

# CIA4\_Working track Cumulative Impact Assessment interpretation of “Analysing cumulative impact assessments on Sea basin level for the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative”

## 1. Explanation and background of the report

The GNSBI working track Cumulative Impact Assessments (WT CIA) has commissioned a quick scan study, by the Dutch consultant Witteveen & Bos.

The aim of this study is to analyse existing Cumulative Impact Assessments (CIAs) on a regional sea level, to identify topics which require (urgent) attention on a GNSBI level. In this analysis we will explore which findings differ or overlap between CIAs. The analysis will serve as input to define which ecosystem components are under the highest risks of pressures in the North Sea and also which activities cause the highest impact risks.

## 2. How will the WT-CIA use the report?

The study contributes to the insight for the further work of WT-CIA, although being aware of its limits and gaps. The design of a quick scan is not suitable to answer questions conclusively, but to contribute to the further work process by granting insight into some aspects.

The WT-CIA has worked in 2024 on:

- A List of Key Questions to be answered by a cumulative impact assessment on sea basin level
- A gap analysis on the future role of GNSBI in the development and alignment of Cumulative impact assessments.
- Knowledge gaps on a strategic level in existing cumulative impact assessments on sea basin level

The WT-CIA seeks to align development and application of CIA tools to assess the impacts of human activities and provide advice for preventive and mitigation measures.

The study contributes to this work in two ways.

1. The WT-CIA seeks to align the application of CIA on the Greater North Sea Basin level. Currently, the methods used in the CIA applications differ. The Witteveen & Bos study shows these differences in methodologies may lead to different results and that there is a need to collaborate on aligning these methodologies. The WT-CIA has therefore asked advice to ICES to identify common principles for the application of CIA on the Greater North Sea basin level.
2. The study gives an overview of existing knowledge and existing knowledge gaps. This helps the WT-CIA to grasp more concretely the current state of knowledge and its limitations. For example, an important point raised through the study and the consultation is the need to develop common scenarios for the sectoral development as input for impact assessment and other GNSBI work. We, as the WT-CIA, think that this would be beneficial for the overall initiatives' work and at best jointly developed with the expertise gathered in GNSBI. Using insights from this study, among other expertise, the WT-CIA has asked ICES for an advice for the best available tool(s) to answer the key questions of the working track.