



**Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**  
**Common Implementation Strategy**

**9th meeting of the  
Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE)**

*0930-1800: 26 February 2014*

*Conference Centre Albert Borschette, Room 1C, Rue Froissart 36, 1040 Brussels, Brussels*

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*Title:* Reporting package for MSFD Article 11 on monitoring programmes

*Prepared by:* DG ENV

*Date prepared:* 11/02/2014

*Background*

The development of reporting requirements for MSFD Article 11 by WG DIKE has led to the preparation of a 'Reporting Sheet' which defines the structure and content of the information to be reported, associated guidance on completion of the reports and guidance on the reporting mechanisms.

These three elements were combined as a 'reporting package' for MSFD monitoring programmes, which complements the Recommendation on monitoring adopted by the MSCG in May 2013.

This package was adopted by MSCG on 11 February 2014.

**WG DIKE is invited to:**

- a. Note the adopted reporting package.

# Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)

## *Common Implementation Strategy*

### Reporting on monitoring programmes for MSFD Article 11

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#### 1 Introduction

Article 11 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) provides legally-binding requirements for Member States to establish and implement coordinated monitoring programmes for the ongoing assessment of the environmental status of marine waters. Member States are to notify the Commission of their monitoring programmes by 15 October 2014 so that the Commission can assess whether the elements notified constitute an appropriate framework to meet the requirements of the Directive.

The Directive provides no particular guidance on the format and content of the reports which need to be notified to the Commission by Member States under each stage of their marine strategies (i.e. the initial assessment, the determination of GES, the setting of environmental targets, the monitoring programmes and the programmes of measures). However, there are several key reasons why reporting structure, content and format have been discussed and agreed with Member States for each reporting round: some are directly linked to the notification obligation (the Commission needs to assess the adequacy and coherence of the reports (for Articles 12 and 16)), and some relate to actions that could be achieved through other processes but could also benefit from the reporting process (the Member States need to cooperate across the regions and subregions in implementation of their strategies and the European Environment Agency needs to draw upon the information to prepare European state of the environment reports). For all these purposes, having a structured common format for reporting is not legally binding but is a significant asset for the potential users of the reports. It can also be a help to Member States to work to a well-defined product. As has been common practice for reporting on other environmental directives, such agreed formats are developed in close cooperation with Member States and defined in what is termed a Reporting Sheet.

This reporting package has been developed with the aim of assisting and facilitating reporting by Member States in their implementation of the Directive. The reporting package does not constitute formal guidance on the interpretation of the Directive.

#### 1.1 Development of reporting requirements

The Working Group on Data, Information and Knowledge Exchange (WG DIKE) of the MSFD's Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) initiated discussions on reporting of MSFD monitoring programmes at its meeting in October 2012 (DIKE 6/2012/12). Proposals were further developed at the Ad-hoc Monitoring meeting in January 2013 (Ad-hoc Monitoring 2013/3) and at WG DIKE in March 2013 (DIKE 7/2013/04), whilst at the same time an overall concept paper on MSFD monitoring was being developed (Ad-hoc Monitoring 2013/2; GES 9/2013/3). The main part of the reporting paper and the 10 key questions for reporting, agreed by WG DIKE in March 2013, were combined with the monitoring concept paper and presented to the CIS Marine Strategy Coordination Group

(MSCG) as a Recommendation (MSCG 10/2013/05rev). MSCG adopted the *Recommendation*, after final amendments, on 7 May 2013<sup>1</sup>.

Based on the agreed 10 key questions in the *Recommendation*, a proposed structure, content and format for reporting has been developed as a Reporting Sheet. This proposal was discussed at WG DIKE in March 2013 and further developed by a WG DIKE drafting group on 4 June 2013; WG DIKE provided comments on a revised version (DIKE DG/2013/02rev), distributed on 19 June. A revised version (rev2), reflecting comments received from DE, DK, ES and UK, was distributed to WG DIKE on 15 July, requesting that the Reporting Sheet now be used as a basis for preparation of schemas and reporting tools. Further comments were received on rev2 from DE, FR, HR, IT, MT, RO and SE. These comments focused on issues related to reporting processes and to particular details in the Reporting Sheet, but gave overall support for preparation of schemas and reporting tools.

