



Risk-based Approaches to Good Environmental Status (RAGES) is a two-year, €800k project, funded by DG Environment to support implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The project is led by MaREI -SFI research centre at University College Cork. The project began in January 2019 and comprises a consortium of partners from Ireland (UCC and DHPLG), France (MTES and INERIS), Spain (DGSCM-SGPM and IEO, UPV) and Portugal (DRAM, DGRM, ARDITI, MARE FCUL, IPMA and DRM), these include the MSFD competent authorities from each country.

This policy brief highlights the main findings of an institutional and governance analysis carried out as part of the project.

More information on the project can be found at www.msfd.eu/rages

or contact us directly

Dr Tim O'Higgins: tim.ohiggins@ucc.ie 083 8625449
or Dr Emma Verling: emma.verling@ucc.ie



Marine Strategy Framework Directive

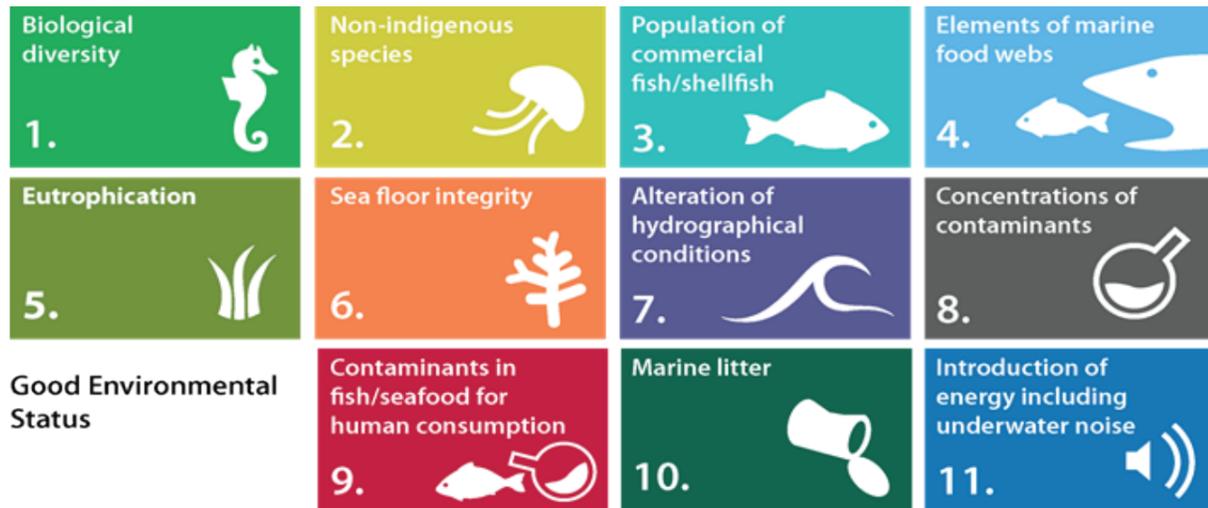
Achieving Good Environmental Status in the North East Atlantic

A policy brief on Governance Analysis



What is the Marine Strategy Framework Directive?

Clean Healthy and Productive Seas



GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL STATUS

The directive sets out 11 qualitative descriptors of environmental status for which EU Member States must achieve or maintain good environmental status. These descriptors include commitments to high profile issues such as biodiversity, management of marine litter and sustainable fisheries as well as more technical aspects of marine environmental health like food web structures and alterations to hydrography.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is coordinated centrally through a Common Implementation Strategy (CIS). Every six years Member States must:

- Assess marine environmental quality
- Put in place monitoring programs
- Design and implement programs of measures to achieve or maintain good environmental status.

