

## Abstract

In less than a century and at the predicted extraction rate, Belgian marine sand will enter a scarcity phase, if no further action is taken. This is worrying for the future of coastal defense.

The entry into force in 2021 of the new reference surface as part of the new environmental measures, vertically limiting the extraction depth, is a first step to ensure the economic sustainability of marine sand. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive was intended to achieve good environmental status by 2020 in Belgian marine waters, and more generally, in European seas. However, it will take longer to achieve this goal, and other environmental constraints will have to be implemented. The commercial fishing and offshore wind energy sectors will be mainly targeted for their impact on the descriptors of good environmental status. A non-negligible impact compared to sand extraction. An environmental accounting of Belgian marine waters should replace the current one as it does not reflect the environmental degradation of each activity.

The declining socio-economic importance of sand extraction in relation to other activities is reflected in the latest marine spatial plan, where less space is allocated to it in favor of renewable energy.