

## **Offshore Norge's input to the European Ocean Act – Call for Evidence**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the European Oceans Act. 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.

As Norway is a European Economic Area (EEA) country with shared sea basins, marine industries and maritime regulatory responsibilities with the EU, Offshore Norge considers it both relevant and important to contribute to this consultation. It is, in Offshore Norge's view, important that the EU Ocean Act facilitates compatibility between the Norwegian and the EU marine management acts.

Offshore Norge believe that the European Ocean Act should support high-quality, coordinated knowledge processes, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens, allow regional differentiation tailored to diverse sea basins and suit different governance regimes.

Offshore Norge encourage the Commission to develop a function-based framework, with focus on overall goals instead of a detailed and descriptive regulation of technical solutions. This promotes a strategic and the most cost-effective approach and solutions that we have positive experience with from the functional-based Norwegian HSE regulations.

Ocean governance must account for increasing spatial interaction and value creation between energy, fisheries, transport, environmental protection, and new offshore industries to ensure value creation. Too rigid governmental spatial planning risks reducing flexibility, sub-optimal solutions and increased costs at a moment when Europe needs dynamic, adaptive solutions for the energy transition. Sector authorities must retain the ability to tailor specific environmental, safety, and seasonal measures based on evolving knowledge, while ensuring overarching coordination.

It is important to balance the development of marine spatial plans that safeguards the marine ecosystems and ensures sufficient flexibility to accommodate rapid developments in offshore wind, CCS, hydrogen, and other emerging industries to ensure value creation.

Norway has established a four-year cyclic model of [Integrated Ocean Management Plans](#) that safeguards the environment, promotes value creation, predictability, flexibility and knowledge-based management of marine ecosystems. In addition, the Norwegian government has established a business plan for Norwegian oceans to secure co-existence between the ocean industries.

Co-existence between the ocean industries based on the established framework is best achieved through early dialogue mechanisms and systematic continuous dialogue. Our experience demonstrates that predictable, cross sector ocean management significantly

reduces conflict and supports sustainable growth. As an example, Offshore Norge has for offshore wind activities, established a systematic collaboration with the Norwegian Fishermen's Association. Together the organisations have agreed on a [playbook](#) to reduce the level of conflict between the industries. This playbook is building on the 50 years' experience of co-existence between the fisheries and the oil and gas industry.

We strongly support the Ocean Observation initiative to improve data coordination and joint monitoring efforts. The industry must be recognized as a central partner in scientific knowledge generation, and data from the industries should also be utilized in the initiative. Data should also be made available and shared as much as possible between the observatories and the industries.

Offshore Norge stands ready to contribute further as the legislative proposal progresses.