

Integrated definition of GES

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1. Introduction

This milestone provides the DEVOTES proposal for an integrated and operational definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) to be applicable within the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). This proposal was made in the paper: Borja, A., M. Elliott, J. H. Andersen, A. C. Cardoso, J. Carstensen, J. G. Ferreira, A.-S. Heiskanen, J. C. Marques, J. M. Neto, H. Teixeira, L. Uusitalo, M. C. Uyarra, N. Zampoukas, 2013. Good Environmental Status of marine ecosystems: What is it and how do we know when we have attained it? *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, 76: 16-27; as well as in Deliverable 6.2 of DEVOTES: Borja A, Elliott M, Andersen JH., Cardoso AC, Carstensen J, Ferreira JG, Heiskanen A-S, Marques JC., Neto JM, Teixeira H, Uusitalo L, Uyarra MC, Zampoukas N, Prins T, Simboura N, Berg T, Marques J-C, Papadopoulou N, Reker J, Menchaca I (2015) Report on potential Definition of Good Environmental Status Deliverable 6.2, DEVOTES Project. 62 pp.

2. Proposed operational definition of GES

“Good Environmental Status is achieved when physico-chemical (including contaminants, litter and noise) and hydrographical conditions are maintained at a level where the structuring components of the ecosystem are present and functioning, enabling the system to be resistant (ability to withstand stress) and resilient (ability to recover after a stressor) to harmful effects of human pressures/activities/impacts, where they maintain and provide the ecosystem services that deliver societal benefits in a sustainable way (i.e. that pressures associated with uses cumulatively do not hinder the ecosystem components in order to retain their natural diversity, productivity and dynamic ecological processes, and where recovery is rapid and sustained if a use ceases)”.