



**OSPAR
COMMISSION**

Protecting and conserving the
North-East Atlantic and its resources



OSPAR
QSR 2023



Co-funded by the European
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Minutes of the OBHEG workshop

Tuesday the 19th of October 2021 (11:00 – 16:00, Utrecht time)

[Aristo meeting center, Brennerbaan 150, Utrecht \(Netherlands\) + online meeting](#)

by Anna Lizińska & Laurent Guérin

Attending

Physically: Ana García-Alegre (ES), José Manuel González (ES), Laurent Guérin (FR), Anna Lizińska (FR), Stefano Marra (UK), Liam Matear (UK), Cristina Vina-Herbon (UK), Sander Wijnhoven (NL)

Online: Ricardo Araújo (PT), Mats Blomquist (SE), Aurélien Boye (FR), Maria Ana Almeida Colaço (PT), Paul Coleman (IE), Grete Dinesen (DK), Stephen Duncombe-Smith (UK), Marie-Louise Krawack (DK), Yvonne Leahy (IE), Giacomo Montereale-Gavazzi (BE), Karl Norling (SE, ICG-CC), Alexandre Robert (FR), Hans Ruitter (NL, ICG-EUT), Gert Van-Hoey (BE), Kirsty Woodcock (UK).

KEY ACTIONS from this meeting

- Sander: to send a BH2b timetable to present the next steps and milestones of the BH2b assessment
- José, Sander and OBHEG co-chairs to organise a specific technical meeting as soon as possible in the next weeks to work on how BH1 and specific applications (BesITO, SoS, BISI) assessments will be presented and formally agreed (e.g. BH1a, BH1b?) through OSPAR processes, notably for Region II, and how to articulate each specific assessment for QSR 23
- Anna: (Nea Panacea task 3.1) D6 review to well and clearly distinguish formal 2nd cycle MSFD reports and recent or ongoing works (e.g. through OSPAR, ICES or TG Seabed) for the analysis. Draft report to be submitted to OBHEG before the end of 2021. Anna to send for review, when available, the water bodies shapefiles (and related pictures, early 2022) and when the data call will be closed (Spring 2022), the results and metadata (habitat types, protocols + national indices used) to OBHEG expert, in charge to forward to national WFD contacts, for agreement.
- BH3 co-leads to clearly highlight new data used and, if any, proposed changes or addition in the methods from the BH3 2017 assessment and agreed 2017 CEMP. As for all indicators CEMP, any eventual proposed changes in the method would need to be discussed and agreed in OBHEG, COBAM then BDC.
- OBHEG to further discuss and articulate complementary approaches of MarESA and Spanish/UK BH1/BH3 methods contributing to the works on integration (Elliott et al, 2018), also with Nea Panacea tasks 3.2 (BH1), 3.5 (BH3 scenario) and 3.7 (thematic assessment) and thresholds. Always highlight in presentations and documents what is already agreed in each method, and what new is proposed.
- BH4 co-leads to share with OBHEG a presentation and any document detailing the work plan and the case study, as an outline of the pilot assessment of BH4 in Region II.
- All indicator leads: to prepare and send (before COBAM) to OBHEG co-chairs + Chris Moulton (OSPAR secretariat) a summary table (Contracting Parties (CPs) in rows) on the current results of data calls per indicator (e.g. in lines or colours with key): CPs which send data in the relevant format, still pending contribution (data format problems, taxonomic issues, not received yet but promised) and eventual information on no contribution planned. All presentations made during this meeting are to be sent to OBHEG co-chairs for archives, and eventual use/referencing by OBHEG members.

AGENDA ITEMS AND MINUTES

1. OBHEG meetings main goals

The co-chairs (Laurent Guérin, FR, and Cristina Vina-Herbon, UK) present the context and aim of the workshop. The first part of the meeting will be focused on the presentation and discussion of the tasks progressed through OBHEG and the Nea Panacea project, while the second part will aim to prepare SuperCOBAM workshop, planned for the following days.

