

Proposals for NORMAN Joint Programme of Activities 2026

Title	Working Group N°8: Marine environment
Type of activity	Development of a sea specific contaminants listings and related indicators for the marine environment
Leader	Leader: DCU fiona.regan@dcu.ie in collaboration with Marine Institute Brendan.McHugh@Marine.ie
Topic / activities	<p>Background / Justification for the proposed activity:</p> <p>WG-8 and is a multi-disciplinary community of experts from academia and environmental agencies which has set out a work programme towards an improved knowledge of the occurrence and risk of contaminants of emerging concern in the marine environment.</p> <p>The primary work areas for WG-8 in 2026 (and particularly in collaboration with WG-1) will include,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ongoing development of prioritisation listing (with WG-1) which has been instrumental in support of the implementation of OSPAR and HELCOM marine contaminant strategies and in supporting the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), working towards Prioritisation of sea-specific contaminants for the four European Sea Regions, 2) Continued development of the 5-year roadmap and associated scoping paper, defining the strategy of the WG regarding the priority topics to be addressed in the coming years and identifying the links with the other NORMAN WGs and communities outside the network. 3) Collaboration with OSPAR (and HELCOM) on monitoring, trends and effects of substances in the marine environment. 4) Following positive developments at GA 2025 with the support of Belen Gonzalez and Milo de Baat, and in parallel with WG-2 to develop capacity in the area of marine ecotoxicology work within WG-8. <p>Description of the proposed activity and expected outcomes for 2026:</p> <p>To deliver on the above main focal points the following sub tasks are proposed. Each task will involve coordinated and collaborative work with WG-1 and WG-2.</p> <p>Task 1: WG Coordination and communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with regular full WG-8 meetings (with the collaboration of WG-1) to ensure communication and transparency in delivery of 2026 aims. All NORMAN members will be informed and will have the opportunity to participate. • Continue work on the WG-8 5-years roadmap covering all relevant topics identified by the WG and links with other WGs, in particular, key aspects related to prioritisation/identification of sea-specific contaminants, mixtures risk assessment, microplastics, status indicators to monitor the changes of the marine environment, optimisation of monitoring strategies (use of non-target screening, bioassays, passive sampling); WG member Sub-groups for working will be established and will meet as needed. <p>Task 2: Prioritisation of sea-specific contaminants for European Sea Regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with WG-1, Netherlands and Swedish support of WG-8 will continue to work toward finalising a listing of sea-specific contaminants in Baltic Sea and North-East Atlantic and towards the development of marine specific indicators, and on a framework toward policy focused prioritisation. • In close cooperation with WG-1, support and development of a scenario based testing of revised NORMAN prioritisation tool, with specific focus on PBMT parameters (including option for assigning a weight factor to any of them, e.g. increasing the weight of P and B in the final hazard score for marine environment (see also JPA 2026 NORMAN Database System and WG-1 activities). The tool will refer to specific marine mammals' toxicity threshold values predicted by the ToxAI (EC50/LC50) converted into concentration threshold values (ug/kg ww, e.g. in liver or any other tissue). Both wide-scope target (EMPODAT) and suspect screening data (EMPODAT Suspect) would be used for their environmental risk assessment using NORMAN Prioritisation Framework (See JPA 2026 NORMAN Database System). • The WG will investigate adjustments of the prioritisation scheme taking into account the specificities of the marine environment. Alternative indicators taking into account persistence and bioaccumulation properties of the substances, will be explored for integration in the prioritisation framework specific to the marine environment (see developments in WG-1). • Continue to explore with HELCOM and OSPAR initiatives in the field of ecotoxicology. • Explore potential use of passive sampling as additional lines of evidence for prioritisation studies. • Upload of the list of sea specific contaminants prioritised as of concern in previous studies in North-East Atlantic and Baltic Sea into the NDS SLE.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase chemical standards of the top 50 GC-amenable substances identified above and their analysis by GC-HRMS by at least two different systems (APCI/EI), upload of mass spectra. <p>Task 3: Data gathering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing identification and reporting of new datasets to improve the population of the NORMAN Database System with the data relevant to the marine environment. <p>Task 4: Screening Explore potential for a “once per MSFD cycle screening study” (e.g. timeframe to be consistent with NORMAN commitments in Joint Danube Surveys 2025/2031/2037).</p> <p>Utilising the outputs of Task 1 prioritisation, WG-8 and policy resource support will work closely with WG-1, OSPAR and HELCOM to explore potential for a follow on OSPAR/HELCOM based screening exercise.</p> <p>Task 5: Microplastics Explore a linkage to microplastics communities within NORMAN. WG-8 to investigate (and report to the scoping paper) potential relevance of MP work in the marine environment. Gather data from past and ongoing projects to feed the new Microplastics Database (see JPA 2026 NORMAN Database System).</p> <p>Added value / Link with other NORMAN activities and / or other projects</p> <p>With WG-1 the proposed programme focuses primarily on the delivery of a contaminants listing. The work is closely aligned to OSPAR and HELCOM pollution management goals.</p> <p>WG-8 will additionally investigate a closer linkage with WG-7 (terrestrial environment; focus on soil and top predators/mammals) and the cross cutting working group on passive sampling and the in relation to the prioritisation framework.</p>
Participants	WG-8, WG-1, WG-2, WG-7, CWG PS, CWG NTS, RWS, OSPAR, HELCOM
Proposed in-kind contribution	DCU, MI, time given to meetings and reports, Task 1, including from WG-1 leaders. DCU. MI in Task 5 on microplastics and Task 3, on-going data gathering.
Contribution needed from NORMAN Association¹	€10,000 to continue the prioritisation work – for personnel to carry out the Task 2. €5,250 to purchase standard chemicals, analyse them in two laboratories with GC-EI-HRMS and GC-APCI-HRMS, and upload spectra to MassBank.

¹ Please, provide here a transparent justification of the requested resources and of the in-kind contribution, thereby distinguishing between the costs associated with “person-months” for the organisation, the “travelling costs” for invited speakers and the costs for the logistics (e.g. meals, room rental etc.)