



OSPAR

COMMISSION

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Agreement 2014-1)



Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Agreement 2014-1)

Note to reader

This report was written in October 2020 and the status of actions was correct at the time of writing. However, it should be noted that work under the RAP ML 2014-2021 is ongoing, and it is anticipated that a number of the actions that were not considered complete at the time of writing, will be completed by June 2021. For the latest status of the RAP ML 2014-2021 actions, please visit the OSPAR web pages via the following link:

<https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/eiha/marine-litter/regional-action-plan>.

Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
2. RECAPITULATIF.....	4
3. INTRODUCTION.....	6
3.1. Background to the issue of marine litter.....	6
3.2. Background to the RAP-ML	6
3.3. Objectives and role of the RAP ML.....	7
3.4. Purpose of this report	7
3.5. Evaluation Framework / methodology	8
3.6. Information used to undertake this review	8
4. STATE OF COMPLETENESS OF THE RAP ML (OCTOBER 2020)	8
4.1. Collective Actions	8
4.2. National Actions	10
4.3. OSPAR workshops, events and seminars	12
4.4. OSPAR publications and technical reports.....	13
5. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RAP ML	14
5.1. Overview	14
5.2. Prevent and reduce marine litter pollution in the North-East Atlantic and its impact on marine organisms, habitats, public health and safety and reduce the socioeconomic costs it causes.....	15
5.2.1. Relevant actions in the plan	15
5.2.2. Evidence of final outcome	17
5.2.3. Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs).....	19
5.2.4. Evidence of impact	19
5.3. Remove litter from the marine environment where practical and feasible	21
5.3.1. Relevant actions in the plan	21
5.3.2. Evidence of final outcome and interim outcomes (outputs).....	22
5.3.3. Evidence of impact	22
5.4. Enhance knowledge and awareness on marine litter	23
5.4.1. Relevant actions in the plan	23
5.4.2. Evidence of final outcome	23
5.4.3. Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs).....	24
5.4.4. Evidence of impact	24
5.5. Support Contracting Parties in the development, implementation and coordination of their programmes for litter reduction, including those for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).....	25
5.5.1. Relevant actions in the plan	25

5.5.2.	Evidence of final outcome	26
5.5.3.	Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs) and impacts	26
5.6.	Develop management approaches to marine litter that are consistent with accepted international approaches	27
5.6.1.	Relevant actions in the plan	27
5.6.2.	Evidence of final outcome, interim outcomes (outputs), and impact.....	27
6.	GENERAL RUNNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAP ML.....	28
6.1.	ICG-ML's standard approach to implementing the RAP ML actions.....	28
6.2.	The implementation plan.....	29
6.3.	The RAP Coordinator role.....	29
7.	BROADER IMPACTS OF THE RAP ML.....	29
7.1.	Links to adoption of other intergovernmental agreements on marine litter – Other regional and global action plans.....	29
7.2.	Links to developments at an EU level	29
7.3.	Collaboration with other Regional Sea Conventions / international bodies	30
7.4.	Feedback from stakeholder survey.....	30
8.	CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLINE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATING THE RAP ML.....	31
8.1.	Conclusion	31
8.2.	Recommendations for the development of the next RAP ML.....	32
8.2.1.	Scope / nature of objectives and actions	32
8.2.2.	International engagement and cooperation	33
8.2.3.	Implementation	33
8.2.4.	Evaluation and review	33
8.2.5.	Areas of action for consideration in the new RAP.....	34
8.2.6.	Tasks that were proposed for NEAES Part II operational objectives but reserved for consideration in the implementation plan:	34
	References	35

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marine litter has become one of the defining environmental issues facing modern society. Marine litter is not only an aesthetic problem but incurs socioeconomic costs, threatens human health and safety and impacts on marine organisms.

OSPAR's Regional Action Plan on marine litter (RAP-ML) was adopted by the OSPAR Commission in 2014 and designed to run until 2021. It comprised 32 collective actions and 23 national actions aimed at addressing both land-based and sea-based sources and pathways of marine litter, as well as education, outreach and removal activities.

OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 commits OSPAR to developing and agreeing an updated RAP-ML by 2022, to address new and emerging issues and to reduce the impacts of those items causing most harm to the marine environment.

In order to provide a solid foundation for that work, OSPAR carried out an extensive evaluation of the impacts and effectiveness of the present RAP-ML, as presented in this report. The evaluation considered evidence from many sources, including the OSPAR indicator assessments, Contracting Party reporting, and stakeholder and public attitude surveys. It assesses the degree to which actions were implemented (as at the time of writing) and reviews effectiveness against each RAP-ML objective as well as its wider impacts on regional and global processes.

The evaluation report presents conclusions on the impact of the RAP-ML and recommendations for the next phase. Many of these recommendations have already been taken up in the initial drafting of the new RAP-ML.

As of June 2021, OSPAR Contracting Parties had completed 25 out of the 32 collective actions from the current RAP; 3 were still in progress; and 4 had been set aside. Recent OSPAR indicator assessments show some signs of reductions in marine litter levels but there is still a long way to go.

2. RECAPITULATIF

Les déchets marins sont devenus l'un des problèmes environnementaux majeurs de la société moderne. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'un problème esthétique, mais d'un coût socio-économique, d'une menace pour la santé et la sécurité des personnes et d'un impact sur les organismes marins.

Le Plan d'action régional d'OSPAR sur les déchets marins (RAP) a été adopté par la Commission OSPAR en 2014 et il s'étend jusqu'en 2021. Il comprend 32 actions collectives et 23 actions nationales qui visent à aborder les sources et les voies terrestres et marines des déchets marins, de même que des actions d'éducation et de sensibilisation, et des actions d'élimination.

La Stratégie pour le milieu marin de l'Atlantique du Nord-est (NEAES) 2030 engage OSPAR à élaborer et à approuver un RAP actualisé d'ici 2022, afin de traiter les questions nouvelles et émergentes et de réduire les impacts des éléments qui causent le plus de dommages au milieu marin.

A titre de base solide pour ce travail, OSPAR a réalisé une évaluation approfondie des impacts et de l'efficacité du présent RAP. L'évaluation a pris en compte des preuves provenant de nombreuses sources, y compris les évaluations des indicateurs OSPAR, les rapports des Parties contractantes et les enquêtes sur l'attitude des parties prenantes et du public. évalue le degré de mise en œuvre des actions (au moment de la rédaction du présent document) et examine l'efficacité par rapport à chaque objectif du RAP-ML, ainsi que son impact plus large sur les processus régionaux et mondiaux.

Le rapport d'évaluation présente des conclusions sur l'impact du RAP ainsi que des recommandations pour la prochaine phase de travail. Nombre de ces recommandations ont déjà été prises en compte dans la rédaction initiale du nouveau RAP.

En juin 2021, les Parties contractantes OSPAR avaient achevé 25 des 32 actions collectives du RAP actuel ; 3 étaient toujours en cours et 4 avaient été mises de côté. Les récentes évaluations des indicateurs OSPAR montrent certains signes de réduction des niveaux de déchets marins mais il reste encore un long chemin à parcourir.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. Background to the issue of marine litter

Marine litter covers any solid material which has been deliberately discarded, or unintentionally lost on beaches, on shores or at sea. It includes materials transported into the marine environment by rivers, drainage or sewage systems, or wind. Any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material that is found at sea is considered as marine litter. It originates from different sea and land based sources and is largely based on the prevailing production and consumption pattern.

Marine litter is not only an aesthetic problem but incurs socioeconomic costs, threatens human health and safety and impacts on marine organisms. It is broadly documented that entanglement in, or ingestion of, marine litter can have negative consequences on the physical condition of marine animals and even lead to death. Ingestion of micro plastics is also of concern as it may provide a pathway for transport of harmful chemicals into the food web. Additionally, marine litter is known to damage and degrade habitats (e.g. in terms of smothering) and to be a possible vector for the transfer of alien species.

3.2. Background to the RAP-ML

In 2014, the OSPAR objective with regard to marine litter was “to substantially reduce marine litter in the OSPAR maritime area to levels where properties and quantities do not cause harm to the marine environment” by 2020. In order to achieve this objective, the North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (2010 to 2020) committed to “develop appropriate programmes and measures to reduce amounts of litter in the marine environment and to stop litter entering the marine environment, both from sea-based and land-based sources”.

To support this objective, the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic (hereafter referred to as the RAP ML) was adopted as an OSPAR Agreement¹ by the OSPAR Commission in 2014, with an implementation period of 2014 to 2021. The adoption of the RAP ML was the culmination of a preparatory process involving a questionnaire to Contracting Parties; issues paper; multi-stakeholder workshops; and negotiation and agreement at the Environmental Impacts of Human Activities Committee (EIHA).

As well as setting out the policy context for OSPAR’s work on Marine Litter, the RAP ML presents a number of actions that OSPAR committed to work on throughout the implementation period (2014-2020). The actions consisted of 32 collective actions and 23 national actions (adopted for national reporting on a two yearly basis), which aim to address both land-based and sea- based sources and pathways of marine litter, as well as education, outreach and removal activities. Together, the collective actions and national actions form a comprehensive strategy / approach to tackle marine litter, with the national actions designed to support implementation of the collective actions. Each of the collective actions are driven by a specific or several Contracting Parties (CPs), using a lead-country approach.

Progress on the collective actions was reported by the lead countries (Action Leads) periodically throughout the implementation period. The implementation of the RAP ML was coordinated by OSPAR’s Intersessional Correspondence Group on Marine Litter (ICG-ML), who in turn report to the EIHA Committee.

