

# Brief overview Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI) 2026 Stakeholder Event

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Venue: NHOW Bloom, Brussels, [Rue Royale 250, 1210 Bruxelles, Belgium](#)

Date: 4 June, during European Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) Week

## Concise agenda (all times in CET):

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|---------------|---|
| 08:45 – 09:30 | Arrival and networking coffee                           |
| 09:30 - 10:00 | Opening session: Introduction to the GNSBI              |
| 10:00 - 11:00 | Panel discussion: Stakeholder perspectives on the GNSBI |
| 11:00 - 11:30 | Coffee break  |
| 11:30 - 12:30 | Panel discussion: The Ocean Pact                        |
| 12:30 - 13:15 | Panel discussion: Meet the GNSBI Working Tracks         |
| 13:15 – 14:15 | Lunch   |
| 14:15 – 15:15 | Thematic breakout sessions - Session I                  |
| 15:15 – 15:45 | Coffee break  |
| 15:45 - 16:45 | Thematic breakout sessions - Session II                 |
| 16:45 – 17:15 | Closing remarks   |
| 17:15         | End of the event  |

## MORNING PROGRAMME

**08:45-09:30 | Arrival and networking coffee**

**09:30 - 10:00 | Opening session – Introduction to the GNSBI**

**10:00 - 11:00 | Panel discussion: Stakeholder perspectives on the GNSBI**

**Objective:** This session will invite stakeholders to share their reflections on the role of the GNSBI and discuss expectations for future engagement. This session’s panel discussion will serve as a moment to jointly explore priorities, define added value, and identify ways to strengthen cooperation and two-way communication between the GNSBI and its stakeholders. The session will further include a Q&A open that is open to the audience.

**Format:** Moderated panel discussion with a Q&A

**Panel members:** North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) - Kim Pauwels; The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Commission) - (pending approval); Northern European Sea Basins project (NESBp) - Marjoleine Nascimento da Silva-Karper; Interreg North Sea programme- Christian Byrith.

**11:00 - 11:30 | Coffee break**

**11:30 - 12:30 | Panel discussion: Ocean Pact and the North Sea**

**Objective:** To exchange views on the relevance of the Ocean Pact for the North Sea basin and explore implications for regional cooperation. The session will provide an update on the state of play of the Ocean Pact and reflect on how stakeholders in the North Sea region perceive its potential impact. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss GNSBI reflections related to this topic.

**Format:** Moderated panel discussion with a Q&A

**12:30 – 13:15 | Panel discussion: Meet the Working Tracks of GNSBI**

**Objective:** To present the five GNSBI Working Tracks, highlight their current priorities and identify opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Each Working Track will briefly introduce its thematic focus, ongoing work and areas where cooperation with stakeholders is particularly relevant.

**Format:** Moderated panel discussion with a Q&A.

**GNSBI Working Tracks with representatives:**

- WT Long-Term Perspective on Fisheries (LTPF): Manuela Zajk
- WT Knowledge Sharing (KNOW): Nick Boxem
- WT Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA): Jan Schmidtbauer Crona
- WT Multi-Use (MU): Pierre-Maxime Giora
- WT Nature Conservation (NAT): Elisa Sarmiento

**13:15 – 14:15 | Lunch break**

**AFTERNOON PROGRAMME**

**14:15 – 15:15 | Thematic breakout sessions – Session I**

**Objective:** The afternoon sessions will provide an opportunity for more interactive and thematic discussions. Each workshop aims to facilitate exchange between GNSBI members and stakeholders on specific priority themes, identify practical challenges and explore potential areas for cooperation.

**Format:** Interactive workshops, moderated by the respective Working Track Leads and/or relevant stakeholders. Five workshops will run in parallel.

**Workshop topics:**

1. **The Virtual Climate Lab North Sea – increasing stakeholder engagement by bringing North Sea data to life.** The Virtual Climate Lab makes interpreting scientific data straightforward and engaging. By projecting various data layers on a detailed 3D-printed terrain model of the Greater North Sea, scenarios are brought to life. Gather around this interactive table to explore different scenarios of spatial planning, discuss potential impacts and make informed decisions together with other stakeholders. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT Knowledge Sharing)*

2. **How can CIA better take priority ecological features into account?** The session would highlight the developing cooperation between the two tracks. It would focus on consulting participants on a draft list of the top [10] priority species and habitats, including: 1) Identifying data availability for mapping and 2) Assessing the suitability of these features for use in impact assessments. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT Nature & CIA)*
3. **Greater North Sea fisheries: key insights on emerging spatial challenges.** The Working Track long-term perspective of fisheries has published a report assessing the spatial challenges on fisheries in the North Sea, analysing the effects of future development of OWF areas and Nature protection measures. The report will be published before the stakeholder event. This presentation will be dedicated to describing the methodology and results of the study, and engage with the audience during an interactive Q&A session. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT LTPF)*
4. **Fishing in Offshore Wind Farms: net gains?** While offshore wind promises clean energy, they also redraw the maps of fishing activities. Between restricted zones, disrupted currents and shifting ecosystems, fisheries must navigate a continuously moving marine landscape. This session will explore the challenges at stake and practical solutions, implemented for a harmonious coexistence between fisheries and wind farms. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT Multi-Use)*

**15:15 – 15:45 | Coffee break**

**15:45 – 16:45 | Thematic breakout sessions – Session II**

**The same workshops will be repeated except for the LTPF and Multi-use sessions.**

1. **How to balance marine energy, nature protection, and the future of fisheries in the Greater North Sea.** This second session includes a panel, the gathering of diverse stakeholders, and a discussion on the potential effects of (future) Offshore wind farms and nature protection areas on fisheries. The aim of this session is to understand how the output of the study can be used in mitigating the spatial squeeze at sea and identify priority areas for the fisheries working track to address in its future work. The panel will be followed by a Q&A with the audience. There is no previous knowledge of the study required, however, it is highly recommended to read the study's results. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT LTPF)*
2. **Harvesting the Wind and the Sea!** Offshore wind farms are not just powerhouses for renewable energy, they can also be unexpected allies for aquaculture: mussel, oyster, seaweed farming, etc. By integrating these cultures into offshore wind farms, we can foster food security, diversify blue economy and reduce the environmental footprint of both industries. However, it is easier said than done and many obstacles are on the way - licensing, regulation, safety, scientific knowledge, etc. This panel will explore the success stories and lessons learned from existing practices. *(Hosted by: GNSBI WT Multi-Use)*

**16:45 – 17:15 | Closing remarks – plenary**

**17:15 | End of the event**