

Implementation of the Political Declaration on energy cooperation between the North Seas Countries

Support Group 1 on Maritime Spatial Planning

Work Programme

1. Work area as outlined in Annex I to the political declaration

Participating countries will work on:

- Coordinating the planning and development of offshore wind and grid projects beyond national borders including area mapping;
- Developing a common environmental assessment framework;
- Increasing the availability and interoperability of marine data for planning, impact assessment, licensing and operations;
- Exchanging best practices on site preparation and the handling of unexploded ordnance;
- Exchanging best practices on permitting procedures and work on the modalities of a coordinated permitting process for concrete regional or sub-regional joint offshore projects.

The priority for the first years is on the first three items. As much as possible use will be made of existing networks, cooperation platforms and projects to avoid double work.

2. Objectives and deliverables (2016-2019)

Deliverable 1	
Objective	Coordinating the planning and development of offshore wind and grid projects beyond national borders including area mapping
Output	<p>Outline of a coherent wind energy plan for the mid and long term, with an emphasis on the cross border aspects, including spatial plan and taking into account land –sea interactions. Relevant elements of the plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory of ongoing projects (location, size, status, timelines). This could also be used as starting point for other work areas (therefore maybe a role for Coordinating Committee). • Possible economic benefits for future projects (macroeconomic and societal cost reduction) due to choice of locations • Infrastructure links • Relation to other users and uses (i.e. shipping, oil & gas, etc.) • Possibilities within the environmental limits (see Deliverable 2); • Identification and assessment of benefits, priorities and methodologies to improve cross - border planning • Timing/planning of different scenarios for future projects (development of a project pipeline)

Questions to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are possible areas of the North Sea (both national and international) which could be developed for wind energy? (a preliminary overview of national spatial plans and wind energy plans can be found in Annex 1) • How would these be integrated into existing or future maritime spatial plans? • What time horizon is logically connected to these areas, based on the demand for offshore renewables? • Can these potential areas be developed according to different scenarios? • What is the relation to other uses in these areas? • How can these relations reduce macroeconomic and societal costs? • What could be limiting or critical factors which hamper the development of these areas? • Which stakeholders need to be involved? And how will they be involved at which stage?
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Deliverable 2	
Objective	Developing a common environmental assessment framework for MSP
Output	<p>An agreed common method for an environmental assessments framework. Focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common development of knowledge (incl. cause-effect relations) on the environmental effects of offshore wind • Common species/habitats that are affected by windfarm development • Cross border cumulative effect • Agreement on the scope of the spatial and time dimensions to be used in environmental assessments <p>Applicability at the operational level of the common method/approach is key.</p>
Questions to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the common ambitions of parties that will work on a common method • What methods of environmental assessment are available in the participating countries and what are the common elements? • Which method can be applied when accumulating environmental impacts? • What type of data, information and knowledge is (more) required? • What research is further needed? • Can there be a synchronisation/coordination between the national SEA procedures when establishing/changing the plans? • What are the industry requirements (good practice of procedures, list differences and list the order of

	<p>importance for harmonization)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which stakeholders need to be involved? And how will they be involved at which stage?
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Deliverable 3	
Objective	Increasing the availability and interoperability of marine data for planning, impact assessment, licensing and operations
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of data needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regulatory needs (for data which is needed for planning, licensing, permits) ○ Inventory of industry needs for data • Specification of the datasets • Check if adoption of common EMODnet based standards could be used for data and data products to facilitate sharing of compatible data across sectors and borders • Collection of new data or products that are presently not covered by EMODnet and delivery to EMODnet through data ingestion • Advise to extend/change EMODnet standards for the needs of MSP • Provision of data and services according to the MSP-needs • Feasibility of a European MSP-Data-Portal/connectivity with EMODnet
Questions to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What further data and information are required? • How can data portals be linked to EMODnet? • What standards best support harmonisation of additional marine data not covered by EMODnet across national boundaries, are these currently supported, and how do we ensure data cohesion? • What are the regulatory needs? • What are the industry needs? What do they have, want and need (to reduce costs)?

Deliverable 4	
Objective	Exchanging best practices on site preparation and the handling of unexploded ordnance
Output	Overview of best practices for on site preparation and the handling of unexploded ordnance, including the related environmental impact, building on existing work undertaken by Regional Sea Conventions.
Questions to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different practices in the Member States? • What developed common approach would save

	more money?
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Deliverable 5	
Objective	Exchanging best practices on permitting procedures and work on the modalities of a coordinated permitting process for concrete regional or sub-regional joint offshore projects
Output	<p>Develop and agree on modalities of a coordinated permitting process for concrete regional or sub-regional joint offshore projects.</p> <p>Ensuring the interface with maritime spatial planning by including linkages with the national maritime spatial plans and processes.</p>
Questions to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the necessary elements to be included in a coordinated permitting process in order to reduce administrative workload, burdens and to reduce cost for the MS and end users.

Annex 1: Available maps and plans

A number of countries in the North Sea have their maritime spatial plan already adopted: Belgium (2014); England (2014); Scotland (2015); Germany (2009), Norway (2013), the Netherlands (2016). Find links to these plans at:

https://www.noordzeeloket.nl/internationaal/plannen_van_buurlanden/

Find more info on maritime spatial planning at European level, including North Sea countries at:

<http://msp-platform.eu/>

With regard to existing activities at sea, each country has its own maps which can be found through these links. Important features in the national maps are: shipping routes, marine protected areas, oil and gas installations, cables and pipelines, wind farms, defense areas, sand mining areas, etc. There is no North Sea wide map with all the existing uses. There are sectoral maps for the North Sea, for instance with all the MPA's (OSPAR) or shipping routes (IMO).

The website <http://www.4coffshore.com/windfarms/> gives a good and up-to-date overview of existing and planned wind farms at the North Sea. It gives information on owner, status, capacities, etc. by clicking on the allocations. It is not always clear what is the planning in time for the development of these wind farms. There are however different stages identified: development zone; pre-construction; fully commissioned; application submitted; consent authorized.