

# Newsletter 1

DEMASK

January 2024



*Dear DEMASK follower,*

*We have started!*

*After the successful completion of the Jomopans project we felt the need to make the next step. We have two reasons to do so. First, the work on underwater noise management is not yet completed and second, the international co-operation is very rewarding.*

*This has led to the DEMASK project, which is again cofunded by the European Union through the Interreg North Sea programme.*

*In DEMASK we want to look forward to the North Sea soundscape of the future. The North Sea is already one of the busiest seas in the world, but for the coming decades major changes in offshore developments and shipping are foreseen.*

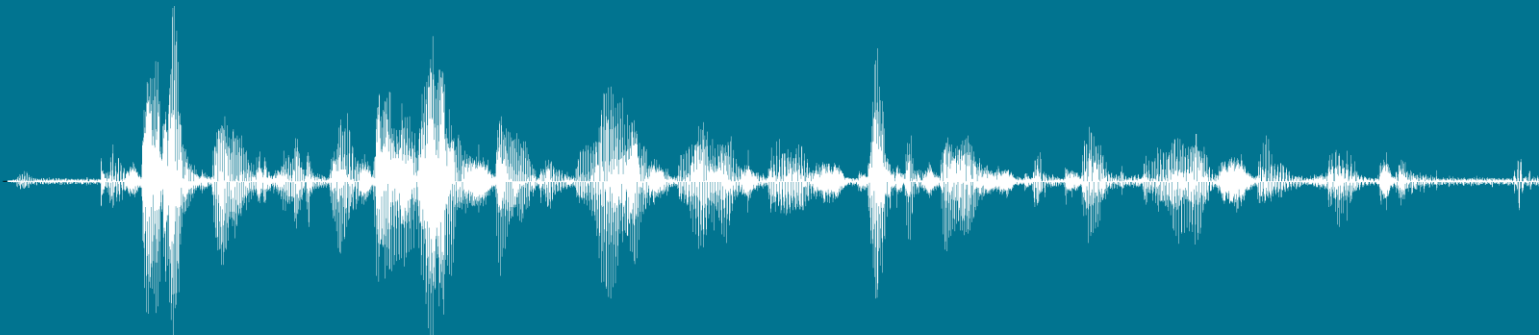
*In this first newsletter you can read on our plans.*

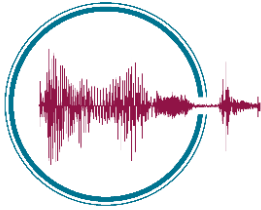


*I'm looking forward to the coming years.*

*Niels Kinneging  
Project manager*

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Interreg  
North Sea



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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## DEMASK

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### Development and evaluation of noise management strategies to keep the North Sea healthy

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#### Background:

After the successful completion of the Jomopans project in 2022 a successor project has started in January 2024. The DEMASK project is partially funded by Interreg North Sea and is planned to run for three years.

#### Objective:

DEMASK aims to bring together policy makers, scientists, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the maritime industry in the management of the underwater soundscape of the North Sea. The project will enable stakeholders to facilitate a well-managed soundscape and strengthen the marine ecosystem. DEMASK will develop an approach for defining policy scenarios for underwater noise management and a method to quantify the effectiveness of those scenarios to mitigate noise pollution and its effects on marine life.

#### So DEMASK will:

- Develop policy scenarios for a well-managed soundscape
- Evaluate these scenarios all the way through effects on marine organisms and biodiversity
- Select an appropriate noise management strategy

#### Importance:

The North Sea is one of the busiest shipping areas in the world, shared with other human activities such as fishing and tourism. With ambitious plans to produce energy from offshore wind farms, major changes will occur in the North Sea in the next decades. The marine ecosystem is at risk of being impacted by all these human activities, making it crucial to manage the sea more sustainably.

