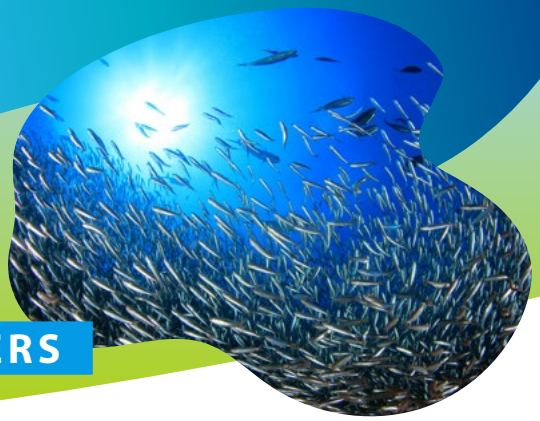
EUROPEAN UNION

EU MISSIONS

RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS



Baseline study - Atlantic and Arctic Sea Lighthouse

Mission Ocean and Waters lighthouses serve as sites to pilot, demonstrate, develop, and deploy Mission activities across EU seas and river basins. The objective of the Atlantic and Arctic Sea Lighthouse is to restore marine and freshwater ecosystems, through the following three specific targets:

Protect a minimum of 30 % of the EU's Sea area and integrate ecological corridors

Strictly protect **at least 10 %** of the EU's Sea area

Contribute to relevant upcoming marine **nature restoration targets**

A baseline study was carried out in 2021-2022 and proposed a draft set of indicators to measure Mission progress towards its targets. It also analysed various elements and actions crucial for achieving Mission objectives, including:

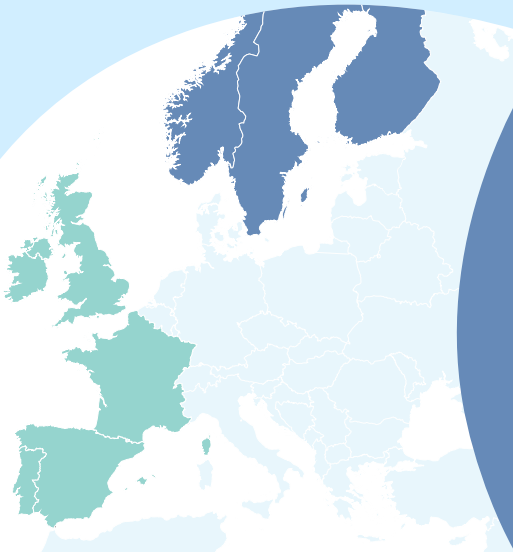
- Governance structures, institutions, stakeholder initiatives and networks, key projects
- Regional, national and macro-regional and Smart Specialisation Strategies, National Recovery and Resilience Plans
- Activities supporting citizen engagement and ocean literacy

The Atlantic and Arctic Sea Lighthouse targets are measured using two broad categories of indicators:

- Evaluating marine ecosystem protection by identifying new or expanded Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), assessing total coverage and jurisdictional percentages, and designating new Strictly Protected MPAs
- Contributing to marine nature restoration targets through the establishment or expansion of coastal protected areas, improvement of marine and coastal habitats, and the mitigation of human-induced pressures on marine ecosystems

The overall objective of the baseline study for the Atlantic and Arctic basins, was to measure the advancements in expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and emphasising a network-wide approach to MPAs rather than individual sites.

With a 2030 target, the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters" aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.



ARCTIC BASIN

231 331 inhabitants (2018)

Area coverage **612 312 km²**

Coastline **331 432 km**

ATLANTIC BASIN

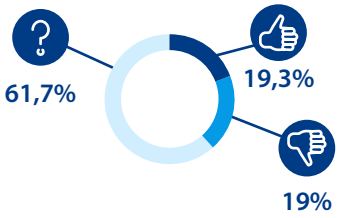
59.5 million inhabitants (2018)