During August 2013 the conversion of the Reporting Sheet into schemas and a web-based reporting tool started. This began with designing a suitable database structure and web forms and identifying the term lists needed. This work has led to clarification of some of the formats and layout of questions in the Reporting Sheet, which were reflected back into the paper discussed at WG DIKE in October 2013 (DIKE 8/2013/03). A revised version of the Reporting Sheet, which accommodated the comments received at WG DIKE in October 2013, was presented to MSCG in November 2013 (MSCG 11/2013/12). Testing by Member States during October and November 2013 of the Web-form reporting tool and associated schemas for Article 11 reporting provided a series of comments (DIKE DG/2014/02), some of which were best accommodated by minor adjustment of the Reporting Sheet, as presented in DIKE DG/2014/03. A Drafting Group of WG DIKE met in January 2014 to finalise the Reporting Sheet, associated guidance and guidance on reporting mechanisms. This 'package' for Article 11 reporting is presented here.

## 1.2 Aim of reporting on monitoring programmes

Reporting to the Commission on MSFD monitoring programmes is a formal requirement of the directive (Art. 11(3)). According to the *Recommendation*, a key aim of this reporting is to provide sufficient information for the Commission to undertake its Article 12 assessment effectively. This will enable the Commission to verify that the monitoring programmes comply with the requirements of the Directive, particularly in relation to whether they will enable environmental status and progress with targets to be assessed, cover all relevant aspects (e.g. of MSFD Annex III), and are sufficiently coordinated, coherent and consistent with the monitoring programmes of neighbouring states in the same marine region/subregion.

The reporting therefore needs to include information about what will be monitored, where, with what spatial resolution and temporal frequency, and with what methodologies. The Commission also promoted the fact that through the reporting process, the Member States could also notify elements that would help the assessment process for article 12. For that purpose, items concerning the elaboration process of the monitoring programmes, self assessment, and timelines for filling gaps were included, even if the Directive does not require them specifically from the Member States.

The detail of what was decided to be reported is to be based on the 10 agreed questions for reporting in Annex 3 of the *Recommendation* which in turn are directly linked to the requirements of the Directive (particularly Article 11 and Annex V). It is consequently helpful to both the Member States and the Commission to discuss and agree upon the contents and format of these reports and the means of making this information available in order to help ensure they are well suited to the needs of the Article 12 assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> 2013. Monitoring under Marine Strategy Framework Directive: Recommendations for implementation and reporting. pp25. <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/5768bf63-7c69-412a-85fb-3b285ee9d96d> [Referred to in this paper as the *Recommendation*].

However, in developing this requirement for reporting to the Commission it has been helpful also to consider other possible uses of reported information on the monitoring programmes:

- a. For national purposes to support development and implementation of monitoring programmes, including use at policy level and for technical delivery;
- b. For stakeholders and the public, to inform them of the programmes;
- c. For neighbouring countries and regional organizations (e.g. Regional Sea Conventions) to foster cooperation within the (sub)region;
- d. For EU level to inform the Commission and others of the Member State implementation.

Consideration of these other possible uses could help develop better synergies between the reporting to the Commission and other needs, where there is some commonality in requirements. These aspects were further considered in discussions with WG DIKE on decentralized reporting and joint documentation, in order to develop more effective and efficient reporting systems. Discussion on these issues has led to the need for clarity on what constitutes a formal notification under Article 11(3) and how this relates to information held at Member State level, such as in web-based information systems. This is addressed in Section 2.

## 2 Reporting mechanisms for MSFD Article 11

This section outlines the range of possible mechanisms for preparing the reporting information as part of the formal requirement to notify the Commission, as required under MSFD Art. 11(3), and linkages to decentralised systems.

