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1 **‘Bottlenecks, showstoppers and train-wrecks’ – impediments to achieving integrated**  
2 **marine management across national and international borders**

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11

12 **Abstract**

13 Several initiatives have been taken worldwide to promote international coordination and  
14 integrated approach in marine management. At the European level, ten years after the  
15 adoption of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), the Member State strategies  
16 still present some ecological, economic and social challenges. This review identifies the  
17 minor, intermediate and major impediments (respectively defined as ‘bottlenecks,  
18 showstoppers and train-wrecks’) to marine management, resulting from a 4-year analysis of  
19 national, regional and European reports. Most of the problems are linked to the resistance of  
20 countries to collaborate and to the inability to integrate the work already carried out under  
21 other pieces of legislation. The European countries will need to better integrate and coordinate  
22 their actions in marine management in the second cycle of the MSFD, in order to achieve its  
23 final goal of Good Environmental Status as well as the objectives of other environmental  
24 policies.

25 **Keywords:** International Cooperation; Regional Coherence; Integrated Management; Marine  
26 Strategy Framework Directive

27 **1. Introduction**

28 Marine ecosystems worldwide, their services and the societal goods and benefits they provide  
29 play a central role in the Blue Growth strategy (Burgess et al., 2018; Eikeset et al., 2018).  
30 They are however threatened by multiple pressures and little is known about the cumulative  
31 effects of maritime activities (Elliott, 2014; EEA, 2015; Halpern et al., 2008; Elliott et al.,  
32 2018; Holon et al., 2018; Cormier et al., 2019). European countries recognised the need to  
33 move towards an integrated management and assessment approach, adopting the Integrated

34 Maritime Policy<sup>1</sup>. This policy aims to increase coherence among marine sectors by  
35 implementing the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (MSPD) (European Union, 2014),  
36 which is the ‘Blue Growth directive’, and to promote a sustainable use of marine resources  
37 through the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (EC, 2008; Borja et al., 2017),  
38 which can be considered the ‘environmental directive’.

39 The European MSFD is considered one of the most ambitious instruments of marine  
40 governance worldwide (Borja et al., 2017), and it has the central aim to achieve or maintain  
41 Good Environmental Status (GES) of the European regional seas by 2020, at the latest, based  
42 on 11 qualitative descriptors: D1 Biodiversity; D2 Non-indigenous species; D3 Commercial  
43 fish and shellfish; D4 Food webs; D5 Eutrophication; D6 Seafloor integrity; D7 Hydrographic  
44 conditions; D8 Environmental contaminants; D9 Contaminants in seafood; D10 Marine litter  
45 and D11 Introduction of energy, including noise. This requires Member States 1) to carry out  
46 an initial assessment of marine status; 2) to define GES for their waters in coordination with  
47 neighbouring countries of the same region; 3) to establish monitoring strategies; and 4) to  
48 implement management responses (termed ‘programmes of measures’) to achieve the aims  
49 (Figure 1). The MSFD is part of a large body of European and national marine legislation and  
50 international agreements (Boyes and Elliott 2014; Cormier et al., 2018) which all have to be  
51 implemented to ensure complementarity among objectives and avoid overlaps. It is of note  
52 that the MSFD is being implemented through the Regional Seas Conventions such as OSPAR  
53 (for the North East Atlantic), HELCOM (for the Baltic Sea), Barcelona (for the  
54 Mediterranean) and Bucharest (for the Black Sea) (Article 6, MSFD). This in itself requires  
55 and creates a source of harmonisation across adjacent states.

