

Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on
Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) and Biofouling
Online, 2-3 December 2021

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Note that this document was submitted after the established deadline. It will be decided by the Meeting whether the document can be discussed or is postponed to the next meeting.

Background

Information on the outcomes of the following meetings of relevance for JTG BALLAST & BIOFOULING within the framework of OSPAR held since TG BALLAST 11-2020 are available in the [OSPAR Meeting Portal](#)

Ministerial Meeting, 1 October 2021

Ministers from the OSPAR Contracting Parties and their representatives met on 1 October 2021, at the end of the OSPAR Commission meeting, to discuss and agree on a list of ministerial deliverables. These included the adoption of the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 and a ministerial declaration highlighting key priorities for the next decade aiming to address the triple challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Strategic Objective 7.02: By 2025 OSPAR will develop a coordinated management approach to ensure the number of non-indigenous species introduced via human activity is minimised and where possible reduced to zero.

Outcomes from Commission meeting, 27-30 September 2021

The new Strategy will be supported by the NEAES Implementation Plan. The meeting of the OSPAR Commission adopted an "other agreement" (OSPAR Agreement 2021-02) outlining the purpose and the structure of the Implementation Plan. The Agreement describes the process through which the OSPAR Committees and other subsidiary bodies will develop and report on content for the plan and how the Coordination Group (CoG), OSPAR Heads of Delegation (HOD) and the OSPAR Commission itself will use the plan to assess progress and help ensure the effective delivery of OSPAR's work (§9.35-9.37 OSPAR 2021 SR).

The Commission also agreed a first populated version of the Implementation Plan, incorporating tasks which had been prepared by the Committees during the 2020/21 meeting cycle, including tasks put forward by EIHA. OSPAR agreed that Committees existing work programmes should be phased out during the 2021/22 meeting cycle and invited Committees to develop additional tasks to present to OSPAR 2022. The Secretariat was invited to prepare an overview management report for consideration at the spring CoG 2022 meeting, and Committees invited to review and draft new Terms of Reference up to and including 2025 (§9.38-9.42).

Environmental Impact of Human Activities, 15-18 March 2021

From the Summary Record

Non-indigenous species

7.1 The Secretariat presented presented EIHA 21/07/13, Add.1 which gave a report on the progress of the Joint OSPAR/HELCOM task group on Ballast Water Management Convention. The Secretariat informed EIHA that the group had agreed to change its name to the Joint HELCOM/OSPAR Task Group on Ballast Water Management Convention (BWMC) and Biofouling, and that terms of reference for the meeting were included at Annex 1 of the document. The Secretariat asked EIHA to consider the Work Plan 2021-2022 at Annex 2 and whether any of the work products should be included within the OSPAR NEAES Implementation plan as OSPAR tasks and if so, whether a Contracting party could take the lead in drafting a task template.

7.2 The Secretariat asked EIHA to consider whether the Early Warning System (EWS) approach as developed and further refined for the HELCOM area could be considered for adaptation to the OSPAR maritime area (Add.1).

7.3 The Secretariat informed EIHA that a proposal by the Netherlands for a pilot study serving as input for the development of a baseline research protocol for the general assessment of biofouling on commercial vessels in the European regional seas had been presented to JTG-Ballast and asked EIHA to endorse and encourage Contracting Parties to nominate relevant experts to participate in the exercise mentioned in point

7.4 In discussion the following comments were noted:

- a. on the Work Plan 2021-2022, there was a need for more precision on timing and lead countries; there could be a role for JTG Ballast and Biofouling to contribute towards the NIS thematic assessment, e.g., on shipping as a vector for spread of NIS;
- b. On EWS, there was general support in principle for adaptation to the OSPAR area; however, some Contracting Parties noted that, while the HELCOM scheme was still under development, its requirements could be onerous, for example on monitoring; careful consideration would need to be given to operational implications for shipping and other technical questions; several Contracting Parties needed to carry out further internal consultation before taking a position; the Netherlands offered to take a lead on developing an OPSAR position on possible adaptation of the EWS to the OSPAR area.

7.5 EIHA agreed:

- a. To endorse the Work Plan, subject to the above comments;
- b. To invite JTG Ballast and Biofouling to nominate a contact point who could contribute to the QSR thematic assessment on NIS;**
- c. to invite Netherlands to lead in developing an OSPAR view on EWS and report state of progress in 2022;**
- d. To encourage Contracting Parties to nominate relevant experts to contribute to the pilot study (contact Netherlands, Mr. Saa Henry Kabuta (saahenry.kabuta@rws.nl));**
- e. To invite Netherlands to work on a draft task template for the NEAES IP, for consideration at EIHA 2022.**

OSPAR's Quality Status Report (QSR) 2023

OSPAR's next full assessment of the status of the North-East Atlantic, the QSR, is due to be published in 2023. The QSR 2023 will include the following elements of relevance:

1. A thematic assessment on NIS as discussed in paper 2-6;
2. A thematic assessment on human activities which includes components of ballast water;
3. A newly published feeder report on shipping and ports <https://oap.ospar.org/en/ospar-assessments/quality-status-reports/qsr-2023/other-assessments/shipping-and-ports/>

Action required

The Meeting is invited to take note of the information and make use of it as appropriate.