

To the EU Commission
Via consultation website

17th February 2025

Offshore Norge's input to the European Oceans Pact

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the European Oceans Pact. Offshore Norge is an industry association for companies with activities on the Norwegian Continental Shelf within oil and gas, offshore wind, carbon capture and storage (CCS), hydrogen and seabed minerals.

Management of ocean areas should facilitate value creation through sustainable activities, while at the same time maintaining the environment in the ocean areas. Sustainable ocean management must safeguard valuable resources for both current and future generations based on knowledge-based assessments for protecting the ecosystems. Comprehensive ocean management plans ensure value creation while safeguarding nature and the environment.

In Norway, cross-sectoral regulations combined with regularly updated management plans have established a good and predictable framework for the management of the ocean areas and demonstrated that it is possible to achieve high value creation while taking into account and safeguarding local environmental conditions.

Offshore Norge believes the current [Norwegian Integrated Ocean Management Plan](#) including the sector-specific regulations ensures the aspects the EU's ocean plans are intended to safeguard. The Norwegian Integrated Ocean Management Plan ensures value creation and coexistence, while at the same time facilitating specific regulations that safeguard ecosystems and biodiversity.

Within the current regime in Norway, the overall framework is laid down in the management plan, while the sectoral authorities adapt specific measures based on assessment of both environmental values, vulnerability in relation to different activities and an assessment of periods during the year that are relevant for specific measures. Management of the measures are subject to thorough scientific assessment through four-year cycles. The ocean management plan and the follow-up from the sectoral authorities provide a very good basis for safeguarding ecosystems and biodiversity.

Offshore Norge believes that the sectoral authorities' ability to set conditions provides the best management of the ocean areas. Introducing legal marine spatial plans could


undermine the political discussions of the frameworks. In our view, marine spatial plans involve shifting the focus from value creation through sustainable management, to separate conservation processes with less room for political control, and less room for adjusting course in the light of new, updated knowledge.

At a time when the energy transition is critical and new ocean-based industries are emerging, it is more important than ever to bring together actors to ensure a broad build-up of knowledge. It is essential to bridge knowledge gaps in sectors that coexist offshore. By closely collaboration, both authorities and the industry can address knowledge gaps effectively, while promoting innovation and sustainable development, upholding safety standards, and minimizing environmental impact. A collaborative approach benefits all parties involved and preserves the ecosystem for future generations.

A prerequisite for achieving coexistence between industries in defined ocean areas are thorough processes to increase understanding and integrate the needs of the various industries as early as possible in the planning process. As an example, Offshore Norge has for offshore wind activities established a systematic collaboration with the Norwegian Fishermen's Association, and together the organisations have agreed on [principles and guidelines](#) to reduce the level of conflict between the industries.

Offshore Norge believes it is crucial that a thorough and solid process is facilitated for obtaining a knowledge base for assessing sustainable use and conservation of nature. Norway has long experience preparing the scientific basis for the ocean management plans. A well-founded scientific basis helps to ensure that assessments and priorities for overall framework conditions are predictable – which is crucial for sustainable business ocean activities. Europe's offshore industries have good experience in building knowledge and are ready to contribute in the future to strengthen the scientific basis.

Offshore Norge remains at your disposal for any further information.



Best regards,
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