¹ OSPAR Agreement 2014-1: <https://www.ospar.org/documents?d=32986>

The RAP ML includes provisions for evaluation at the end of the implementation period (2014-2021), and states that the RAP ML ‘would be reviewed and updated in accordance with the outcomes of the Quality Status Report (QSR) 2021, the new OSPAR Strategy, and assessments under the European Union’s (EU) Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)’.

Since adoption of the RAP ML, the scheduled timeline for the production of the QSR 2021 has been reviewed and subsequently delayed to delivery in 2023. This is as a result of the production of the OSPAR Intermediate Assessment in 2017, which was produced to support Contracting Parties in their reporting obligations under the EU MSFD. The adoption of the post 2020 OSPAR Strategy has also been postponed due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

3.3. Objectives and role of the RAP ML

The main objectives of the RAP ML are to:

- Prevent and reduce marine litter pollution in the North-East Atlantic and its impact on marine organisms, habitats, public health and safety and reduce the socioeconomic costs it causes;
- Remove litter from the marine environment where practical and feasible;
- Enhance knowledge and awareness on marine litter;
- Support Contracting Parties in the development, implementation and coordination of their programmes for litter reduction, including those for the implementation of the MSFD; and
- Develop management approaches to marine litter that are consistent with accepted international approaches.

The role of the RAP ML is to:

- Coordinate work to improve the evidence base on the impacts of litter on the marine environment;
- Establish a range of measures and actions, identifying gaps and opportunities where OSPAR can add value through its marine focus. This should take into account existing activities;
- Be a framework under which Contracting Parties can identify where a regional approach can add value to the actions of individual Contracting Parties, including in relation to their implementation of the MSFD, where appropriate; and
- Promote reporting by Contracting Parties to OSPAR regarding their progress and cooperation in a manner consistent with obligations under the MSFD, where appropriate.

3.4. Purpose of this report

Although OSPAR’s work on marine litter issues is ongoing, the implementation period for the RAP ML is due to come to an end in June 2021. In accordance with the provisions set out in OSPAR Agreement 2014-1 (the RAP ML), this report presents an evaluation of the effectiveness of the RAP ML in achieving its objectives and appraises the impacts of the RAP ML in contributing to other regional and global efforts to prevent and reduce marine litter.

Where possible, material outputs will be captured to show the effectiveness of OSPAR’s RAP ML. However, it should be noted that not all impacts of the RAP ML can be documented in this way, as much of the influence of the RAP ML is less tangible / quantifiable. Therefore, this report will also try to capture the overall impact

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

of OSPAR's work to prevent and reduce quantities of marine litter through the implementation of the RAP ML.

Finally, this report provides some conclusions and recommendations for the planned revision / update of the OSPAR RAP ML, which is scheduled to be developed in 2021/2022.

This report was written in October 2020 and the status of actions was correct at the time of writing. However, it should be noted that work under the RAP ML 2014-2021 is ongoing, and it is anticipated that a number of the actions that were not considered complete at the time of writing, will be completed by June 2021. For the latest status of the RAP ML 2014-2021 actions, please visit the OSPAR web pages via the following link: <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/eiha/marine-litter/regional-action-plan>.

3.5. Evaluation Framework / methodology

In order to structure the review of the RAP ML, ICG-ML agreed an evaluation framework and review methodology. The evaluation framework aims to enable OSPAR to investigate the overall outcome against each RAP review objective (e.g. changes in environmental state, changes in pressures, changes in awareness / behaviour); what actions have been taken by OSPAR (outputs); and what evidence there is of their effectiveness (impact). A copy of the evaluation framework is presented in **Annex 1**. The framework identified what evidence could be collected in relation to each RAP review objective.

3.6. Information used to undertake this review

The review of the RAP ML has been informed by the following:

- Surveys sent to stakeholders, members of ICG-ML (including OSPAR Contracting Parties and OSPAR Observers), other Regional Sea Conventions and international bodies / intergovernmental organisations;
- Contracting Party reporting on progress and impact of collective actions;
- Contracting Party reporting on progress and impact of national actions;
- OSPAR Indicator Assessments of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic; and
- Additional, third party reports which provide an indication on overall changing attitudes towards the issue of litter in the marine environment.

It should be noted that although the development of the OSPAR QSR 2023 is still underway and there are no material outputs of that work currently available, the periodic marine litter indicators assessments (on beach litter, floating litter and seafloor litter) have been used to show evidence of changes in the marine environment and to inform this review.

4. STATE OF COMPLETENESS OF THE RAP ML (OCTOBER 2020)

4.1. Collective Actions

Each of the 32 collective actions was considered by the Action Leads in collaboration with ICG-ML and allocated a category of completeness. The three categories applied were 'limited progress', 'in progress' or 'fully implemented'. These categories were based on categories used during the review of the OSPAR 2010 Environment Strategy. A definition for each category is presented in **Table 2.1** below.

Table 2.1 Categories of completeness

LIMITED PROGRESS	Where work towards agreed actions, tasks or issues has not progressed beyond initial discussions and steps.
IN PROGRESS	Where agreed actions, tasks or issues are currently under development and pending final approval/decision
FULLY IMPLEMENTED	Where agreed actions, tasks or issues have been fully implemented

The complete report on all 32 collective actions is presented in **Annex 2**. Where an action has been considered ‘fully implemented’ it may be that the action has been implemented to the extent possible within the context of OSPAR, and therefore there is nothing further to be done within this forum. For some of the actions which have been considered complete and therefore ‘fully implemented’ this is not necessarily to say that every component of that action has been implemented to the extent it was envisaged when the RAP ML was adopted in 2014. Over the seven year implementation period of the RAP ML, the legislative landscape has changed, advances in technology and science have been made (or in some case they haven’t advanced as quickly as expected), and priority policy areas have shifted, therefore, planned actions have adapted to these changes as necessary.

At the time of review (October 2020), of the 32 collective actions of the RAP ML, 41% (13) were considered complete or fully implemented, 47% (15) were still in progress, and 12% (4) were limited in progress and no further action was foreseen. For the actions still in progress, 11 are expected to be complete by the finalisation of the RAP ML in June 2021, and measures are in place to support these actions to completion.

The specific actions listed under each category are presented in **Table 2.1** below (for the list of actions in full please refer to the collective actions report in **Annex 2**).

Table 2.1 Status of Collective Actions (as of October 2020)

Status	Action Numbers
LIMITED PROGRESS	34, 45, 50, 51
IN PROGRESS	37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 48, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60
FULLY IMPLEMENTED	29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 35, 36, 41, 46, 47, 53, 58

Note: Actions in bold for the ‘in progress’ category are anticipated to be completed by the close of the RAP ML implementation period in June 2021.

4.2. National Actions

There are a total of 23 national actions included within the RAP ML. These actions were designed to be considered within national programmes of measures, and to support the broader implementation of the 32 collective actions. Contracting Parties committed to reporting on implementation progress for national actions every second year, starting in 2016. The latest reporting took place in October 2020, and reports were received from all 12 Contracting Parties² who are active members of ICG-ML. Contracting Parties were invited to provide the status of implementation as ‘limited progress’, ‘in progress’ or ‘fully implemented’, using the same definitions as outlined in **Table 2.1**, for the collective action reporting.

None of the Contracting Parties reported full implementation of all actions, but all Contracting Parties had over 50% of actions either fully implemented or in progress, and for 11 Contracting Parties over 75% of actions were fully implemented or in progress. No Contracting Party reported ‘limited progress’ on more than 6 of the 23 actions. Three Contracting Parties had fully implemented 70% (or over) of the national actions at the time of writing, and three Contracting Parties had fully implemented less than 5% of the national actions.

All of the national actions had been fully implemented in at least one OSPAR Country, except for Action 65 which relates to riverine litter. Other actions that saw the least success in national implementation (25% or less of Contracting Parties reporting the action as ‘fully implemented’) include Action 63 (on investigating markets for plastic waste from the fishing and shipping industry), Action 70 (on promoting extended producer responsibility), Action 71 (on sustainable procurement policies), Action 73 (on appropriate disposal of marine litter from fishing for litter schemes), Action 76 (on reporting, marking and retrieval of fishing nets), and Action 83 (on producer responsibility schemes or deposit schemes).

The most successfully implemented action was Action 62 (on implementation and enforcement of MARPOL Annex V) with 66% of Contracting Parties reporting the action as fully implemented. Other Actions which saw high levels of success (more than 50% of Contracting Parties reporting the action as ‘fully implemented’), include Action 64 (on ensuring integration of marine litter considerations into revised EU directives), Action 66 (on promoting and supporting inclusion of marine litter measures in the revision of EU waste legislation), Action 80 (on encouraging participation in litter clean-up campaigns) and Action 82 (on raising public awareness).

Table 2.3 below provides a summary of the national reporting responses received for each national action. The status shown in bold, is the most frequently occurring status reported by Contracting Parties.

