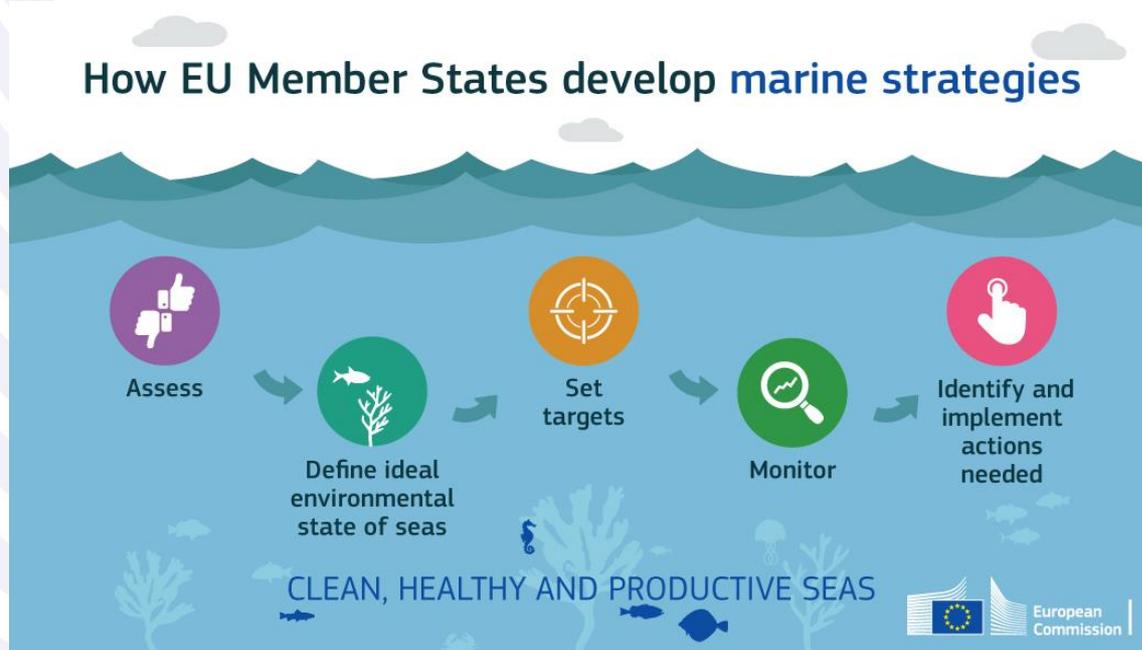


## Clean, healthy and productive seas

### Marine Strategies

In the European Union (EU) there is a framework that requires EU Member States to develop strategies to achieve 'good environmental status' in their marine waters by 2020. This objective aims at having clean, healthy and productive seas. This framework is set through a legal instrument known as the "Marine Strategy Framework Directive" (Directive 2008/56/EC). Over the first six years of implementation EU Member States had to assess the status of their marine waters; determine 'good environmental status' on the basis of 11 descriptors (such as biodiversity, commercial fisheries, marine litter or seabed integrity); set targets, develop and implement monitoring programmes; and finally develop and implement measures to achieve this objective. The ecosystem approach to the management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment is intrinsic to the framework, thereby integrating the concepts of environmental protection and sustainable use. Importantly, this framework requires Member States to work together in a regional context, thereby ensuring coherence in the actions that are being taken by Member States given the transboundary nature of impacts on the marine environment. EU Member States therefore often work together with the Regional Sea Conventions covering the marine waters of EU Member States.



### What is targeted in the strategy?

The strategies revolve around these 11 'descriptors', which EU Member States use to determine 'good environmental status' and for which specific monitoring programmes and measures are defined:

- Biodiversity is maintained

- Non-indigenous species do not adversely alter the ecosystem
- The population of commercial fish species is healthy
- Elements of food webs ensure long-term abundance and reproduction
- Eutrophication is minimised
- The sea floor integrity ensures functioning of the ecosystem
- Permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions does not adversely affect the ecosystem
- Concentrations of contaminants give no effects
- Contaminants in seafood are below safe levels
- Marine litter does not cause harm
- Introduction of energy (including underwater noise) does not adversely affect the ecosystem



### What has been achieved so far?

The first cycle, which sets up all the steps for the first time ever, is about to come to a close. These six years have set in motion a globally unique approach to tackling the protection of the marine environment through regional cooperation. EU Member States have so far been through all the different steps and are now preparing themselves to update their strategies in 2018 by re-assessing the state of the marine environment, their 'good environmental status' and their targets. As the next cycle starts this re-assessment should shed some initial light on what has been achieved in real terms.

For more information - [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/index_en.htm)