Each Member State has the right to submit any information it considers appropriate as part of its formal notification under Article 11(3). This could include, for example, submission of documents ('text-based reports') to address all or part of the required Article 11 report; these may have also been used for stakeholder consultation and governmental approval processes. This type of report was prepared by all Member States for reporting in 2012 under Art. 8, 9 and 10<sup>2</sup>.

### 2.1 Information structure and content needed for the Article 11 report

The content of the Reporting Sheet has been developed with the intention of accommodating all the information (structure and content) considered by the Commission as necessary to enable it to perform its Article 12 assessment. The Reporting Sheet includes:

- a. A structure for reporting on Art. 11, centred on the GES Descriptors and using a two-tier Programme/Sub-programme structure;
- b. Specific categorical information which facilitates analysis and use across Member States and regions;
- c. Textual information which explains the categorical information at (b) or adds additional relevant information;
- d. Web URL links to where additional information can be found.

Provided the Reporting Sheet is completed fully, there should be no need for additional information, other than what is specifically referred to in web URL links.

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<sup>2</sup> This may in part be due to agreeing Reporting Sheets only in June 2012, therefore necessitating Member States to prepare their documentation before this time to ensure they could report on schedule in October 2012.

## 2.2 Format of the information

A key aim of the Reporting Sheet is also to provide the information content in a standard format as this has the following benefits:

- a. The information is in a structured format to enable easier review across multiple Member States;
- b. The information can be readily aggregated into a common database for subsequent summary and analysis (e.g. for Article 12 assessment);
- c. The information is in a common format for dissemination (e.g. through WISE-Marine).

The preferred format for reporting information is XML, which has proven to be a reliable format for the types of information (mixtures of text, categorical data and values) collected in Directive reporting and is readily processed in onward applications.

Under circumstances where the same Reporting Sheet information (content) is made available but in different formats (electronic or paper) it is not then feasible and/or practical to use it in the ways given above.

The generation of XML files requires the reported information be held in a structured database. There are three options for this for Article 11 reporting:

- Option A. In the Web-form application developed for Article 11 reporting, managed by the EEA, which automatically generates the XML and submits it to ReportNet (see DIKE 8/2013/05);
- Option B. In a web-based application (e.g. Content Management System), managed at Member State or Regional level, capable of exporting the information in the XML format;
- Option C. In a non web-based application (e.g. database), managed at Member State or Regional level, capable of exporting the information in the XML format;

A further option (Option D) is to use formats which do not allow generation of standard XML files; this could include provision as pdf files or other electronic formats.

It is expected that many Member States will use Option A, especially where they do not have bespoke information management systems in place for MSFD implementation.

Option B has been discussed within WG DIKE and encouraged by the Commission as part of a forward process to modernise reporting processes via 'decentralised' systems (as the systems that hold the information are held by the competent authorities in the Member States or anyone mandated by them). It has the following benefits:

- a. It enables the Member State to prepare and hold its information in a manner suited to its national information systems and needs, including information additional to that needed for formal reporting to the Commission such as specifications for practical implementation of the monitoring;
- b. It provides open access to the information for all stakeholders, thereby fostering improved understanding of MSFD implementation within and across countries;
- c. It provides a mechanism for the Member State to continuously update its information from one implementation cycle to another, or, if necessary, throughout the 6-year formal reporting cycles to reflect the changing nature of some elements of the monitoring programmes, especially the aspects related to operational implementation;
- d. It enables ready generation of reporting information to the Commission in XML format (either by a manual 'push' mechanism or a more automated 'pull' mechanism);

- e. Where the information is generated and held at regional level (such as in a Regional Sea Convention), it can save resources in preparation and maintenance (the information is prepared once for multiple countries) and it fosters coherence in implementation of the Directive. In such cases, the Member States would still have the responsibility to indicate the information held at this regional level is the information they want to be considered as part of their formally reported information for their MFD monitoring programme (see Section 2.5).