Part I - OBHEG and NeaPanacea tasks' progress

2. BH1 (Nea Panacea task 3.2), BH2b – data available, progress, update and discussion on approaches assessments in regions II & IV

- Presentation by Sander (NL, BH2b lead): BH1 for region II SoS + BISI, BH2b data call – data received from Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Germany United Kingdom and Belgium – French data expected soon

BISI Plans:

- Application of BISI in the Dutch areas and, in the future, for all the region II
- Update and improvements of BISI protocol + publications

Comments:

The UK – a lot of species were not included in the UK, because they were not fitting into reference values.

The Netherlands – we will try to connect data to habitats and areas and see what species are involved and ask you if any other species should be added.

ACTION: To further works with involved CPs expert on species and reference values and report on progress made.

ACTION: Sander to send a BH2b timetable to present on next steps and milestones of the BH2b assessment

- Presentation by José (ES, BH1, lead): BH1, SoS indicator in region IV– ongoing works, BH1 common in region IV and candidate in region II – test of the assessment has not started yet

Comments:

The Netherlands agree with the proposed methodology but want to make clear in the BH1 revised CEMP that SoS is not the only application of BH1

Co-chair – BH1 commonalities and specificities, between currently applied indices (Besitos, SoS and BISI), to be clarified in each indicator's applications, presentations and documents. For example, all BH1 indices are based on species life traits and a selection of species, while BH2 applications are analysing the species community as a whole.

Co-chair – propose a specific BH1, notably for Region II, meeting to clarify this. This meeting should involve at least all Region II CPs experts (but any others welcome) + ES BH1 lead + OBHEG co-chairs to clarify BH1 commonalities and Region II specific assessments, to be reported to the next COBAM.

ACTION: José, Sander and OBHEG co-chairs to organise a specific technical meeting as soon as possible in the next weeks to work on how BH1 and specific applications (BesITO, SoS, BISI) assessments will be presented and formally agreed (e.g.



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BH1a, BH1b?) through OSPAR processes, notably for Region II, and how to articulate each specific assessment for QSR 23

- Presentation by Stefano (UK) on an ongoing UK national project for testing and comparing BH1 applications, also to provide inputs to BH3 sensitivity layers.

Comments:

Spain/UK/Germany technical discussion on limits and use of SoS and BESITO indicators. Co-chair – these UK and ES initiatives on integration between BH1 and BH3 are very interesting and useful for integration issues (also linked to thematic assessment), and should be further progressed and discussed at next OBHEG meetings, and notably by a BH1 dedicated technical meeting.

ACTION: To liaise and further work with OBHEG experts involved in indicators development, and integration between indicators.

3. MSFD D6 GES Review and BH2a (Nea Panacea tasks 3.1 and 3.3) - data, plan and timeline

- Presentation by Anna (FR, BH2a lead) on D6 GES review progress (Nea Panacea task 3.1) and BH2a data call and work plan

D6 GES review in progress = draft report to be submitted end November. Some late due to very complex and inconsistent reporting between a/ highly modified GES revised Decisions between 1st and 2nd cycle on D1/D6 benthic habitats, b/very different 1st and 2nd cycles EU Member States' reports, and c/ High variability per MSFD cycle of European Members states' reports contents and understanding of MSFD criteria. For these reasons and late available reports from UK and Greece, the analysis will be conducted in the next weeks, focussing mainly on the MSFD 2nd cycle reports, against the 2nd MSFD cycle revised GES Decision and current OSPAR methodological standards.

Comments:

Spain – it is important to clearly distinguish formal MSFD 2nd cycle reports contents, and ongoing works, like those discussed in TG Seabed.

Files sent by Jose: GES_25-2021-06_TGSeabed_AdverseEffects.doc and GES_25-2021-05_TGSeabed_OtherPolicyMethods.doc

BH2a results (when ready and complete) to be checked by OBHEG members or forwarded to national WFD contacts to ensure accuracy of water bodies delineation and assessment results provided by CPs and/or the European Environmental Agency.

ACTION: Anna to send the draft D6 GES review report for review by OBHEG. Final publication integrating comments aimed for end 2021, early 2022.

