



Marine Strategy Reports¹

A Data description (metadata)

Data description	<p>The datasets inform about the progress towards achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in European marine waters. It is based on data collected by Member States under the reporting obligations of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD - Directive 2008/56/EC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Articles 8 (e.g. GES assessments which cover the physical and chemical features, the habitat types, the biological features and the hydro-morphology; analysis of pressures and impacts; economic and social analysis);- Article 9 (determination of characteristics of GES);- Article 10 (environmental targets and associated indicators). <p>Member States are required to monitor the marine environment (Article 11) against a set of 11 descriptors and to assess the status of their marine water for each descriptor. The monitoring programmes are reported by Member States.</p> <p>Member States also report on the human activities and pressures that impact the marine environment and assess their effects (based on the list of elements in Table 2 of MSFD Annex III (as revised by Directive 2017/845/EU)) as well as evaluate the effectiveness of measures implemented (Article 13 and 14) to address pressures and impacts and to achieve GES. Member States also provide the spatial areas (Article 4) where marine assessments are undertaken. Data are provided using reporting templates agreed with Member States.</p> <p>More information about the Marine Strategy Framework Directive can be found at: EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive - European Commission (europa.eu)</p> <p>Latest reporting guidance is available at: https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/msfd/2024/Documents/Reporting_GD20_MSFDguidance_Art8-9-10_20240514.pdf</p>
Statistical population	<p>Assessments of GES target 11 descriptors. The monitoring and assessments are made regarding different criteria, features, elements, and parameters according to the following descriptors:</p> <p>Descriptor 1: Marine biodiversity Descriptor 2: Non-indigenous species Descriptor 3: Commercial fish and shellfish Descriptor 4: Food webs Descriptor 5: Eutrophication Descriptor 6: Seabed integrity Descriptor 7: Hydrographical conditions Descriptor 8: Contaminants Descriptor 9: Contaminants in seafood Descriptor 10: Marine litter Descriptor 11: Energy, including underwater noise</p> <p>https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/marine-environment/descriptors-under-marine-strategy-framework-directive_en</p> <p>Furthermore, Annex III of the Directive details lists of characteristics, pressures and impacts that Member States need to consider and report in their marine strategies. Directive - 2017/845 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)</p>
Reference period	<p>6-year period. Articles 8, 9 and 10 require Member States to report every 6 years, as required by MSFD Article 17 (2012, 2018, 2024, 2030, etc.) on the progress towards achieving GES on Europe's Seas. The reference period of the 2024 reporting should be 2016–2021.</p>
Frequency of dissemination	<p>In accordance with Article 17(2) of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD, Directive 2008/56/EC), the frequency of review and update is every 6 years.</p>
Geographical reference area	<p>22 EU Member States and specified marine areas.</p> <p>The obligation to report applies to Member States with EU marine waters (22 Member States), as defined in MSFD Article 3(1). Land-locked countries are not required to report. All articles to be reported are linked to a specific Marine Reporting Unit (MRU), thereby linking the reported information to a specified part of the Member State's marine waters. The MRUs can be of varying sizes, covering all or part of a Member State's marine waters. Based on Member States' assessments, separate EU regional assessments are conducted for the marine (sub)regions.</p>
Unit of measure	<p>Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 sets out the criteria and methodological standards to be used by Member States when reporting data, to ensure consistency and to allow for comparison between marine regions or subregions of the extent to which good environmental status (GES) is being achieved, in accordance with MSFD Article 9(3). The GES Decision sets out the elements, criteria, scales of assessment and how the criteria are to be used, for each of the MSFD descriptors.</p>

¹ This document is based on a template provided by Eurostat and based on the [SIMS standard](#) for reporting on reference metadata and quality of statistical products. The content is the sole responsibility of the publisher.

