



Strategic Plan 2020-2024

DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

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INTRODUCTION

DG MARE's¹ strategic plan for the next five years is firmly anchored in the political guidelines² of President von der Leyen, and in her mission letter³ to the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius.

The political priorities therein have shaped our strategy and will frame our work throughout the current Commission's mandate. The strategic plan is complemented by annual management plans, defining the concrete deliverables for each year in question, thus allowing for regular monitoring of performance.

The strategic and management plans cover policy work (part 1) and organisational improvements (part 2), to modernise the way the Commission administration functions (for example through digitalisation and collaborative methods).

PART 1. Delivering on the Commission's priorities

A. Mission statement

The mission of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (or "DG MARE") is:

"To strive for healthy seas and a sustainable use of the oceans and of marine resources in the EU and worldwide. This involves ensuring sustainable fisheries through the full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, promoting in the EU an integrated approach to all policies impacting the oceans, including fostering a sustainable blue economy, thus providing jobs and prosperity to coastal communities and sustainable food, and contributing to a healthy environment for today's and future generations, as well as projecting these policies internationally."

This mission statement infuses all policy areas of DG MARE with a sense of purpose and long-term vision.

¹ Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/mission-letter-virginijus-sinkevicius_en.pdf

B. Operating context

The EU has **exclusive competence** for the conservation of marine biological resources under the **Common Fisheries Policy** (CFP)⁴. This applies both in EU waters and in relation to the international obligations deriving from UNCLOS (United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea) and from other United Nations agreements to which the EU is party, such as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. The exclusive competence equally applies to the sustainable fisheries partnership agreements signed with non-EU Member States. All these areas are regulated by the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Common Fisheries Policy also includes areas of **shared competences** between the EU and its Member States⁵, where the subsidiarity principle⁶ applies. For example:

- for aquaculture, the EU added value resides in finding solutions to the sector's most common problems;
- in market policy, which is essential to create a single market in fishery and aquaculture products and ensure fair competition, Member States and economic actors (such as producer organisations) maintain a high degree of autonomy in applying the various market policy instruments at their disposal.

The second main policy strand of DG MARE's activities is **maritime policy**. It provides a coherent approach to other (non-fisheries) maritime issues through close coordination and cooperation across sectors and between international, national, regional and local decision makers. In particular, our blue economy policy encourages Member States, industry and stakeholders to develop joint approaches to drive sustainable economic development, while safeguarding the marine environment and Europe's unique maritime assets.

The third strand of action of DG MARE is the strengthening of the **international ocean governance** framework, comprising the reduction of the pressures on the oceans and their sustainable use, as well as a better understanding about the oceans. Under this agenda, developed since 2016 jointly with the EU's High Representative⁷, DG MARE is implementing actions for safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed oceans in Europe and around the world, including negotiating new standards and rules in international fora. Achieving better ocean governance, including better fisheries governance, is an integral part of the EU's response to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 14 'to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources'.

The **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** (EMFF) is the financial instrument to support the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and certain actions under the maritime policy and the international ocean governance agenda. The 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework sets a more ambitious goal for climate mainstreaming

⁴ 3 (1) (d) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

⁵ Article 4 (2) (d) TFEU.

⁶ Article 5(3) of the Treaty on the European Union.

⁷ JOIN(2016) 49 final of 10.11.2016.

across all EU programmes, with an overall target of 25% of EU expenditure contributing to climate objectives. The contribution of the EU spending programmes to this overall target will be tracked through an EU climate marker system at an appropriate level of disaggregation. Under the Commission proposal, the EMFF 2021-2027 is expected to contribute 30% of the overall financial envelope of the fund towards EU climate objectives.

The EMFF for the programming period 2014-2020 has been established by Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, as amended⁸. The new EMFF Regulation will define the support framework for 2021-2027. Both Regulations define the **delivery systems** for the financial support and the type of projects to which they apply. Besides EMFF spending that is directly implemented by the Commission under direct management, the bulk of the funds are managed in shared management jointly with the Member States based on national strategies. Each Member State details the use of the funds in shared management in an operational programme covering the respective programming periods (2014-2020 and 2021-2027).

The Common Provisions Regulations apply to the part of the EMFF under shared management aiming at simplifying and improving policy delivery in a coherent way:

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, as amended,⁹ applies to Member States' operational programmes adopted in the programming period 2014-2020.
- For the 2021-2027 period, the new Regulation will set simplified and consolidated rules for the new EMFF as one of the seven funds¹⁰ under shared management.
- Both regulations put a strong emphasis on shared management and partnership.¹¹

The **main partners** for DG MARE are:

- public bodies, such as the other EU institutions, Member States and their national or regional administrations, coastal regions, international organisations and bodies, and partner countries;
- The stakeholders of the blue economy sector, including fishing and aquaculture, and related organisations, such as fishers' and aquaculture associations and communities, non-governmental organisations and civil society, maritime professions, marine and maritime research, academia;

⁸ [Regulation \(EU\) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations \(EC\) No 2328/2003, \(EC\) No 861/2006, \(EC\) No 1198/2006 and \(EC\) No 791/2007 and Regulation \(EU\) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#).

⁹ [Regulation \(EU\) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1083/2006](#).

¹⁰ Cohesion Fund, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund Plus, Asylum and Migration Fund, Border Management and Visa Instrument, and Internal Security Fund.

¹¹ Article 5 provides the basis for shared management and Article 6 for partnership. Partners are identified in categories of regional and local authorities, urban and public authorities, economic and social partners, civil society and bodies promoting social inclusion, fundamental rights, gender equality, non-discrimination and rights of people with disabilities.

- scientific advisory bodies, such as the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF);
- the public at large, namely consumers and EU citizens, especially in coastal regions, where 214 million people, or 42% of the EU's population live.

DG MARE also works closely with the Advisory Councils¹², the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA)¹³, the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)¹⁴, other Commission services as well as administrations of partner countries and international organisations.

Every year we perform a risk assessment to ascertain if any **critical factors** in DG MARE's operating environment can prevent us from delivering on our mission or attain the general and specific objectives defined in this strategic plan. For each identified risk, mitigating measures or specific actions are undertaken.

DG MARE has adopted a 2020-2024 communication strategy that sets our 3 ambitions for the entire mandate of the Commission under President Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius. These ambitions ensure that our communication is driven by a clear strategic agenda, rather than individual events, and in line with the strategic priorities of the Commission. The 'big ambitions' for the 5-year period are aligned with main corporate priorities, most notably the European Green Deal and COVID-19 recovery, but to a lesser extent also digitalisation. DG MARE will continue to contribute to relevant corporate campaigns, including with compelling success stories, and implement its own action in compliance with corporate guidance regarding overall messaging, visual identity and efficiency.

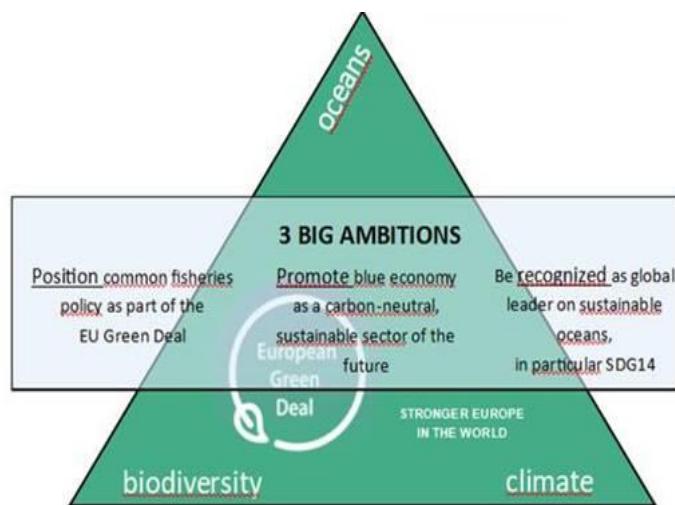


Figure: overview of DG MARE's communication strategy 2020-2024

¹² <https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/partners/advisory-councils>

¹³ <https://www.efca.europa.eu/>

¹⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en>

C. Strategy

Taking care of our oceans

During this 5-year period and beyond, DG MARE is striving for a prosperous and sustainable fisheries sector and a thriving and sustainable blue economy in the EU.

The oceans and the ocean economy have an important potential for a sustainable economic recovery as part of the EU's recovery plan from the COVID-19 crisis of spring 2020, presented by the Commission on 27 May 2020¹⁵. This plan intends to accelerate the twin green and digital transitions. In the context of such a green recovery, DG MARE's policies can promote structural change towards a sustainable marine economy and jobs, and can contribute to kick-start Europe's economy quickly, especially at the local level in coastal communities. Indeed, as a result of the crisis, a large part of the EU economy, including the EU's fisheries and aquaculture and other blue economy sectors, almost came to a standstill in most parts of the EU. While the EU reacted very speedily and adopted a vast series of general and specific support measures for the EU economy, including also specific support to the fisheries, processing and aquaculture sectors, the economic recovery will require particular efforts over the coming years. DG MARE will deploy all its means to contribute to these broader recovery policies and to structural change towards a more sustainable economic model. The detailed contributions to the implementation of the EU's economic recovery plan will be developed over the coming months. They will be an essential part of DG MARE's activities over the next years, and will be mainstreamed wherever possible in the actions set out in this plan.

We will also continue to strengthen the role of the EU as a global leader, taking care of our oceans and seas and their resources worldwide.

The Political Guidelines of the European Commission for 2019-2024 will frame our work.¹⁶ Internationally, we will contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notably SDG 14 dedicated to life below water, SDG 2 on food security and SDG 6 to address climate change and its impacts.

In line with President von der Leyen's mission letter¹⁷ to the Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, we will contribute to **two headline ambitions or general objectives** of the Commission:

- the European Green Deal, to deliver on the EU's climate ambitions while creating sustainable jobs and ensuring sustainable economic development, including as part of the economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. We will in particular help achieving the following goals:
 - reducing emissions from 40% towards -55% by 2030,

¹⁵ [Commission Communication "Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation", COM\(2020\) 456 final of 27.05.2020](#).

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

¹⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/mission-letter-virginijus-sinkevicius_en.pdf

- enhancing biodiversity for our environment and oceans, including by promoting sustainable fisheries through the full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and effective control and enforcement,
- fighting ocean pollution, marine litter and waste of single-use plastics, including micro-plastics.
- a Stronger Europe in the World, in particular through:
 - promoting international ocean governance and sustainable fisheries worldwide,
 - zero tolerance for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing,
 - concluding sustainable fisheries partnership agreements with partner countries.

The general objectives are accompanied by impact indicators to allow performance to be monitored. Where responsibilities are shared, DG MARE will closely cooperate with other DGs and Agencies, and with the European External Action Service.