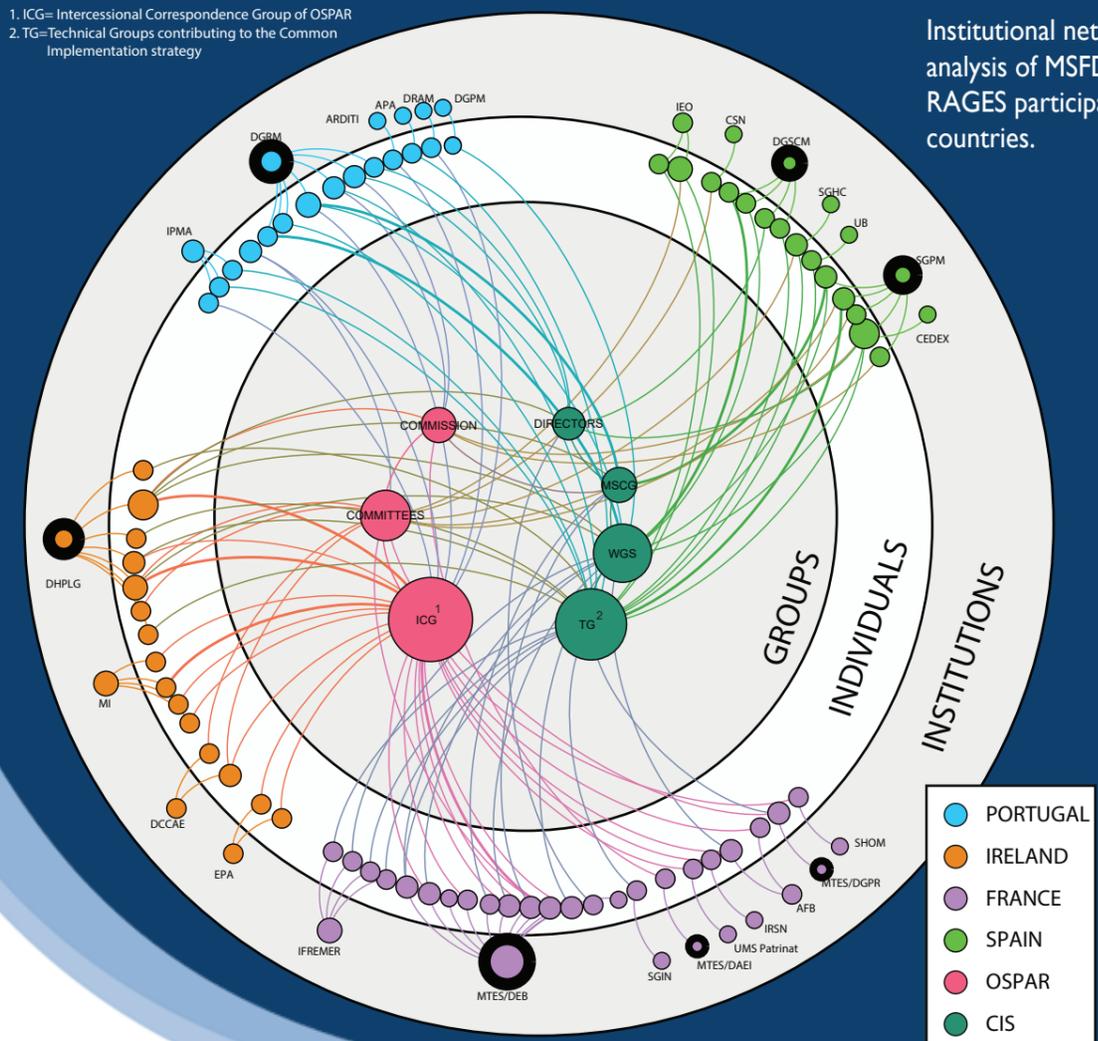
REGIONAL COOPERATION

The MSFD applies to waters water under Member State jurisdiction. It recognizes that the marine territories form continuous ecosystems where the activities in the marine waters of one Members State may affect the environmental state in another. The MSFD obliges countries to cooperate across regions and subregions. This is facilitated by the existence of the regional seas conventions, in the North East Atlantic this is the OSLO Paris Commissson (OSPAR).

The Challenge

In the first cycle of implementation of the directive the European Commission found that many aspects of implementaton of the MSFD were adequate or partially adequate. Information and data necessary to implement the MSFD come from a range of sources, for example the Habitats Directive reporting, from the Common Fisheries Policy, from the Water Framework and Plastics Directives. We performed an insttutional network analysis to examine the barriers and enablers to implementation of MSFD in Portugal, Spain, France and Ireland.

1. ICG= Intersectoral Correspondence Group of OSPAR
 2. TG=Technical Groups contributing to the Common Implementation strategy



Institutional network analysis of MSFD in RAGES participating countries.

Results

The graphic above shows the institutions, individuals and groups (circles) involved in MSFD implementation in the four countries and regionally through OSPAR. Bubble size is proportional to the number of roles. Each connecting line represents a specific role in the process. Institutions with a dark outline are competent authorities with responsibility for the MSFD. Many agencies are required to deliver aspects of MSFD which can lead to failures in accountability. The number of individuals employed directly by competent authorities varies and is very limited in some countries.

Recommendations

There is a clear need to build capacity in competent authorities.

There is a need for Member States to prioritise descriptors with limited national capacity at present.

Harmonisation between directives of timelines and targets, as well as underlying criteria and assessment methods between directives may help to alleviate some of the potential issues in national inter-agency cooperation and could also tackle potential problems of accountability at the national scale.