Table 2.3 Contracting Party Reporting on National Actions

Action number	Action summary	Number of CPs reporting action as ‘fully implemented’, ‘in progress’ or ‘limited progress’ The most frequently occurring status is in bold in the table		
62	Ensuring effective implementation and enforcement of MARPOL Annex V in relation to both fishing and shipping waste.	8 fully implemented	4 in progress	0 limited progress
63	Investigating markets for plastic waste from the fishing and shipping industry	1 fully implemented	10 in progress	1 limited progress

² Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium, Portugal

Action number	Action summary	Number of CPs reporting action as 'fully implemented', 'in progress' or 'limited progress' The most frequently occurring status is in bold in the table		
64	Ensuring considerations related to marine litter and actions in this plan are integrated, as appropriate, into the implementation and any future revision of relevant EU Directives.	7 fully implemented	4 in progress	1 limited progress
65	Seeking cooperation in the river and river basin authorities in order to include impacts of litter on the marine environment in river and river basin management plans.	0 fully implemented	9 in progress	3 limited progress
66	Promoting and supporting, where appropriate, the inclusion of measures aimed at the prevention and reduction of marine litter in the 2014 revision of the EU's waste legislation.	7 fully implemented	4 in progress	1 limited progress
67	Including a reference to marine litter, where applicable, in National Waste Prevention Plans and Waste Management Plans.	5 fully implemented	6 in progress	0 limited progress
68	Entering into dialogue with the waste industry, working towards highlighting waste management practices that impact on the marine environment.	5 fully implemented	7 in progress	0 limited progress
69	Identifying illegal and historic coastal landfill or dumpsites, including where these might be at risk from coastal erosion, and take action if appropriate.	6 fully implemented	4 in progress	0 limited progress
70	Promoting Extended Producer Responsibility Strategies requiring producers, manufacturers, brand owners and first importers to be responsible for the entire life-cycle of the product with a focus on items frequently found in the marine environment.	2 fully implemented	10 in progress	0 limited progress
71	Encouraging the development and implementation of Sustainable Procurement Policies that contribute to the promotion of recycled products	3 fully implemented	9 in progress	0 limited progress
72	Promoting and enhancing national stakeholder alliances focusing on marine litter.	4 fully implemented	8 in progress	0 limited progress
73	Removing barriers to the processing or adequate disposal of marine litter collected in Fishing for Litter initiatives, including landfilling if relevant and in line with waste legislation	2 fully implemented	8 in progress	2 limited progress
74	Encouraging all fishing vessels to be involved in Fishing for Litter schemes, where they are available.	4 fully implemented	6 in progress	2 limited progress
75	Ensuring that any vessel involved in the scheme can land non-operational waste collected at sea at any participating harbour.	5 fully implemented	5 in progress	2 limited progress
76	Undertaking an awareness-raising campaign to make fishermen aware of their obligations under EU Control Regulation (1224/2009) with regard to reporting, marking and retrieval of lost nets	2 fully implemented	6 in progress	4 limited progress
77	Promoting education activities in synergy with existing initiatives in the field of sustainable development and in partnership with civil society.	5 fully implemented	6 in progress	1 limited progress
78	Promoting curricula for marine-related education, including the recreational sector.	5 fully implemented	6 in progress	1 limited progress
79	Promoting or adopting environmental awareness courses for fishermen and the fishery sector.	5 fully implemented	6 in progress	1 limited progress

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

Action number	Action summary	Number of CPs reporting action as 'fully implemented', 'in progress' or 'limited progress'		
		The most frequently occurring status is in bold in the table		
80	Encourage participation in International, EU and National Litter Cleanup Campaigns.	7 fully implemented	5 in progress	0 limited progress
81	Promoting the "Adopt a beach" system.	5 fully implemented	3 in progress	4 limited progress
82	Raising public awareness of the occurrence, impact and prevention of marine litter, including micro plastics.	7 fully implemented	5 in progress	0 limited progress
83	Supporting/initiating community/business-based producer responsibility schemes or deposit systems, for example on recycling fishing nets.	3 fully implemented	6 in progress	1 limited progress
84	Developing collective agreements between Contracting Parties, NGOs and industry to tackle particular problems of marine litter.	4 fully implemented	6 in progress	1 limited progress

Note: Actions where the total doesn't add up to 12 are where a CP reported the action was not relevant or provided no response (see Action 67, 69, 83 and 84)

4.3. OSPAR workshops, events and seminars

The following list of workshops, events and seminars were arranged to gather information, engage with stakeholders, and further work to support the implementation of the OSPAR RAP ML actions:

1. International Conference on Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in European Seas, Berlin, Germany (April 2013);
2. Joint OSPAR / Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Netherlands conference on Closing the plastic value chain: measures for reducing microplastic emissions, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (December 2015);
3. Work session on riverine and marine litter, Bonn, Germany (June 2017);
4. Stakeholder workshop: handling (plastic) garbage in the fishing sector in Rotterdam, The Netherlands (November 2017);
5. OSPAR working session on the relationship between the EU's Revised Port Reception Facilities Directive and marine litter in the North-East Atlantic, with OSPAR/EIHA HODs and their transport colleagues who were directly responsible for the negotiations on the revision of the Directive in the Council of Ministers, and other stakeholders, Brussels, Belgium (March 2018);
6. Joint OSPAR / HELCOM workshop on prevention and sanctions on illegal waste disposal from ships at sea, attended by the Barcelona Convention, European Maritime Safety Agency, the IMO, North Sea Prosecutors, ship owner associations, harbour associations and NGO's, Berlin, Germany (November 2018);
7. Follow up workshop on riverine and marine litter, Paris, France (June 2019);
8. Joint OSPAR / EC workshop on the design and recycling of fishing gear as a means to reduce quantities of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic, Brussels, Belgium (February 2019); and
9. Stakeholder engagement meeting on pellet loss prevention, Paris, France (March 2019).

4.4. OSPAR publications and technical reports

The following list of OSPAR publications have been produced to support the implementation of the OSPAR RAP ML actions:

1. OSPAR Action Briefing note on OSPAR actions in relation to marine Litter and their overlap with the revision of the Directive on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, ACTION 30 & 31 (2019);
2. OSPAR Summary Report on the implementation of OSPAR RAP ML, Action 30 (2019);
3. OSPAR Background Document: Sanctions, penalties and fines issued by OSPAR and HELCOM Contracting Parties for waste disposal offences at sea, Actions 32, 33 & 38 (2017);
4. OSPAR / HELCOM Report of the joint OSPAR/ HELCOM seminar on prevention and sanctions on illegal waste disposal from ships at sea, Berlin (2018);
5. OSPAR Background document on Improving the implementation of ISO standard 21070:2013 in relation to port reception facilities, Action 34 (2016);
6. OSPAR scoping study to identify key waste items from the fishing industry and aquaculture, Action 35 (2019);
7. OSPAR Report (with conclusions and recommendations) on a stakeholder workshop on handling (plastic) garbage in the fishing sector with stakeholders and member states, Action 36 (November 2017);
8. OSPAR scoping study on best practices for the design and recycling of fishing gear as a means to reduce quantities of fishing gear found as marine litter in the North-East Atlantic, Action 36 & 37 (2020);
9. OSPAR Overview and assessment of implementation reports Fishing for Litter, Action 53 (2014);
10. OSPAR Fishing for litter guidelines, Action 53 (2017);
11. OSPAR Recommendation 2016/1 on the reduction of marine litter through the implementation of fishing for litter initiatives, Action 53 (2016);
12. OSPAR background document on Sustainable Fishing Education at fishing academies in OSPAR countries, Action 58 (2018);
13. OSPAR Recommendation 2019/01 on the reduction of marine litter through the Implementation of Sustainability Education Programmes for Fishers, Action 58 (2019);
14. OSPAR Workshop report on riverine and marine Litter, Action 41 (June 2017);
15. OSPAR Workshop report on riverine litter, Action 41 (2019);
16. OSPAR Review of BAT and BEP in Urban Wastewater Treatment Systems focusing on the reductions and prevention of stormwater related litter, including micro-plastics, entering the Marine Environment (2019);
17. OSPAR Assessment document of land-based inputs of microplastics in the marine environment (2017); and
18. OSPAR Background document on pre-production Plastic Pellets (2018).

In addition, the following list of reports and other technical outputs have been produced by third parties to support the implementation of the OSPAR RAP ML actions:

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

1. Cefas: A Review of Marine Litter Management Practices for the Fishing Industry, Action 36 (2017);
2. KIMO International: Net cuttings waste from fishing in the North-East Atlantic: best practices for mitigation, Action 36 (2020);
3. KIMO International: Best Practices to reduce marine litter from net cuttings waste, Action 36 (2020);
4. Optimize / EFTEC Report: Study to identify and assess relevant instruments and incentives to reduce the use of single-use and other items, which impact the marine environment as marine litter, action 43 (2018);
5. Eunomia Scoping Study on Processes Relevant to the Implementation of the OSPAR and HELCOM Regional Action Plans on Marine Litter (2017);
6. Rijkswaterstaat Zee en Delta Report: An inventory of knowledge and actions concerning riverine litter relevant for the OSPAR area, Action 41 (2016);
7. Supporting information related to projects discussed at the 2019 Riverine Litter Workshop, Action 41 (2019);
8. SMED Report concerning techniques to reduce litter in waste water and storm water, Action 42 (2016); and
9. Norwegian Technical report on technologies for litter reduction from waste- and storm water and supply, Action 42 (2017).

5. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST ACHIEVING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RAP ML

5.1. Overview

The RAP ML has five main objectives (set out in **Section 1.3** of this report). The following sections (**Sections 3.2 to 3.6**) examine the effectiveness of the RAP ML in achieving these objectives. The complete list of collective actions is included in **Annex 2. Table 3.1** below summarises which collective actions relate to which objective.

Table 3.1 Actions contributing towards the objectives of the RAP ML

Objective	Relevant action No.
Preventing and reducing quantities of marine litter in the north-East Atlantic	30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 52
Remove litter from the marine environment where practical and feasible	53, 54, 55, 56, 57
Enhance knowledge and awareness on marine litter	48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60
Support Contracting Parties in the development, implementation and coordination of their programmes for litter reduction, including those for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.	Relates to the implementation of all actions
Develop management approaches to marine litter that are consistent with accepted international approaches	Relates to the implementation of all actions

5.2. Prevent and reduce marine litter pollution in the North-East Atlantic and its impact on marine organisms, habitats, public health and safety and reduce the socioeconomic costs it causes

5.2.1. Relevant actions in the plan

The majority of actions in the RAP ML relate to preventing and reducing quantities of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic; a total of 20 actions contribute towards this objective (see **Table 3.2**). It should be noted that some actions have an overlap with more than one of the RAP ML objectives and so are listed again elsewhere.