56 In 2018, the Directive is entering its second cycle where countries are required to achieve  
57 coherent, coordinated and consistent updates of the determinations of GES, Initial  
58 Assessments and Environmental Targets (EC, 2014a). At this stage of the implementation, it  
59 is especially important to understand what were the major impediments identified in studies  
60 carried out at national, regional and European level and to propose recommendations to  
61 support all the parties involved in the future phases of implementation of this Directive in  
62 overcoming these impediments. The present work puts together these impediments, or  
63 challenges, categorising them into ‘bottlenecks’, the aspects which can be cleared easily;  
64 ‘showstoppers’, the aspects that require rather more effort, and ‘train-wrecks’, the aspects  
65 which are especially difficult to solve and yet will prevent the outcomes being reached

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy_en)

66 (modified from Newton & Elliott, 2016). More specifically, the focus here is on discussing  
67 the challenges related to transboundary cooperation and policy integration, and providing  
68 some recommendations on the basis of the results of a 4-year study. The latter focused on an  
69 in-depth analysis of national, European Commission and Regional Seas Conventions reports  
70 and a dedicated survey (Cavallo et al., 2016; 2017; 2018). These recommendations can also  
71 be considered in the implementation of other European and international environmental  
72 legislation based on similar principles.

73

74 -----Figure 1 here -----  
75

76

77

## 2. Present and future challenges

78 In recent decades, new legislation and agreements have been adopted by coastal countries to  
79 move toward a cooperative and coordinated management of marine resources to address  
80 transboundary issues such as migratory species, fisheries, marine pollution and climate  
81 change (Table 1).

82 -----Table 1 here -----  
83

84

85 At the European level, the MSFD has been widely investigated in most of its aspects to  
86 identify the challenges that Member States have faced to meet its ambitious goals (e.g. Berg et  
87 al., 2015). These challenges have been categorised here according to their level of severity  
88 (Table 2) and the aspects related to countries cooperation and policy integration are discussed  
89 more in detail in the following seven points.

90 -----Table 2 here-----  
91

92

### 2.1 Consistency in reporting

93 A comparative analysis of national strategies indicated that the reporting format was not  
94 consistent across countries (Cavallo et al., 2018), despite the many recommendations  
95 provided by the European Commission (EC, 2014b; 2017) and the Regional Seas  
96 Conventions (i.e. OSPAR, 2012, 2015). For example, the Commission Decision 2010  
97 (amended by EC, 2017) provides a list of criteria and methodological standards for each  
98 descriptor to be used by the Member States to assess the extent to which GES is being  
99 achieved. The differences in reporting make it difficult to identify best practices and situations  
100 where countries build in their strength, and so further scientific research and implementation

99 mechanisms are needed to fill in knowledge gaps. A more extensive use of existing guidelines  
100 and recommendations will help countries to produce more readily comparable reports,  
101 learning from each other and to align GES definitions, environmental targets and management  
102 measures.

### 103 *2.2 Applying the subsidiarity principle*

104 In common with the link between federal and state legislation in the US, EU legislation  
105 centres on the subsidiarity principle that decisions should be taken as close to the people (the  
106 local level) as possible and indeed this is reflected in the term ‘Framework’ in the title of  
107 MSFD and other major directives, i.e. a bottom-up approach. Hence the overall aim is to  
108 achieve the same outcome across Member States (in the case of the MSFD to obtain GES in  
109 their waters) while leaving the detailed method of implementation to the discretion of the  
110 Member State. This therefore automatically creates the potential, albeit sanctioned by the EU,  
111 for different ways of implementing the MSFD and so leads to inconsistencies between  
112 Member States.

113 The many differences in the way countries implemented the phases of the Directive for each  
114 descriptor (see EC, Annex 2014; 2018; Cavallo et al., 2016), made it impossible always to  
115 achieve a high level of coherence across each region, namely in the targets, the indicators and  
116 the criteria to assess the status, and the management measures. When the factors leading to  
117 these differences are strictly related to specific national geopolitical, social, and  
118 biogeographical characteristics (such as biodiversity composition and types of anthropogenic  
119 pressures) and on the financial resources available, countries should not be forced to adopt a  
120 common approach. However, according to the European Commission (EC, 2017), in such  
121 cases “Member States shall provide the Commission with a justification in the framework of  
122 the notification made pursuant to Article 17(3) of the Directive”.

### 123 *2.3 Harmonisation does not mean uniformity*

124 It is possible, necessary and indeed urgent to work together to establish common targets and  
125 GES definitions, ensuring that each country is contributing to improve the environmental  
126 quality of the whole marine region. This is also needed in an attempt to ensure that there is not  
127 a disjointed assessment down the mid-lines in the sea areas between adjacent Member States.  
128 This is required for understanding existing trade-offs between conflicting stakeholder  
129 objectives and ecosystem services, in order to achieve regional win-win management  
130 strategies, i.e. to protect the natural system and deliver the societal benefits (Elliott, 2011).

