

Interim report of the Technical Subgroup on Marine Litter

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To be presented at the Sixth meeting of the Working Group on Good Environmental Status in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC (WG GES)

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In accordance with the terms of reference of the Technical Subgroup on Marine Litter (TSG ML), the group is expected to 1) identify and review existing data and on-going data collection on marine litter, 2) describe data needs and methods for future assessment of marine litter, 3) consider standards for recording of marine litter, 4) develop proposals for the development of impact indicators for each of the regions, 5) address how to develop objectives (characteristics of GES), environmental targets and associated indicators in relation to marine litter, 6) discuss effectiveness of measures leading to reductions in Marine Litter and 7) recommend proposals for further research priorities.

The kick-off meeting of the TSG ML was held in Copenhagen, 4th November 2010. The group is chaired by Francois Galgani (Ifremer, France) and co-chaired by Georg Hanke (EC JRC) and Stefanie Werner (UBA, Germany). As a main outcome of the first meeting, the basic approach and tasks of the group were defined. The activity of the group will focus on developing a toolbox with applicable monitoring/quantification methods and a roadmap for the further MSFD Descriptor 10 implementation.

The work has been divided into the following tasks:

1. Available data and methodologies
2. Beach
3. Water column & surface
4. Seafloor
5. Biota
6. Microplastics
7. Objectives and targets
8. Sources
9. Reporting and data treatment
10. Research needs.

All group members are expected to contribute to each task. However, the group members have been allocated to the different tasks to take lead in preparing the task deliverables, and a contact person has been identified for each task. The deliverables of the group will be communicated via Circa (http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/marine/library?l=/implementation_coordinat/technical_subgroup&vm=detailed&sb=Title, whereas Basecamp (a web-base communication tool) is used for collaboration, drafting documents and compiling all information.

Currently, work is ongoing for all of the tasks with drafts of the toolboxes being produced and discussed for most of the tasks. Data on the availability of litter monitoring data has been collected as part of Task 1 and gaps are currently being identified to ensure full coverage of the data.

The second meeting of the TSG ML will be held in Calvi, Corsica 18.-20.04.2011. The main agenda of the meeting is to review the drafts produced by each task and agree on the steps to take in order to produce the final report by the end of 2011. The third meeting of the group has been planned to be held in Varna during the week of 10.-14.10.2011.