

Vacancy Announcement / Job Description for the post of Junior Postdoctoral Research Associate – Fixed Term (Project Funded)¹

We are looking for an ambitious early-career researcher with an interest in developing and applying novel environmental science to real-world sustainability challenges. The post offers a great opportunity to contribute to the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. The basic salary is in the region of £41,200 per annum and, in line with the rules for international organisations, is not subject to UK income tax. An attractive package of additional allowances and benefits may apply, depending on entitlement.

1. Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the post of junior postdoctoral researcher in a science-to-policy role at the Secretariat of the OSPAR Commission. The role is for the period January 2027 – August 2029 (32 months) with possibility to extend for an additional year, subject to available funding.
2. This role is part of European Funded Research Project OceanSOS, to undertake activities of Work Package 5. The post will be subject to an initial five-month period of probation. The Secretariat operates a '3 days in the office/2 days working from home' policy. Standard working hours are 36 hours per week, but this may vary according to the workload. The post may require international travel, mainly within Europe.
3. The successful candidate will be asked to take up his/her post ideally from January 2027. Should the successful candidate be available to start earlier, the start date could be discussed.
4. The post is open to nationals of the Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention (see below), or nationals of any other State which is a Member State of the European Union.

The OSPAR Commission

5. The OSPAR Commission is an international intergovernmental organisation established to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. It has 16 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. Further information about the OSPAR Commission can be obtained from the Commission's website at www.ospar.org.
6. OSPAR has a unique remit among Regional Sea Conventions because it has the legal mandate to designate Marine Protected Areas in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) of the OSPAR maritime area. To date, OSPAR has collectively designated eight MPAs in ABNJ, and a further four have been designated by Contracting Parties. OSPAR therefore has a role in coordinating conservation measures for biodiversity in

¹ Applicants' data will be handled in line with the OSPAR Privacy Policy, <https://www.ospar.org/privacy>

ABNJ, beyond the jurisdiction of individual states, through cooperation among its Contracting Parties, as well as a role in coordination with other international competent authorities where their action is required.

7. The responsibilities of the Secretariat in respect of the OceanSOS project are to deliver Work Package 5 and to support the project in translation of the science outputs into policy. This will include the preparation of project reports, workshops, policy guidance and briefing documents, in the framework of an international intergovernmental organisation.

Ocean SOS

8. We are seeking an enthusiastic and motivated Junior Postdoctoral Research Associate to join the international Horizon Europe OceanSOS project, which brings together scientists, policymakers and regional governance organisations to develop science-based solutions for safeguarding the health and resilience of the global ocean. More information about the project can be found at <https://oceansos.net/>.

9. OceanSOS aims to transform our understanding of how cumulative human pressures affect ocean ecosystems and translate this knowledge into practical tools for decision-makers. The project integrates marine ecology, Earth system science, ecosystem modelling, environmental governance and stakeholder engagement to support precautionary, ecosystem-based management of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) under current and emerging anthropogenic pressures.

10. The successful candidate will join Work Package 5, which will develop the first operational regional Safe Operating Space (SOS) framework for the ocean. Building on the Planetary Boundaries framework, Work Package 5 aims to translate global Earth system limits into practical regionally relevant approaches that help governments, regional seas organisations and international bodies identify ecological thresholds and implement management actions that maintain healthy, resilient ocean ecosystems.

11. A defining feature of WP5 is its commitment to co-production. The framework will be developed in partnership with international organisations to ensure that it is scientifically robust, operationally relevant and appropriate for the realities of ocean governance.

Description of the post and requirements

12. This role offers an exciting opportunity to work at the interface of environmental science, policy and international collaboration. The successful candidate will contribute to the scientific development of regional Safe Operating Space frameworks while playing a central role in building productive relationships with project partners, governance organisations and other stakeholders. They will help ensure that scientific knowledge is developed collaboratively and translated into approaches that can support evidence-based decision-making across regional and global ocean governance.

13. The postholder will collaborate closely with other work packages to integrate ecological indicators, model outputs, cumulative impact assessments and governance information into an operational framework for regional ocean management. The postholder will also collaborate with policy makers in the OSPAR Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Protected Areas and the Collective Arrangement. For this role, technical expertise and the interpersonal skills needed to facilitate dialogue across disciplines, sectors and cultures will be essential.

14. Key responsibilities of the role will include:

- a. Contributing to the development of methods for translating the Planetary Boundaries Safe Operating Space framework to regional ocean and ABNJ contexts.
- b. Supporting the development of new control variables describing regional ocean ecosystem health and food-web integrity.