Option C will most likely be used by those Member States who maintain internal data management systems for policy delivery (and who have not yet developed web-based systems - Option B - with similar purposes).

The final Option D does not allow generation of standard XML files. Whilst use of such formats may be a helpful way to prepare draft material (e.g. prior to its incorporation into any of the three database options above), it is not the Commission's preferred format for final transmission of the information as it may provide a different report structure and the information cannot readily be integrated with that of other Member States for the purposes described above.

It is moreover acknowledged that Member States may prepare and submit a 'traditional' text-based paper report, along with submitting XML files, as such documents are anyway prepared for national/stakeholder uses. When such documents are officially adopted by the national competent authorities, the Member State may wish to consider them as the reference document for their notification to the Commission, even if part of their content has been exported into a database and reported in XML format.

### 2.3 Reporting language<sup>3</sup>

Member States have the right to complete the reporting sheets in any official EU language.

However, reporting in English is strongly encouraged by the Commission for the following reasons:

- a. The information reported will be needed to support and enhance ongoing cooperation amongst Member States within a region or subregion (when the information is made accessible via WISE-Marine, for example); use of a common language will facilitate such cooperation.
- b. The translation of a Member State's information into a common language will support its further use in aggregation of the information to regional, European and global scales for ongoing State of the Environment reporting.
- c. The Commission has 6 months in which to undertake its Article 12 assessment. It will greatly assist this process if the information is available in a common language. This short time period means it is not feasible to have the information formally translated; consequently, translation by the Member State itself prior to submission will help avoid misinterpretation of the information reported.

Some Member States may not want to take the responsibility to submit the content of the reporting sheet in English, as there is a risk of mis-interpretation due to the translation between the adopted version (in national language) and what would be considered as the "official reported information" by the Commission that will be used for the article 12 assessment. On the other hand, translation by the Commission Services in order to undertake its Article 12 assessment is also subject to possible risks of misinterpretation of what was reported by the Member State.

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<sup>3</sup> Modified from: European Commission. 2012. Guidance for 2012 reporting under the MSFD, using the MSFD database tool. Version 1.0. DG Environment, Brussels. pp164

## 2.4 Formal notification

Formal notification of the Member State's report(s) according to Article 11(3) should follow the standard practice, as follows:

The Member State's Permanent Representation to the European Commission should send to the Commission a) a suitable cover letter indicating the relevant Directive and article to which the notification refers and b) the receipt(s) obtained from ReportNet of all the reports (files) that have been deposited in relation to this notification.

The cover letter and ReportNet receipt(s) can be sent in hard copy or electronically (as pdf).

The reports deposited in ReportNet as part of the notification can be one or several of the following:

- a. Validated XML files which are generated automatically by completing the Web-forms and which hold the data and information defined in the Reporting Sheet (option A);
- b. Validated XML files which are generated from Member State databases and which hold the data and information defined in the Reporting Sheet (options B and C above);
- c. Other (text-based) reports (in pdf format) which the Member State wishes to have considered (option D);
- d. A copy of information<sup>4</sup> held in a web-based data system (i.e. option B) or other web site, but which is not in XML format. This should include information which is referenced by a URL in the Reporting Sheet (i.e. which is providing information relating directly to a question in the Reporting Sheet and which the Member State considers necessary for the Commission to do its Article 12 assessment and understand the rest of the Member State report)<sup>5</sup>. This is required to provide a snapshot of the information held on a web-site at the time of reporting, and ensures the Commission can refer to a date-stamped version of the information that the Member State has formally included in its report.

## 2.5 Joint preparation of the information

Member States are required under the Directive to coordinate their monitoring programmes to ensure they are coherent and consistent within each (sub-)region. Whilst the reporting of these programmes formally remains a Member State responsibility, it is possible to prepare the required reporting information jointly (such as within the Regional Sea Convention framework). This has the following advantages:

- a. It clearly demonstrates to the Commission the level of coordination achieved (as the Member State reports would hold the same information), and
- b. It potentially reduces effort as only one documentation per programme or sub-programme need be prepared for the sub(region) for all relevant Member States.