The need to manage seas sustainably has been recognized in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Ocean Decade and is reflected in a number of EU policies, including the Marine Spatial Planning Directive (MSP) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Underwater noise is recognized as a pollutant in the MSFD, and EU member states are mandated to monitor and mitigate noise pollution as part of their efforts to obtain Good Environmental Status. Underwater noise is an important topic for the Regional Sea Conventions for the North East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Baltic Sea (HELCOM). OSPAR and HELCOM work closely together on this topic.

#### Target audience:

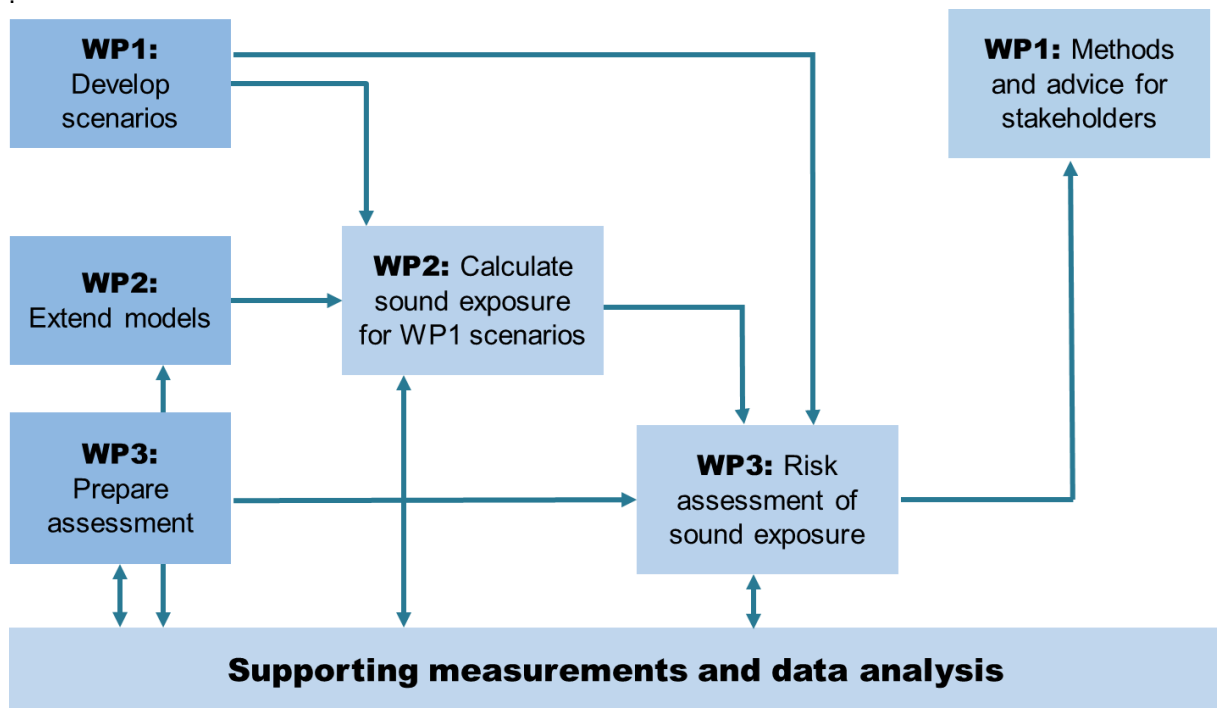
For DEMASK, stakeholder involvement is a crucial part of sustainable management of underwater noise. The project targets various stakeholders involved in the MSP, MSFD, and other processes to protect the marine environment.

- National government authorities will benefit from the scenario study results. It provides them with insights into the effectiveness of noise management strategies.
- International organisations, like regional sea conventions (OSPAR and HELCOM) and IMO (International Maritime Organisation), will be able to develop policy options for the marine environment.
- Marine engineers will gain data and knowledge on little studied sound sources, like operational wind farms. This allows them to improve and validate their soundscape models.
- Marine biologists will expand their knowledge and tools related to the effects of noise on marine biodiversity. This allows them to evaluate risk-of-impact.
- Environmental NGOs will benefit from stakeholder engagement and communication as an incentive for impactful change.