ACTION: Anna to send for review, when available, the water bodies shapefiles (and related pictures, early 2022) and when the data call will be closed (Spring 2022), the results and metadata (habitat types, protocols + national indices used) to OBHEG expert, in charge to forward to national WFD contacts, for agreement.

4. BH3 (and Nea Panacea tasks 3.4 + 3.5) – data available, progress, update and discussion on approaches for regions II/III & IV

- Presentation by Liam (UK, BH3 co-lead) on BH3 works' progress



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Abrasion layer data, from the VMS fisheries bottom trawling data, were published by ICES in September 2021.

About aggregate data calls, data were received from Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany. The Republic of Ireland, Spain and Sweden reported that this activity doesn't occur in their national waters. France informed about its later contribution (Autumn 2022). Most of the available data are from licensed areas.

Comments:

Spain: Spanish data on sensitivity from IBTS can be shared and used here for Region IV, as already shared through BH1 data call.

Co-chair: The use of MarESA method is new and would require to be presented in detail and discussed at SuperCOBAM during benthic and assessment scales and integration sessions.

ACTION: BH3 leads to clearly highlight new data used and, if any, proposed changes or addition in the methods from the BH3 2017 assessment and agreed 2017 CEMP. As for all indicators CEMP, any eventual proposed changes in the method would need to be discussed and agreed in OBHEG, COBAM then BDC.

ACTION: OBHEG to further discuss and articulate complementary approaches of MarESA and Spanish or UK BH1/BH3 methods contributing to the works on integration (Elliott et al, 2018), also with Nea Panacea tasks 3.2 (BH1), 3.5 (BH3 scenario) and 3.7 (thematic assessment) and thresholds proposals. Always highlight in presentations and documents what is already agreed in each method, and what new is proposed.

5. BH4 (Nea Panacea task 3.6) – data available, brief progress update

Verbal update by Cristina on the behalf of Petra (DE, BH4 co-lead)

Planned pilot assessment: proportion of physical loss by the 5 most relevant activities in Region II: offshore wind farms, oil & gas platforms, pipelines, bottom trawling, and aggregate extraction.

Several scenarios have been tested with different trawling intensity thresholds and different energy classes for the period 2009-2014.

The planned output of BH4 proportion of lost area or with a high risk of lost per habitat type and assessment unit

Next steps:

- Compare 6 years cycles 2009-2014 and 2015-2020
- Prepare pressure layers for trawling for Region II
- Combine pressures levels with a habitat map
- It is planned to include T&D habitats in the assessment

Comments:

Please address any comments directly to Petra

ACTION: BH4 co-leads to share with OBHEG a presentation and any document detailing the work plan and the case study, as an outline of the pilot assessment of BH4 in Region II.

6. Coordinated Environmental Benthic Monitoring

Gert (BE) remind participants about the oncoming Benthic monitoring workshop (16-17/12, Ghent, BE). This workshop aims to progress a roadmap for integrated benthic monitoring in the Greater North Sea. Link to register: <https://forms.gle/JQehVPQNq5v8tsvA6>

Part II – Thematic assessment and preparation of SuperCOBAM

7. Presentation of Nea Panacea project and SuperCOBAM workshop agenda

- Presentation by Laurent (FR, co-chair) of the remaining NeaPanacea task's aim (3.7 on benthic thematic assessment) and timeline versus OSPAR draft/final products, and works planned for the dedicated SuperCOBAM workshop.

8. Brain warming (pre-brainstorm) on 1/ assessment scales and spatial integration (based on data available) + EU TG Seabed and ICES initiatives

- Presentation by Laurent (FR, co-chair) of illustrations on ongoing data calls per indicator, indicative Marine Reporting Units from Wijnhoven S., 2021 (OBHEG 08/06) and ICES WKTRADE3, EU TG Seabed and OSAR ICG-EUT, and illustration of MarESA method from Last E.K. et al, 2020 (OBHEG 08/06)

Updates on data calls progress were made during the first part of this meeting, but it should be summarised and clarified in a common table.

