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# Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI)

## First Stakeholder Conference

part of the European MSP Week

📅 June 4 2026 📍 Brussels

#GNSBI

NHOW Bloom Brussels, Rue Royale 250, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

## AGENDA

**08:45-09:30** Arrival, registration and networking coffee

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Master of Ceremonies (MC): Seamus Kearney

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

- Welcome/ Setting the stage by Seamus Kearney, Master of Ceremonies
  - Video greeting of the GNSBI co-presidency by DG Jaap Slootmaker of the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management
  - Introduction of the GNSBI, its structure, and its purpose by Nancy Mahieu, Director General Energy of the Belgian Federal Ministry for the Economy
  - Welcome address by Delilah Al Khudhairy, Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, European Commission - DG MARE
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**10:00-11:00** Panel discussion: Stakeholder perspectives on the GNSBI

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.

Panel members:

- Kim Pauwels, North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC)
- Henriette Jacobsen, CPMR North Sea Commission
- Marjoleine Nascimento da Silva-Karper, Northern European Sea Basins project (NESBp)
- Christian Byrith, Interreg North Sea programme

Moderator: Emilie Riclet, GNSBI Assistance Mechanism

## 11:00-11:30 COFFEE BREAK

### 11:30-11:40 Update from the European Commission about the state of play regarding the Ocean Pact

Speech by Delilah Al Khudhairy, Director Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, European Commission - DG MARE

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### 11:40-12:30 Panel discussion: Ocean Pact and the North Seas

In this session panel members will exchange views on the relevance of the Ocean Pact for the North Seas 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 across the North Seas perceive its potential impact. It will also provide an opportunity to discuss GNSBI reflections related to this topic.

Panel members:

- Felix Leinemann, European Commission - DG MARE
- Cyrielle Delvenne, EU4Ocean
- Isabelle Perret, Government of France - Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture
- Tom Woolley, Government of Ireland - Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment

Moderator: Chris McDougall, European Maritime Spatial Planning Platform

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### 12:30-13:15 Panel discussion: Meet the Working Tracks of GNSBI

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

GNSBI Working Tracks with representatives

- *WT Long-Term Perspective on Fisheries (LTPF)*  
Manuela Zajk, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
- *WT Knowledge Sharing (KNOW)*  
Nick Boxem, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
- *WT Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA)*  
Jan Schmidtbauer Crona, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management
- *WT Multi-Use (MU)*  
Pierre-Maxime Giora, French Ministry of Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion
- *WT Nature Conservation (NAT)*  
Elisa Sarmiento, GNSBI Assistance Mechanism

Moderator: Karoline Führer, GNSBI Assistance Mechanism

## 13:15-14:15 LUNCH BREAK

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.

## 14:15-15:15 Thematic breakout sessions – Session I

Parallel workshops hosted by respective Working Track (WT) Leads

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.

Moderators

- Sharon Tatman, Deltares
- Nick Boxem, Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management

2. **How can CIA better take priority ecological features into account?**

*The session will highlight the developing cooperation between the two tracks Nature Restoration & Conservation and Cumulative Impacts Assessment. It will focus on consulting participants on a draft list of the top priority species and habitats and include Identifying data availability for mapping, and assessing the suitability of these features for use in impact assessments.*

Hosted by GNSBI WTs Nature & CIA.

Moderators

- Senne Aertbeliën, Belgian Federal Government - FPS Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment
- Jan Schmidtbauer Crona, Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management

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.

Presenters

- Manuela Zajk, Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature
- Torsten Schulze, Thünen Institute of Sea Fisheries

#### Moderators

- Emilie Riclet, GSNBI Assistance Mechanism
- Isabelle Perret, French Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture

#### 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.

#### Panellists

- Gert Van Hoey, Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (ILVO)
- Mike Cohen, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO)
- Mattia Cecchinato, WindEurope

#### Moderator

- Christina Christoforou, GNSBI Assistance Mechanism

### 15:15-15:45 COFFEE BREAK

The same, above workshops will be repeated except for the LTPF and Multi-use sessions that have different topics in the afternoon.

### 15:45-16:45 Thematic breakout sessions – Session II

Parallel workshops hosted by respective Working Track Leads

1. **The Virtual Climate Lab North Sea – increasing stakeholder engagement by bringing North Sea data to life.**  
Same as before the coffee break
2. **How can CIA better take priority ecological features into account?**  
Same as before the coffee break
3. **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.

Speakers

- Mattia Cecchinato, WindEurope
- Tamara Talevska, North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC)
- Aliko Kolovou, WWF European Policy Office

Q&A moderators

- Tom Woolley, Government of Ireland - Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment
- Isabelle Perret, French Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries and Aquaculture

4. **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.

Panellists

- Ivana Lukic, s.Pro - sustainable projects GmbH
- Helle Herk-Hansen, Vattenfall
- Kinnie de Beule, De Blauwe Cluster

Moderator

- Christina Christoforou, GNSBI Assistance Mechanism

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**16:45-17:15 Closing remarks (Plenary)**

Video closing words from the GNSBI co-presidency by DG Eric Banel, French General Director for Maritime Affairs, Fisheries, and Aquaculture

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**17:15 End of event**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE GNSBI**

<b>Visit the GNSBI Community on the Maritime Forum website</b>	<b>Subscribe to the GNSBI newsletter</b>
	

**Contact the Greater North Sea Basin Assistance Mechanism**  
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