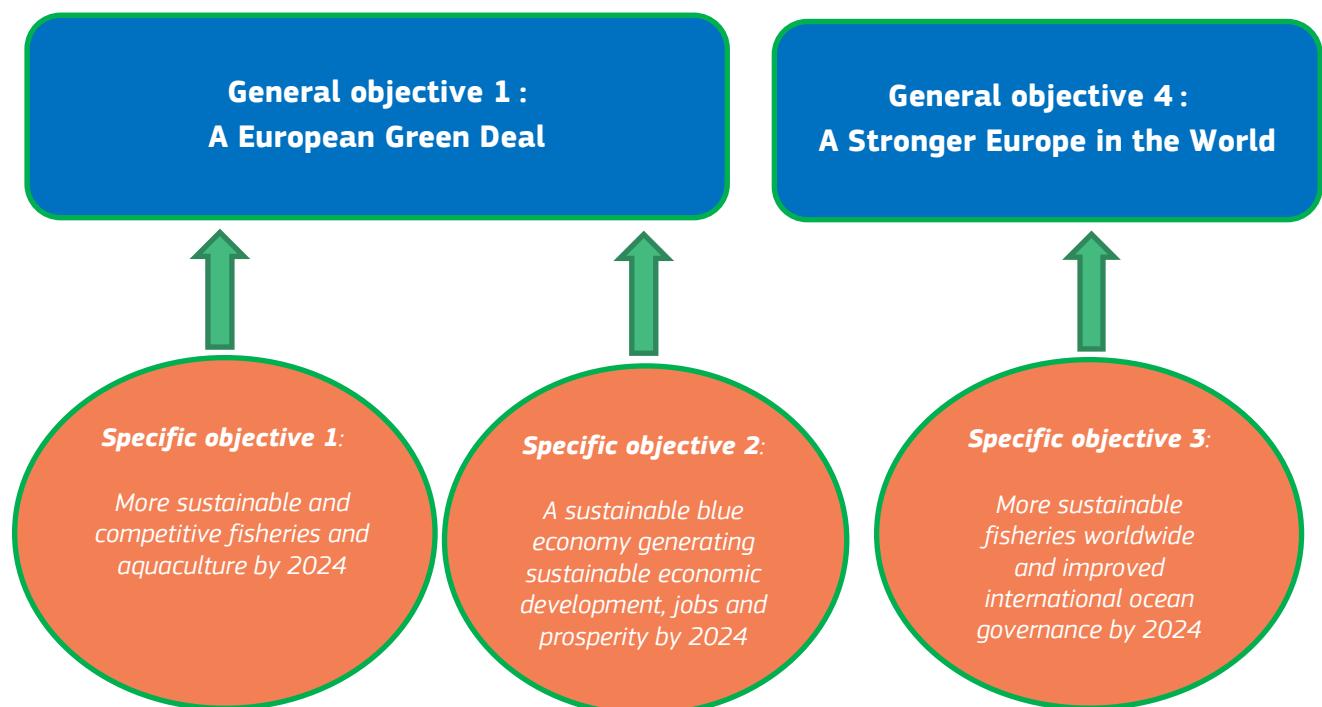
The general objectives are in this strategic plan translated into **three specific objectives**:

- Specific objective 1: more sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024,
- Specific objective 2: a sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024, and
- Specific objective 3: more sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024.

Progress towards the specific objectives is measured through result indicators.

Following the departure of the United Kingdom from the EU as of 1 February 2020, negotiations are currently ongoing on the future relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom. In the area of fisheries, where the EU and the UK share an important number of fish stocks, which will have to be managed jointly in the future, the outcome of these negotiations will have an important impact on fisheries management in the EU. The modalities of the future cooperation will therefore also have to be reflected in a series of policies and actions described in this strategic plan, depending on the outcome of the ongoing negotiations.

The following chart illustrates the links between the specific objectives and the general objectives to which they contribute:



This strategic plan for 2020-2024 is structured as follows:

General objective 1: A European Green Deal	
Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027
Impact indicator: Stocks fished at maximum sustainable yield levels	
Result indicator: Number of stocks fished at maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels	
Result indicator: Profitability of the EU fishing fleet	
Result indicators on aquaculture:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volume and value of aquaculture production in the EU • Volume of organic aquaculture production in the EU • Profitability of aquaculture production in the EU 	
Result indicator: Effectiveness of Member State fisheries control systems measured by the number of control action plans implemented within the deadline set	
Impact indicator: Climate mainstreaming in the European Union budget	
Result indicator: Contribution from the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds (EMFF) for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 to climate related EU spending	
General objective 1: A European Green Deal	
Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027
Impact indicator: Greenhouse gas emissions	
Result indicator: Size of the EU blue economy in terms of:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of gross value added (GVA) generated by the blue economy relative to the total economy • Percentage of employment in the blue economy relative to the total economy • Direct employment in the blue economy in number of persons 	
Result indicator: Improved marine knowledge measured by the degree of use of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) in terms of the quantity of downloaded data per month	
Result indicator: Reduction of economic impact of marine litter measured in terms of median number of litter items per 100 metres of beach in the EU	
Result indicator: Maritime security measured by the number of new CISE (Common Information Sharing Environment) connections/ nodes	
Impact indicator: Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption	
Result indicator: Installed capacity of EU offshore wind energy and ocean energy	

General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World	
Impact indicator: The European Union's voice counts in the world according to its citizens	
Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	<p>Related to spending programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 - Regional Fisheries Management Organisations - Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements
Result indicator: Sustainable management of the main regulated tuna and tuna-like species fished by the EU fleet under the purview of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which the EU is a Member	
Result indicator: Conservation measures based on scientific advice adopted for the main regulated species fished by the EU fleet under the purview of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which the EU is a Member	
Result indicator: Fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing measured by the number of non-EU Member States that the Commission has engaged in a dialogue with and the number of countries having addressed their deficiencies	
Result indicator: Control of imports of fisheries products in the EU measured by the number of refusals of catch certificates for imports by Member States	
Result indicator: Number of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) in force	

General objective 1: A European Green Deal

Seas and oceans cover 70% of our planet. They are crucial to human life, for our wellbeing and that of future generations: as a supplier of highly nutritious food, clean and abundant energy and other natural resources; as a regulator of our climate and many of the Earth's natural cycles and as a driver of sustainable economic development and technological innovation. The importance of oceans is fully reflected in the political priorities of President von der Leyen, and in particular in the "**European Green Deal**". The Green Deal is about making Europe the first climate-neutral continent, about preserving and restoring our biodiversity, about sustainable food along the whole value chain, and about continuing to fight against pollution.

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024

The **Common Fisheries Policy** already contributes significantly to all those objectives. The Common Fisheries Policy aims to maximise seafood catches within sustainable limits. To this end, catch limits and effort limitations have to be set at levels that maintain healthy fish stocks in the long term (**maximum sustainable yield**, MSY). Under the landing obligation, fishers must bring all catches back to land, thereby ending the wasteful practice of throwing unwanted fish back to sea.

As outlined in Commissioner Sinkevičius' mission letter, **full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy**, including the landing obligation, multiannual management plans, effective control and enforcement and respecting the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) objective will remain top priorities of DG MARE throughout the mandate.

Significant progress has already been achieved under the Common Fisheries Policy. Today, a majority of fish stocks in the North East Atlantic are in far better condition than just a decade ago. In recent years, we have also observed positive economic trends for the EU fleet, which shows that reduced fishing pressure and **higher fish stock abundance coincides with increased fleet profitability**. In particular, the fleets exploiting stocks sustainably tend to be more profitable than others. This proves **long-term sustainability goes hand in hand with profitability**. This real-life example is important in the context of the European Green Deal, and in particular the **Farm to Fork Strategy for Sustainable Food**.

However, sustainability is not a final state, but an ongoing process. It will be crucial to **Maintain this positive progress, and step it up where it is less evident** (e.g. the Mediterranean), to ensure that the EU fishing fleet can retain a long-term positive perspective. Full implementation of maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and effective control and enforcement, including of the landing obligation remain top priorities in the coming years. To this end, implementation of the multiannual management plans for all relevant sea basins needs to proceed further. Moreover, the encouraging achievements in the above-mentioned sea basins are not mirrored in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, where recent efforts to strengthen fisheries management are yet to translate into improved state of stocks. The priority there is now to accelerate the move from commitments to action, while cushioning potential socio-economic consequences in affected coastal communities.

Achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) exploitation rates also depends on a number of external factors that are beyond the Commission's control. A main factor is that the annual decisions on fishing opportunities are taken by the Council or, occasionally, by Member States (e.g. setting of total allowable catches (TACs) per vessel per day for some fisheries). Other stocks are managed jointly with non-EU states or by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), which requires agreement with partner countries. While the Commission can influence these outcomes by making sure that scientific advice is available in support of policy choices and through its proposals and subsequent negotiations, both in the EU and with its international partners, it is not in control of the final outcomes. In the Mediterranean and Black Seas, where many stocks are exploited jointly with non-EU fishing vessels, the EU plays a crucial role in pushing forward new management measures against overfishing applicable to all involved coastal states in the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM).

Next to its full implementation, the **upcoming report on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy** will be essential. Article 49 of the Basic Regulation¹⁸ provides that by 31 December 2022 the Commission should deliver a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the functioning of the Common Fisheries Policy. DG MARE will take stock and identify how to address issues not sufficiently covered in the current policy, such as the **social dimension, climate adaptation and clean oceans**.

Impact and result indicator: Stocks fished at maximum sustainable yield levels		
Baseline (2013)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Median fishing pressure – North-East Atlantic: 1.1 Median fishing pressure – Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea: 2.5	Decrease	Decrease

The profitability of the EU fishing fleet is the main indicator to measure the **economic performance of the fleet**. The sector continued to be highly profitable in 2017.²⁰ With a total net profit of €1.3 billion, 16.9% of the revenue generated by the EU fishing fleet was retained as net profit. This sustained improvement in recent years has been driven by three main factors:

- progress in achieving sustainable fisheries;
- continued relatively low fuel costs resulting from lower fuel consumption and relatively low fuel prices;
- stable or, in some cases, increased average first sale prices for a number of commercially important species.

However, the COVID-19 crisis has hit the sector hard by disruption to the market. The sudden decline in demand, and subsequent drop in first sale prices caused activity to cease for a number of fleet segments, particularly in the small scale coastal fisheries. In addition, sanitary measures hampered some fishing fleets. In response to this crisis, the European Commission has taken urgent action to mitigate this situation, which put at stake the livelihoods of thousands, not least in the EU's coastal regions, and the stable supply of

¹⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1585148355722&uri=CELEX:02013R1380-20190814>

¹⁹ This indicator is used to measure progress in sustainable fisheries management and conservation in the medium term (result indicator) as well as in the long term (impact indicator).

²⁰ [Source of the latest data \(2017\): The 2019 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet \(STECF 19-06\), p. 2](#)

healthy seafood to EU citizens, by adopting a vast series of general and specific support measures for the fisheries, processing and aquaculture sectors.²¹ In 2020, the Commission will support Member States in the implementation of these support measures on the ground and will carefully monitor further developments. From mid-April 2020, the situation is stabilised and there are indications of improvement. The lower fuel prices may also contribute to easing operating costs in the EU fleets. Under this scenario, proposed targets for 2021 and 2024 remain realistic despite the COVID-19 impacts in 2020.