Table 3.2 Actions contributing towards prevention and reduction of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic

Action No.	Action
30	Ensure regional coordination on the implementation of EU Directive 2000/59/EC in relation to MARPOL Annex V ship generated waste. Such coordination could: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) deliver a cost recovery system, ensuring the maximum amount of MARPOL Annex V ship generated waste is delivered to port reception facilities; b) not solely focus on reception facilities, but also other relevant differences; c) analyse the implementation of compulsory discharge of waste in each port for all ships leaving the OSPAR maritime area for non-EU ports, in line with EU Directive 2000/59/EC.
31	OSPAR will assist the European Commission in the ongoing revision of EU Directive 2000/59/EC.
32	Identify best practice in relation to inspections for MARPOL Annex V ship generated waste, including better management of reporting data, taking into consideration the Paris MOU on port state control.
33	Seek dialogue with the Paris MOU to take the risk of illegal waste discharges into consideration for the prioritisation of port state control inspections.
34	Improve implementation of the ISO standard 21070:2013 in relation to port reception facilities.
35	Identify the options to address key waste items from the fishing industry and aquaculture, which could contribute to marine litter, including deposit schemes, voluntary agreements and extended producer responsibility.
36	Through a multinational project, together with the fishing industry and competent authorities develop and promote best practice in relation to marine litter. All relevant aspects (including e.g. dolly rope, waste management on board, waste management at harbours and operational losses/net cuttings) should be included.
37	Investigate the prevalence and impact of dolly rope ³ (synthetic fibre). Engage with competent authorities (such as National Authorities, EU, NEAFC etc.) and the fishing industry in order to work together to reduce the waste generated by dolly rope on a (sub) regional basis.
38	Analyse penalties and fines issued by Contracting Parties for waste disposal offences at sea to highlight the differences, trends, problem areas and issues to relevant organisations, such as the North Sea Network of Investigators and Prosecutors.
39	Highlight those waste management practices that impact significantly on marine litter. Engage with the industry and other authorities, at the appropriate level, in order for them to be able to develop best environmental practice, including identification of circumstances on where litter “escapes” into the marine environment and investigating how to close loops focusing on non-toxic material cycles.
40	Share best practice on waste management, e.g. on landfill bans of high caloric wastes (esp. for plastics).
41	Exchange experience on best practice to prevent litter entering into water systems and highlight these to River or River basin Commissions.
42	Investigate and promote with appropriate industries the use of Best Available Techniques (BAT) and Best Environmental Practice (BEP) to develop sustainable and cost effective

³ Bunches of polyethylene threads used to protect the codend of demersal trawl net from abrasions

Action No.	Action
	solutions to reducing and preventing sewage and storm water related waste entering the marine environment, including micro particles.
43	Assess relevant instruments and incentives to reduce the use of single-use and other items, which impact the marine environment, including the illustration of the associated costs and environmental impacts.
44	Reduce the consumption of single use plastic bags and their presence in the marine environment, supported by the development of quantifiable (sub) regional targets, where appropriate, and assist in the development of relevant EU initiatives.
45	Encourage international environmental certification schemes to include the management and prevention of marine litter in their lists of criteria.
46	Evaluate all products and processes that include primary micro plastics and act, if appropriate, to reduce their impact on the marine environment.
47	Engage with all appropriate sectors (manufacturing, retail etc.) to explore the possibility of a voluntary agreement to phase out the use of micro plastics as a component in personal care and cosmetic products. Should a voluntary agreement prove not to be sufficient, prepare a proposal for OSPAR to call on the EU to introduce appropriate measures to achieve a 100% phasing out of micro plastics in personal care and cosmetic products.
49	Investigate the prevalence and impact of expanded polystyrene (EPS) in the marine environment, and engage with industry to make proposals for alternative materials and/or how to reduce its impacts.
52	Promote initiatives and exchange of best practice aiming at zero pellet loss along the whole plastics manufacturing chain from production to transport.

5.2.2. Evidence of final outcome

OSPAR Indicator Assessments

OSPAR assesses the quantity and distribution of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic through monitoring and assessments of beach litter, floating litter (litter ingested by fulmar) and seafloor litter. The latest assessments were undertaken in 2019 for beach litter and floating litter, and 2017 for seafloor litter. However, at the time of writing, updated assessments for beach litter, seafloor litter and floating litter were underway and expected to be published in 2021.

General trends show that litter is abundant on beaches in the OSPAR Maritime Area. Plastic fragments, fishing gear and packaging are the most common types of litter found. About 90% of recorded items on OSPAR beaches are plastic. However, from December 2009 to January 2018 litter abundance on OSPAR beaches declined significantly on 23% of the survey sites and only increased on 9% of survey sites. Therefore, although the abundance of litter items on OSPAR survey sites remains high there is some indication that, in general, the situation is improving.

For floating litter, currently 95% of beached North Sea fulmars had some plastic in the stomach, with 56% of fulmars having more than 0.1 g of plastics in their stomachs, exceeding the OSPAR long-term goal of 10%. This reflects the abundance of floating litter and provides an indication of harm. However, the amounts of ingested plastics in fulmar stomachs has decreased significantly over the past ten years. The overall conclusion is that there appears to be a move towards less plastics in the North Sea marine environment, but that levels are still far above the long term ecological target set by OSPAR.

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

These indications that the amount of plastic present in OSPAR waters is decreasing should also be viewed in the context of the trends in global plastic production (as discussed in the following section).

For Seafloor litter, the 2017 OSPAR indicator assessment concluded that litter is widespread on the seafloor across the area assessed, with plastic the predominant material encountered. The data used to inform this assessment were from 2012 to 2014. This was the first assessment of its kind and so no trends were recorded. This assessment will be repeated for the QSR 2023.

Data on production and consumption of plastics (from human activities thematic assessment work)

To support the drafting of the Quality Status Report 2023, OSPAR [has produced a 'feeder report' on the production and consumption of plastics in the OSPAR Maritime Area]. The report describes the rapid growth in plastics production and use over the past 70 years (since the 1950s).

The OSPAR report summarised plastic production across the European Union. Plastics production in 2018 in the 28 EU member states⁴, Norway and Switzerland, was 61.8 million tonnes (mt), which was slightly lower than in 2017 (64.4 mt), but more than in 2010 (57 mt)⁵. Global plastics production increased over the same period, from 265 mt in 2010 to 359 mt in 2018. Demand for plastic from converters (manufacturers of plastic products) in the EU 28, Norway and Switzerland in 2018 was 51.2 mt, up from 46.4 mt in 2010⁶. Germany accounted for nearly one quarter of total European demand in 2018. Of other OSPAR countries, the largest proportions of total demand were from France (9.4%), Spain (7.6%), the United Kingdom (7.3%), Belgium / Luxembourg (4.6%) and the Netherlands (4.3%). PlasticsEurope (2019) reported that the value of EU exports from plastics manufacturing and plastics processing was over €40 billion in 2018, over €15 billion more than the value of imports.

Annual per capita plastic consumption has reached 100 kg in Western Europe (European Commission 2018). Amounts of plastic waste have also increased. Post-consumer plastic waste collected in the EU28, Norway and Switzerland rose between 2006 and 2018 from 24.5 million tonnes to 29.1 mt (PlasticsEurope, 2019). Furthermore, European Commission 2018 (referring to Jambeck et al 2015) referred to an estimate of 0.15 – 0.5 million tonnes of plastic waste entering EU seas in 2015, within a global estimate of 4.8 – 12.7 mt entering the seas and oceans.

Based on this information, it cannot be concluded that there has been a significant shift in the production or use of plastic in the implementation period of the RAP ML. Furthermore, reviews by the European Environment Agency and European Commission concluded that it is very likely that the plastic consumption and waste issues will intensify in the future, and that global annual plastics production is expected to reach up to 1.2 billion tonnes by 2050 (EEA 2019, European Commission 2020). In this context, the OSPAR indicator assessment results showing a gradual decrease in the amount of plastic recorded in OSPAR waters should be seen as a greater positive than perhaps first acknowledged. If production and use is increasing, but prevalence in the marine environment is decreasing, it can be assumed that there have been some significant positive changes to prevent plastic from entering the marine environment.

⁴ Including the UK.

⁵ 2010 figures is for EU 27 (not including Croatia), Norway and Switzerland.

⁶ 2010 figure is for EU27 (not including Croatia), Norway and Switzerland. Croatian demand in 2018 was less than 0.5 million tonnes.

5.2.3. Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs)

Of the 20 actions identified as relevant to the prevention and reduction of marine litter pollution in the North-East Atlantic, 50% (10) have been fully implemented, 40% (8) are expected to be completed in 2021 and 10% (2) have been parked with limited progress (see collective action reporting in **Annex 2** for details).

Notably, of those which have been fully implemented at the time of writing, work undertaken under Action 30 and 31 has contributed to the development of a piece of legislation which is likely to affect real change in OSPAR waters, the EU's revised PRF Directive. OSPAR provided supporting information documents to Contracting Parties, in order that they might share information with shipping and transport colleagues, alongside the organisation of joint workshops, and supply of relevant data and information to inform decision making. All of this culminated in OSPAR being invited to speak with representation of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament to highlight the overlap between the proposed PRF Directive and the existing OSPAR commitments in the RAP. The revised Directive (EU) 2019/833, fulfils the requirements of Actions 30 and 31. It includes inter alia the demand to establish no-special-fee systems in all European ports including fishing harbours.

