



Workplan for the OSPAR/HELCOM Joint Expert Group on Non-Indigenous Species (JEG NIS) 2025-2028



Approved via correspondence by WG Sea-based Pressure in November 2024

N.Task description	Lead	Timeframe	Results	Intersessional activities
Data and Database				
1 Identify datasets and data flows for the existing OSPAR and HELCOM NIS indicators, consider the data required for HOLAS 4 and IA 2028 assessments, aim to improve and harmonise data collected for OSPAR and HELCOM assessments	Task group: Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin, Henn Ojaveer, Martin Jørgensen	By the time of the data call for HOLAS 4 (anticipated in 2027) and OSPAR IA28)	Final data call format (considering N.1 and N. 2), which should be practical and easy to complete, so that data are inter-comparable, and available on the timescales required by each Convention.	HELCOM and OSPAR experts workshops in Q1 2025 to discuss what indicators will be included in HOLAS 4 and IA28 and identify opportunities for joint development work.
2 Investigate and implement options for harmonising formats for NIS data collection, data processing and data submissions under both Conventions	Task group: Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin, Henn Ojaveer, OSPAR and HELCOM Secretariats	In parallel with preparing the data call for HOLAS 4 (anticipated in 2027) and OSPAR IA28	Develop a proposal (for WG review) for OSPAR and HELCOM to submit their data to the same database or, if a common database is not yet feasible, to submit data in the same format. Easy to access and interpret dataset which will facilitate NIS information and knowledge exchange between the Baltic and the North-East Atlantic.	Further explore suitability of AquaNIS and/or other existing or developing databases for the data specifications of HOLAS 4 and OSPAR IA28. Check what data is in the OSPAR dataset and determine the requirements of an NIS database from the OSPAR perspective. Determine HELCOM's future needs and plans for NIS data storage. Compare the two and, in light of planned assessment activities, determine whether a joint database is yet necessary or desirable/feasible. Subject to these considerations, determine what data entry activities would be needed.

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3 Provide update to ICES WGITMO on work of JEG NIS (and vice versa) and any foreseen AquaNIS developments	Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin	Annually	Clarity on work priorities and how they are mutually beneficial rather than double work.	Attend WGITMO to represent JEG-NIS and provide a report back to JEG NIS annual meeting. Pursue any time critical queries or opportunities intersessionally.
4 Prepare data calls and data sets for HOLAS 4 and OSPAR IA28 assessments according to the quality requirements set out in the data call and make the datasets available in accordance with data use and access policy	Task group: Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin, Henn Ojaveer	HELCOM indicator will be run in 2027 (tentatively), OSPAR Common Indicator in 2027	Publicly available and intercomparable data sets for OSPAR and HELCOM NIS records. Set the stage for next updates post HOLAS 3 and QSR 2023 for more harmonized outputs.	Experts to review data calls for QSR23 and HOLAS 3 and produce draft data call for IA28 and HOLAS 4 in collaboration with the Secretariat data specialists.
5 Specify technical aspects of how to make data stream processes operational, e.g. automating delivery of indicator assessments through scripts	Task group: Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin, Henn Ojaveer, Maiju Lehtiniemi (tbc), OSPAR and HELCOM Secretariats	In parallel with making the assessments for HOLAS 4 and IA28		Workshop in 2027 to begin to convert the documented OSPAR and HELCOM assessment processes into scripts for automated NIS assessments, using open-source programming such as GitHub on the basis of open licensing.
6 Provide a forum to exchange information regarding ongoing monitoring programmes, their results, species identified as causing problems including rapid expansion; discuss the possibility of implementing an early warning system among countries		2025 - onwards	Data on new introductions, species causing problems and expanding rapidly in one country are communicated to adjacent countries or verified via a regularly updated list, without the need to wait for data calls.	Consider what sort of shared resource or communication method would be suitable for this purpose.

Monitoring					
7	Provide a forum for discussion of monitoring programmes, focusing on developing joint or coordinated monitoring where possible, based on common standards (indicators or other elements of assessment methods)		Annually	Common monitoring protocols (like the one existing for ports, but for MPAs or other environments too).	Dedicated meeting to discuss alignment of HELCOM and OSPAR monitoring programmes
8	Provide updates to OSPAR CEMP guidelines and appendices, HELCOM monitoring programmes	All	Regularly, as changes necessitate	Up to date, well documented data collection and analysis/assessment protocols.	
9	Provide expert opinion on the development and implementation of new monitoring strategies and guidelines for NIS			Discuss new methodologies, e.g. eDNA, as well as frequency. Proposals to achieve adequate programmes, based on comparisons between countries, including on criteria beyond new introductions.	Engage with EU 'biodiversity monitoring' project run by the JRC
Assessments					
10	Ensure information flow with regular communication to both Secretariats and experts relevant to JEG NIS and/or general NIS related issues	Co-Chairs and Secretariats	Regularly		
11	Provide updates of indicators to be delivered regularly, frequency to be decided with the priority to deliver indicator assessments for the IA28 and HOLAS 4	OSPAR: Peter Stæhr as indicator lead; HELCOM: Maiju Lehtiniemi as indicator lead	Regular updates	Adequate information available for planning and delivering IA28 and HOLAS 4; NIS indicator products available in time for sign off process in respective Conventions.	Indicator development and assessment planning discussions between experts of each Convention, and subsequently comparison of plans to allow harmonization where possible.

12	Further develop the candidate indicators and/or developing new indicators, where a need has been identified by the Conventions or by MSFD (D2) at the EU level		Tbc 2025 workshop	Build on task 8, taking up information from novel monitoring approaches.	Compile list of existing indicator proposals which have not yet been feasible to apply. Organise dedicated workshop to discuss. Consider discussions in the frame of EU
13	Develop integration methods and other aspects of indicator assessment, which require further development to be in line with EU MSFD assessment requirements according to COM DEC 848/2017	Co-Chairs and Secretariats	Depending on development and testing of indicators.	Documented integration methods.	Initial discussion on integration methods e.g. at workshop to document indicator methodology in 2027.
14	Contribute NIS related information to assessments carried out by other relevant groups	All contacts and observers of JEG NIS		Shared information	
15	Support the development and review of all assessment materials (e.g., indicator reports, thematic assessments, summary reports) as developed within HELCOM and OSPAR				
Measures					
16	Provide input to regional initiatives towards reducing NIS introductions through human activities, e.g. OSPAR: NEAES 07.02.T2 on biofouling	Task group: Peter Stæhr, Sergej Olenin, Henn Ojaveer	2025- 2030	Harmonised regional management options for reducing NIS introductions to zero where necessary.	Relevant management options could be shared between managers from HELCOM and OSPAR Regional Seas Conventions

Ad hoc expert consultation					
17	Respond to queries relating to NIS from the two Conventions' respective subsidiary bodies, such as JTG BALLAST & BIOFOULING, by providing input / expert opinion	All	As required	Maximised use of JEG-NIS data and expertise	
Any other issues					
18	Identify resources to carry out work, for example through projects	All	Depending on available funding calls	Increased development and harmonization of OSPAR and HELCOM NIS work	Consider whether any project calls could be used for delivery of NIS work under the two Conventions and bring them to the attention of JEG NIS as appropriate.