While the economic dimension of fisheries develops positively, more attention needs to be paid to the **social dimension**. Fishing remains one of the most dangerous professions. In addition, fisheries throughout the EU have undergone major structural changes, leading to impactful social consequences for individual fishers and fishing communities. We will therefore continue to pay close attention to labour standards on board, including fishing vessels safety and design, as well as the fair standard of living of fishers.

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	
Result indicator: Profitability of the EU fishing fleet		
Explanation: The net profit margin (calculated as the ratio of net profit and revenues) gives an indication of the relative profitability of the fishing fleet. It reflects the short-term economic sustainability of the fishing companies and is an indicator of the success of the Common Fisheries Policy in balancing fleet capacity and resources productivity.		
Source of data: Data Collection Framework data obtained from the Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF) ²²		
Baseline (2017, latest known results) Source: The 2019 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet (STECF 19-06), p. 16 ²³	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)
Net profit margin of the EU fishing fleet: 16.9%	Increase of 7% in net profit margin compared to baseline	Increase of 15% in net profit margin compared to baseline

The Common Fisheries Policy highlights **EU aquaculture** as an important sector to satisfy the growing global demand for seafood. The Common Market Organisation framework, which puts producer organisations and associations of producer organisations in the core of the Common Fisheries Policy, will contribute to achieving the policy objectives.

The Common Fisheries Policy promotes the development of sustainable EU aquaculture through an **open method of coordination**. It helps the sector develop sustainably by

²¹https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/jobs-and-economy-during-coronavirus-pandemic_en#securing-essential-food-supplies

²² <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic>

²³[file:///C:/Users/neromli/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/STECF%202019-06%20-%20AER%20-%20202019%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/neromli/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/STECF%202019-06%20-%20AER%20-%20202019%20(1).pdf)

providing a framework of national aquaculture strategies and facilitating voluntary cooperation and mutual learning across Member States. A key tool in this respect are seminars where Member States can share and assess the effectiveness of identified good practices in policies, programmes and institutional arrangements.

Ensuring sustainability of fishery and aquaculture products in the EU market is part of the **Farm to Fork Strategy** along the whole value chain, which explicitly refers to sustainable seafood, and the **European Green Deal** objective to cover every step in the food chain from production to consumption. Food from the sea can have a much lower environmental – and climate – impact than food produced on land. The European Green Deal also mentions the role of algae for sustainable food and feed production.

In the context of the Farm to Fork Strategy, DG MARE will revise the Strategic Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of EU Aquaculture, with the objective to help make our aquaculture sector even more competitive and sustainable, including through a significant increase of organic aquaculture. We are also going to take a more strategic approach to algae production in the EU, in order to facilitate the development of a dynamic business sector. Algae are part of the tools we need to help relieve environmental pressure on land, and they provide a host of ecosystem services.

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027		
Result indicator: Volume and value of aquaculture production in the EU			
Explanation: This indicator measures the volume and the value of EU aquaculture production. It provides an indication of the economic performance of the sector. ²⁴			
Source of data: Economic Report of the EU aquaculture sector (STECF): https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic Yearly intervals reported every two years			
Baseline (data 2016, latest known results) Source: Economic Report of the EU aquaculture sector (STECF-18-19) ²⁵	Interim milestone (data of 2018)	Interim milestone (data of 2020)	Target (data of 2022)
Sales volume: 1.42 million tonnes	1.50 million tonnes	1.55 million tonnes	1.60 million tonnes
Sales value: €4.89 billion	€5.20 billion	€5.40 billion	€5.60 billion

²⁴ Increases in volume and value will contribute to the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (by reducing pressure on wild stocks) and to the development of a sustainable Blue Economy (by securing jobs and sustainable economic development in coastal and rural areas). Moreover, aquaculture production is an important contributor to the Farm to Fork Strategy. This indicator is a segment of one of the common indicators in the EMFF operational programmes of the Member States relating to the overall aquaculture production.

²⁵ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic>

Yearly intervals reported every two years (ESTAT, Data Collection Framework Regulation, STECF Report).

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027
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Result indicator: Volume of organic aquaculture production in the EU

Explanation: This indicator measures the volume and the value of EU organic aquaculture production, which is subject to specific requirements in terms of environmental performance and animal health and welfare. It provides an indication of the economic performance of this type of aquaculture and the overall diversification and conversion of the sector towards increased environmental performance.²⁶

Source of data: Economic Report of the EU aquaculture sector (STECF):

<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic> Yearly intervals reported every two years

Baseline (data 2015, latest known results) Source: EUMOFA EU organic aquaculture report (May 2017) ²⁷	Interim milestone (data 2018)	Interim milestone (data 2020)	Target (data 2022)
50,000 t (volume) (value not available)	60,000 t	70,000 t	90,000 t

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027
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Result indicator: Profitability of EU aquaculture production

Explanation: This indicator measures the competitiveness and the overall performance of the EU aquaculture sector. It is important to balance the sustainability objectives with competitiveness and profitability.

Source of data: Economic Report of the EU aquaculture sector (STECF):

<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic> Yearly intervals reported every two years.

Baseline (data 2016, latest known results) Source: Economic Report of the EU aquaculture sector (STECF-18-19)	Interim milestone (data of 2020)	Target (data of 2022)
€767 mio EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Taxes or Operating Profit)	€700 million (COVID-19 crisis impact)	€920 million

²⁶ Increases in volume and value will contribute to the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy (by reducing pressure on wild stocks) and to the development of a sustainable Blue Economy (by securing jobs and sustainable economic development in coastal and rural areas). Moreover, the significant increase of organic aquaculture production is an objective of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The promotion of this type of aquaculture production is expected to be part of the revised Commission Strategic Guidelines currently under discussion.

²⁷ https://www.eumofa.eu/documents/20178/84590/Study+report_organic+aquaculture.pdf

Rules only work if they are properly enforced. This also applies to the Common Fisheries Policy. Its ambitious objectives for healthy fish stocks and ecosystems, a profitable sector, viable coastal communities and food security can only be achieved if Member States, and the EU as a whole, have a proper **control and enforcement system** in place to ensure that:

- reliable, accurate and complete fisheries data are supplied on time,
- Member States have full control of their fleet,
- measures are in place to allow effective controls of fisheries products in the supply chain, and
- a widespread culture of compliance is in place, allowing fishing operators to compete fairly.

An effective control system ensuring that the EU's fisheries are sustainably managed, will in return guarantee the long-term viability of the EU fishing sector and protect the livelihoods of our fishers. It will also ensure a level playing field among operators across the EU and increase the value of fisheries resources for both the fishing communities and consumers. To this end, the Commission adopted in May 2018 a proposal to review and further strengthen the EU Fisheries Control System²⁸, which is still under negotiation by the co-legislators. If agreed, the revised Regulation would modernise controls, ensure better quality and sharing of fisheries data and information, including for the small scale fleet, reduce administrative burden, strengthen the enforcement provisions, as well as support the implementation of the landing obligation and the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It is also essential to live up to our ambitions under the **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030** and the **Farm to Fork Strategy for Sustainable Food**, e.g. through enhanced traceability from net to plate.

The main external risk factor concerning fisheries control is an economic or social crisis, which would reduce human, technical and financial resources available to the control authorities, for example as experienced in the context of the COVID-19 crisis this year. Also, unclear competences or insufficient cooperation and coordination between Member State control authorities could reduce the effectiveness of the fisheries control.

²⁸ [COM\(2018\) 368 final - 2018/0193\(COD\)](#) of 30.05.2018. This proposal includes amendments to the Control Regulation 1224/2009, the IUU Regulation 1005/2008 and the founding Regulation of the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA).

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Effectiveness of Member States' fisheries control systems measured by the number of control action plans implemented within the deadline set²⁹

Explanation: When the Commission identifies shortcomings in the fisheries control system of a Member State by means of verifications, autonomous inspections or audits, the Commission may establish a control action plan through a Commission implementing decision.³⁰

Source of data: Commission, DG MARE – Commission decisions establishing control action plans.

Baseline (2020)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Number of control action plans implemented within deadline (for action plans from 01/01/2020) / Total number of action plans adopted (from 01/01/2020) In 2020: 0% (as none of the action plans will have reached its deadline)	At least 70% of the control action plans are implemented within the deadline	At least 90% of the control action plans are implemented within the deadline

In line with the Paris Agreement and the EU's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Commission proposed to set a more ambitious goal for **climate mainstreaming** across all EU programmes, with a target of 25% of EU expenditure contributing to climate objectives.

Impact indicator: Climate mainstreaming in the European Union budget

Explanation: Proportion of climate related spending (mainstreaming) in the EU budget

Source of the data: European Commission Draft Budget Reports

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
21%	25%	25%

The **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** (EMFF) is essential as the financing instrument to support the full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy, under the current (2014-2020) and under the future (2021-2027) multiannual financial frameworks. It provides support to fishers in the transition towards more sustainable fisheries and

²⁹ Implementation of an action plan is delayed when the longest target date has not been met.

³⁰ Each control action plan is established in agreement with the Member State concerned and contains a detailed and time-bound roadmap for the improvement of certain parts of the Member State's fisheries control system, based on the shortcomings identified during the verifications/inspections/audits performed. In addition to control action plans, there are other instruments that can be used to help improving the effectiveness of the Member States' fisheries control systems, for example: EU-pilots, infringement proceedings and the interruption/suspension of EMFF payments. Hence, an update on the implementation of control action plans does not always give the full picture of the state of the fisheries control systems in a Member State. Besides, a control action plan only covers specific parts of the Member States' fisheries control systems. Consequently, the full implementation of a control action plan does not mean that the entire fisheries control system is effective. Nevertheless, the implementation of an action plan can serve as a useful indicator for the effectiveness of Member States' fisheries control systems.

provides funding for data collection and fisheries control, which are both essential for ensuring sustainable fisheries. At the same time, the EMFF will also play a part in supporting the transition to lower greenhouse gas emissions. Fishing vessels and land based aquaculture and processing facilities can avail of EMFF support for greenhouse gas saving technologies or the use of solar energy for example. The EMFF 2021-2027 will include an indicator for reduced energy consumption as a result of this support.

As the single specific financing instrument for all of DG MARE's policies, the EMFF will also be an important tool to trigger the transformation and innovation that is essential for climate mitigation and adaptation measures in the maritime domain. Targeted direct funding and support to Member States for the preparation of national programmes will facilitate proper policy implementation. Its contribution to the Blue Economy are further developed under the specific objective 2 of this plan.

The proposal for the EMFF 2021-2027 contributes to mainstreaming climate actions and to the overall target of 25% of the EU budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Actions supported by the fund are expected to contribute 30% of the overall financial envelope of the fund towards actions which help meet our climate objectives over the funding period. Relevant actions as proposed by the Member States will be identified during the preparation and implementation of their programmes.

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Contribution from the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds (EMFF) for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 to climate related EU spending

Explanation: This indicator measures the share of climate relevant expenditure under EMFF (2014-2020 and 2021-2027) in relation to the total budget allocation.