Other outputs are less tangible, but have provided an important and necessary perspective on other important issues, such as those covered by Action 32, 33, and 38 addressing sanctions and fines for illegal discharges from ships. The outputs of this work have been shared with the North Sea Network of prosecutors and the European Maritime Safety Agency, where next steps to make use of this information will be considered.

Actions to address one of the key issues identified in OSPAR waters (through the OSPAR indicator assessments), specifically relating to abandoned lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) have also made progress, in advancing the understanding of the issues through the publication of background documents and scoping reports, alongside associated stakeholder engagement activities. Again, the outputs here are less tangible, but work is still ongoing in these fields, and OSPAR has led the way to begin looking at possible solutions and ways forward.

Furthermore, the large number of workshops, events and seminars alongside the large number of publications and technical output (see sections 2.3 and 2.4), highlights the volume of work that has been undertaken over the preceding six years.

5.2.4. Evidence of impact

In a survey to stakeholders, 100% of respondents stated that they were aware of improvements in reducing and/or preventing marine litter as a result of the work of OSPAR. Some specific examples were provided, including:

- The quality of input in working groups and workshops is extremely high, and the knowledge sharing among countries at ICG ML allows better cooperation and better implementation of measures at the national level;
- The role that OSPAR plays in coordinating national actions across the European Union;
- The role of the RAP ML in strengthening dialogue on strategic issues;

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

- Influencing legislation with guidance and recommendations;
- The strong influence on European and national policy through groups working on RAP ML issues and from data collection, giving guidance and focus to the science; and
- Specific advances in the knowledge base through shared research and generating quality material for general awareness on the issues linked with marine litter (sources, prevention, causes and solutions).

Many stakeholders specifically recognised OSPAR's work to expand fishing for litter schemes across the OSPAR Maritime Area, work on ALDFG, single use plastics, plastic pellets, the revision of the PRF Directive, the EU wide plastic bag ban, the adoption of the European Plastics Strategy.

Although there was a lot of praise for OSPAR's work to reduce and/or prevent marine litter, there was also an acceptance that there is still a lot of work to be done.

Impact of fishing related actions

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to preventing or reducing marine litter from fishing activities, 76% of respondents stated that they were either 'effective' (11%) or 'moderately effective' (65%). Just 3% of respondents felt the actions were 'neither effective nor ineffective', and 19% 'didn't know'.

Many respondents were optimistic about the progress that has been made under these actions and respondents pointed to the fishing for litter scheme as a success story of the RAP ML. Another highlighted area of success was the collaboration with the European Commission and the North Sea Advisory Council in organising workshops and collecting information and experiences on the design and recycling of fishing gear in 2019 and 2020. This is a good example of OSPAR's network helping to ensure that the right stakeholders were included in processes supporting the implementation of the EU's SUP Directive.

Criticisms included the lack of progress in identifying hotspot /accumulation of ALDFG, and a lack of engagement with international fisheries organisations. It was also commented that the OSPAR process to develop and approve background documents was too slow and it meant that often work was superseded by bodies that could work at a faster pace (e.g. the EU).

Impact of ship generated waste related actions

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to preventing or reducing marine litter from shipping activities, 53% of respondents stated that they were either 'effective' (11%) or 'moderately effective' (42%). However, 11% of respondents felt that the actions were 'not effective', and 3% of respondents felt the actions were 'neither effective nor ineffective', and 30% 'didn't know'.

Many respondents highlighted the success of these actions, specifically in relation to regional coordination of EU work, and in terms of adding value to national work. However, many indicated that the true impact will only be known once legislation is properly enforced. There were specific concerns raised about OSPAR lack of willingness to address issues related to waste from ships, with a default position of leaving it to the IMO. This is in contrast to other RSC who have a mandate to address ship generated waste. Others thought that better collaboration with the IMO on these issues was needed.

Impact of land based sources actions

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to land based waste management, most respondents (36%) replied 'don't know', which was closely followed by 'neither effective nor ineffective' (32%). The remaining 32% of respondents stated that they were either 'effective' (12%) or 'moderately effective' (20%).

Some respondents highlighted the importance of OSPAR's work on riverine litter. Many felt that progress had been slow in relation to storm water management. Criticisms included that the actions were too ambitious, with too many complex components squeezed in to one action. There were also concerns about the lack of engagement and collaboration with freshwater environmental policy makers. Some respondents felt that although some of these actions are listed as complete, the progress made was minimal and the actual impact on the environment is non-existent.

Impact of actions aimed at altering product & packaging use, and potential design modifications

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to altering product & packaging use, and potential design modifications, most respondents (30%) replied 'don't know', with 15% stating that actions were 'neither effective nor ineffective'. A total of 45% of respondents replied that actions were either 'effective' (19%) or 'moderately effective' (26%). Whereas 7% of respondents thought that the actions were not effective.

Several respondents felt that the actions were still in the early stages of implementation, and so some progress had been made, but there was still a way to go to maximise on the initial efforts, highlighting actions in this field as candidates for inclusions in the new RAP. Some respondents highlighted that these actions have helped push forward national agendas leading to legislative instruments being adopted. Many respondents pointed towards the success of the dialogue with industry on microplastics in cosmetics and also on pellets. Criticisms included that there had been too much focus on specific products, and this focus had been too slow. Others thought that more progress should have been made over the last 7 years, and that voluntary approaches were not sufficient to deal with the issue. One of the main challenges faced was the complication of having the right policy makers involved in the discussion, as decisions on product design and packaging understandably sit outside of marine environmental policy.

5.3. Remove litter from the marine environment where practical and feasible

5.3.1. Relevant actions in the plan

There are fewer RAP ML actions directly related to removal and clean-up operations than those related to prevention and reduction; there are a total of five actions which contribute towards this objective (see **Table 3.2**). It should be noted that some actions have an overlap with more than one of the RAP ML objectives and so are listed again elsewhere.

Table 3.3 Actions contributing towards removal of litter in the North-East Atlantic

Action No.	Action
53	Strengthen the existing OSPAR recommendation 2010/19 on the reduction of marine litter through implementation of fishing for litter initiatives, including by reviewing the option that any vessel involved in the scheme can land non-operational waste at participating harbours in OSPAR countries.

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

54	Establish an exchange platform on experiences on good cleaning practices in beaches, riverbanks, pelagic and surface sea areas, ports and inland waterways. Develop best practice on environmental friendly technologies and methods for cleaning.
55	Develop subregional or regional maps of hotspots of floating litter, based on mapping of circulation of floating masses of marine litter, and identification of hotspots of accumulation on coastal areas and the role of prevailing currents and winds.
56	Identify hot spot areas through mapping of snagging sites or historic dumping grounds working with other initiatives, research programmes and with fishing organisations.
57	Develop a risk assessment for identifying where accumulations of ghost nets pose a threat to the environment and should be removed.

5.3.2. Evidence of final outcome and interim outcomes (outputs)

Of the five actions included in the RAP ML that relate to clean up and removal activities, only one has been completed, Action 53 to strengthen the existing OSPAR Recommendation 2010/19 on the reduction of marine litter through implementation of fishing for litter initiatives. The remaining four actions are all due to be completed in 2021, but there has been limited progress to report to date. For further details, see collective action reporting in **Annex 2**.

Fishing for Litter (FFL)

As well as guidance to support the OSPAR Recommendation on FFL schemes, OSPAR has also agreed a target to 'Increase the total number of vessels participating in FFL schemes in the OSPAR Maritime Area by 100% by 2021, compared to the baseline situation in 2017'. The latest reporting was undertaken in 2018, where data on vessel participation was received from five Contracting Parties⁷. There were a total of 607 vessels registered on FFL schemes, and the total weight of recorded waste returned to participating harbours was 2 439 tonnes.

5.3.3. Evidence of impact

When specifically asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's work on cleaning and removal of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic, the highest percentage of respondents (26%) replied that they 'didn't know', with just 15% of respondents stating that they thought actions were 'effective'. Equal numbers stated that actions were 'moderately effective' (19%), and 'neither effective nor ineffective' (19 %), and 'not effective' (19 %).

Many of the reasons sighted for this include a lack of dedicated OSPAR work on the issues, as well as some technological, scientific and financial barriers to undertaking clean-up and removal operations. Some felt that the focus should be on reduction and prevention of marine litter, rather than clean-up operations. The most success was attributed to the fishing for litter activities.

⁷ Belgium, Germany, Spain, The Netherlands and The United Kingdom.

5.4. Enhance knowledge and awareness on marine litter

5.4.1. Relevant actions in the plan

Many of the actions which overlap more than one objective of the Rap ML are included in the actions to enhance knowledge and awareness; there are a total of 11 actions which contribute towards this objective (see **Table 3.4**).

Table 3.4 Actions to enhance knowledge and awareness

Action No.	Action
48	Evaluate the potential harm caused to the marine environment by items such as cigarette filters/butts, balloons, shotgun wads, cotton buds and bio-film support media used in sewage plants. Based on this evaluation, proposals can be made on the elimination, change or adaptation requirements for these other potentially problematic items.
49	Investigate the prevalence and impact of expanded polystyrene (EPS) in the marine environment, and engage with industry to make proposals for alternative materials and/or how to reduce its impacts.
50	Engage in a dialogue with industry aimed at highlighting the top marine litter problem items based on OSPAR Beach monitoring surveys and/or other evidence on impacts.
51	Explore with industry the development of design improvements to assist in the reduction of negative impacts of products entering the marine environment in order to better inform industry on alternative solutions.
54	Establish an exchange platform on experiences on good cleaning practices in beaches, riverbanks, pelagic and surface sea areas, ports and inland waterways. Develop best practice on environmental friendly technologies and methods for cleaning.
55	Develop sub regional or regional maps of hotspots of floating litter, based on mapping of circulation of floating masses of marine litter, and identification of hotspots of accumulation on coastal areas and the role of prevailing currents and winds.
56	Identify hot spot areas through mapping of snagging sites or historic dumping grounds working with other initiatives, research programmes and with fishing organisations.
57	Develop a risk assessment for identifying where accumulations of ghost nets pose a threat to the environment and should be removed.
58	Develop marine litter assessment sheets to assist Contracting Parties in developing material for education programmes, including those for professional seafarers and fishermen.
59	Establish a database on good practice examples of marine litter measures and initiatives and share this database with other Regional Seas Conventions in order to make action more visible to the public.
60	Develop a communication strategy on the Regional Action Plan (RAP) linked in a coherent way with national initiatives/measures. This will include linking the OSPAR website to relevant projects and initiatives.