131 The European Commission Decision (EC, 2017) and Directive (EU) 2017/845 (amending the  
132 Directive 2008/56/EC), review the existing guidelines, taking into consideration recent  
133 scientific and technical progress. In particular, the first of these documents provides an  
134 updated list of criteria and methodological standards for the definition of GES, while the latter  
135 amends Annex III of the Directive with an updated list of ecosystem elements, anthropogenic  
136 pressures and human activities. These new indications, if adopted, can improve regional and  
137 European coherence in the future phases of the implementation of the Directive.

#### 138 *2.4 Adopting a common list of threatened species and core indicators*

139 In the analysis of the first cycle of the Directive, the lowest levels of regional coherence were  
140 found for Biodiversity related descriptors (EC, Annex 2014). Moreover, although the need to  
141 adopt a common list of the most threatened species/habitats whose distribution spans  
142 international borders is widely recognised in international agreements such as the Bonn  
143 Convention<sup>2</sup> and the IUCN<sup>3</sup>, a general lack of consideration of the existing lists was noticed  
144 (Cavallo et al., 2016; 2018). Adopting such a list should be a priority among Member State  
145 national strategies, not only in the context of the MSFD. In particular, the OSPAR  
146 Commission list<sup>4</sup> including invertebrates, fish, birds, reptiles and mammals, offers a valid  
147 reference of vulnerable species and habitats that are specific for the five OSPAR regions.  
148 Each of the Regional Seas Conventions has developed or is developing its own list of core  
149 indicators in line, where possible, with those of the MSFD (i.e. OSPAR Biodiversity  
150 Common Indicators<sup>5</sup> and the HELCOM core indicators<sup>6</sup>) and indeed there are some generic  
151 aspects here. For example, each list has the breeding success of a dominant piscivorous  
152 seabird (the kittiwake in the NE Atlantic and the White-tailed Sea Eagle in the Baltic).  
153 However, the desire by each area, Member State or region or group of scientists to create their  
154 own indicators has resulted in a very large number (>600) of indicators (Teixeira et al., 2016).  
155 It would be of value to create a core list of generic indicators to use in all regional seas but  
156 again adopting this would imply greater top-down control.

157 The confusion between indicators has increased further with the move by countries in their  
158 attempts to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, for example SDG14 covering

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<sup>2</sup> Also called [the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals](#)

<sup>3</sup> The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/bdc/species-habitats/list-of-threatened-declining-species-habitats>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ospar.org/work-areas/bdc/biodiversity-monitoring-assessment-1/biodiversity-common-indicators>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.helcom.fi/baltic-sea-trends/indicators/core-indicators>

159 marine waters (Cormier and Elliott, 2017). The MSFD is being proposed as the means in  
160 Europe of meeting SDG14 and hence a subset of indicators has been adopted<sup>7</sup>. However,  
161 these indicators differ from those adopted by the UN for the SDG as a whole<sup>8</sup> thus giving the  
162 potential for yet more confusion. There is the potential that countries will be so confused  
163 regarding which indicators to follow that they do not achieve any of them.

#### 164 *2.5 Ensuring integration among environmental legislation*

165 Although the MSFD intends to integrate, not to replace, related environmental legislation  
166 (Boyes and Elliott, 2014), in national reports many differences were found in the way  
167 countries integrated the objectives, measures and, in general, the work already carried out in  
168 those contexts. For D3-Commercial fish and shellfish, different ICES (International Council  
169 for the Exploration of the Sea) reference points have been used across the North-East Atlantic  
170 region for the initial assessment, e.g. F (fishing mortality),  $F_{MSY}$  (Fishing mortality consistent  
171 with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yield), etc. Despite this, the representatives of the EU  
172 Marine Strategy Coordination Group recognised, when questioned in a dedicated survey, the  
173 importance of coherent policy integration for the success of the MSFD (Cavallo et al., 2017).  
174 A stronger collaboration among all the parties from the early stages of the development of  
175 national strategies will help Member States disentangle the web of European, regional and  
176 international environmental legislative instruments, and to identify the issues where they  
177 overlap and where new legislative instruments are necessary.

