

Blue Growth and Ecosystem Resilience in the North Sea: Sustainability Challenges and Opportunities

International Science – Green NGO Dialogue Meeting on Management and Decommissioning of Offshore Installations

Date: September 26th, 2017 from 10.00 to 15.30

Location: Hosted by DTU Aqua at: Technical University of Denmark, Anker Engelunds Vej 1, Building 101A, 2800 Kgs. Lyngby, Denmark

The North Sea is one of the most productive marine ecosystems in the world; it is also one of the most heavily exploited. Over the centuries, human activity has fundamentally changed the character of large parts of the North Sea ecosystem. What used to be a diverse ecosystem with stretches of sand, large oyster beds, peat banks, sea-grass fields and glacial boulders in the South, and kelp forests and cold coral reefs in the North, has been turned into a seascape dominated by sand, mud and gravel.

Right now, the North Sea is undergoing a new wave of industrial transition driven by the energy transition and a more general focus on the economic opportunities of 'Blue Growth'. This transition poses a significant sustainability challenge: With some 1,350 oil and gas installations and more than 2,300 offshore wind turbines present today, the number of wind turbines is growing with hundreds each year. Forecasts predict additional 4,000-8,000 turbines by 2030 and up to 25,000 turbines by 2050, which would occupy almost 8% of the North Sea area (57,000km²). The United Nations have so far failed to address such developments in their UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and especially in SDG 14 on "*Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*".

Needless to say, the initial placement of offshore installations at sea or on the seabed has a huge negative impact on the marine ecosystem. But once they are there, scientific evidence shows, some of these man-made structures come to host rich ecosystems and a large variety of species including threatened, protected and commercially valuable species. With their safety zones, many of these installations also have come to effectively protect the surrounding marine areas from other damaging impacts such as trawling.

Hence, time is ripe to discuss what the sustainability opportunity of offshore installations might be, and what is actually better for the marine environment: To fully remove all present and future installations to shore? Or to allow clean, ecologically valuable parts to stay where they are, to continue to serve as temporary habitats and ecosystems?

With an eye to the 2018 review of OSPARs Decision 98/3, which forms the basis for most of the current regulatory framework regarding offshore installations, we aim to bring in a timely and well-informed contribution to an increasingly urgent debate.

Objectives of the meeting are to:

- **Facilitate networking and knowledge sharing** on the challenges arising from the growing industrialisation of the seas.
- **Learn from Green NGO's and international scientists** how sustainable management and decommissioning of offshore installations can lead to new best practices.
- **Launch a North Sea Futures Message to OSPAR** Contracting Parties and start mobilising solutions-oriented stakeholders towards a *future resilient North Sea*.

Final programme

Time slot	Activity (title)	Speaker
9.30 – 10.00	Registration & coffee	
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome & Opening: Reef restoration and the potential for reuse of offshore installations material	Anne-Mette Jørgensen, North Sea Futures (welcome) Dr. Jon Christian Svendsen, DTU Aqua
10.15 – 10.40	Keynote: Blue Growth and Sustainable Development of our oceans – perspectives from Sustainability Science and United Nations Scientific Panel	Prof. Dr. Katherine Richardson, University of Copenhagen
10.40 – 11.20	Offshore installations and decommissioning in the North Sea – ongoing research & key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life on a man-made structure (20 min) • Offshore installations & marine mammal populations (20 min) 	Dr. Robbert Jak, Wageningen Marine Research Dr. Jonas Teilmann, Århus University
11.20 – 11.35	Questions/discussion with audience	
11.35 – 12.20	Presentation on Expert Survey (15 min) Blue Growth & Ecosystem Resilience in the North Sea – sustainability challenges and opportunities. - Panel discussion on NGO Discussion paper & Expert Survey (30 min)	Anne-Mette Jørgensen, North Sea Futures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous speakers • Dr. Patrizio Mariani, DTU Aqua/EMB • Prof. Dr. David Paterson, MASTS • Guido Schild, North Sea Foundation, NL
12.20 – 13.00	Lunch (sandwiches)	
13.00 – 13.35	Inspiration for break-out sessions: Ideas behind our principles for a next best practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principle 6. Decommissioning of off-shore wind - Circular economy and ecosystem services (15 min) • Principle 8. Reallocation of savings to a North Sea Environmental Fund – Why and how? (10 min) • Learning from a first mover project: Platforms Naturally (10 min) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johan Finsteen Gjødvad & Nynne Marie Bech, NIRAS • Sam Collin, Scottish Wildlife Trust • George Wurpel, MSG Sustainable Strategies
13.35 – 14.40	Break-out sessions Identification of key issues, knowledge gaps and needs and messages to other stakeholders	All
14.40 – 15.00	Report back from break-out sessions	
15.00 – 15.15	Conclusions & next steps	Anne-Mette Jørgensen, North Sea Futures
15.15 - ?	Snacks & drinks	

North Sea Futures, including this dialogue meeting is being funded by the Velux Foundations. For more information, please visit www.veluxfoundations.dk

(Preliminary) List of Participants

Name	Organisation
Andre Visser	DTU Aqua
Anne-Mette Jørgensen	North Sea Futures
Nynne Marie Bech	NIRAS
David Paterson	MASTS
Finn Adser	DONG Energy A/S
George Wurpel	MSG Sustainable Strategies
Guido Schild	North Sea Foundation
Gölsým Koc	Danish Energy Agency
Jesper Byberg	DONG O&G
Jesper Kuhn	DTU Aqua
Jonas Teilmann	Aarhus University
Jon Burgwald	Greenpeace
Jon Christian Svendsen	DTU Aqua
Katherine Richardson	University Of Copenhagen
Katinka Johansen	HOFOR
Knud N. Flensted	BirdLife/Dansk Ornitologisk Forening
Kristian Nehring Madsen	ORBICON
Lasse Fast Jensen	Vattenfall
Lene Kristensen	COWI
Luca van Duren	Deltares
Mads Nistrup Madsen	DHI
Magnus Eckeskog	Greenpeace
Malene Rahbek	DONG Oil & Gas
Michael Brinch-Pedersen	North Sea Futures
Michael Olesen	Rambøll
Mieke Mathys	IMDC
Mikkel Klougart	THE VELUX FOUNDATIONS
Mogens Schrøder Bech	Danish Maritime Authority
Moya Crawford	Deep Tek Limited
Muralee Thummarukudy	UNEP
Nicholas Kambase	World Maritime University
Olof Lindén	World Maritime University
Patrizio Mariani	DTU Aqua
Peter Blanner	WWF Denmark
Peter Munk	HOFOR
Robbert Jak	Wageningen Marine Research
Ryan Metcalfe	KIMO Denmark
Sally Rouse	Scottish Association for Marine Science
Sam Collin	Scottish Wildlife Trust
Sunil Murlidhar Shastri	www.oceangovernance.org
Søren Knudsen	Rambøll
Thomas Kirk Sørensen	WWF Denmark