5.4.2. Evidence of final outcome

Exploring public views on marine litter in Europe (Hartley et al., 2018)

This study published in 2018 used data from 1133 respondents across 16 European countries. The results showed that people reported high levels of concern about marine litter, and the vast majority (95%) reported seeing litter when visiting the coast. The study concluded that retailers, industry and government were

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic

perceived as the most responsible actors to tackle the issue of marine litter, but were also seen as least motivated and competent to actually reduce marine litter. In contrast, the study found that scientists and environmental groups were perceived as least responsible to tackle marine litter, but most motivated and competent.

UK survey on attitudes to England's marine Environment (Defra 2018)

The top three ranked priorities for respondents in terms of services and benefits provided by the sea, were 'seas providing habitats for fish, birds, plants and marine mammals', the seas providing jobs for the fishing industry and people in coastal communities, and the 'seas providing food to eat'. Large percentages of UK respondents thought that it was the responsibility of local authorities (67%), UK Government (76%) and industry (70%) to look after and maintain the UK's seas. With under half of respondents (46%) seeing themselves as very responsible, but 51% of respondents saying that 'other people / general public' were very responsible.

Attitudes in Scotland on the Marine Environment and Marine Issues (Marine Scotland, 2020)

The survey conducted by Marine Scotland indicated that respondents are concerned that not enough is being done to protect the environment, with nearly a third of residents believing that the health of Scotland's seas has worsened in the last year. Marine litter dominated concerns about the marine environment; with a focus on plastic bottles (67%), bags (60%) and micro plastics (49%). All of which were seen as having a direct impact on families living near and visiting the coast. The report indicated that a quarter of Scottish residents felt that their family is affected by marine litter a great deal or a fair amount. In terms of responsibility to reduce marine litter, many individuals felt that there is a joint responsibility which requires both residents and businesses to commit to more responsible use of the marine environment, as well as for both local authorities and the Scottish Government.

5.4.3. Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs)

Of the 11 actions included in the RAP ML that relate to enhancement of knowledge and awareness, only one has been completed, Action 58 to develop marine litter assessment sheets to assist Contracting Parties in developing material for education programmes, including those for professional seafarers and fishermen. Eight⁸ of the remaining actions are due to be completed in 2021, but for two⁹ actions there has been limited progress to report to date, and no further work is planned. For further details, see collective action reporting in **Annex 2**.

For Action 58, an OSPAR Recommendation on the reduction of marine litter through the Implementation of Sustainability Education Programmes for Fishers was adopted in 2019. The first reporting on this recommendation will not take place until January 2021. Furthermore, the publication of the Intermediate Assessment 2017 and the associated assessment sheets further contribute to work under this action.

5.4.4. Evidence of impact

To date, a total of 27 reports / publications on issues related to marine litter have been produced for, or by, OSPAR (see section 2.4). This includes background documents, recommendations, guidelines, scoping

⁸ 48, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59 and 60.

⁹ 50 and 51

studies, workshop summaries, and technical reports. This number is expected to increase before the completion of the RAP ML in 2021. In addition, OSPAR has hosted or co-hosted a large number of workshops and stakeholder engagement events (see section 2.3), alongside specific targeted information sharing sessions between different organisations and departments (for example under Action 31 on the revision of the EUs PRF Directive). Furthermore, the publication of OSPAR's assessments on beach litter, floating litter and seafloor litter are widely referred to and the data collected is frequently used elsewhere.

Impact of education and outreach actions

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to education and outreach activities, 57% of respondents stated that they were either 'effective' (19%) or 'moderately effective' (38%). However, 11% of respondents felt that the actions were 'neither effective nor ineffective', and 26% 'didn't know'. Just 3% of respondents felt the actions were 'not effective'.

Some respondents felt that the work being done at OSPAR was not widely recognised in other intergovernmental fora (i.e. UN or other RSCs). Some felt that the majority of these action had made little advancements, and this was due to a lack of targeted resources and commitment. Some of the actions were commented as being overtaken / superseded by EU legislation, as a result of the speed at which progress was made on these actions. Many respondents recognised the importance of education and awareness actions, but there were limited examples of how these actions had achieved a tangible impact on the issue of marine litter. There are no outcomes to report on the education for fishers work yet, for example.

Impact of actions aimed at encouraging dialogue with industry to highlight the top marine litter problems

When stakeholders were asked about the effectiveness of OSPAR's RAP ML actions that related to dialogue with industry, only 28% of respondents stated that they were either 'effective' (8%) or 'moderately effective' (20%). The majority (36%) of respondents 'didn't know' or thought the actions were 'neither effective nor ineffective' (28%). There were 2 respondents (8%) who thought the actions were 'not effective'.

Many respondents were unaware of dialogue that had taken place at the OSPAR level (such as through the pellets recommendation process, the discussions around microplastics in cosmetic products, and also conversations with the fishing industry on gear design). Some respondents mentioned that there had been more structured engagement at a national level and indicated that there could be a better record of what engagement has taken place at the OSPAR level. Most respondents reiterated the importance of actions to engage with industry, and some suggested a need for better collaboration with other regional sea conventions and the European Commission when consulting industry stakeholders.

5.5. Support Contracting Parties in the development, implementation and coordination of their programmes for litter reduction, including those for the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

5.5.1. Relevant actions in the plan

This objective relates to all actions of the RAP ML, and more broadly to the communication and coordination that is enabled through the OSPAR marine litter network (ICG-ML).

5.5.2. Evidence of final outcome

In 2018, the European Commission (EC) undertook an assessment of European Union Member State's Programmes of measures under the MSFD. Marine litter is captured under Descriptor 10 (D10) of the MSFD. The EC assessment makes specific reference to Member States drawing upon international agreements and the action plans of Regional Sea Conventions as a means to tackle the issue of marine litter.

5.5.3. Evidence of interim outcomes (outputs) and impacts

When OSPAR Contracting Parties were asked about how helpful the RAP ML had been in supporting the development of their own marine litter reduction plans, the vast majority of respondents (14 out of 15) found the RAP ML either 'helpful' (6) or 'very helpful' (8). The only respondent who replied 'no comment', did so as they were not responsible for creating a plan themselves. This was also true for implementation / coordination of national reduction programmes, whereby most respondents (13 out of 15) found the RAP ML either 'helpful' (7) or 'very helpful' (5) in implementing and coordinating their own marine litter reduction plans. Two respondents stated that the RAP ML was neither helpful or unhelpful, and one respondent replied 'no comment'.

Additional benefits highlighted by Contracting Parties in relation to the role of the RAP ML in developing national reduction programmes, included:

- A reduced burden through collaboration on issues and knowledge sharing;
- The opportunity to share and discuss best practice and particular obstacles faced and how to overcome them;
- Adding weight to national implementation, with the knowledge that measures were being implemented across all countries in the OSPAR Maritime Area;
- OSPAR setting a good model for work in other fora, as it was one of the first international organisations to focus on marine litter and microplastics with a holistic plan developed;
- Providing additional information to support nationally adopted actions (many of which are identical to the OSPAR actions);
- Broadening national ambitions / stimulating additional areas for action nationally; and
- Specific praise for the collaboration on marine litter data collection and analysis.

Specific praise from Contracting Parties was given to the work on the development of the indicator for marine litter ingested by sea turtles (developed through the EU-funded INDICIT project), fishing for litter schemes, collaborative fisheries education measures, alongside praise for the common assessment and monitoring programmes.

Criticism included the speed at which OSPAR measure are developed and can be implemented, with one Contracting Party indicating that national programmes of measures often progressed faster. A reason proposed for this delay in progression was inadequate resourcing.

Usefulness in supporting implementation of the MSFD

When asked about usefulness in supporting implementation of the MSFD, most respondents (13 out of 15) found the RAP ML either ‘helpful’ (7) or ‘very helpful’ (5). One respondents stated that the RAP ML was neither helpful or unhelpful as the implementation of the MSFD was dealt with separately, and two respondent replied ‘no comment’ (as one was an OSPAR Observer and the other was a non-EU Contracting Party).

Many Contracting Parties highlighted the usefulness of discussing shared issues and concerns regarding MSFD implementation within the OSPAR network. Many respondents also praised the common assessment and monitoring programmes, especially the beach litter data and assessment. Criticism by Contracting Parties of the RAP ML in supporting the implementation of the MSFD included complaints about mismatch in timescales, and the need for more coherence.

5.6. Develop management approaches to marine litter that are consistent with accepted international approaches

5.6.1. Relevant actions in the plan

This objective arguably relates to all actions of the RAP ML, in so much as any progress made to deliver on the specific actions has been done so in a way that supports and where possible allows synergies with broader international processes. There are a number of specific actions which refer directly to specific international processes, these are presented in **Table 3.5**.