#### 178 *2.6 Reducing uncertainty among economic sectors*

179 Coordinating actions at regional and sub-regional levels is essential to regulate socio-  
180 economic activities that impact waters beyond national borders, such as shipping, fisheries  
181 and offshore renewable energy sectors, and thus influence achieving GES of the whole region  
182 (Elliott et al, 2018). It is suggested that more coherent GES definitions (see Borja et al., 2013)  
183 and management measures across regions will reduce uncertainty among those economic  
184 sectors whose activities span geopolitical boundaries. Moreover, a more transparent  
185 stakeholder engagement process should be set both at European and at regional level to give  
186 all the parties affected by this Directive the opportunities to share their views and concerns  
187 (see Ounanian et al., 2012; De Santos, 2011; 2016).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/life-below-water>

<sup>8</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>

188 It is emphasised that the MSFD is only one pillar of the EU Maritime Strategy and that it now  
189 has to be jointly implemented with a newer instrument, the MSPD (European Union, 2014).  
190 This aims to ensure that the spatial allocation of marine activities, and thus the ability to  
191 achieve Blue Growth and protect the Blue Economy, is harmonised with the need to protect  
192 the health of the seas (Elliott, et al., 2018). The joint implementation of these two Directives,  
193 the MSFD and MSPD, will be a major challenge in the coming years.

### 194 *2.7 Cooperation in the economic analysis*

195 The review of the Cost-Benefit analysis in the Initial Assessment (EC, Annex 2014) and the  
196 Programmes of Measures (Cavallo et al., 2018; EC, 2018 Annex) revealed data gaps for most  
197 European Member States. For example, Portugal admits in its report that there is poor current  
198 scientific knowledge about the deep sea ecosystems that makes it difficult to assess the  
199 economic value of the different ecosystem services and their societal goods and benefits, and  
200 their trade-off, which can be influenced by the establishment of oceanic MPA (Cavallo et al.,  
201 2018). There is a need to increase the level, amount and accuracy of the information on non-  
202 market benefits of coastal and marine ecosystems when addressing the efficiency of  
203 management decisions thereby understanding the multiple ecosystem services and the societal  
204 benefits that they provide for multiple sectors (Turner and Schaafsma, 2015; Torres and  
205 Hanley 2016; Mehvar et al. 2018). In this approach, Norton and Hynes (2018) account for use  
206 and non-use value derived from achieving the GES in the North-East Atlantic, estimated to  
207 vary between €2.3 billion and €3.6 billion per annum. However, accounting explicitly for the  
208 cultural ecosystem services, which are not readily amenable to being measured either by  
209 biophysical or monetary metrics, remains a necessary key challenge (Diaz et al. 2018; Fish et  
210 al. 2016; Bryce et al., 2016).

211

212

## 213 **3. Discussion**

214 Ten years from its adoption, some progress has been made to move towards a more  
215 coordinated and harmonised implementation of the MSFD but several ecological, economic,  
216 social and governance challenges remain. Some of the bottlenecks and showstoppers have  
217 been analysed and recommendations are given for overcoming these in the future. The present  
218 section focuses on the train-wrecks which are the aspects especially difficult to solve and are  
219 related to the challenges discussed in Section 2.



220 In general, in the first cycle of the implementation of the MSFD (2012-2018) a national  
221 approach has prevailed, suggesting a certain resistance by Member States to cooperate.  
222 However, some of the problems discussed here may be the result of the lack of economic  
223 resources, lack of experts with multidisciplinary background and the short-time scale of the  
224 Directive (Table 2). In fact, to fulfil the objectives of this ambitious Directive, countries are  
225 required to make significant financial investment, especially in carrying monitoring  
226 programmes (Borja and Elliott, 2013; Zampoukas et al., 2013; Shephard et al., 2015; Nygard  
227 et al., 2016), to fill the gaps in ecological and socio-economic data and to implement their  
228 programmes of measures. It has been shown here that other problems are related to the  
229 complexity of reporting and the integration of the work from several environmental policies.