Source of data: EU Open Data Platform

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
4% expenditure of total EMFF 2014-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17% expenditure of total EMFF 2014-2020 0% expenditure of the EMFF 2021-2027 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22% expenditure of total EMFF 2014-2020 at the end of the implementation period 2% expenditure of the EMFF 2021-2027

DG MARE will strive to ensure that new revisions of EU legislation under this specific objective will explore simplification and burden reduction so that the new regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. Furthermore, every legislative proposal creating new burdens should also relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area.

Simplification and burden reduction are among the key objectives in the ongoing revision of the EU's fisheries control regulation, but will ultimately depend on the agreement achieved in the ongoing inter-institutional negotiations.³¹

Specific objective 1: More sustainable and competitive fisheries and aquaculture by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	
Result indicator: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures		
Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.		
Source of data: DG MARE		
Baseline N/A	Interim milestone (2022) Positive trend	Target (2024) Positive trend

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024

Mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change will be a defining vector for policymaking and implementation in the coming years. Climate change consequences such as acidification, deoxygenation, or changes in biological productivity are interfering profoundly, partly irreversibly, with ocean dynamics and ecosystems. **Healthy oceans play a crucial role in mitigating and adapting to climate change**, through the absorption of 25% of the emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and 90% of extra heat generated by the greenhouse effect.

Marine renewable energy will play a significant part in the decarbonisation of the EU's electricity production. By 2030, it is projected to reach at least four times its current capacity, and by 2050 it could provide up to 35% of the EU's electricity production. This is recognised by announcement in the European Green Deal of an **Offshore renewable energy strategy**. DG MARE will contribute to this initiative, led by DG ENER, by looking at the spatial planning and industrial dimension of the offshore renewables revolution. This will be complemented by a needs assessment for the massive development of the offshore wind industry until and beyond 2030 in terms of maritime space, as well as by an analysis whether the current legal framework under the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive³² is appropriate to strategically steer the development of renewable energy in European seas. Following the implementation deadline on 31 March 2021, DG MARE will assess the

³¹ COM(2018) 368 final - 2018/0193(COD) of 30.05.2018.

³² Directive 2014/89/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning.

implementation of the Directive by Member States through their maritime spatial planning processes, and report on it in 2022.

Impact indicator: Greenhouse gas emissions		
Explanation: This indicator measures man-made emissions of the so-called 'Kyoto basket' of greenhouse gases, which are integrated into a single indicator expressed in units of CO ₂ equivalents using each gas' global warming potential. It shows changes in percent of the emissions compared to 1990 levels.		
Source of the data: European Environmental Agency (Eurostat online data code: sdg_13_10)		
Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2020)	Target (2030)
-20.7%	-20%	-55%

From 2018 on, DG MARE together with the Joint Research Centre produces an annual EU Blue Economy Report³³ in an attempt to measure and monitor the **size of the blue economy in the EU**. In parallel, the blue economy indicators³⁴ IT tool was developed. It is used to produce the report and to give everyone access to blue economy data in a simplified, centralised and user-friendly manner. The goal is also to provide reliable and accurate data that may contribute to the development of informed policies and initiatives as part of the European Green Deal.

Seven sectors have traditionally contributed to the blue economy in the EU:

- Marine living resources
- Marine non-living resources
- Coastal tourism
- Port activities
- Shipbuilding and repair
- Maritime transport
- Blue Energy (only fixed offshore wind).

In 2017, the seven established sectors together generated €205 billion gross value added, a gross operating surplus (profit) of €89.9 billion, and a turnover of €712 billion. They directly employed 4.8 million people.

Emerging and innovative sectors as part of the blue economy are:

- Blue energy (including offshore floating wind energy and ocean energy (wave/tidal), floating solar panels, offshore hydrogen generation)
- Blue bio economy
- Marine minerals
- Desalination
- Maritime defence
- Submarine cables.³⁵

³³ https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/published-reports_en

³⁴ <https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/>

³⁵ [The EU Blue Economy Report 2020](#)

In 2017, the EU hosted 70% of global ocean energy installed capacity in its waters (38.9.5MW of the 55.8MW). Other sectors are catching up. The maritime defence sector accounted for over 177,000 jobs and the algae sector employed around 17,000 (direct and indirect). Desalination bioeconomy continues to be a key sector for countries suffering from water shortages, especially as a result of climate change (e.g. Spain, which currently hosts 60% of all EU desalination plants).

During the period 2014-2020, special efforts were made to reduce investment costs for small and medium enterprises aiming to start or scale up innovative services or products in the blue economy. The package of measures under **BlueInvest** included assistance and grants from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and venture capital from the European Investment Fund (EIF), backed by the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI). The aim was to increase their revenue prospects, but in the future they will also be contributing to the objectives of the **European Green Deal** such as decarbonisation, circular economy and biodiversity enhancement.

Contributing to the European Green Deal, the Commission will propose a **new approach to developing a sustainable blue economy**, to replace the Blue Growth strategy from 2012. This initiative will also contribute to economic recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. A public consultation will be launched in 2020.

The blueprint for vocational skills in the renewable energy and shipbuilding industries prepared under the Erasmus+ programme will be delivered in 2021. Although both sectors offer secure and challenging jobs for the future, companies are finding it difficult to hire qualified staff. The recommendations will feed into the **blue careers programme** that DG MARE will prepare. At the same time, we will work on a similar exercise for the blue bioeconomy encompassing fisheries, aquaculture as well as new industries exploiting material from marine living resources.

To support actions that stimulate the sustainable blue economy, **sea basin regional strategies³⁶** have been developed in the Atlantic, the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Western Mediterranean, the Back Sea and the Arctic Ocean. They strengthen regional cooperation including with third countries with whom we share the same seas.

³⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/sea_basins_en

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Size of the EU blue economy in terms of:

- Percentage of gross value added (GVA) generated by the blue economy relative to the total economy
- Percentage of employment in the blue economy relative to the total economy
- Direct employment in the blue economy in number of persons

Explanation: The below indicators measure sustainable economic development and employment.

Source of data: [European Commission's Blue indicators online dashboard³⁷](https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/access-online-dashboard_en)

Baseline (2017, latest known results)	Interim milestone ³⁸ (2019 data)	Target (2022)
Percentage of blue economy (BE) GVA over total economy: 1.5%	1.8%	2.0%
Percentage of BE employment over total economy: 2.0%	2.3%	2.5%
Direct employment: 4.48 million persons	5.0 million	5.15 million
BE GVA growth in the 3 sea basins covered by sea basin strategies (EU countries only)	+2%	+4%

Research in the behaviour of oceans and use of ocean resources is relevant to nearly all areas of the EU's Horizon Europe research programme for 2021-2027. Whilst the first and third pillars of the programme are devoted to excellent science and innovation and open to bottom-up proposals, the second pillar will tackle specific global challenges and the EU's industrial competitiveness. This includes a mission on "*healthy oceans, seas, coastal and inland waters*" which will increase significantly the proportion of the **research programme devoted to oceans**. DG MARE will play a leading role in defining the direction, preparing the work programmes and monitoring the output of this pillar through a new co-creation process.

As part of the **European Green Deal**, "*The Commission will support work to unlock the full benefits of the digital transformation to support the ecological transition. [with] (...) a very high precision digital model of the Earth*". In addition, the Commission's **Data Strategy** envisages "*A Common European Green Deal data space, to use the major potential of data in support of the Green Deal priority actions on climate change, circular economy, zero-pollution, biodiversity, deforestation and compliance assurance.*" The **European Marine Observation and Data Network** (EMODnet) will be a key component. It is already a key resource for those analysing the state and dynamics of Europe's seas. About a quarter of the users are from the private sector. The data portal will be further developed to bring higher resolution, a more complete data catalogue, fewer gaps, extension beyond Europe through partnerships with analogous efforts in other continents, more intuitive and more

³⁷ https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/access-online-dashboard_en

³⁸ Note that increased figures are not only due to real growth but also to the addition of new sectors/activities and changes in methodology. This is also applicable to the 2022 targets.

unified access. We will also work to facilitate its use for reporting obligations under EU legislation and closer integration with other components of the digital earth including those developed under the Copernicus programme. The ocean observations that feed into the digital earth will be rationalised through a new initiative to begin a process for setting priorities and sharing efforts between different agencies and authorities, at national and European levels.

All these efforts together will help increase productivity, stimulate innovation and reduce uncertainties in the blue economy.

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024

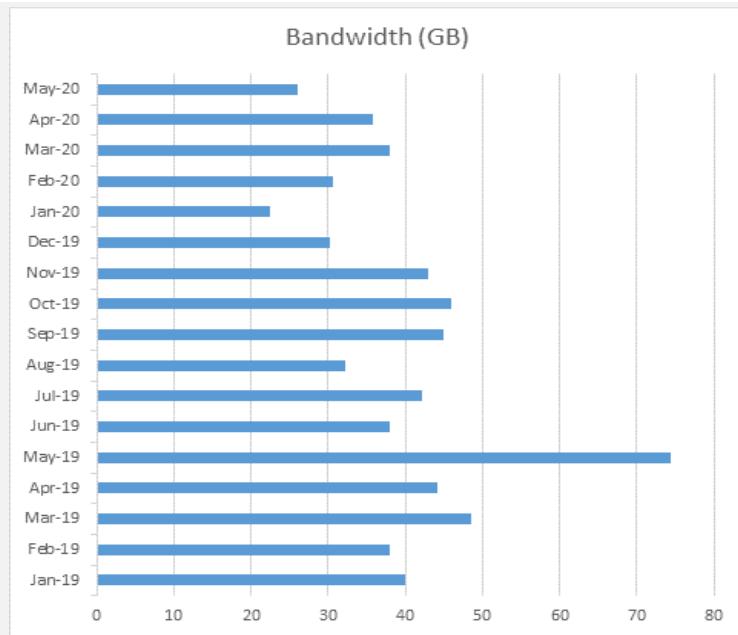
Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Improved marine knowledge measured by the degree of use of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) in terms of the quantity of downloaded data per month

Explanation: By making marine data more available and interoperable, EMODnet reduces uncertainties on the behaviour of the sea, which allows for innovation and productivity in the blue economy. The trends in data usage are at present the best way to measure progress.

Source of data: Annual Reports from EMODnet secretariat: <http://www.emodnet.eu/>

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)
Downloads per month (Gbytes) from the EMODnet central portal in terms of bandwidth (downloads from thematic portals are not included) in 2019: 43.47 Gbytes per month on average	50 Gbytes per month on average	100 Gbytes per month on average



Images of plastic bags at the bottom of ocean trenches, bottle tops found in the stomachs of seabirds and turtles entangled in abandoned fishing nets are powerful demonstrations of the plastic pollution of our seas. The EU has taken unprecedented legislative action to

reduce the quantity of plastic reaching the sea³⁹ to curb the impact of certain plastic products on the environment by imposing consumption reduction targets, separate collection, bans and clean-ups for the ten most common items found on beaches and introducing obligations for producers of fishing gear to take responsibility for its safe disposal. By making port fees independent of the amount of waste delivered, the Directive (EU) 2019/883 on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships disincentivises a previous practice of dumping waste at sea in order to avoid higher fees in ports (including passively-fished waste).