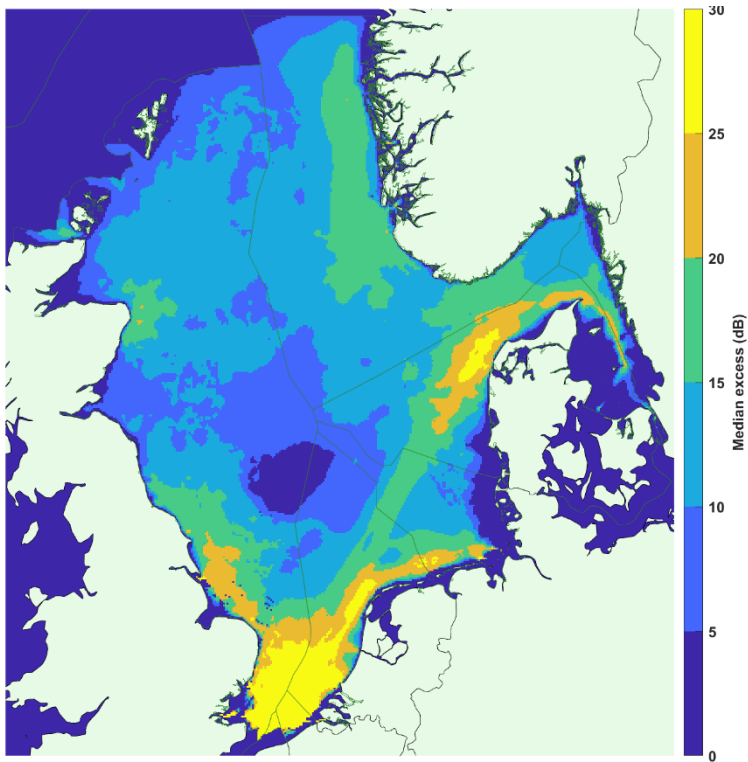
DEMASK already interested various parties of policy makers, NGOs, and the maritime industry, as well as other initiatives and organizations that are active in the field of underwater noise, to support the project.

**Project activities:**

DEMASK consists of three work packages on policy making, evaluation of noise pollution and the effects on marine life. We will focus on a number of case studies for which scenarios will be developed. The first work package focusses on developing scenarios for noise management in close collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders. Different scenarios will be tested against a base scenario and the effect on the noise pollution will be evaluated and discussed with the stakeholders. Some specific case studies will be chosen to illustrate noise for different regions and sound sources. The second work package works on the quantification of the scenarios to come up with soundscape maps that describe the pressure of underwater noise on the marine environment. DEMASK will endeavour to add offshore wind turbines and small recreational boats as sources of underwater sound, in addition to the shipping and wind in the Jomopans sound maps. The third work package will evaluate the impact of noise on indicator species and associated risks using the provided noise scenarios. The assessment will be based on sensitivity, distribution, habitat, and exposure. It will determine the occurrence of biologically significant adverse effects (LOBE) at regional scales and explore how it can be utilized by marine policy makers.



DEMASK will communicate the results to professionals as well as non-professionals in this working field. Co-operation is sought with sister projects in related work areas and with the scientific community.



*Result from Jomopans project: monthly median excess of shipping sound over wind sound.*

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## DEMASK Project partners



Co-funded by the European Union



Rijkswaterstaat – lead partner (Netherlands)



Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie (Germany)



IVL Svenska Miljöinstitutet (Sweden)



JASCO Applied Sciences (Germany)



Institute of Natural Sciences (Belgium)



Stichting de Noordzee (Netherlands)



Nederlandse Organisatie voor Toegepast-natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek (Netherlands)



Stiftung Tierärztliche Hochschule Hannover (Germany)



Vlaams Instituut voor de Zee (Belgium)