230 In this review, more emphasis has been given to the lack of transboundary cooperation since  
231 this is a major requirement of the MSFD and of other international marine legislation (see  
232 Table 1). However, from a 4-year comparative analysis of national reports (Cavallo et al.,  
233 2018) other forms of collaboration and cooperation have emerged as equally important to  
234 meeting the targets of the MSFD and to overcome some of the problems identified here. For  
235 example, better collaboration between countries and scientific communities is essential to fill  
236 gaps in data and knowledge. To this end, ad-hoc platforms have been developed, such as the  
237 WISE-Marine<sup>9</sup> for sharing information on the state of the marine environment or the Working  
238 Group on Programmes of Measures and Socio-Economic Analysis to develop common  
239 approaches to carry out the economic and social analysis. Moreover, two subgroups focusing  
240 on emerging issues of particular concern, such as underwater noise<sup>10</sup> and litter<sup>11</sup>, have been  
241 set up to provide a forum for exchange of principles and best practice on assessment  
242 methodologies.

243 To date, cooperation among all the parties involved in the implementation of the MSFD have  
244 been supported by specific multi-stakeholders platforms established at sub-regional, regional  
245 and European levels and other existing one (i.e. the Regional Seas Conventions). While these  
246 have been widely accepted (Cavallo et al., 2017) they have not been used to their full  
247 potential.

248 These types of structures have been demonstrated to be effective instruments not only to fill  
249 knowledge gaps but also to identify and resolve conflicts, to overcome a lack of

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<sup>9</sup> <http://marine.copernicus.eu/usecases/wise-marine-platform-support-msfd/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.iqoe.org/library/8061>

<sup>11</sup> [http://mcc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/dev.py?N=41&O=434&titre\\_chap=TG%20Marine%20Litter](http://mcc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/dev.py?N=41&O=434&titre_chap=TG%20Marine%20Litter)

250 communication and resistance to collaborate and to foster trust and the adoption of common  
251 solutions (Jones et al., 2013; Pinkerton, 1989; Berkes, 2007; Granovetter 1973). However,  
252 given that the MSFD is a Framework Directive, responsibility for implementation lies with  
253 the willingness of each Member State and its commitment should be achieved through  
254 voluntary agreements, reached by consensus amongst the relevant stakeholders (Beunen et al.,  
255 2009). Ultimately, the successful regional implementation of the Directive relies on the will of  
256 individual national governments. This is in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity (Art.  
257 5 of the Lisbon Treaty<sup>12</sup>) that “seek to safeguard the ability of the Member States to take  
258 decisions and action and authorises intervention by the Union when the objectives of an  
259 action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, but can be better achieved at  
260 Union level”. When implementing the MSFD “Member States are required to cooperate to  
261 ensure the coordinated development of marine strategies for each marine region or subregion”  
262 (Paragraph 13 of the MSFD) suggesting that countries adopt a wider spatial scale of  
263 implementation that goes beyond national borders. While the subsidiarity principle is  
264 acceptable/accepted and tolerable for terrestrial and freshwater legislation, in which the  
265 implementation is confined to a Member State territory, this may be considered an  
266 impediment for marine waters. This can be regarded as a *Paradox of Subsidiarity* (see Cavallo  
267 et al., 2016). In fact, marine waters are intimately linked with adjacent waters and indeed have  
268 some features such as fish stocks, the diversity of mobile species, and the delivery of  
269 contaminants, which cannot be separated from adjacent waters and even those further away.  
270 Hence, it is argued here that when agreement in transboundary issues cannot be achieved on  
271 voluntary bases and the actions, or inactions, of a country could compromise the GES of the  
272 entire region, a greater top-down control may be necessary. This possibility is contemplated in  
273 Paragraph 43 of the Directive which states that “Since the objectives of this Directive, namely  
274 protection and preservation of the marine environment, the prevention of its deterioration and  
275 where practicable the restoration of that environment in areas where it has been adversely  
276 affected, cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States and can therefore, by reason of  
277 the scale and effects of the Directive, be better achieved at Community level, the Community  
278 may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of  
279 the Treaty”. Moreover, Articles 2-6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union  
280 specify the areas of EU competence, which include an exclusive competence for the  
281 conservation of marine biological resources under the CFP, and shared competence for

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<sup>12</sup> [www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-1-common-provisions/9-article-5.html](http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-1-common-provisions/9-article-5.html)

282 environment, transport, energy and economic, social and territorial cohesion (see Qiu and  
283 Jones, 2013).