DG MARE will have responsibility, in close cooperation with the lead services DG ENV and MOVE, for implementing the parts of the two above-mentioned Directives relating to **fishing gear** and will work with standardisation organisations to develop standards for recyclability. The European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) already hosts a standardised set of beach litter data. Work will continue, under the auspices of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive⁴⁰, to do the same for **seafloor litter, floating litter and microplastics**.

DG MARE will continue to organise the global communication campaign centred around the organisation of beach clean-ups from plastics and other litter: **#EUBeachCleanUp campaign**. This campaign has been carried out in partnership with the European External Action Service and the EU delegations across the world. Importantly, it has been actively supported by the United Nations and carried out in partnership with the Smurfs, in a truly exceptional communication and citizen diplomacy instrument.

In addition, we will stimulate ocean literacy with particular emphasis on increasing understanding amongst youth of our impact on the oceans. The European Atlas of the Seas will be specially tailored to meet the requirements of this audience, in particular for schools.

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	
Result indicator: Reduction of the economic impact of marine litter measured in terms of median number of litter items per 100 metres of beach in the EU		
Explanation: Estimates of the economic impact of marine litter vary by an order of magnitude but are directly proportional to the amount of litter. Over the next years more data on the quantity and nature will become available but for now the only reliable data for which it is possible to construct a time series are from the amount of litter found on beaches monitored as part of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and available through the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet).		
Source of data: Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Common Implementation Strategy		
Baseline (2015-2016)	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)
133	110	80

³⁹ [Directive \(EU\) 2019/904](#)

⁴⁰ [Directive 2008/56/EC](#)

Maritime security is key to the development of a sustainable blue economy. The **EU Maritime Security Strategy** (EUMSS) and its Action Plan combine the efforts of all relevant maritime actors in the EU with a view to enhancing their efficiency and cost-effectiveness. A key element of the strategy is its cross-sectorial approach. Different maritime authorities performing coast-guard functions (e.g. border control, fisheries control, environment and defence) can and should work much more closely together and systematically share resources such as vessels, radars and information. Civil-military co-operation is also an element to be continually enhanced.

A building block of the EUMSS Action Plan is the **Maritime CISE** (Common Information Sharing Environment), which improves interoperability between over 300 surveillance authorities. Better information exchange contributes directly to enhanced maritime security. The interoperability developed by CISE supports European cooperation on coast guard functions at Member States' level and at EU level between EFCA, EMSA and FRONTEX.⁴¹ It will also be used for further technological development in the domain of maritime security. Once operational, the exchanges through CISE will increase both effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the actions at sea performed by each participating maritime authority.

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	
Result indicator: Maritime security measured by the number of new CISE (Common Information Sharing Environment) connections/ nodes		
Explanation: This indicator measures the capacity of Member States and other institutions (cf. European agencies) to connect to CISE and share their data.		
Source of data: EMSA report		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
10	+5	+10

The European Green Deal announced an **offshore renewable energy strategy** in 2020. Beyond issues related to energy policy (e.g. grid development, financing), access to maritime space, industrial and manufacturing capacities, interactions with other economic sectors that are using the sea, such as fisheries, tourism and aquaculture, as well as safeguarding marine biodiversity are core challenges that will be addressed in this strategy.

Through its competence and expertise for several maritime industries, as well as its experience in integrating different policies related to the sea, DG MARE will contribute significantly to the offshore renewable energy strategy (lead by DG Energy). Beyond the strategy, DG MARE will also assess whether the current framework for **Maritime Spatial Planning** is appropriate to address the challenges of offshore decarbonisation and its

⁴¹ European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex).

required massive upscaling in a perspective beyond 2030. DG MARE will support the emerging **ocean energy** technologies (e.g. tidal and wave) by facilitating licensing procedures and encouraging joint approaches by Member States to set up revenue schemes that support the deployment of those technologies.

Impact indicator: Share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption

Explanation: Renewable energy generation is given as the share of renewable energy consumption in gross final energy consumption. The gross final energy consumption is the energy used by end consumers (final energy consumption) plus grid losses and self-consumption of power plants

Source of the data: Eurostat (Eurostat online data code: [sdg_07_40](#))

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2020)	Target (2030)
18.88%	20%	32%

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Installed capacity of offshore wind energy and ocean energy in the EU

Explanation: This indicator measures the total installed capacity of offshore renewable energy production in EU waters, in MW/GW.

Source of data: The annual EU Blue Economy Report 2019, 2020 and Blue Economy Indicators⁴²

Baseline (end 2018) Source of data: The EU Blue Economy Report 2019, p. 63 and 66 ⁴³	Interim milestone (2019)	Target (2024)
Offshore wind energy installed capacity: 18.5 GW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.1 GW (with UK) • 12 GW (for EU without UK) 	21 GW (UE27) for 2023 Source: WindEurope
Ocean energy installed capacity: 38.9 MW	Ocean energy installed capacity: 39.5 MW	100 MW of tidal and wave energy Source: Ocean Energy Europe

DG MARE will strive to ensure that new revisions of EU legislation under this specific objective will explore simplification and burden reduction so that the new regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. Furthermore, every legislative proposal creating new burdens should also relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area.

⁴² https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/published-reports_en,
<https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/>

⁴³ https://blueindicators.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019_blue_economy_report_5.pdf

Specific objective 2: A sustainable blue economy generating sustainable economic development, jobs and prosperity by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
European Maritime and Fisheries Funds
for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027

Result indicator: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures

Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.

Source of data: DG MARE

Baseline	Interim milestone	Target
N/A	(2022) Positive trend	(2024) Positive trend

General objective 4: A Stronger Europe in the World

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024

With the UN Ocean Science Decade starting in 2021, recent scientific evidence points out that the oceans and their ecosystems are in a dire state due to climate change, pollution and other pressures from human activities such as the unsustainable exploitation of resources. In line with the **European Green Deal** and the ambition to **make Europe stronger in the world**, the state of the oceans calls for determined and coherent action by the EU and its Member States and for ambitious international cooperation.

International ocean governance is about managing and using the world's oceans and their resources in ways that keep our ocean healthy, productive, safe, secure and resilient. The EU is well placed to contribute thanks to its experience in sustainable ocean management. Under one overarching international ocean governance agenda the EU has brought together environment, fisheries and development policies that it has been leading on in recent years. Good progress has been made in recent years by the global community, and the EU in particular, to use multilateral and regional processes as well as to develop international instruments for better ocean governance. However, further action is needed to deliver on the agreed targets, in particular **Sustainable Development Goal 14** (SDG 14) on life below water.

The Commission will continue to promote sound ocean governance in the United Nations, the FAO, all Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and other relevant

international organisations and processes⁴⁴, as well as bilaterally. The EU has signed Ocean Partnerships with China and with Canada and has regular dialogues with strategic partners, such as Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, New Zealand and the USA, and is also strengthening ties on oceans with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries⁴⁵. Special attention will be given to cooperation on ocean governance and blue economy in the context of the EU's new strategy with Africa.

Our **main priorities for ocean governance** aim at:

- Ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of marine ecosystems, including in polar areas, against rapid climate change and accelerating biodiversity loss;
- Enforcing international rules, also by a zero tolerance approach in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and more effective RFMOs;
- Ensuring better coordination and collaboration between legal instruments, frameworks and bodies (global, regional and sectoral) for a more holistic and integrated management of the oceans;
- Reducing fishing overcapacity and elimination of harmful fisheries subsidies globally;
- Improving global transparency of the fisheries sector, including access arrangements and high seas activities.

The **EU's strong international engagement on ocean-related issues** will be actively promoted to all relevant audiences, in line with DG MARE's communication strategy. To that end, we will seek to coordinate with selected stakeholders and consider joint **communication actions** wherever possible.

Impact indicator: The European Union's voice counts in the world according to its citizens

Explanation: This indicator shows the percentage of EU citizens that tend to agree that the EU's voice counts in the world

Source of the data: [Eurobarometer](#)

Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
71%	Increase	Increase

⁴⁴ For example: G7, G20, the World Trade Organisation and the Arctic Council.

⁴⁵ For example, in the context of the negotiations on the post-Cotonou agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, as well as under the [Joint Communication: towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa \(JOIN\(2020\) 4 final of 09.03.2020\)](#).

Considering that not all marine life is subject to management measures, we will measure progress using an indicator for **tuna and tuna-like species** as per relevant scientific advice. We will focus on those species fished by the EU fleet, for which we have information on the state of the stocks across different oceans and regions, and that are also significant in EU consumption patterns. Tuna and tuna-like species stand high in the food chain: the health of these stocks will affect the situation of other species.

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024

Related to spending programmes:
Of international organisations, including
Regional Fisheries Management
Organisations

Result indicator: Sustainable management of the main regulated tuna and tuna-like species fished by the EU fleet under the purview of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which the EU is a Member

Explanation: This indicator measures to what extent the main tuna and tuna-like regulated species managed by RFMOs fished by the EU fleet are fished at sustainable levels ($F_{curr}/F_{MSY} \leq 1$)⁴⁶. The species concerned are those stocks fished by the EU fleet and for which the RFMOs scientific bodies have provided scientific advice available.

Source of data: Annual stock situation in scientific reports of RFMOs concerned. The data on results will be assessed qualitatively by the Commission (DG MARE), which could include indicators on the EU's implementation of SDG 14 on life below water.

Baseline (end 2019) Source: RFMO reports	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
17 out of 20 stocks ⁴⁷	17 out of 20 stocks but good progress made for at least one additional stock	18 out of 20 stocks but good progress made for the other two remaining stocks

Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) are key organisations for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of the highly migratory and straddling fish stocks and their ecosystems. They contribute to implementing the EU Biodiversity Strategy by 2030 for instance through measures to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems or the establishment of fisheries restricted areas. They also support the EU Farm to Fork Strategy by contributing to food security and fair and sustainable food systems. RFMOs are essential in the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and ensuring a level playing field for operators. Finally, the EU's fruitful cooperation with partners within RFMOs contributes to a stronger Europe in the world.

⁴⁶ A stock is considered subject to overfishing if the ratio of F_{curr}/F_{MSY} is greater than 1. F_{curr} : current fishing rate/mortality. F_{MSY} : the rate of fishing that produces the maximum sustainable yield (MSY).

⁴⁷ 20 tuna and tuna-like stocks targeted by the EU fleet: Albacore (North Atlantic, South Atlantic); bigeye (Atlantic, Eastern Pacific, Western Pacific, Indian Ocean); bluefin (East Atlantic); skipjack (Atlantic, Eastern Pacific, Western Pacific, Indian Ocean); swordfish (Atlantic, Mediterranean, Eastern Pacific, Western Pacific, Indian Ocean); yellowfin (Atlantic, Eastern Pacific, Western Pacific, Indian Ocean). See the relevant RFMOs managing those species at: <http://iccat.int/en/> ; <http://iotc.org/> ; <https://www.wcpfc.int/> ; <http://iattc.org/> ⁴⁸ RFMOs which manage highly-migratory species, mainly tuna: <http://iccat.int/en/>, <http://iotc.org/>.