Table 3.5 Actions to develop management approaches consistent with accepted international approaches

Action No.	Action
32	Identify best practice in relation to inspections for MARPOL Annex V ship generated waste, including better management of reporting data, taking into consideration the Paris MOU on port state control.
45	Encourage international environmental certification schemes to include the management and prevention of marine litter in their lists of criteria.
50	Establish a database on good practice examples of marine litter measures and initiatives and share this database with other Regional Seas Conventions in order to make action more visible to the public.

5.6.2. Evidence of final outcome, interim outcomes (outputs), and impact

There is little material evidence to show final outcomes under this objective. This is partly due to there being a lack of adopted and accepted international standards for the management of marine litter. Many of the processes that are aiming towards this are still underway, and although there is much discussion in different international fora, the discussion to develop standards is still in its infancy for many management approaches.

However, it should be noted that OSPAR Contracting Parties are playing an important role in the development of other globally accepted international approaches. Many members of OSPAR’s ICG-ML are key figures in international discussions around the development of accepted global standards and approaches to monitor and manage marine litter, and the thinking and development that takes place through the OSPAR marine litter network has supported and enabled discussions at a global scale. This cooperation works both ways, as

OSPAR ICG-ML members are therefore also very informed and up to date with other international developments, which ensures that any OSPAR outputs are in keeping with global developments.

One area which has advanced further than others is the monitoring and assessment of beach litter. In this field specifically, there is clear evidence of the impact of OSPAR's work to develop a consistent globally accepted approach. The 'Guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of plastic litter in the ocean (GESAMP, 2019) highlights the OSPAR approach to monitoring and assessment of beach litter, and many countries outside of the OSPAR Maritime Area have adopted similar approaches to tackle this issue. OSPAR was one of the first organisations to develop a standard approach and highlight the value of beach litter data in understanding patterns and types of marine litter. OSPAR beach litter monitoring techniques have been further improved through cooperation with TG-ML, and the data collected was used to inform the development of the EUs SUP Directive.

The same is true, but to a lesser extent for the other OSPAR accepted indicator assessments on floating litter and seafloor litter.

Based on anecdotal information, OSPAR is often held up as an example of good practice for addressing the issue of marine litter in other international fora.

6. GENERAL RUNNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RAP ML

6.1. ICG-ML's standard approach to implementing the RAP ML actions

The implementation of the actions of the OSPAR RAP ML was led by Contracting Parties. Taking this approach had multiple benefits, including giving Contracting Parties ownership over the marine litter work and ensuring 'buy-in' from OSPAR countries. This approach also enabled Contracting Parties to focus on the specific thematic areas that they saw as the highest priority.

In the early stages of the RAP ML, ICG-ML agreed a standard process to develop actions. The steps included in that process were as follows:

- 1) Task group / action lead to define the scope and an implementation strategy and record this in the action development sheet template;
- 2) Circulate the action development sheet to ICG-ML;
- 3) Undertake a literature review and / or questionnaire to gather information on the current state of knowledge, identify any knowledge gaps and highlight possible measures;
- 4) Task group / action lead to develop a proposal for a way forward, and request feedback from ICGML;
- 5) Hold workshop to discuss the action with key stakeholders;
- 6) Develop background document / scoping study, working towards approval by EIHA;
- 7) Develop appropriate OSPAR measure / or highlight need for action to relevant competent authority.

This process was used in the development of most of the RAP ML action, but in some circumstances development deviated from this approach. For example, if it was identified early on that there was limited added value OSPAR could bring to a topic already being progressed in other fora.

6.2. The implementation plan

ICG-ML was asked about the role of the implementation plan in delivering the RAP ML. The majority of respondents felt that it was a useful tool that helped keep track of progress and allowed Contracting Parties to follow up on specific actions. Some respondents went as far as to say that the plan was essential for the management and implementation for RAP ML actions. Others highlighted its use as a document to support discussions elsewhere (including with other international organisations). However in contrast, one respondent felt that the implementation plan was overly cumbersome and lacked focus as it tries to do too much.

6.3. The RAP Coordinator role

ICG-ML was asked about the role of the RAP Coordinator, and how they saw this role in the revised RAP. The majority of respondents felt that having a dedicated resource in place to support the delivery of the RAP ML was essential / fundamental / crucial to its success and went on to say that they thought that a similar role would be very beneficial in the implementation of the revised RAP.

Activities undertaken by the RAP Coordinator that were seen as most beneficial included: supporting engagement with specific work streams being undertaken by the European Commission, coordinating work between all Contracting Parties, providing general guidance and support, writing, reviewing and providing templates for OSPAR documents, organising meetings, and chasing up on questionnaires or comments. The role was also seen as important in order to keep an overview of the total process and ensure that countries stay involved and participate. This oversight and knowledge enabled the identification of synergies and gaps between actions.

However, one respondent suggested that if the revised RAP remains overly cumbersome and demanding, the role of the RAP coordinator will be a little help in reducing the burden on Contracting Parties.

7. BROADER IMPACTS OF THE RAP ML

7.1. Links to adoption of other intergovernmental agreements on marine litter – Other regional and global action plans

OSPAR's RAP ML was developed at a similar time to many of the other European Regional Sea Convention plans, including the plan for the Mediterranean (UNEP/MAP) in 2013 and the plan for marine litter in the Baltic (HELCOM) in 2015. Due to the overlap in Contracting Parties for these conventions, there is a natural synergy between the actions included in each respective plan.

The structure and topics covered by the OSPAR RAP ML have since been used as a basis to inform other international developments and agreements, including the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter in 2015, the G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter in 2017, and more recently the current development of the Marine Litter Regional Action Plan for the Arctic.

7.2. Links to developments at an EU level

Many of the OSPAR Contracting Parties play an important role in the discussion around marine litter in the European Union, specifically at the MSFD technical group on marine litter (TG-ML). For example, OSPAR

experts have taken leading roles in developing EU monitoring guidelines, baselines and thresholds, as well as an OSPAR Contracting Party representative being both the chair of ICG-ML and simultaneously the chair of TG-ML for many years.

In recent years there have been a number of advancements at the European level in terms of specific legislation to tackle the issue of marine litter, including the revision of the PRF Directive, as well as the adoption of the EU's Plastics Strategy, and the publication of the Single Use Plastics Directive. Many of the specific items targeted by the SUP Directive were identified making use of OSPAR's beach litter database, and the top litter items appearing on beaches in the North-East Atlantic.

Furthermore, under the MSFD, TG-ML have developed a threshold value for beach litter. Although this is a specific EU assessment tool, much of the data used (in the NE Atlantic region) to inform the development of this thresholds is OSPAR data.

7.3. Collaboration with other Regional Sea Conventions / international bodies

In order to share best practice and seek opportunities for collaboration, a number (3) of meetings have been organised between the various European Regional Sea Conventions (RSCs)¹⁰, with attendance by the European Commission and those Contracting Parties who are members of more than one RSC. These meetings have been fairly sporadic in nature, and as there is no one sole coordinating body, the organisation has been inconsistent. However, on the occasion when meetings have taken place, there has been a wealth of information shared, and the discussions have been very productive. There is however a definite opportunity for better future collaboration with the other RSCs, and a formalisation of this joint working group could be a way forward for this.

OSPAR has also engaged with other RSCs around the world, including the Cartagena Convention in the Caribbean, and the COBSEA convention.

OSPAR has collaborated with specific initiatives, such as the Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) and is an official signatory of the initiative. The GGGI have worked closely with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to develop guidelines on gear marking as a means to reduce ALDFG.

Furthermore, OSPAR Contracting Parties have collaborated through the processes at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) during the development of their recently adopted action plan for reducing marine litter from ships. There is scope for further future collaboration with the IMO on ship source marine litter in OSPAR waters.

7.4. Feedback from stakeholder survey

A specific questionnaire was developed for global bodies and other regional sea conventions, however there were only a small number (6) of responses received. Responses were received from; UNEP/MAP, The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), the Secretariat of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) - UNEP, The European Environment Agency, UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission.

¹⁰ UNEP/MAP (Barcelona Convention), HELCOM, The Black Sea Convention.

Those that responded all said they had some awareness of the OSPAR RAP ML, but only 2 (Cartagena Convention and NEAFC) of the 6 stated that the RAP ML had had some influence on the development or implementation of their own action to address marine litter. 50% of respondents felt that the OSPAR RAP ML had been 'moderately effective' in contributing to other regional and global efforts to prevent and reduce marine litter.

Importantly, UNEP MAP highlighted a need to coordinate on the development of the new RAP, as they are currently in the process of updating the marine litter action plan for the Mediterranean. AMAP also highlighted the potential for better future collaboration, once the Arctic monitoring and assessment work has progressed further. Other respondent (Cartagena convention and EEA) also expressed a wish to collaborate further with OSPAR on monitoring and data and information management.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLINE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATING THE RAP ML

8.1. Conclusion

The OSPAR RAP ML when adopted was at the forefront of international collaborative efforts to tackle the issues associated with marine litter. The RAP ML was ambitious, and intentionally so, and has inspired action and progress in OSPAR Contracting Parties. The evidence (collected under this review) to show that it has also inspired other similar international organisations is limited, but the experience of ICG-ML members who work in other international fora is that the OSPAR RAP ML has had a strong influence and inspired other international organisations (e.g. Arctic Council, G7). Furthermore, OSPAR has contributed to and benefited from recent EU initiatives, such as the Single Use Plastics Directive, Port Reception Facilities Directive, work on microplastics and several EU funded projects.

The work completed under the RAP ML has been extensive, but is not always easy to quantify, or illustrate through concrete outputs. Furthermore, the actions included in the RAP are in many cases so broad in nature, that it is not easy to assess their true impact when it comes to reducing quantities of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic.

