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Covadonga Orejas, Ellen Kenchington, Jake Rice, Georgios Kazanidis, Andreas Palialexis, David Johnson, Matthew Gianni, Roberto Danovaro, J. Murray Roberts, 2020.

[Towards a common approach to the assessment of the environmental status of deep-sea ecosystems in areas beyond national jurisdiction.](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104182)

Marine Policy, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2020.104182>

Abstract: Many of the marine policy frameworks developed to protect biodiversity in deep-sea areas, including areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), include indicators to assess policy objectives. These frameworks often have specific guidance on how the indicators should be applied and interpreted. Selection of indicators is an important process and those with strong scientific underpinnings are more likely to produce the expected outcomes. We reviewed three policy and assessment frameworks which include ABNJ regions or were developed specifically for ABNJ: (1) Oslo and Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) ecosystem assessments, (2) the frameworks adopted to implement the UN General Assembly (UNGA) sustainable fisheries resolutions for the management of bottom fisheries to prevent Significant Adverse Impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems, and (3) the Aichi Biodiversity Targets adopted by Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We examined whether an assessment approach based on evaluation of Good Environmental Status (GES) under the European Union's Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), could be applied to ABNJ. We examined each MSFD descriptor for its applicability to deep-sea habitats considering the work of two European projects concluding that the MSFD could be applied to ABNJ to support OSPAR, UNGA and CBD policy objectives towards a common approach to the assessment of the status of deep-sea ecosystems in ABNJ. In achieving this we also introduce readers outside of Europe to the work conducted within the MSFD.

Keywords: Deep sea, Ocean health, Environmental status assessment, Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Good Environmental Status