



March 2022

NORA strategy and organization: new strategy perspectives and structure for the coming years

Strategy development

In the first years of its existence, NORA has been strongly focused on coordination and stimulation of the science behind native oyster restoration in Europe. That is logical, since the initiation of restoration activities has to start with addressing the question: how to undertake restoration successfully? NORA therefore enhanced knowledge exchange, based on 5 pillars; monitoring, site selection, production, biosecurity and more recently, outreach.

Now that many of these questions are being answered and scaling-up of restoration is on the agenda, it is now time to address the question: how do we get more support for restoration activities, initially in terms of:

- much more financial support, in order to produce many more seed oysters, deploy these over much larger areas and perform extensive monitoring;
- proper protection of existing and restored reef systems.

This implies that NORA has to stimulate awareness among policy makers and the public at large that native oyster reefs represent important natural values and that they need to be restored. The scientific stimulation and coordination work obviously has to continue too, which means that NORA has to extend its spectrum of work and competences. The required strategy development will take place in 2022, and we will involve our NORA network as much as possible.

Organizational changes

From Advisory Board to Steering Board

The strategy development elucidated above requires clearer and quicker decision-making within the NORA organization. The Advisory Board, which was the informal platform for strategic orientation and scientific advice from the beginning of NORA, realized this and decided that its role had to change: to a proper Steering Board, in which key decisions on NORA strategy and organization are taken. This was decided, in the Advisory Board of February 9 2022. The Steering Board will be responsible for the following tasks and competences:

- Funding: All funders have to agree to and underwrite the NORA mission statement, but the Board decides about acceptance of funders. Contact with potential new funders is coordinated by the secretariat and if conditions seem promising, this is reported to the Steering Board for a decision on acceptance.
- Steering Board membership: acceptance of new members and turn-over of current members.
- NORA conferences: timing planning, venue and main topics, with conference organization undertaken by an Organising Committee

- Working Groups:
 - Number and themes: decisions on the working groups to be installed within NORA and have assistance from the secretariat are taken by the Steering Board
 - Objectives and progress: regular participation of Working Group coordinators in Steering Board meetings, to discuss progress and strategy
- Development of a strategic plan and annual working plans, in cooperation with the secretariat.
- Management of publication of news or opinions on sensitive topics.

Steering Board decision-making is streamlined by adopting a simple voting system: decisions are made by majority voting (with 1 voting right per Steering Board member), in Board meetings with a minimum of 50% + 1 of its members present. A chair person will be elected from the current Steering Board members and will remain in function for 1 year. If voting stalls, the Chair Person will have the final vote. Duration of normal Steering Board membership will be 2 years.

Steering Board membership

The extended NORA strategy also creates a need to extend the sectoral and geographical representation of the Steering Board. Sectors that will optimally be represented in the Steering Board are:

- Science
- Administration / governmental bodies
- Restoration managers/practitioners
- NGOs
- Oyster growers/aquaculture

The following membership changes were made as of February 2022:

- Pierre Boudry and Henning von Nordheim laid down their membership
- Marina Albentosa and Stefano Carboni were adopted as new members

The NORA Steering Board therefore currently consists of the following members (with the countries and sectors they represent):

- **Joanne Preston (chair, UK; science)**
- **Marina Albentosa (Spain; science)**
- **Kruno Bonačić (Croatia; aquaculture)**
- **Stefano Carboni (Italy; science)**
- **Alison Debney (UK, NGO)**
- **Boze Hancock (USA, NGO)**
- **Tristan Hugh-Jones (UK; aquaculture)**
- **Bernadette Pogoda (Germany; science)**
- **Bill Sanderson (UK; science)**
- **Hein Sas (The Netherlands; NGO)**

New membership from France is being investigated after Pierre Boudry stepped down and also Scandinavian representation is being sought.

Secretariat: budget decrease, but basic activities to be continued

As of July 2021, the NORA secretariat funding by the German government (through the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection) ended. Funding was arranged by TNC to the end of 2021 from the Mary Kay Foundation. From 2022 Philine zu Ermgassen and Boze Hancock have stepped down from their secretarial functions. For the first half of 2022 the function of the secretariat is being supported by ARK Nature Development, The Fishmongers Company and Rossmore Oysters. **Katrin Wollny-Goerke** (network) and **Andreas Essenberger (website)** continue their (basic) work in the first half of 2022. **Hein Sas** offered to continue the voluntary coordination of activities of the secretariat as long as needed and the Steering Board gladly accepted his offer.

Working groups: structure unchanged, new working group being set up

The basic working group structure will remain. The following working groups are currently operational, with their coordinators:

- **Production: Bérenger Colsoul**
- **Historical Ecology: Ruth Thurstan and Philine zu Ermgassen**
- **Outreach: Corina Peter**
- **Monitoring: Joanne Preston & Boze Hancock**
- Coordination is sought after for the working group on Site Selection.
- A Genetics and Biosecurity working group is being set up by Pierre Boudry.

In the future, new working groups may be set up, according to developments in the reef restoration world and wishes or needs of the NORA network.