Area coverage **293 999 km²**

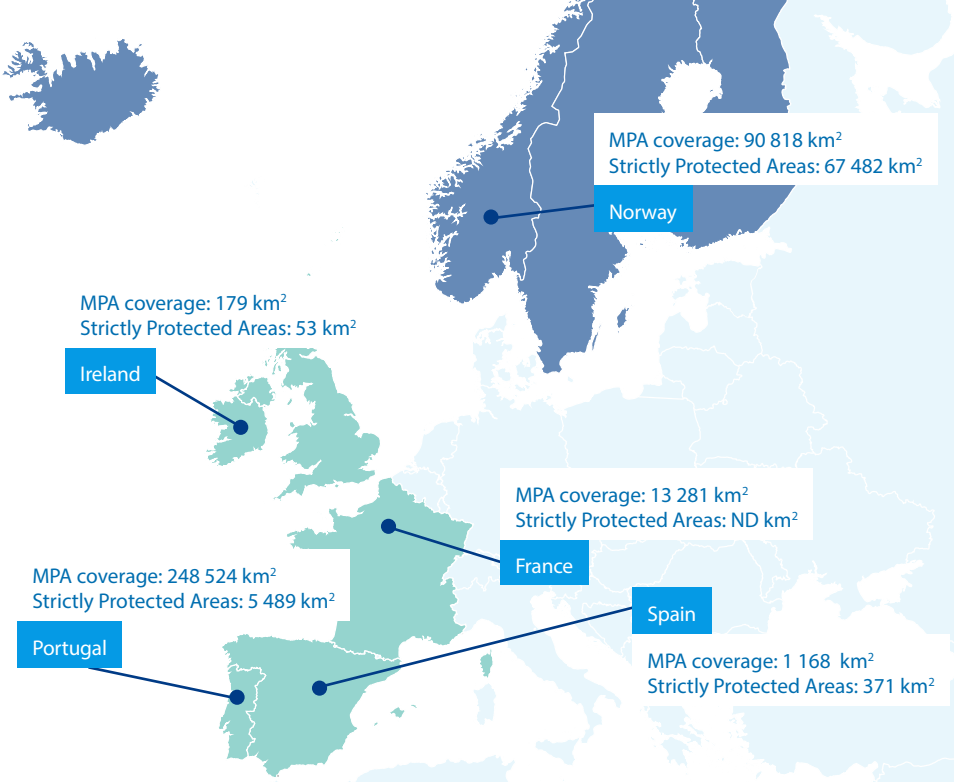
Coastline **44 028 km**

BASELINE STATE OF PLAY 2021 – 2022

- Total of Maritime Protected Areas (MPAs) coverage in Atlantic and Arctic lighthouse Area: 422,010 km²
- Total coverage of Strictly Protected Areas (Atlantic and Arctic waters): 73,399 km²



- Total Area to be improved: 123,867 km2
  - In Good Condition: 19.3%
  - Not in Good Condition: 19%
  - Unknown Condition: 61.7%
- 20.22% of the total area of the Atlantic basin requires ecosystem restoration
- Baseline conditions are unknown for 61.7% of coastal habitats in the Atlantic basin



Strategy covering the Arctic Sea basin:

The Arctic Sea basin is covered by the Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021-2030 and focuses on increased environmental protection in the Arctic, including:

- Efforts on monitoring and assessing the impacts of climate change in the region and raising awareness about its ecosystems and marine environment.
- Focusing on social and cultural inclusion of Arctic inhabitants and indigenous people, alongside advancing sustainable and diverse economic development.

Strategy covering the Atlantic Sea basin:

The Atlantic Sea basin is covered by the Atlantic Action Plan 2.0 which aims to promote innovation and contribute to the protection and improvement of the Atlantic's marine and coastal environment.

The plan focuses on four thematic pillars:

- Atlantic ports as gateways and hubs for the blue economy
- Development of marine renewable energy
- Blue skills and ocean literacy
- Ensuring a healthy ocean and resilient coasts.

Visit website

Six MPAs Datasets were used

- Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA) dataset – EEA
- Natura 2000 data, the European network of protected sites
- OSPAR MPA dataset
- EMODNet datasets (MPA + Natura 2000)
- Protected Planet dataset
- MPA Atlas dataset

Data gaps

- Additionally, further data are needed on monitoring and management of MPAs.
- Data are not collected for ecological corridors, which is a key element of the first target.
- When it comes to monitoring objectives on nature restoration, data are often incomplete, making it not yet possible to quantify the progress.

Link to the report

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