



Press Release - April 2013

Massive Survey of MSFD-Relevant Projects Underway

The **STAGES** project (Science and Technology Advancing Governance on Good Environmental Status) is an EC FP7-funded project that is directly responding to a request from DG Environment to put a support action in place to facilitate the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Under the MSFD, EU Member States are expected to assess the overall status of their respective marine environments and to put in place the necessary measures to achieve Good Environmental Status (GES) by 2020.

From January 2013 to date, **STAGES** has undertaken a significant survey and analysis of MSFD-relevant projects at EU and Member State level. The knowledge outputs collected will be made available in a user-friendly format through the EurOcean Knowledge Gate and will be used to develop state-of-the-art reports on each of the five Thematic Groups relating to the 11 GES descriptors [further information about GES and its descriptors can be found in the **Notes for Editors** section]:

- **Biodiversity Group** - Biodiversity, Non-indigenous species, Elements of marine food webs and sea floor integrity (Descriptors 1, 2, 4, and 6 respectively)
- **Contaminants & Nutrients Group** - Eutrophication, Contaminants and Contaminants in fish and other seafood (Descriptors 5, 8 and 9)
- **Disturbances Group** - Marine litter and Underwater energy, including noise (Descriptors 10 and 11)
- **Commercially Exploited fish Group** - Population of commercial fish/shellfish (Descriptor 3)
- **Hydrographical Conditions Group** - Alteration of hydrographical conditions (Descriptor 7)

So far, the European knowledge collection survey has identified and contacted 1,500 projects (dating from 2005 until the present day) from 13 funding programmes. These projects' relevance to the MSFD is being currently assessed.

To date, the survey of Member State projects has identified more than 2,000 projects that have marine relevance.

If you are a coordinator of an EU or Member State project of relevance to the MSFD and have not yet been contacted about the **STAGES** project, please contact EurOcean as soon as possible:

Maica Garriga, Science Officer, EurOcean, E: Maica.Garriga@fct.mctes.pt T: +351 21 392 4495

Notes for Editors

The **STAGES** project is being carried out by a consortium of eight partners in seven countries and is being coordinated by the Centro Tecnológico del Mar (CETMAR) in Spain. **STAGES** has received funding from the European Union Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under grant agreement n° 308473. For more information about **STAGES**, please visit www.stagesproject.eu or contact Marisa Fernández Cañamero, **STAGES** Coordinator (mfernandez@cetmar.org) or Raquel Díez Arenas (rdiez@cetmar.org), Centro Tecnológico del Mar - Fundación (CETMAR) www.cetmar.org.

Glossary

Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD): The MSFD was the first legislative instrument in relation to marine policy in the EU. The MSFD lists 11 descriptors to guide evaluation of GES.

Good Environmental Status (GES): GES means that the overall state of the environment in marine waters provides ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive. The use of the marine environment must be kept at a sustainable level that safeguards potential uses and activities by current and future generations. This means the structure, functions and processes of marine ecosystems have to be fully considered, marine species and habitats must be protected and human-induced decline of biodiversity prevented.

11 qualitative descriptors for determining GES:

1. Biological diversity
2. Non-indigenous species
3. Population of commercial fish/shellfish
4. Elements of marine food webs
5. Eutrophication
6. Sea floor integrity
7. Alteration of hydrographical conditions
8. Contaminants
9. Contaminants in fish and seafood for human consumption
10. Marine litter, and
11. Introduction of energy, including underwater noise