One of the main recognised outputs of the RAP ML has been to guide and steer advancements across OSPAR Contracting Parties on issues related to marine litter, and the advancements in thinking and scientific understanding have been clear, although not always easy to measure. It was mentioned on several occasions by stakeholders that the role that OSPAR plays in coordinating efforts and sharing knowledge and information between Contracting Parties is paramount. Indeed, the value that Contracting Parties and OSPAR Observers apply to the RAP ML is an indication in itself of its impact and relevance.

In contrast, the recurring criticism is that at times, the RAP ML has been overly ambitious, and the burden on Contracting Party resources to develop and follow up on the total amount of collective actions has been very high. When considering the national actions, this level of ambition is also evident, and for most national actions in the RAP-ML, the work is still 'in progress' for the majority of Contracting Parties. The national actions that were progressed the least, similarly to the collective actions, were those that required action outside of OSPAR's standard remit, relating to topics like extended producer responsibility schemes, terrestrial environments (rivers), product design, and onshore waste management.

In terms of evidence of change of quantities of marine litter in the North-East Atlantic, there are initial signs of a decrease in quantities of litter found on OSPAR beaches and of floating litter in the North Sea over the last 10 years (as identified through the OSPAR Indicator Assessments, see section 3.2.2). When this is considered against the upward trend in plastic production and consumption in Europe over a similar period (see section 3.2.2), as well as the predictions for plastic consumption and waste issues to intensify in the future, this suggests that there have been some significant positive changes to prevent that plastic from entering the marine environment.

8.2. Recommendations for the development of the next RAP ML

The following recommendations are intended to give a starting point for discussions around the development of a new OSPAR Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic, post 2021.

8.2.1. Scope / nature of objectives and actions

- .1 A renewed Regional Action Plan should be built on a set of overarching objectives that guide OSPAR's work, together with criteria for the selection of more focussed and specific actions; those criteria could include that:
 - a. actions should focus on areas where OSPAR has a mandate to take action;
 - b. actions should add value to other existing processes or efforts, e.g. actions taken in the EU, by other regional bodies (RSCs, NEAFC, Arctic Council) and by global bodies (UNEP, IMO, FAO);
 - c. actions should fill in evidence, policy or implementation gaps; and
 - d. actions should be SMART, supported by evaluation criteria.
- .2 The RAP objectives and actions should demonstrate how they contribute to the strategic and operational objectives of the OSPAR North East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES);
- .3 There is a need for more flexibility in the plan so that, for example, the RAP could be split into more 'areas of action' than was the case with the first RAP, supported in turn by specific actions which can be adapted and revised every few years; the new RAP would therefore be an adaptive plan, similar to the implementation plan of the NEAES;
- .4 RAP actions (tasks) should be fully integrated into the NEAES implementation plan;
- .5 The template that has been developed to support the selection of tasks for the NEAES implementation plan could also be used when discussing new actions for the RAP;
- .6 Milestone planning should broadly follow the ICG-ML standard approach to implementation of actions;
- .7 Identification of RAP actions should be informed by evaluation of the current situation, e.g. analysis of indicator assessments, actions in other fora, OSPAR mandate;
- .8 RAP actions should be designed, where relevant, to feed into other processes including circular economy work, supporting effective implementation across different sectors and more upstream intervention (e.g. product design);
- .9 The new RAP should focus on collective actions, not national actions; however, Contracting Party experience and best practice from the national level should continue to be raised to regional level and disseminated, including through OSPAR measures; and

- .10 In view of the importance of EU action on plastics and other marine litter, there should be close cooperation and coordination between EU and OSPAR measures on marine litter.

8.2.2. International engagement and cooperation

- .1 OSPAR should strengthen its cooperation with relevant international organisations and partnerships (especially the Regional Sea Conventions but also the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Arctic Council, IMO, NEAFC and the FAO) in order to improve the targeting and implementation of marine litter work. Furthermore, with a view to sharing learnings and identifying potential for joint actions, OSPAR should collaborate with those international organisations who are also in the process of updating their marine litter plans, e.g. UNEP/MAP and HELCOM;
- .2 Future actions in an updated RAP should seek to identify links with, and actively coordinate, with other international efforts, in order to ease the burden on OSPAR Contracting Parties; specific consideration should be given to the organisation of joint workshops, including on monitoring and assessment activities; and
- .3 OSPAR Contracting Parties believe that a new global agreement, dedicated to marine plastic litter and microplastics / plastic pollution, is needed. Therefore, OSPAR should consider its role in / contribution to a possible global framework/agreement.

8.2.3. Implementation

- .1 So long as the marine litter work continues to be substantial, OSPAR should maintain a dedicated resource to support the implementation of the new RAP, whilst ensuring that the level of ambition can be supported by the resources available;
- .2 The country lead approach gives ownership to Contracting Parties on particular issues and is the model for how OSPAR undertakes its work generally, therefore, it is recommended that this continues in the new RAP;
- .3 OSPAR should also continue to encourage the active involvement of observers; and
- .4 OSPAR should continue to consider cost-sharing for certain actions where that would be more efficient, including in support of task leads' work.

8.2.4. Evaluation and review

- .1 The monitoring and assessment aspects of OSPAR's work should be integrated into the RAP, given they are core work and a key instrument in furthering the objectives of the RAP;
- .2 OSPAR should strengthen its techniques for evaluating progress on actions, including reporting of outputs, impacts and outcomes; evaluation criteria should be built into the initial design of actions as provided for in the NEAES task template;
- .3 The time period of the RAP should match that of the NEAES (2021 – 2030), while being able to adapt according to developments and the requirements of the MSFD cycle; the NEAES itself will allow for new tasks to be defined throughout the period;
- .4 The evaluation and dissemination of on-going tasks / OSPAR measures from the first RAP should form a new layer of the new RAP and be used to inform new work.

8.2.5. Areas of action for consideration in the new RAP

The design of action areas and specific collective actions for the new RAP should consider the following for possible inclusion:

- .1 Horizon scanning of specific thematic areas where further action beyond the first RAP could be necessary (i.e. for inclusion in the new RAP):
 - a. Reducing and preventing sewage and storm water related waste entering marine environment – with focus on specific and concrete measures;
 - b. Mapping of hot spots (accumulation areas) and removal activities – specifying how OSPAR can add value to national actions;
 - c. Reducing the impact of abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) – as above;
 - d. Supporting Contracting Party implementation of the EU SUP Directive / effectiveness of introduced plastic bans/single-use items not covered in the Directive (e.g. shot gun wads, plastic sheeting and strapping bands);
 - e. Reducing riverine litter as a source of marine litter, addressing links between sources and pathways, contributing to monitoring;
 - f. Actions to prevent leakage of plastic during the production as well as the sorting and recycling phase;
- .2 Potential new action areas:
 - a. Microplastics pathways and sources (textiles and fabrics, tyres and road run off, astroturf / artificial lawns, shipping, run-off from agriculture fertilisers, sea-based infrastructure and landscaping (including the use of geotextiles));
 - b. City/urban management;
 - c. Biodegradability in marine environment;
 - d. Adapting to climate change: assessment of risks from e.g. extreme weather events on discharges, run-off, accidents; and

8.2.6. Tasks that were proposed for NEAES Part II operational objectives but reserved for consideration in the implementation plan:

- .1 Implement circular economy approaches (see reference in NEAES Part I);
- .2 Single Use Plastics in business to business operations;
- .3 Emerging issues: on exports of plastic litter in countries with insufficient waste management.

References

European Commission 2018 Commission Staff Working Document Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy SWD(2018) 16 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018SC0016&from=EN>

PlasticsEurope 2019 Plastics – The Facts 2019 <https://www.plasticseurope.org/en/resources/publications/1804-plastics-facts-2019>

[European Environment Agency 2019 Preventing Plastic Waste in Europe EEA Report 2/2019](#)
Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019 ISBN 978-92-9480-194-4
<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/preventing-plastic-waste-in-europe>

European Commission 2020 Commission Staff Working Document Leading the way to a global circular economy: state of play and outlook SWD (2020) 100 final https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/leading_way_global_circular_economy.pdf

UNEP (2019). Guidelines for the monitoring and assessment of plastic litter in the ocean (GESAMP) <http://www.gesamp.org/site/assets/files/2002/rs99e.pdf>

Defra 2018. Survey on Attitudes to the Environment. Available at:
<http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=20397&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=survey%20on%20attitudes%20to%20the%20environment&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>

Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean adopted in 2013:
<http://marinelitternetwork.engr.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Regional-Plan-for-the-Marine-Litter-Management-in-the-Mediterranean.pdf>

Marine Litter in the Baltic Sea (HELCOM) adopted in 2015:
<http://marinelitternetwork.engr.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Regional-Action-Plan-for-Marine-Litter-HELCOM.pdf>

Evaluation of the Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in the North-East Atlantic



OSPAR
COMMISSION

OSPAR Secretariat
The Aspect
12 Finsbury Square
London
EC2A 1AS
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)20 7430 5200
f: +44 (0)20 7242 3737
e: secretariat@ospar.org
www.ospar.org

Our vision is a clean, healthy and biologically diverse North-East Atlantic Ocean, which is productive, used sustainably and resilient to climate change and ocean acidification.

Publication Number: 791/2021

© OSPAR Commission, 2021. Permission may be granted by the publishers for the report to be wholly or partly reproduced in publications provided that the source of the extract is clearly indicated.

© Commission OSPAR, 2021. La reproduction de tout ou partie de ce rapport dans une publication peut être autorisée par l'Editeur, sous réserve que l'origine de l'extrait soit clairement mentionnée.