The EU plays a prominent role in RFMOs by promoting better ocean governance, compliance and science-based fisheries management, including the ecosystem-based approach and the precautionary approach. The large majority of the **conservation measures** adopted by these organisations in their annual meetings – many of them proposed by the EU – are in line with the best available scientific advice. They are a good indicator to measure progress towards more sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international governance for stocks fished by the EU fleet. Even though decisions within RFMOs are generally taken by consensus, the EU is often able to steer the final decision, because of its long-standing experience with sustainable fisheries management.

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	Related to spending programmes: Regional Fisheries Management Organisations	
Result indicator: Conservation measures based on scientific advice adopted for the main regulated species fished by the EU fleet under the purview of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which the EU is a Member		
Explanation: The stance of the EU in international organisations dealing with fisheries management, in particular RFMOs, is based on the best available scientific advice in order to ensure that fishery resources are managed in accordance with the objectives laid down in Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy. The species concerned by the result indicators are those stocks fished by the EU fleet and for which the RFMOs scientific bodies have provided scientific advice.		
Source of data: Commission, DG MARE, based on RFMO reports ⁴⁸		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
57 out of the 65 (or 88%) conservation measures adopted by RFMOs in their annual meetings are in line with the best available scientific advice.	90%	95%

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing causes huge damages: it leads to collapse of fish stocks, destruction of marine ecosystems, poverty among coastal communities and damages to legitimate fishers and traders. This is why fighting IUU fishing is part of the EU's international ocean governance policy and its commitment to achieve the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goal 14** for a sustainable use of the sea and its resources.

Importing two-thirds of what we consume, the EU is the world's biggest importer of fishery and aquaculture products. We therefore have enormous leverage by not allowing products from IUU fishing into the single market.

⁴⁸ RFMOs which manage highly-migratory species, mainly tuna: <http://iccat.int/en/>, <http://iotc.org/>, <https://www.wcpfc.int/>, <http://iattc.org/>, <http://www.ccsbt.org/site/>

RFMOs which manage straddling fish stocks: <http://neafc.org/>, <http://nafo.int/>, <http://www.nasco.int/>, <http://www.seafao.org/>, <https://www.apsoi.org/>, <http://www.sprfmpoint/>, <http://www.ccamlr.org/>, <http://www.gfcm.org/gfcm/en>

We fight against IUU fishing with a zero-tolerance approach and support all States to abide with their international obligations as regards combatting IUU fishing. In cases of lack of engagement and non-cooperation, we are prepared to use all tools at our disposal, including import prohibitions as a last resort.

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027	
Result indicator: Fighting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing measured by the number of non-EU States that the Commission has engaged in a dialogue with and the number of countries having addressed their deficiencies.		
Explanation: This indicator measures the number of non-EU countries with whom the EU has conducted a formal dialogue and the number of countries that have successfully addressed identified deficiencies. ⁴⁹		
Source of data: Commission, DG MARE		
Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Number of countries that the Commission has conducted an IUU dialogue with: 65 (cumulative figure for 2012-2019)	68	70

One of the main operational elements of the IUU Regulation⁵⁰ is the **EU IUU catch certification scheme**. This scheme aims to ensure that fishery products imported to the EU stem from legal fishing operations in accordance with the international law of the sea and in compliance with national and regional conservation and management measures. EU Member States are responsible for the implementation of the scheme and, in particular, for performing all necessary IUU-related controls and verifications on imports of fishery products. Such tasks require certain structures, resources and supporting tools to be in place.

Currently, the scheme is paper-based. An IUU IT project (CATCH) is ongoing to digitalise the submission of information contained in catch certificates, processing statements and other relevant documents with the automations of the related procedures. The formal release of the **CATCH project**, functional and available to all Member States, took place in May 2019. CATCH functionalities will be further developed in the coming years in close cooperation with Member States to be adapted to the legal provisions currently discussed by the legislators in the context of the revision of the EU fisheries control Regulation, in view of the compulsory use of CATCH by stakeholders.

⁴⁹ The constraints affecting this indicator relate to international relations, and in this particular case, the domestic political situation of the countries concerned and their administrative capacities to implement reforms needed. Achieving the target will also depend on the countries' willingness to take the necessary steps and implement reforms at national level.

⁵⁰ [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations \(EEC\) No 2847/93, \(EC\) No 1936/2001 and \(EC\) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations \(EC\) No 1093/94 and \(EC\) No 1447/1999](#).

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	Related to spending programmes: European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027			
Result indicator: Control of imports of fisheries products in the EU measured by the number of refusals of catch certificates for imports by Member States				
Explanation: One of the main objectives of the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is to ensure the legality of imported fishery products and landings by fishing vessels. The control of imports is the best way to reach that objective. ⁵¹				
Source of data:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Member States' reporting on their refusals of imports into the EU, and – Commission (DG MARE) 	Baseline (2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)	
Number of refusals of catch certificates allowing for imports that have been reported by Member States to the Commission ⁵² : 16 Source: reports from Member States	24	32		

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) concluded between the EU and non-EU Member States contribute to the promotion of ocean governance at global level and serve to promote internationally the principles of the Common Fisheries Policy. The agreements are based on the principle of sustainable fishing and help the partner countries put in place an adequate governance framework and develop sustainable local fisheries. They help reinforcing administrative and surveillance capacities, contributing to the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, developing scientific capabilities and focusing on the development of sustainable local fisheries, including artisanal fishers communities. The role of SFPAs in promoting ocean governance needs to be further recognised. At the same time, the impact and visibility of supported activities could be improved and value for money of the agreements increased. Moreover, the issues of climate change and the development of the blue economy should become part of SFPAs and synergies with various development instruments could be reinforced.

In order to contribute to this strategic reflection on SFPAs, an **overall evaluation** is planned for end 2020 to take stock of the situation and find ways to improve further the SFPAs. This evaluation will inter alia help designing regional strategies for each main region

⁵¹ The IUU Regulation ([Council Regulation \(EC\) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing](#)) establishes a system of import controls of fisheries products for IUU related issues based on EU criteria for verifications. DG MARE provides guidance and information on cases of risk and discusses with Member States on the harmonized implementation of import controls. Member States are tasked with the control of imports and refusals and report to DG MARE on the latter. In order to support Member States in their control tasks, the Commission develops an EU-wide IT system for the management of the information required under the Catch Certification Scheme.

⁵² This number depends on the effectiveness of implementation by the Member States, as well as actual attempts by operators to import illegal products into the EU. Member States are responsible to control imports of fishery products into the EU and report to the Commission (DG MARE).

where the EU distant fishing fleet is active, i.e. Atlantic, Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. We will thereby address one of the recommendations made by the European Court of Auditors in its 2015 Special report on SFPAs⁵³. The result of this evaluation could feed into the report on the Common Fisheries Policy which is due for the end of 2022.

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	Related to spending programmes: Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements	
Result indicator: Number of sustainable fisheries partnership agreements (SFPAs) in force.		
Explanation: The number of SFPAs in force is directly linked to the capacity of the EU fishing fleet to conduct its fishing operations in non-EU waters in a highly regulated environment. ⁵⁴		
Source of data: the new or renewed SFPAs and Protocols published in the Official Journal of the EU. ⁵⁵		
Baseline (end 2019)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
13 SFPAs in force ⁵⁶	15 SFPAs in force	16 SFPAs in force

DG MARE will strive to ensure that new revisions of EU legislation under this specific objective will explore simplification and burden reduction so that the new regulation is targeted, easy to comply with and does not add unnecessary regulatory burdens. Furthermore, every legislative proposal creating new burdens should also relieve people and businesses of an equivalent existing burden at EU level in the same policy area.

Specific objective 3: More sustainable fisheries worldwide and improved international ocean governance by 2024	Related to spending programmes: - international organisations, including Regional Fisheries Management Organisations - European Maritime and Fisheries Funds for 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 - Sustainable fisheries partnership agreements	
Result indicator: Proportion of proposed legislative revisions that include burden reduction measures		
Explanation: The indicator measures how the Commission upholds its commitment to ensure that proposals for legislative revisions incorporate burden reduction measures, in the broader context of REFIT programme and One-In, One-Out approach. The indicator shows how many proposed legislative revisions out of the total, for each relevant specific objective, include measures that concretely reduce burden.		
Source of data: DG MARE		
Baseline	Interim milestone	Target

⁵³ [Special Report No 11/2015: Are the Fisheries Partnership Agreements well managed by the Commission?](#)

⁵⁴ The objective is to ensure as much as possible continuity between fishing grounds - in particular for the tuna fleet - through a network of SFPAs in force based on the following principles of the Common Fisheries Policy: sustainability, value for money, improved governance and consistency with other EU policies. Each year, on average 25% of the SFPA protocols expire. In order to ensure fishing continuity and maintain a network of SFPAs, new protocols must be negotiated and timely enter into force. Regarding the extension of the SFPA network, the capacity of the EU to engage into negotiations for new SFPAs, and to manage them, will depend on the guarantees obtained in terms of sustainability of the fishing stocks, and the availability of adequate financial and human resources.

⁵⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/ov/direct-access.html>

⁵⁶ Greenland, Morocco, Mauritania, Cabo Verde, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Ivory-Coast, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Cook Islands.

N/A	(2022) Positive trend	(2024) Positive trend
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D. Key performance indicators

From the result indicators identified in this strategic plan, we have selected **five key performance indicators** (KPIs) reflecting the core aspects of our policies and DG MARE's performance. Four KPIs relate to the delivery on the Commission's policy priorities (KPI 1 to KPI 4); one KPI relates to modernising the administration (KPI 5):

KPI 1 (related to specific objective 1)	Stocks fished at maximum sustainable yield levels
KPI 2 (related to both specific objectives 1 and 2)	Contribution from the European Maritime and Fisheries Funds (EMFF) 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 to climate related EU spending
KPI 3 (related to specific objective 2)	Installed capacity of EU offshore wind energy and ocean energy
KPI 4 (related to specific objective 3)	Sustainable management of the main regulated tuna and tuna-like species fished by the EU fleet under the purview of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) of which the EU is a Member
KPI 5 (related to modernising the administration)	Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions ⁵⁷

For more details on KPIs 1 to 4, please refer to the Strategy in part 1 and for KPI 5 to part 2 of this strategic plan.

⁵⁷ The European Commission Digital Strategy (C(2018)7118) calls on Commission services to digitally transform their business processes by developing new innovative digital solutions or make evolve the existing ones in line with the principles of the strategy. At the beginning of the year N+1, the Solution Owner and IT Investments Team will assess the progress made on the basis of the proposed modernisation plan. For each of the 3 solutions, a table will reflect – per principle – the progress achieved during the last year.

