



MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION  
COMMITTEE  
59th session  
Agenda item 2

MEPC 59/INF.24  
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## HARMFUL AQUATIC ORGANISMS IN BALLAST WATER

### Information on the North Sea Ballast Water Opportunity Project within the European Union Regional Development Fund Interreg IVB Programme

Submitted by Germany

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document introduces a project in the North Sea Region aiming to promote coherent and innovative regional policies and science for ballast water management in support of the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	1.1
<i>High-level action:</i>	1.1.2
<i>Planned output:</i>	1.1.2.3
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 5
<i>Related documents:</i>	MEPC 58/INF.8 and MEPC 58/INF.17

1 The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments in Article 13 calls upon Member States to enhance regional co-operation in a given geographical area.

2 Germany is pleased to inform the Committee that several government agencies of the coastal States, scientific institutes as well as other stakeholders in the North Sea Region are actively engaged in an ambitious project to co-operate for the effective implementation of the Convention. The project has received support from the European Union Regional Development Fund within the Interreg IVB Programme.

3 The project brings together agencies from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as 11 partners and 25 sub-partners from science, public sector, industry and NGOs in an effort to find common approaches to the administrative, scientific and technical challenges posed by the Convention.

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4 A more detailed description of the project can be found in the annex to this document.

**Action requested of the Committee**

5 The Committee is invited to take note of the information provided in this document.

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## ANNEX

### **NORTH SEA BALLAST WATER OPPORTUNITY – AN EU INTERREGIONAL PROJECT**

In the spirit of Article 13 of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, the North Sea Ballast Water Opportunity project aims to strengthen regional co-operation, encourage innovation and develop future strategies in ballast water policies and ballast water management. The project addresses all major aspects of the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention, including technical and scientific questions, certification and compliance control as well as monitoring. It aims to provide an open research and innovation platform for all of these issues.

The project will deliver four main outcomes in support of adequate ballast water management:

- Coherence and harmonization in the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of ballast water management policies: The project focuses on the development of policies and technologies to aid the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention. The early work of the project will put the emphasis on testing, certification and control of ballast water treatment technology. The project hopes to establish and promote the use of common standards for certification, compliance control and monitoring throughout the North Sea Region. Building on extensive experience of the Administrations of coastal States within the North Sea Region, standard protocols and manuals will be developed.
- Innovative technological solutions for the implementation, enforcement and development of ballast water certification and port State control: Together with industry partners, new approaches for detection technology vital for compliance control will be evaluated and the scientific background for testing will be further developed. New technologies will be evaluated on site, mainly at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) testing research facility.
- Advancement of future strategies to reduce ship-borne bio-invasions: Building on existing work, the dynamics of invasive species in the North Sea Region will be investigated and concepts for monitoring the effect of the Ballast Water Management Convention will be developed. The risk posed by invasive species will be assessed and strategies for mitigating such risks will be proposed.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in the North Sea Region, while stimulating open exchange of knowledge, ideas and expertise: The already high degree of expertise on ballast water issues in the North Sea will be further advanced with the possibilities the project offers by disseminating results, networking and collecting and collating existing information. The project will offer best practice studies, training and demonstrations such as for newly-developed detection technology.

As the project will address the scientific and administrative sides of ballast water management, it will contribute to a mutual understanding between field scientists and regulators. This approach will support the establishment of common standards and harmonized procedures in dealing with all aspects of ballast water management across the North Sea Region.

The project aims to co-operate closely with other regional initiatives under the auspices of OSPAR and HELCOM, and within the framework provided by European and international initiatives, i.e. by EMSA and GloBallast.

The scientific and policy knowledge basis for ballast water management policies has made progress in the last years, in particular in the North Sea Region, where many of the manufacturers of ballast water treatment systems are based. The North Sea Ballast Water Opportunity Project offers an excellent platform for the further advancement of the basic science as well as its application. Aside from facilitating effective ballast water management as required by the Convention, the challenge of monitoring the adequacy of treatment systems on board ships has been a major hurdle in implementing ballast water policies. The joint knowledge, expertise and resources available in the North Sea Region will allow this challenge to be met.

The project is co-funded by the Interreg IVB North Sea Region Programme of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and is coordinated by NIOZ, the Netherlands. The project group consists of NIOZ, The Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency of Germany (BSH), GoConsult, World Maritime University (WMU) and CaTO Marine Ecosystems (CaTO). The project's time span is five years.

Partners of the project include DHIGroup (Denmark), Wageningen Imares (the Netherlands), IMarEST (United Kingdom), manufacturers of ballast water treatment systems and leading research companies.

Sub-partners include University of Kiel (Germany), Lloyd's Register London, Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), University of Bergen, Federal Environmental Agency of Germany, Marine Coastguard Agency (United Kingdom), Swedish Maritime Safety Inspectorate, Mobility – Flemish Government (Belgium), Ministry of Transport (the Netherlands), Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Protection and Fisheries (the Netherlands), NATUR området (Denmark), Norwegian Maritime Directorate, IUCN, the ports of Antwerp, Groningen, Rotterdam, Copenhagen-Malmö and Gotheborg.

A full list of partners as well as more information on the project can be found at:

<http://www.NorthSeaBallast.eu>.

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