Further discussion is required on the practicalities of delivering such joint documentation, including how Member States could use it, in combination with their national reports, to fulfil their formal reporting obligations under the directive. It can be expected that:

- a. A varying proportion of the total needs for monitoring for each Descriptor may have been developed and agreed by the Member States within a (sub)region by 2014 (e.g. via their Regional Sea Convention or other mechanisms);

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<sup>4</sup> There is no specified format for these copies, but formats which allow searching/extraction of text would be most helpful.

<sup>5</sup> This is not intended to relate to information, such as detailed descriptions of methodologies for data collection, which is not directly answering the Reporting Sheet questions but which adds further 'in-depth' detail.

- b. The agreed elements will probably relate to particular sub-programmes, for which joint documentation could be prepared; there may additionally be some information at Programme level that can be jointly prepared.
- c. The Member State would need to prepare whatever additional information it considered necessary to report on its overall needs for each Descriptor; this is likely to address the General questions, some or all the Programme-level questions and perhaps some additional sub-programmes.
- d. Whilst the total needs for a Descriptor may not be in place at (sub)regional level for 2014, this should not detract from the benefits (short term and long term) of preparing information jointly whenever possible;
- e. The most effective way to 'combine' regional and national elements of the Art. 11 report and to formally notify it (e.g. whether it needs to be physically combined as a single XML or whether the files can be submitted separately) needs to be set out by the Member States in the region (if appropriate via the Regional Sea Convention);
- f. The preparation of joint documentation should be considered in conjunction with development of decentralised information systems, working towards the benefits of both processes.

Examples of where joint documentation is being developed are given by OSPAR (DIKE DG/2014/07) and HELCOM (DIKE DG/2014/08).

## 2.6 Development of decentralized information management systems

Section 2.2 highlights some of the potential benefits of developing web-based information systems (option B) at either national or regional level. The Commission considers this development, already in place in some countries for certain EU reporting, provides a modern more effective means to manage and disseminate information related to policy implementation.

In the context of Article 11, Germany initiated within WG DIKE and at the DIKE TSG meeting in July 2013 a discussion and a conceptual framework to further develop this approach, coupled with establishing mechanisms for preparation of joint documentation through the Regional Sea Conventions, using HELCOM as a test case. There was further discussion during a workshop on 16-17 October 2013, hosted by Germany in Hamburg.

For 2014 reporting, decentralised reporting is likely to be used by relatively few Member States, due to its ongoing development status. It nevertheless has potential advantages than can be further developed in future reporting rounds. The following points are relevant:

- a. The Reporting Sheet has been modified to allow reference to existing monitoring programmes (of other Directives and Conventions); this also allows reference to national web-based 'decentralised' systems. Where the information required (sub-programme question 9) is clearly available on a national web-site, or through national reports already submitted to the Commission for other relevant EU legislation, it does not need to be reported into the XML. This approach should allow those Member State wishing to use decentralised reporting to take advantage of this modification<sup>6</sup>;
- b. The use of fully automated 'pull' systems (e.g. via a Web Discovery Service) between the EEA's ReportNet and Member State/regional systems needs further development and

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<sup>6</sup> Note that in this interim phase of developing decentralised reporting, the option is provided on the basis that the information required in the Reporting Sheet is clearly held in the same format as required by the Reporting Sheet. Once Member State have completed their 2014 reporting, an evaluation will be needed to test ease of access to this information so that it can be readily used (for Article 12 assessments) and aggregated/summarised (for WISE marine dissemination).

testing. In order to benefit from such dynamic technical solutions, there will need also to be discussion and agreement with Member States on their implementation (e.g. frequency of updates and access to the updated information). Such processes could be progressively developed and implemented to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of information management and formal reporting requirements;

- c. In developing decentralised systems, it is helpful to build in an easy mechanism to make a snapshot of the information (which can be used as part of formal reporting – see Section 4), to enable its export to XML format (where it is part of a Reporting Sheet) and to ensure INSPIRE compliance;
- d. Ongoing developments in other reporting processes, particularly under WFD and SIIFs, will bring further experiences that can help with marine reporting.
- e. Experiences gained from reporting obligations under other EU Directives for which electronic reporting has been established should be considered and built upon, where appropriate, to avoid duplication of efforts.