PART 2. Modernising the administration

In addition to the corporate initiatives to modernise the administration, in DG MARE we intend to contribute to modernisation via several local initiatives. These include the development of a local HR Strategy, which will provide the context to reflect on the new normal which we want for our DG, to improve the efficiency of our HR processes, and to contribute to improving staff's work-life balance. We will also continue with the automation and simplification of our financial processes, and implementation of our Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy (JAFS) together with DG Regional Development and DG Employment. In addition, we will improve our information and knowledge management, including by streamlining and enhancing the impact of our web presence, and we will implement a range of actions to support the transition to a digital, user-focused and data-driven administration. We will implement the MARE Digital Modernisation Plan and we will enhance our efforts on Protection of personal data, including through awareness raising amongst our staff. Finally, we will build on the momentum of the 2020 Greening MARE Package to boost our efforts under EMAS, with implementation of the Strategy to Reduce MARE's Carbon Footprint as a central pillar of our efforts.

As a modern public administration, the Commission implements an internal control framework inspired by the highest international standards. The Commission's system covers all the principles of internal control identified in the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission 2013 Internal Control framework, including financial control, risk management, human resource management, communication and the safeguarding and protection of information.

DG MARE has established an internal control system tailored to its particular characteristics and circumstances and regularly assesses its implementation and overall functioning. This assessment is based on indicators, the most strategic of which are listed in this section of the strategic plan.

A. Human resource management

DG MARE will develop a local HR strategy with a medium to long-term outlook (3–5 years) consistent with the overall corporate HR strategy. This new strategy will help ensure organisational efficiency and effectiveness, as well as good people management, with the aim of delivering high quality output in line with business objectives. Our key priority will be to ensure that allocation of human resources across the DG matches the priorities and workload.

In the period 2020-2024, HR policy and actions in DG MARE will focus on the following areas:

Modernising middle and senior management: female representation, work-life balance and professional development

Female representation in management in DG MARE has been well above the Commission average for a number of years. DG MARE is committed to ensuring that the

gender balance targets are fully attained at all management levels. DG MARE will maintain its current practice over the 2020-2024 period in order to further increase the percentage and achieve the target of 50% of women managers by the end of 2024.

We will continue focusing on the implementation of the Management Pledge adopted and signed by all managers in 2017. It was developed based on discussions with managers and non-managers, providing opportunities for topics related to work-life balance for all staff and the role of managers in staff engagement and development. The follow-up to the pledge is an integral part of the annual career development review for managers and of our recruitment process for management positions.

We will further support development of our managers through 360° evaluations for middle managers as well as through coaching, specialised training programmes within and outside DG MARE, and peer learning via the MARE Middle Management network established in 2019.

Staff wellbeing and engagement

In the 2018 Staff Survey, DG MARE obtained the best results across all Commission services, both in terms of staff engagement results, which increased from 67% to 78% (compared to the Commission average of 69%), and in terms of the greatest improvement in scores in most of the survey themes since the last survey (2016).

Our aim is to keep up to these great achievements and to improve the results even further. Based on analysis of the 2018 Staff Survey results and inclusive discussions with MARE staff, an Action Plan for Staff Engagement has been developed, which focuses on:

- Workload & Work-life balance,
- Improving Management,
- Supporting professional development,
- Encouraging innovation and managing change.

The key priority in the short-term is to tackle workload and to improve work-life balance. We will do this by reviewing priorities, improving the efficiency of our working methods, and promoting flexible working methods, such as working in project teams across Directorates on cross-cutting topics.

We will continue to focus our attention on actions to support the professional development of staff, promoting internal mobility, developing mentoring and coaching programmes for newcomers, and specific measures for the professional development of staff on temporary contracts. Beyond DG MARE, we will continue to work on corporate HR initiatives, such as the Fit@work programme and the Talent Management Strategy.

DG MARE will be following closely the results of the Commission Staff Survey in the coming years and will take action aimed at enhancing staff engagement and wellbeing wherever necessary.

Objective: DG MARE employs a competent and engaged workforce and contributes to gender equality at all levels of management to effectively deliver on the Commission's priorities and core business

Indicator 1 [mandatory]: Number and percentage of first female appointments to middle management positions in DG MARE

Source of data: SEC(2020)146 - Measures to reach gender equality at all levels of management by the end of 2024

Baseline (female representation in management) (2019)	Target (2022) ⁵⁸
47% of MARE middle managers are women (9 women out of 19 managers)	<u>First female appointments</u> targets assigned by the Commission for MARE: – number: 1 out of 2 – percentage: 50%

Indicator 2 [mandatory]: DG MARE staff engagement index

Source of data: Commission staff survey [data provided by DG HR]

Baseline (2019)	Target (2024)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2018 Staff Survey: 78% (up 11 percentage points since 2016. Commission average is 67%). – 2018 Commission Staff Survey: DG MARE obtained the highest Staff Engagement score across the Commission, and the largest improvement since 2016. – July 2019: MARE Management adopted a new Staff Engagement Action Plan to address the main concerns expressed by staff in the 2018 Staff Survey. 	80%

⁵⁸ The target will be revised and extended for the period 2023-2024 by January 2023.

B. Sound financial management

Shared management:

For the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) material irregular expenditure is corrected by deduction from the accounts to be submitted by 15 February of year *n*. The remaining amount at risk is represented by the residual total error rate (RTER).

The RTERs reported by the Member States and validated by DG MARE applied to the relevant expenditure result in the overall amount at risk for that year, represented by the RTER. DG MARE assesses the reliability of these error rates through desk review and, where necessary, fact-finding missions and compliance audits before or following the submission of the annual assurance packages. In particular, the compliance audits are carried out with the objective to seek, via the review of the work of the audit authority, reasonable assurance that no serious deficiency in the monitoring and control system remains undetected, unreported and therefore uncorrected. Subsequently, DG MARE concludes on the reliability of the error rates for the accounting year 1 July N-1 to 30 June N ("confirmed error rates"). The confirmed RTER represents the most relevant key performance indicator of the residual risk since the whole control chain has been applied to it.

Direct management:

In the period 2017-2020, with the introduction of the electronic circuits for financial transactions, significant optimisation and efficiency gains were achieved in the financial processes. During 2020-2024 further automation and simplification in the processes will be sought, aiming at maximizing the efficiency gains.

Objective: The authorising officer by delegation has reasonable assurance that resources have been used in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that cost-effective controls are in place which give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of underlying transactions

Indicator 1 [mandatory]: Estimated risk at closure

Source of data: Annual Activity Report

Baseline (2019)	Target (2024)
< 2% of relevant expenditure	< 2% of relevant expenditure

Indicator 2: Cost-effectiveness of control

Source of data: Annual Activity Report

Baseline (2019)	Target (2024)
Overall cost of controls as percentage of payments made = 1.2%	Overall cost of controls as percentage of payments made ≤ 5%

C. Fraud risk management

DG MARE has developed and implemented a Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy (JAFS) together with DG Regional Development and DG Employment. It was elaborated based on the methodology provided by OLAF and updated following the new anti-fraud developments, including the 2019 Commission anti-fraud strategy update and a study on the Member States' implementation of anti-fraud measures. The JAfs covers the whole anti-fraud cycle: prevention, detection, investigation and corrective measures. It seeks to reinforce existing measures in place for the protection of the financial interests of the EU, by providing support to Member States in their anti-fraud efforts and strengthening the capacity of DGs to deal with fraud, as well as intensifying cooperation with OLAF. The controls aimed at preventing and detecting fraud are essentially the same as those intended to ensure the legality and regularity of the transactions.

The main common actions concern:

- Supporting Member States' authorities in their administrative efforts to implement efficient and appropriate anti-fraud measures;
- Strengthening processes for the involvement of external competent public service and civil society actors;
- Further strengthening the structured and systematic exchange of experience and information with other services dealing with fraud and corruption;
- Ensuring that desk officers and auditors are continuously vigilant to prevent and detect fraud, including conflict of interests.

The revised JAfs action plan for shared management funds is extended to 2025, to cover until the end of the current programming period (2014-2020), as the eligibility period for programmes ends on 31 December 2023 and closure is expected by 2025 (with the last annual accounts foreseen in February 2025). At the same time, this extended lifespan will also cover the start of the next programming period (2021-2027). A revision of the JAfs may be carried out, if deemed necessary, in the light of experience obtained on the implementation of the 2021-2027 programmes.

Objective: The risk of fraud is minimised through the application of effective anti-fraud measures and the implementation of the Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy⁵⁹ aimed at the prevention, detection and correction⁶⁰ of fraud

Indicator: Implementation of the actions included for DG MARE in the Joint Anti-Fraud strategy over the whole strategic plan lifecycle (2020-2024)

Source of data: DG MARE annual activity report, Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy of DGs REGIO, EMPL and MARE 2020-2025, OLAF reporting

Baseline (2020)	Target (2024)
Joint Anti-Fraud Strategy of DGs REGIO, EMPL and MARE, updated and adopted on 20/12/2019.	100% of action points implemented in time.

D. Digital transformation and information management

Information and knowledge management

DG MARE will continue the revamping of its web presence in line with corporate guidance under the digital transformation process. This involves putting user needs first, making what the EU does easier to understand and striving for cost efficiency, including by reducing the overall amount of content and number of **websites** maintained by DG MARE.

DG MARE will deploy its intranet as a means to sharing information between management and staff and among staff, sustaining a collaborative community of active users. DG MARE will proactively align internal communication actions with the forthcoming “together” campaign, fostering a harmonized approach and harvesting efficiency gains, where relevant.

MARE’s Staff Engagement Action Plan contains actions aiming to improve **information flow** in the DG, in particular between colleagues working with a specific sea-basin or Member State. This includes, for example, the development of informal thematic or geographic networks. In addition, we continue to try and improve process for bringing newcomers on-board more rapidly, and also to draw on **knowledge** of colleagues with long-standing experience (Active Seniors, Legacy Talks).

⁵⁹ Communication from the Commission 'Commission Anti-Fraud Strategy: enhanced action to protect the EU budget', [COM\(2019\) 196 final of 29.04.2019](#) – 'the CAFS Communication' – and the accompanying action plan, [SWD\(2019\) 170 final](#) – 'the CAFS Action Plan'.

⁶⁰ Correction of fraud is an umbrella term, which notably refers to the recovery of amounts unduly spent and to administrative sanctions.

Digital transformation

In DG MARE, a dedicated unit defines and implements an integrated policy on fisheries data management supporting the Common Fisheries Policy, including its external dimension. We aim at high data quality governed in accordance with the principles laid down in the EC data strategy and in line with the timeline indicated therein, thereby responding effectively to the needs of fisheries management stakeholders.