284 This anomaly is compounded further by the fact that the EU aims for the MSFD to be  
285 implemented through the Regional Seas Commissions, which are international agreements by  
286 treaty and in which there is no legally-binding sanctions. Any disputes between signatories to  
287 the Regional Seas Conventions are handled through bilateral arbitration<sup>13</sup>. This is in contrast  
288 to EU law in which failures to implement legislation ultimately results in infraction  
289 proceedings under the auspices of the European Court of Justice (Bell et al., 2017).

#### 290 **4. Conclusions**

291 As the 2020 deadline for GES is approaching, it has become urgent to identify the main  
292 problems hampering the achievement of the final aim of this ambitious directive and a greater  
293 effort is required by all the parties involved in its implementation to overcome them. The  
294 current work contributes to synthesising and categorising these problems and a number of  
295 recommendations are proposed to achieve better coordination among countries and  
296 stakeholders. These include a more extensive use of existing multi-sectoral platforms and with  
297 more willingness to move from a national to a regional scale of implementation adopting the  
298 ecosystem-based approach as the bases of the MSFD and other international agreements.

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300

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/ospar/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/international-cooperation/regional-sea-conventions/ospar/index_en.htm)

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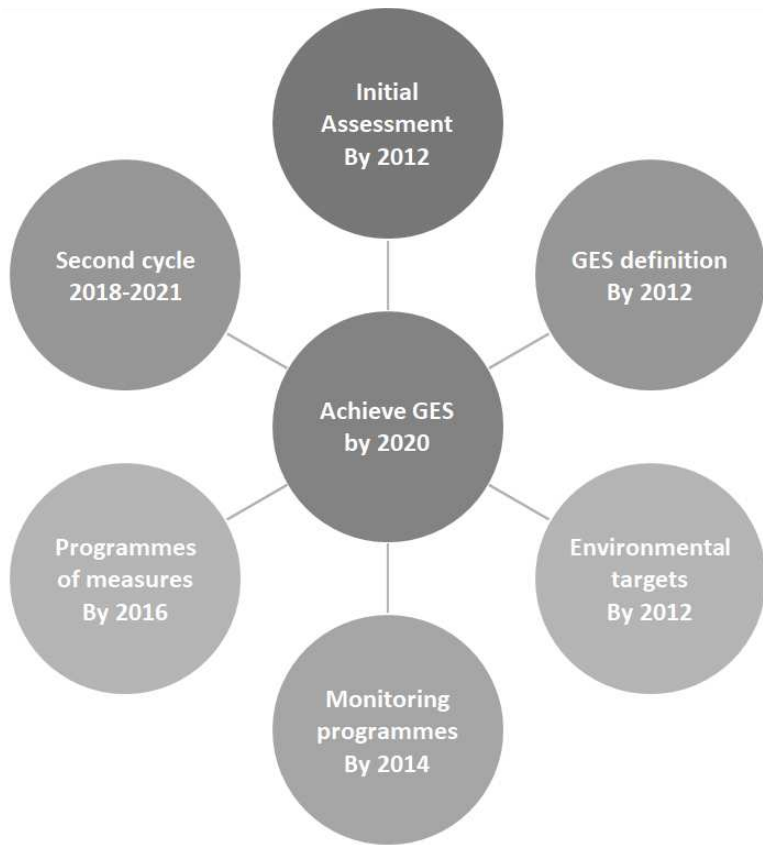
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466 Figure 1. Cyclical timeline of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive repeated every six  
467 years. GES: Good Environmental Status.

468

469 **Table 1**  
 470 Global examples of international coordination and integrated marine management. IOC:  
 471 Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission; UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and  
 472 Cultural Organization; CoP: Conference of the Parties; UNEP: United Nations Environmental  
 473 Program.