## 2.7 Technical support for reporting

For details on the technical preparation of the reports, including use of the web-form application for reporting and preparation of xml schemas, please refer to the EEA ReportNet resource page: <http://icm.eionet.europa.eu/schemas/dir200856ec/resources>. Reporting using the web forms is split into two web forms. The first form enables reporting on the monitoring programmes as a whole, including more specific details for each of the thirteen monitoring programmes. The second form records the details of each sub-programme, each of which can be linked to one or more monitoring programmes using the unique sub-programme identifier assigned when the form is completed.

As was done for 2012 reporting, the reports are to be provided per (sub)region. Because Member States may use the same/similar monitoring programmes across several regions or subregions, the web-form application has been set up to allow a programme report to be duplicated for a second (sub)region and subsequently adjusted if necessary to reflect more minor (sub)regional differences to be expressed.

During the reporting process, a **Helpdesk** ([helpdeskWISEreporting@atkinsglobal.com](mailto:helpdeskWISEreporting@atkinsglobal.com)) will be in operation to support both content and technical queries which may arise.

## 3 Overview of the Reporting Sheet for MSFD Article 11

### 3.1 Structure, content and format for the Reporting Sheet

The Reporting Sheet is divided into three sections:

- a. General questions
- b. Programme-level questions
- c. Sub-programme-level questions

It aims to set out a 'minimum reporting requirement' against the 10 questions of the *Recommendation*, with a focus on provision of categorized information (Summary Information) that can be readily analysed and used at EU level, but is supported where necessary by brief additional explanatory text.

### 3.2 Building upon existing reporting structures

The reporting questions under Article 11 make links to reporting on Articles 8, 9, 10 and (in future) 13 as the monitoring programmes are closely associated to these articles; the reporting can consequently make use of information reported by Member States in 2012 under Articles 8, 9 and

10, such as established structures and term lists. This will have the advantage of enabling links to be made in the reporting database between Article 11 and these previous articles, and also in reuse of structures with which Member States are already familiar.

Therefore reuse is made of:

- a. Relevant xml schemas (e.g. geographic boundaries);
- b. Relevant term lists (e.g. lists of pressures, functional groups, habitat types), updating these where needed;
- c. Relevant aspects defined by Member States (e.g. specific indicators, environmental targets)<sup>7</sup>.

Data and information from the monitoring programmes are to be made available to the Commission and the EEA according to MSFD Article 19(3). Whilst there is a separate process of WG DIKE, via the Technical Group on Data, for forward implementation of Article 19(3) (e.g. to define which data/data sets are most suitable to aggregate at (sub)regional scales, how they will be accessed), it was decided that it was useful, even if not required by the directive in the framework of Article 11 reporting, to make initial links to Article 19(3) through some generic questions, whilst leaving the detail on specific datasets (e.g. metadata) to this associated process.

### 3.3 What is a programme and sub-programme?

A key issue for structuring the reporting sheet is to define what constitutes a 'programme' and a 'sub-programme' as this influences significantly the consistency of reporting across Member States and the level of detail and variation reported under each section of the Reporting Sheet. These two levels can be distinguished as follows:

- a. The Programmes are defined around the GES Descriptors, reflecting the different aspects of GES for which the monitoring needs to provide data;
- b. The Sub-programmes are defined around the practicalities of monitoring, reflecting different data types and ways of collecting these data.