DG MARE has developed a **Digital Modernisation Plan** (DMP) in line with the core principles of the European Commission Digital Strategy (ECDS). Moreover, we ensure that data assets are governed in accordance with corporate rules on data governance. The Digital Modernisation Plan will be implemented in close cooperation with central services in order to ensure that needs covered at corporate level are adequately fulfilled and that specific needs of DG MARE follow the principles of the ECDS:

- Digital by default and Once-Only: information should be provided once only to the Commission and re-used internally. Our IT Strategy and Data Strategy focuses on a comprehensive management of data, available and shared with relevant stakeholders;
- Security and privacy: it is necessary to ensure that our digital solutions are compliant with the Commission's IT-security and information-security policies and standards. To this end, DG MARE follows the implementation plan designed by DIGIT.S;
- Openness and transparency: information needs to be shared among the Commission services and Agencies when appropriate. DG MARE will continue to share its data and IT services (software for exchanging data on Fisheries and IT support) with Member States and other stakeholders who are also involved in our decision making for IT matters;
- Interoperability and cross-border: DG MARE policies require digital public services available across borders, supporting the free flow of data based on international standards;
- User-centric, data-driven, agile: DG MARE will privilege the re-use of solutions, a careful design of user interfaces and data visualisation. Open-source solutions will be favored when equivalent in total cost and cybersecurity. DG MARE will follow corporate recommendations on re-usability and user-interface design.

All new developments must follow the principles of the EC Digital Strategy, existing IT solutions must be adapted as far as it is possible taking into account business priorities and available resources.

DG MARE has launched an ambitious process to update its IT Strategy, to define a comprehensive Data Strategy and to identify the technical solutions needed to support them. DG MARE will collaborate with DG DIGIT for using innovative data solutions in an evolving technological scenario. Corporate and local governance should ensure that IT solutions covering DG MARE data needs follow the above core principles of the ECDS and other corporate requirements. DG MARE is developing a timetable and a data strategy

implementation plan that covers an assessment of current maturity, the mobilisation of necessary business stakeholders, different small-scale prototypes, the development of a data lake pilot by end of 2021, leading to a larger scale data strategy aligned with the principles of the ECDS.

Objective: DG MARE is using innovative, trusted digital solutions for better policy-shaping, information management and administrative processes to forge a truly digitally transformed, user-focused and data-driven Commission

Indicator 1 [mandatory]: Degree of implementation of the digital strategy principles by the most important IT solutions⁶¹

Source of data: DG MARE (data provided partially by DG DIGIT)

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
Ocean Storage – 0%	Ocean Storage – 67%	Ocean Storage – 94%
FLUX-FMC – 0%	FLUX-FMC – 61%	FLUX-FMC – 94%
EUMOFA – 55%	EUMOFA – 85%	EUMOFA – 95%

Indicator 2 [mandatory]: Percentage of DG MARE's key data assets for which corporate principles for data governance have been implemented

Source of data: DG MARE

Baseline N/A	Interim milestone (2022)	Target (2024)
25%	50%	80%

Document management

In the period 2020-2024, DG MARE will support the transition to a digital, user-focused and data-driven administration. Our local actions are in line with the corporate strategies and are directly driven by the corporate e-Domec policy (Electronic Archiving and Document Management in the European Commission). In the near future, the Decisions on document management⁶² and electronic and digitalised documents⁶³ will be replaced by a new Decision on Records Management and Archives. These changes will reflect the evolution in the Document and Archives Management landscape and the increasing digitalisation of the

⁶¹ The European Commission Digital Strategy (C(2018)7118) calls on Commission services to digitally transform their business processes by developing new innovative digital solutions or make evolve the existing ones in line with the principles of the strategy. At the beginning of the year N+1, the Solution Owner and IT Investments Team will assess the progress made on the basis of the proposed modernisation plan. For each of the 3 solutions, a table will reflect – per principle – the progress achieved during the last year.

⁶² 2002/47/EC, ECSC, Euratom.

⁶³ 2004/563/EC, Euratom.

Commission, moving from the central concept of “document” to “record”, a broader concept in line with a data driven culture. DG MARE will undertake the following **priority actions**:

- **Towards a digital, paperless administration**

Electronic signatures and workflows: Qualified electronic signature will replace the handwritten signature in the future. It will only be applied for documents listed in the corporate inventory of types of documents, while the full implementation of electronic workflows will contribute to the reduction of office paper consumption.

Integration to Hermes Repository Services (HRS): Integration of IT systems into the Commission’s central register “Hermes” making sure e-Domec rules are followed.

- **Data, information and knowledge sharing, networking and a data driven administration**

Promoting a culture of knowledge sharing and breaking silos: Widest sharing of files while ensuring the protection and security of sensitive and classified information on a “Need to know” basis. Communication and training on document (record) management.

Data-driven culture – networking: MARE DMOs (Document Management Officers) will closely cooperate with the following networks: MARE e-Domec correspondents; data governance partners (local data correspondent, data stewards or owners); corporate community of practice for DMOs.

Data-driven culture - Digital preservation strategy: MARE DMOs will cooperate with IT staff on the adequate preservation of data information systems ensuring that information is preserved in accordance with its administrative, legal or historical value, promoting “archiving by design” when developing business applications.

Data-driven culture - Artificial intelligence: DG MARE will follow the progress made by the Commission in the use of automation and artificial intelligence in the document (record) management domain while ensuring better metadata quality of documents and files.

Data-driven culture - Corporate search: In order to improve corporate search in full compliance with legal and security requirements, DG MARE will ensure proper electronic register and filing of documents, promote the development of a high quality filing plan and promote better metadata quality.

Protection of personal data

Data Protection Coordinator of DG MARE will closely cooperate with the controllers and Document Management Officers with view to sharing the knowledge and correct application of the rules on the protection of personal data. DG MARE's work will continue the focus on ensuring compliance with these rules, in particular by:

Keeping an updated and complete inventory of all data processing operations

- New records and finalisation of the conversion of the notifications of DG MARE into records in the IT system dedicated to record keeping of the Commission – the DPMS which then makes all finalised records available for public consultation in the public register.

Continued assessment of compliance with general principles

- The Data Protection Coordinator will keep the controllers in DG MARE informed about the rules and principles and check with the controllers whether the processing operations under their responsibility are compliant with these rules and principles, in particular lawfulness, data minimisation and storage limitation.

Appropriate information provided to the data subjects

- People whose data processes DG MARE will be properly informed through concise and intelligible privacy statements (including a thorough exercise of updating the specific privacy statements on the websites under DG MARE's responsibility).

Implementation of the Commission decision (EU) 2019/1862

- DG MARE will follow internal rules in relation to the provision of information to data subjects and the restrictions of certain of their rights in the context of implementing Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Organisation of awareness raising events

- Data Protection Coordinator of DG MARE will continue to organise lunch conferences about the topic, trainings to newcomers and, if necessary, joint workshops with the executive agency EASME to explain how to protect personal data when managing projects delegated to EASME by DG MARE.

Indicator 3 [mandatory]: Percentage of staff attending awareness raising activities on data protection compliance

Source of data: DG MARE

Baseline (2018)	Interim milestone (2021)	Target (2024)
20%	60%	100% of staff

E. Sound environmental management

In order to contribute to the Commission's commitment to reach net carbon neutrality by 2030, DG MARE adopted in early 2020 a package of measures to reduce our environmental footprint at local level. The **2020 Greening MARE package** includes at its core, the Strategy to Reduce DG MARE's Carbon Footprint⁶⁴, a MARE Green Pledge⁶⁵ signed by all managers, and a "MARE New Year's Resolution 2020" video featuring MARE colleagues and teams making a personal pledge to adopt a green behaviour at work.

The Green Strategy covers the following core areas for which we set targets to reduce MARE's carbon footprint: MARE conferences, missions, commuting to work, resources and waste, electricity and gas. The reductions will be achieved through a combination of structural measures and supporting actions, such as training, and promotion of "good practices". Colleagues are encouraged to adopt on a voluntary basis such good practices to help us reduce our carbon footprint, and meet our target. For certain areas, relating for example to infrastructure or energy use, we will require the support of the OIB to achieve our objectives.

In addition to improvements at local level, DG MARE will continue to contribute to ongoing corporate efforts to reduce the Commission's environmental footprint. This will be done through our contribution to the **EMAS**⁶⁶ Steering Committee, which DG MARE was invited to join in 2019 following our active contribution to waste-reduction in the Commission, as well as through the EMAS network and by sharing good practice with other services. In addition, DG MARE is an active member of the Steering Committee for the Study on the Feasibility of Making the Commission Carbon-neutral by 2030, which will provide key input for the Commission to adopt longer-term measures to meet its 2030 carbon-neutrality objective.

The table below reflects the targets and outputs adopted in our Strategy to Reduce DG MARE's Carbon Footprint. In the absence of corporate environmental targets beyond 2020, we have adopted as our target an 8% annual reduction, based on the best available science⁶⁷. At our level, therefore, we set a target to reduce the carbon footprint of DG MARE by 8% per year as of 2020, equivalent to a 34% reduction by 2024. As we do not have data on DG MARE's total emissions, beyond those generated by our missions, this target will be applied to each of the areas in the Strategy, at the level at which we can monitor our progress. The targets in this action plan may also be revised in light of new corporate targets which the Commissions may adopt in the coming years and the potential new areas that will be included in the monitoring system.

⁶⁴<https://myintra.ec.europa.eu/dg/mare/NewsPortal/Documents/MareIntranetNewsMain/strategy-to-reduce-dg-mare-s-carbon-footprint.pdf>

⁶⁵<https://myintra.ec.europa.eu/dg/mare/collaboration/Documents/greening/signed-management-greening-pledge.pdf>

⁶⁶ Eco Management and Audit Scheme.

⁶⁷ The UNEP emissions gap report 2019 calculated that to get in line with the Paris Agreement, emissions must drop 7.6% per year from 2020 to 2030 for the 1.5°C goal.

Objective: DG MARE takes full account of its environmental impact in all its actions and actively promotes measures to reduce the related day-to-day impact of the administration and its work

Indicator: Annual CO₂ emissions from MARE missions (tonnes per person)

Source of data: DG HR EMAS team (via PMO) - data on missions

Baseline	Target 2024
2018	
2,9 tonnes per person	1,9 tonnes per person (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator:

Average number of working days (per person) for which MARE staff travelled by car

Source of data: DG MARE survey of green behaviours (February 2020)

Baseline 2019	Target 2024
41,4 days	27,3 days (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator:

Amount of PMD (plastic & metal) waste we produce in J99 (kg per person)

Source of data: OIB

Baseline 2018	Target 2024
1,9 kg per person	1,3 kg per person (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator:

Paper sheets used in J99 (per person)

Source of data: OIB

Baseline 2018	Target 2024
8838	5825 (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator: Unsorted waste per person in J99 (kg per person)

Source of data: OIB

Baseline 2018	Target 2024
129 kg	85,1 kg (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator: Consumption of electricity & gas in J99 (kWh per person)

Source of data: OIB

Baseline 2018	Target 2024
3628 kWh per person	2394,5 kWh per person (equivalent to a 34% reduction)

Indicator: % of MARE conferences⁶⁸ for which we offset emissions

Source of data: DG MARE

Baseline 2019	Target 2024
0%	100%

⁶⁸ Organised using an external service provider.