacity and available data in agreement with ICG-EcoC.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee will be established, with the aim of incorporating best knowledge on CEA in the OSPAR Region. Members of the Steering Committee will be asked to comment and reflect on the approach and work undertaken by the consultant and will contribute to the work by guiding the consultant in terms of data availability and presentation of results. This Steering Committee is expected to be made up of members of relevant OSPAR groups working in the OSPAR region.

In addition to the Steering Committee the aim is to have an Advisory Group that will be made up of experts from other regional initiatives on cumulative impacts, i.e., the Cumulative Impact Assessment working track of the GNSBI, the ICES Working Group on cumulative impacts, and North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC).

Deliverable

The consultant is expected to produce a Cumulative Effects Assessment for the OSPAR Region report that can be directly used in the OSPAR 2029 Intermediate Assessment. The consultant will have to follow carefully the OSPAR 2029 Intermediate Assessment Guidelines, which clearly define how such an assessment report is to be developed and presented. The consultant will be responsible for developing an annotated outline for the report at the beginning of the project. All project outputs, including spreadsheets, tables, figures and maps, should be presented to OSPAR in accessible and editable formats to facilitate any final amendments that may arise during the finalisation of the IA 2029.

The consultant indicates in the quotation for which OSPAR regions a regional elaboration is possible based on capacity and available data (at least analysis and visualization for OSPAR Regions II and III).

The consultant should incorporate into their costs at least monthly update meetings with the ICG-EcoC Co-convenors to discuss progress and provide opportunity for early review of draft outputs. This will aid wider communication and discussion of outputs iteratively both within this specific contract and wider compliance with the IA 2029 guidance and work planning.

The consultant will be invited to give two presentations to ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee members to inform them of the work progress: one at the start of the project and one when the first draft of the assessment report is available. This should allow ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee members to provide feedback and propose directions to the consultant's work.

The consultant organizes at least two meetings of the Advisory Group, one to present the proposed content final draft and one to present the final draft. Additionally, technical assistance may be required to present the outputs to specific OSPAR groups (e.g. the Coordination Group) and more widely following publication of the IA 2029.

3. Tasks, products and timings

The consultant will carry out the tasks and deliver the final product "Cumulative Effects Assessment for the OSPAR Region as part of the Intermediate Assessment 2029" according to the milestones reflected in the below table.

The contractor will:

- Present a report outline at the **ICG-EcoC and Steering Committee meetings in March 2027***.
- Submit and present the full draft report at the **same meetings in November 2027***, incorporating feedback from March.
- Deliver the final report to **ICG-EcoC in January 2028***.
- Address feedback from **OSPAR groups** and submit the final report to the **OSPAR Commission meeting in May 2028**.
- Finalise the report by **end of July 2028**, if additional feedback arises.

Tasks	Delivery*
Initial online meeting with the Steering Committee to discuss the work to be undertaken, go through the OSPAR 2029 Intermediate Assessment Guidelines, and agree the data to be used as well as the geographic coverage of the assessment	January 2027
Preparation work with a report outline. Identification of the relevant datasets and propose ways of gathering information covering the objectives of this project	February 2027
Presentation of the proposal to ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee. Consider any feedback from ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee	March 2027
Development of the assessment, with guidance from ICG-EcoC, the Steering Committee and the Advisory Board	March – October 2027
Presentation of the draft assessment report to ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee. Consider any feedback from ICG-EcoC and the Steering Committee	November 2027

Finalisation of the assessment, taking into account the feedback received	December 2027 – January 2028
Submission of the final draft report on Cumulative Effects Assessment for the OSPAR Region to ICG-EcoC	January 2028
The tender should include time to take into account comments from OSPAR on the analyses and outputs as the report progresses through the formal OSPAR sign-off process	January – July 2028

** Note that the timeline provided is indicative and subject to change, as it depends on the scheduling of upcoming OSPAR meetings. Exact dates will be confirmed and communicated to the contractor once the meeting dates are finalised.*

4. Duration of the contract

Start date: 11 January 2027

End date: 31 July 2028

5. Type of tender:

Open

6. Estimated level of provision of technical assistance

It is envisaged that the work will be conducted remotely, at the contractor's premises.

The tender proposal should include a comprehensive breakdown of days and costs per task for all aspects of the project. The price for technical assistance should be based on a daily rate.

The budget for this contract shall not exceed EUR 250,000 excluding VAT and expenses. If travel is necessary for the purposes of the delivery of the technical assistance, it shall be agreed with the project manager. Reasonable travel and subsistence costs associated with this additional travel will be reimbursed by the OSPAR Secretariat and should not be included in the tender.

Bids submitted by consortia may be considered. The consultant will be expected to provide a named individual who maintain time sheets providing evidence of the support provided.

The contractor will be required to participate in online meetings throughout the contract, including discussions with the Steering Committee and Advisory Board, presentations to specific OSPAR groups, and administrative reviews with the project manager, and must account for these time commitments when developing the tender proposal. For this, the contractor should budget for:

- a 1-hour online meeting with the project manager every 3 months;
- Presentations at 4 online meetings with the Steering Committee and Advisory Board (each 1- to 2-hour meetings); and

- Presentations at 3 online meetings of ICG-EcoC (each 1-hour meetings), as well as possibly presentations at 3 online meetings of specific OSPAR groups (TBC; each 1-hour meetings).

7. Selection criteria and weighting:

Criteria	Weighting (%)
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

8. Management, delivery and completion of the work

The OSPAR Secretariat will act as project manager. The ICG-EcoC Steering Committee will act as steering group. 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.

All communication and deliverables of the project are required to be in English. The contractor is responsible for language and accessibility proofing of deliverables.

9. Exclusion criteria

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.

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

10. 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.