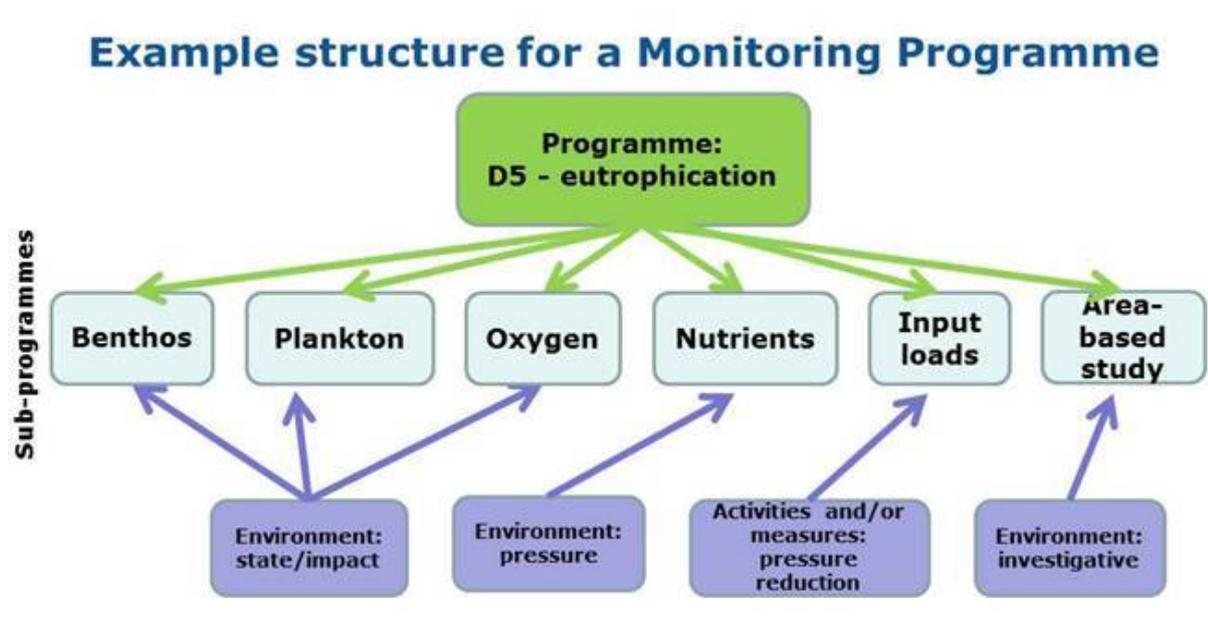
In order to ensure consistency between Member States in how the reporting on monitoring programmes is structured and to facilitate their assessment under Article 12, an agreed common set of programmes will be used. WG DIKE discussed a proposal that there should be a 'programme' to address each of the Descriptors, i.e. one for eutrophication, one for contaminants, litter etc. For the biodiversity descriptors (D1, 4, 6) it was recognised that it may be more appropriate to structure reporting in another way, e.g. around seabed and water column habitats, and around birds, mammals, reptiles, fish and pelagic cephalopods, to reflect the inter-relationships of these descriptors. **Section 4.4** provides the agreed set of monitoring programmes to be used by all Member States for reporting.

Each programme can contain a number of sub-programmes, the number varying depending upon the complexity of the Descriptor, the extent that GES has already been achieved, the (extent of) Member State marine waters, the (variety of) associated activities, pressures and measures and the environmental targets which have been set.

An example structure for a programme and its component sub-programmes is shown in **Figure 2**. Further information on sub-programmes is provided in Annex 3.

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<sup>7</sup> Subject to notification, by Member States via their representations to the EU, of any changes to those definitions reported in 2012. Such change may be expected given ongoing work on the determination of GES, targets and indicators at regional level.



**Figure 2:** Structure for a monitoring programme for a particular descriptor (except for D1, 4 and 6) (example here is for D5 - eutrophication), with an illustrative set of sub-programmes directed towards monitoring aspects of state/impact, pressures, activities and measures and, if appropriate, one-off and/or investigative studies. Note that the sub-programmes in the illustration have been further modified in the indicative list of sub-programmes provided in Annex 3.