Legislation	Geographic area	Description
Caribbean Challenge Initiative <sup>14</sup>	Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines	Brings together leaders of Caribbean governments and business leaders to take collaborative action to protect and sustainably manage their marine environment.
Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia <sup>15</sup>	Australia	A spatial framework for classifying Australia's marine environment into bioregions, at a scale useful for regional planning.
Integrated Maritime Policy (2007)	28 European Member States	Seeks to provide a more coherent approach to maritime issues, with increased coordination between different policy areas.
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC – UNESCO)	Global scale	The Commission assists countries in implementing the Marine Spatial Planning with an ecosystem-based approach since 2006 (UNESCO, 2017)
Oceans Act of 2000 <sup>16</sup>	USA	Establishes a commission to make recommendations for coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy
Sustainable Development Strategy for Seas of East Asia <sup>17</sup> (2003)	Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; DPR Korea; Indonesia; Japan; Malaysia; Philippines; RO Korea; Singapore; Thailand; Vietnam; Lao PDR and Timor-Leste	Incorporates relevant international conventions, existing regional and international action programmes for achieving sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia.
UN Convention on Biological Diversity <sup>18</sup> (Decision II/10, CoP in Jakarta in November 1995)	Global scale	Support the adoption of the Integrated Marine and Coastal Area Management (IMCAM) to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts from human activities in the marine environment and to contribute to the restoration of degraded coastal areas
UNEP Regional Seas Conventions <sup>19</sup>	143 countries are included in 18 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans	Legally binding Conventions to tackle common environmental issues through joint coordinated activities.
UNEP Global Programme of Action <sup>20</sup> (1995)	More than 108 governments	It is the only global initiative directly addressing the connectivity between terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. It aims to protect and preserve the marine environment from the impacts of land-based activities, through the Washington Declaration.

<sup>14</sup> <http://caribbeanchallengeinitiative.org/>

<sup>15</sup> [www.environment.gov.au/node/18075](http://www.environment.gov.au/node/18075)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.congress.gov/106/plaws/publ256/PLAW-106publ256.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.pemsea.org/our-work/regional-marine-strategy>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/marine/imcam.shtml>

<sup>19</sup> <http://drustage.unep.org/regionalseas/who-we-are/overview>

<sup>20</sup> <http://web.unep.org/nairobiconvention/unep-global-programme-action-unepgpa>

474 Table 2 Examples of ‘Bottlenecks’, ‘Showstoppers’ and ‘Train-wrecks’ in marine  
 475 management (modified from Newton and Elliott 2016).

<b>Bottlenecks*</b>	<b>Showstoppers*</b>	<b>Train-wrecks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient monitoring budget</li> <li>- Lack of (shared) targets [2.3, 2.4]</li> <li>- Decision on indicator aggregating methods</li> <li>- Multiple stakeholder fora [2.6]</li> <li>- Lack of data (ecological, social and economic) [2.1, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7]</li> <li>- Excessive and redundant advice documents [2.1]</li> <li>- Lack of harmonised and generic indicators [2.2, 2.4, 2.7]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complex regulation [2.4, 2.5]</li> <li>- Complex reporting [2.1, 2.4]</li> <li>- Lack of experts with multidisciplinary background</li> <li>- Overlapping designation</li> <li>- Sectoral management (e.g. separate management for fisheries, energy, nature conservation) [2.5, 2.6]</li> <li>- Poor coordination among national agencies</li> <li>- Different economic prerogative (i.e. Blue Growth with precedence over GES) [2.2, 2.6]</li> <li>- Lack of use of technologies</li> <li>- Short time-scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resistance to collaborate</li> <li>- Lack of dedicated funding</li> <li>- Legal challenges</li> <li>- Political will</li> <li>- Unwillingness to adopt joint aims/vision</li> <li>- Inflexible planning system</li> <li>- Socio-cultural conflicts</li> </ul>

476 \*The numbers in brackets in column 1 and 2 refer to the sections in the main text where challenges  
 477 related to transboundary cooperation and policy integration are discussed. Illustrations of train-wrecks  
 478 are evaluated in the Discussion section.