

To: postmottak@kld.no by 12th May 2023
Subject: Input to the National Biodiversity Action Plan

Dear Oyvind Andreassen,

Regarding the three questions in your letter of 31st March 2023

1. What do you think are the most important topics and instruments Norway should emphasize in our national follow-up of the new global goals in the nature agreement?
2. What is the most important contribution your organization or business can make to the world to reach the new global goals of the Nature Agreement?
3. What do you think about Norway's opportunities to contribute to achieving the global goals? Do we have better or worse conditions in some areas?

1. Of the 23 Targets in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) we suggest Norway take a lead role in supporting those with respect to marine and adjacent coastal land areas due to our experience in their management.

2. Our university provides and could expand education with respect to the ecology and sustainable use of marine and adjacent terrestrial (coastal) areas, thereby training people to support ecosystem restoration (Target 2), protection (e.g., Marine Protected Areas, Target 3), reducing extinction risk (e.g., threats of climate change, Target 4), sustainable harvest (e.g., of fisheries, Target 5), managing Invasive and Alien Species (IAS, e.g., Red King crab, humpback salmon, Target 6), reducing pollution (e.g., from salmon farming, Target 7), understanding and mitigating the risks posed by climate change (Target 8), and sustainable use of wildlife and areas of land and sea (Targets 9 and 10) including use of nature-based solutions (Target 11). We could provide more training in these areas for overseas students and early-career researchers and policy-support experts.

Our research informs several of the above Targets, in particular with respect to:

- **Sustainable aquaculture** development, including environmental impacts and ecotoxicology concerns related to salmon farming;
- **climate change related trends** in zooplankton, benthos and fish populations;
- and we lead a Horizon Europe project designing a **Marine Protected Areas** network for all European seas that would optimally include biodiversity and “blue carbon” stores.

We would welcome opportunities to extend this training and research, including contributing to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. For example, a national masters level course with space for international students on *the science and management supporting marine protection, restoration and sustainable use*.

3. Norway's economy is built on using its own natural resources. There is increased awareness amongst the public and industry that these resources are limited, that use can have negative environmental impacts, and infinite growth is impossible.

Building on its strengths in research, education, social equality, and evidence- and rules-based governance, Norway should take a global initiative on using marine natural resources without deteriorating natural biodiversity. This requires knowing what is “natural”.

To that end, we recommend a national network of reference areas, which could be called Protected Areas or Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECM) (contributing to Target 3 to protect at least 30% of all land and sea habitats by 2030), from which no resources are taken but would be open to public access. Thus, both scientists and the public could see whether biodiversity differs between “no-take” from “sustainable use” areas. Such an approach would be scientifically robust as well as publicly transparent. Instead of artificial divides between places that are protected and unprotected, there would be a new understanding of how human activities affect the biodiversity on which our and future generations livelihoods depend. To date, we do not know how altered marine biodiversity has been in Norway’s seas; a problem common to most countries although a few exceptions exist where MPA are well developed (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, parts of south-east Asia). However, we can learn by doing and share this experience and knowledge worldwide.

Kind regards,

Ecology division
Faculty of Biosciences and Aquaculture
Nord University