	<p>The data provided by Member States concern a range of parameters, for each one of the 11 descriptors, which may entail different units (e.g. km² of MRU, % area of MRU, number of newly introduced species). The assessments also provide the date by when GES is achieved or expected to be achieved (e.g. 'GES achieved by 2024', 'GES expected to be achieved later than 2024'). The units regarding the extent to which GES has been achieved can be: 'Proportion of species in good status within species group' (D1C1-C5); 'Proportion of habitats in good status' (D1C6, D6C4-C5); 'Number of newly introduced species' (D2C1); 'Proportion of populations in good status' (D3); 'Proportion of area in good status' (D5, D11); 'Proportion of substances in good status' (D8C1, D9); 'Proportion of litter categories in good status' (D10C1, D10C2, D10C3); or 'Not relevant'.</p>
Basic statistical concepts and definitions	<p>Definitions and explanations on the main concepts and data collected via the reporting are available from the relevant reporting guidelines. The latest reporting guidance is available at: https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/msfd/2024/Documents/Reporting_GD20_MSFDguidance_Art8-9-10_20240514.pdf</p> <p>The assessments provide the date when GES is achieved or expected to be achieved. In addition, Member States need to define the extent to which the threshold values are to be achieved. This requirement is expressed in the reporting as the proportion value for the marine reporting unit.</p> <p>The trend in status of the feature compared with previous 6-year reporting period is also reported (e.g. 'Improving', 'Stable', 'Deteriorating'). The status of the specific element (species, habitat, contaminant) based on the outcomes of the criterion used, is classified into classes, as well as the status of the criteria based on the outcomes of the parameters used (e.g. 'Good', 'Good, based on low risk', 'Not good').</p>
Classifications used	<p>WoRMs (World Register of Marine Species), WISE (Water Information System for Europe), NACE codes (Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community), CAS (Chemical Abstracts Service), EQS Directive (2013/39/EU), ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea), Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), Bathing Water Directive (76/160/EEC), Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), etc.</p>
Statistical Confidentiality	<p>Not applicable (there is no information disclosed that would enable identification of individuals).</p>

B Data quality

Relevance	<p>The assessments provided indicate the implementation success of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD Directive 2008/56/EC) in Member States' marine waters and the EU.</p> <p>Through the MSFD, the ecosystem-based approach became a legally binding and operational principle for managing the EU's entire marine environment. The MSFD aims to maintain clean, healthy, productive and resilient marine waters while securing a more sustainable use of marine resources. This Directive directly contributes to the ambition of the European Green Deal, namely the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Zero Pollution action plan.</p> <p>The European Green Deal - European Commission (europa.eu) Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - European Commission (europa.eu) Zero Pollution Action Plan - European Commission (europa.eu)</p>
Timeliness	<p>Two years. The data are available in WISE Marine portal (https://water.europa.eu/marine) in less than a year after reported by Member States. Aggregated data at EU level become fully available approximately 2 years after the end of the reporting period.</p>
Accuracy and reliability	<p>Source data: Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 sets out the criteria and methodological standards to be used by Member States, when reporting data. The GES Decision provides details per criterion, including a) prioritisation of criteria, b) scales of assessment, c) how to derive the extent to which GES is achieved, d) when it is expected to use the assessments coming from the coastal and territorial waters (as defined under the Water Framework Directive (WFD)) regarding eutrophication and contamination and other assessments, e) criteria for selecting the species and habitats to be assessed, and f) units of measurement for each of the criteria. The monitoring and assessment performed by the Member States are reported through the Reportnet system. Data are displayed in WISE Marine portal.</p> <p>Data collection and methods used: Member States report data through an e-Reporting platform (https://reportnet.europa.eu/), for reporting environmental and climate data to the European Environment Agency (EEA).</p> <p>Full details on the reporting method are available at: Decision - 2017/848 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu) https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/msfd/2024/Documents/Reporting_GD20_MSFDguidance_Art8-9-10_20240514.pdf</p>
Accessibility and clarity	<p>Publications: All Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) data reported by Member States are available in WISE Marine web portal, which is an information system on Europe's seas co-developed by the European Environment Agency and the European Commission: https://water.europa.eu/marine.</p> <p>Publications which have used information reported by Member States: https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/marine-messages-2 https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/state-of-europes-seas https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/contaminants-in-europes-seas</p> <p>Quality documentation: All documentation is available at: https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/help/msfd/</p>
Coherence and comparability	<p>Commission Decision (EU) 2017/848 sets out the criteria and methodological standards to be used by Member States to ensure consistency and to allow for comparison between marine regions or subregions of the extent to which good environmental status (GES) is being achieved, in accordance with MSFD Article 9(3).</p> <p>However, access to datasets available through Article 19(3) is not always possible and lacks data standardisation and harmonisation between Member States. The data collection methods have shown not to be completely</p>

harmonised and monitoring data is sometimes of insufficient quality. Additionally, the reporting formats can vary significantly (e.g. tabular data in MS Excel, point or polygon ESRI shapefiles, PDF) as well as units of measure, spatial and temporal resolution.

C Contact and update

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