

Proposals for NORMAN Joint Programme of Activities 2026

Title	Survey on the availability of marine-specific bioassays in the NORMAN network and beyond
Type of activity	Survey
Leader	Belen Gonzalez-Gaya (EHU), Milo de Baat (UvA), Henner Hollert (UF), Brendan McHugh (MI) and Fiona Reagan (DCU)
Topic / activities	<p>Background / Justification for the proposed activity:</p> <p>Effect-based methods are crucial to understanding the toxic effects of mixtures in the environment. A variety of bioassays are available for the freshwater environment, based on standardised toxicity tests using freshwater organisms (e.g., <i>Daphnia</i> sp.). Nevertheless, standardised bioassays are markedly less available for marine/saltwater organisms, representing an important analytical gap for chemical risk assessment in the marine environment. Besides the “existence” of marine bioassays (standardised or not), analytical capacity at laboratories is also crucial to the availability of an effect-based testing strategy for the marine environment. However, an overview of available marine bioassays and potential analytical capacity or interest among the NORMAN network or even beyond, in broader European structures, is lacking. The need is becoming specially relevant taking into account the recently ongoing efforts from HELCOM and OSPAR to derive a list of biological effects in those areas, with expected key support in future regulations.</p> <p>Description of the proposed activity and expected outcomes for 2026:</p> <p>The main goal of the proposed activity is to create an overview of the bioassays with marine organisms that are available within the NORMAN network and beyond and to assess the potential interest and capacity on developing/curating/comparing these required ecotoxicological tests.</p> <p>For that, a survey will be prepared (following all the ethical regulations on data treatment and data privacy) and distributed within the NORMAN network and other similar structures (OSPAR, HELCOM, ICES, etc.) [1st half 2025]. With the obtained results, a technical report will be produced, with potential regulatory and research-oriented impacts as the main gaps and goals within the biological testing of emerging pollutants in the marine environment in EU will be identified. The report will be presented at the 2026 general assembly and distributed to the interested partners and European structures. This will provide an up to date state-of-the-art for the available tools in marine ecotoxicology and identify knowledge or infrastructure gaps to direct future research.</p> <p>Added value / Link with other NORMAN activities and / or other projects:</p> <p>The proposed activity will connect with other WGs inside the NORMAN community but also with other networks within the European scientific, managing and policy spheres. To list some:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WG1 and CWG NTS: Provide information for prioritization of substances already being tested with marine-specific tests - WG2 and WG3: complement the bioassays information/performance/results with marine specific data - WG4: complement the bioassays information/performance/results for nano- and microscale particulate contaminants with marine specific data - The survey may also lead to inputs to the WG 8 marine database - It may inform prioritization efforts within OSPAR/HELCOM/ICES
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interested members from NORMAN community - External targeted groups
Proposed in-kind contribution	<p>Person-month from the coordinators to prepare the survey, distribute it and review the data obtained. (EHU, UvA, UF, MI and DCU)</p> <p>Funding complements on the person month for the contracted student/postdoc (EHU)</p> <p>Online support on a safe and accessible location for the survey and the data obtained, following EU regulation on ethics and personal-data management (EHU)</p> <p>Norman Secretariat in sharing the survey and updating the WG 8 webpage</p>
Contribution needed from NORMAN Association¹	7,500€ to support the working hours of an advanced student or postdoc (EHU) responsible for the ethical permissions solicitude, literature search to prepare the survey, survey preparation and distribution, data extraction and data management, reporting.

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.)