Comments

Spain - make clear deadlines for the document's submissions. It is not clear about OSPAR process and NeaPanacea timelines and milestones.

Co-chair: To be confirmed by OSPAR Secretariat during SuperCOBAM, but Nea Panacea timeline and deliverables are mandatory (UE funding) and were agreed by OSPAR to contribute, as proposal in due time, to QSR2023. Notably through extra-BDC planned in December 2022 for the latest products. NEa Panacea timeline and milestones (draft and final products) were presented today and were made available through the Nea Panacea project description.

ACTION: EU TG Seabed document, from ICES WKTRADE3, send by email by Sandler: Paper_Assessment_Scales&Areas (TG-Seabed Wijnhoven et al 2021)

ACTION: All indicator leads: to prepare and send (before COBAM) to OBHEG co-chairs + Chris Moulton (OSPAR secretariat) a summary table (Contracting Parties (CPs) in rows) on the current results of data calls per indicator (e.g. in lines or colors with key): CPs which send data in the relevant format, still pending contribution (data format problems, taxonomic issues, not received yet but promised) and eventual information on no contribution planned.

9. Brain warming (pre-brainstorm) on 2/ integration of indicators, around the schematic of Elliot et al, 2018 + Benthic habitats schematic of draft MSFD Art.8 Guidance (based on indicators + methods available)

- Presentation by Laurent (FR, co-chair) of illustrations on last progress made on benthic indicators' integration method from Elliott et al (2018), OSPAR QSR203 thematic assessment principles and the ICG-ecoC "Bow-tie approach"

Link to a publication sent by Mats:

<https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0308597X17306371>

ACTION: To be further discuss at SuperCOBAM, in link with data available and more detailed presentation of the BH1/BH3 Spanish approach and MArESA method.

10. Brain warming (pre-brainstorm) on 3/ Thresholds values (based on indicators + agreed methods available)

- Presentation by Laurent (FR, co-chair), from Anna draft report on Nea Panacea task 3.1, of the current reported OSPAR standards by EU Member States for its MSFD GES definition.

Comments

Co-chair: Very few OSPAR standards (indicators) were formally reported nor at 1st nor 2nd MSFD cycle, which limit the next step to agree on common or sub-regional specific thresholds. Besides, there is currently only the BH2a indicator which has agreed thresholds (from Water Framework Directive and OSPAR IA2017). There are proposals from UK and DE on BH3 thresholds which will be discussed in the next dedicated meeting planned. It is thus not relevant to discuss this in the next SuperCOBAM workshop, and time will be prioritized to progress preliminary steps required (assessment scales, integration and thematic assessment).

11. Other topics: future Funding opportunities:

- Presentation by Anna (FR, BH2a lead), on some funding opportunities related to OBHEG Terms of Reference and work plans

Mission Starfish 2030: Restore Our Ocean and Water

Comments

Co-chair: We are currently benefitting of extra resources to progress prioritizes OSPAR works through Nea Panacea. Nevertheless, since EcApRHA, we know progress is boosted but time is spending fast. Since, and also due to CoVid context, few conceptual and technical progress were made. It is thus very important to anticipate and prepare as soon as possible the next opportunities to obtain the needed resources for nest priority steps, notably on monitoring and integrated methods.

ACTION: Link on funding opportunities and slide sent by Anna Lizińska, within OBHEG and some other group leads, to start the discussion on future consortium and cooperation.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mission-starfish-2030-restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en

detailed description <https://www.biodiversa.org/1932/download>

12. Next steps and meetings:

The work will be further progressed through SuperCOBAM workshop (20-22/10). A dedicated BH3 meeting on thresholds option proposals, mixing science-policy people, was already planned for the 10th of November. The next OBHEG meeting will be exceptionally planned in November (doodle pool between indicator leads), notably to progress communication and distinguish specific applications of BH1. Until the next draft products are planned through Nea Panacea and OSPAR QSR2023, a high-frequency meeting (monthly to bi-monthly) is anticipated, mainly online and occasionally physically (end Spring) in 2022. All participants will be informed by email and any potential working documents sent before the meeting.