- c. Integrating outputs from ecological models, risk assessments and cumulative impact analyses into regional Safe Operating Space assessments.
- d. Working collaboratively with researchers across OceanSOS to integrate ecological, modelling and governance outputs into practical decision-support frameworks.
- e. Working with project partners and stakeholders to co-design decision-support approaches relevant to regional and international ocean governance.
- f. Representing the project at workshops, stakeholder meetings and international conferences
- g. Contributing to scientific publications, project reports, policy briefs and presentations for both academic and non-academic audiences.

15. OSPAR's Executive Secretary will be the overall supervisor for this post, although the day-to-day activity will be managed and guided by the Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity and complemented by guidance from researchers at the Stockholm Resilience Centre.

Experience and Qualifications

16. We are looking for an ambitious early-career researcher with an interest in developing and applying novel environmental science to real-world sustainability challenges, who is motivated to contribute to international efforts to improve governance of the global ocean.

17. Candidates should have:

- a. A PhD (or be close to completion) in marine ecology, oceanography, Earth system science, environmental science, environmental modelling, or a closely related discipline.
- b. Demonstrated research experience in one or more relevant fields, such as marine ecosystems, ecosystem functioning, environmental indicators, cumulative impact assessment, Earth system processes or marine conservation.
- c. Evidence of scientific publication or equivalent research outputs appropriate to career stage.
- d. Excellent stakeholder engagement and relationship-building skills and, ideally, knowledge of co-production and participatory research approaches.
- e. Strong facilitation and listening skills, with the ability to bring together different perspectives constructively and respectfully and build trusted working relationships.
- f. Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including to communicate complex scientific concepts clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- g. Ability to work independently while contributing effectively within a multidisciplinary international research team.
- h. Quantitative and analytical skills, including experience analysing complex environmental datasets.

18. Experience of one or more of the following disciplines is desirable, but not essential: Planetary Boundaries, Safe Operating Space or Earth system science; Marine ecosystem assessment or ecosystem-based management; Ocean governance or international environmental policy; Risk assessment, scenario analysis or cumulative impact assessment; Ecological or Earth system modelling.

Terms of Service and Remuneration

19. The role offers an exciting opportunity to contribute to one of Europe's flagship projects addressing the future sustainability of the global ocean. The successful candidate will work with leading international

experts across marine ecology, Earth system science and ocean governance while helping develop innovative approaches with direct relevance to global policy and management. Travel to consortium meetings, workshops and conferences will be required.

20. The terms and conditions of service are those set out in the Commission's Staff Regulations (which can be found on the OSPAR website under [Staff regulations.](#)) The Staff Regulations are currently being amended.

21. OSPAR Secretariat staff enjoy privileges and immunities in line with the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom and OSPAR. The salaries of OSPAR Secretariat staff are exempt from UK income tax. Remuneration of staff members is guided by the salary scales of remuneration of the Co-ordinated Organisations for staff serving in the United Kingdom. The remuneration package is in the region of £41,200 per annum with attractive additional allowances and benefits depending on entitlement. Further details on the allowances which may be payable are set out in the Commission's Staff Regulations.

Procedure

22. Applicants are requested to submit a two-page curriculum vitae together with a covering letter explaining why they consider themselves suitable for this post.

23. If you have any questions about the application procedure, please contact Barbara Middleton (barbara.middleton@ospar.org)

24. The closing date for applications is Sunday 6 September 2026. Applications should be addressed to:

The Executive Secretary
OSPAR Commission
secretariat@ospar.org

Applications should be sent by e-mail. Please include the following in the subject line of your e-mail: "Application – Research Associate - OceanSOS". The Secretariat will acknowledge receipt of all applications by email. If an acknowledgement is not received, applicants should contact the Secretariat to check that their application has been received.

25. The provisional timetable for the procedure for appointing the Postdoctoral Research Associate is as follows:

Step	Date
Applications to be sent to the Executive Secretary	By Sunday 6 September 2026
Shortlisting of candidates	Wednesday 9 September 2026
Interview with short-listed candidates resulting in recommendation for appointment	Friday 25 September 2026
Successful applicant to take up appointment	January 2027

Please note that the above timings are indicative only and, in particular, the date of the interview may change depending upon the availability of the interview panel. Shortlisted candidates will be notified by email, and those invited for interview may be invited to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a subject to be determined by the selection panel.

Interviews will be held in person at the Secretariat offices in London.