To facilitate comparison between Member States at sub-programme level an indicative list of sub-programmes has been developed, based on input from four Member States and one Regional Sea Convention on how they organise their monitoring in practice (Annex 3). Member States are encouraged to follow this list as a guide, whilst recognising that it may need adjustment to suit each Member State's circumstances and that some Member States have already developed alternative approaches to organising their reporting on monitoring.

The sub-programmes typically aim to address one or more topics:

- a. aspects of ecosystem state/impact (to assess if GES has been met and whether environmental state is changing);
- b. the pressures upon the ecosystem that can cause impacts on environmental state (e.g. to assess if environmental targets are being met);
- c. the activities and uses of the marine environment which may be giving rise to the pressures, and
- d. the measures<sup>8</sup> which are in place to address pressures and impacts (to assess whether the measures are effective in managing the activities) (recognising that new measures that Member States put forward under Article 13 in 2016 would not be addressed in monitoring programmes established in 2014 and that, in 2014, the process of identifying existing measures relevant for MSFD implementation will still be under way).

<sup>8</sup> As the MSFD programmes of measures have not yet been adopted, the way of linking monitoring to measures has still to be defined, in coherence with what is decided on the methodology for assessment of the efficiency of measures, The first discussions on the subject suggest that the key linking tools between measures and monitoring may be the environmental targets and not necessarily the pressures, impacts or activities themselves.

## 4 Reporting sheet and associated guidance

### 4.1 Introduction

The tables in the following sections convert the 10 questions for reporting from the *Recommendation* into a Reporting Sheet, based on the three-section structure: general, programme and sub-programme. The relationship of the Reporting Sheet fields to the 10 questions is given in Annex 1. The Reporting Sheet is organised into a logical sequence, starting with some broad generalised questions relating to the monitoring programmes as a whole and then a set relevant to each programme and to each sub-programme (i.e. likely to differ per programme/sub-programme). Questions 1 to 3 and 4a-4c are general questions, questions 4d-4f and 5-8 relate to each monitoring programme, and questions 4g-4l and 9-10 relate to each sub-programme. There are text fields for every section (1e, 2b, 3a-e, 4c, 4f, 5f, 5h, 6d, 6f, 7b, 7d, 4j, 4l, 9d, 9i, 10b, 10d), excepting Question 8 where any text detail should be provided in Question 4l. Additional guidance on how to respond to the questions is provided, focusing solely on the content of the information to be reported.

### 4.2 Linking the reports to geographic areas

Each report needs to be linked to a spatially defined geographic area. This is identified by a MarineUnitID which has already been reported as part of the 2012 reporting for Articles 8, 9 and 10 (in the 4Geo.xml file and included in the GIS file of assessment areas). If the areas to be used for Article 11 reporting are not already available in the 2012 reporting files, these files should be updated and resubmitted to ReportNet when submitting the Article 11 report. If the areas have already been reported they do not need to be submitted again; simply make a reference to these via the MarineUnitID.

A single MarineUnitID is required for each Programme report per (sub)region. All relevant sub-programmes are associated to a Programme; a separate MarineUnitID is not required at sub-programme level.

It is expected that each programme will typically cover the entire Member State part of the (sub)region, but in some cases it may be appropriate to extend it beyond this (for example into neighbouring states for joint programmes or onto land for relevant pressure monitoring). Whilst the programme may address this entire area of marine waters, the actual sampling in sub-programmes may be more restricted and can be expressed via Questions 4i and 9g for each sub-programme.

If the Member State wishes to subdivide their part of a (sub)region for reporting at Programme level (i.e. the information will be different for different parts of the marine waters), a separate Programme report needs to be prepared with a separate MarineUnitID. This approach is not encouraged as it leads to more reporting (and assessment) effort.