

# EMAS in harbours: a plus in quality

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## Ports, important industrial centres

Over the last few decades, international trade transport among EU member states and non-EU countries has increased considerably, converting harbours into important industrial centres. Port activities have thus, directly or indirectly, become a focus generator of much negative environmental impact.

Furthermore, the number of leisure ports and their associated activities has also increased, causing an escalation in the number of boats along the coast at weekends and during summer time.

As a result, coastal ecosystems are exposed to pressure from sea and leisure port activities, often in conjunction with the needs of the local population. Consequently, the environmental impact on these vulnerable areas could increase drastically, leading to a multiple impact on the coast and beaches and affecting the quality of bathing water.

The main environmental problems related to port activities are: low level of recycling of waste, problems with the water quality due to maintenance of the ships and waste water, poor use of energy and resources and high environmental impact from accidents.

Port management involves negotiating with a great variety of key players: port and maritime authorities, customs, health and safety inspectorate, transport and storage companies, shipping lines etc.

In this context, the implementation of an Environmental Management System under the EMAS Regulation can help to reduce and minimise these negative impacts and to organise a coherent and integrated environmental management system.

## What is EMAS?

The EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) is a management tool for companies and other organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance. The scheme has been available for participation by companies since 1995 (Council Regulation (EEC) No 1836/93 of 29 June 1993) and was originally restricted to companies in industrial sectors.

Since 2001 EMAS has been open to all economic sectors including public and private services (Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of Europe 19th March 2001). In addition, EMAS was strengthened by the integration of EN/ISO 14001 as the environmental management system required by EMAS, by adopting an attractive EMAS logo to signal EMAS registration to the outside world, and by considering more strongly the indirect effects such as those related to financial services or administrative and planning decisions.

Participation is voluntary and extends to public or private organisations operating in the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA) – Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway. An increasing number of candidate countries are also implementing the scheme in preparation for their accession to the EU.

## LIFE and EMAS

To achieve these targets, the European Commission through LIFE, the EU's financial instrument which supports environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU, has been directly and indirectly supporting the implementation of environmental management instruments such as the European Environmental Management Scheme known as EMAS.

LIFE has provided the possibility to test and reinforce methods to systematically manage environmental activities, products and services and to help to achieve environmental obligations and performance goals. ([ec.europa.eu/environment/life](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life))

Some of the LIFE projects designed to achieve these targets are:

- ECOPORT – Environmentally friendly Port Community (Spain)
- Experimental testing and diffusion of EMS in the port of Livorno (Italy)
- The implementation of EMAS in a fishing and leisure port (Spain)

The aim of the ECOPORT project (in Spain) was to develop a methodology which would enable port areas to adopt Environmental Management Systems.

The strategy encompassed three areas: ECOPORT system, training and dissemination. The project would design and implement, on a pilot basis, a system of Environmental Management and Auditing adapted to a port context, using the EMAS Regulation.

The project EMAS PO.LI (in Italy) had two main targets: establishment of a policy for continuous improvement of the environmental and safety performances within the port and carry out physical planning in order to achieve sustainable development.

The third project has been developed in A Coruña, Spain and aims to demonstrate how the implementation of the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) can improve the environment in fishing and leisure ports. This pilot test is being carried out in the port of A Pobra do Caramiñal (A Coruña, Spain) to improve environmental management, and the project is designed to contribute to the extension of EMAS in fishing and leisure ports at a Spanish and European level.

## EMAS projects results

The projects produced the following results:

- The ECOPORT project has created a model structure, which provides a detailed, step-by-step methodology for implementing Environmental Management Systems in a Port Company, backed by detailed tools and instruments (Guide for the implementation of environmental management systems in port facilities; [www.valenciaport.com](http://www.valenciaport.com))
- The EMAS PO.LI project has achieved EMAS registration of the Livorno Port Authority. It is the first port in Europe to have gained the ISO 14001 certification, which may serve as the first step towards EMAS registration. The Livorno Port Authority is a member of the ECOPORTS Foundation, a network platform where European ports exchange environmental experience ([www.ecoport.com](http://www.ecoport.com))

With EMAS registration, ports can improve environmental management and contribute to the minimisation of negative impacts. This tool provides the Port Authorities with a framework designed to give a corporate image to the port area.

## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

The European Commission is the executive branch of the European Union. It is a cabinet government of 27 'Commissioners' led by a Commission President. The present Commission, known after its President as the 'Barroso Commission' took office in late 2004 and is serving a five-year term. The body is responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the Union's treaties and the general day-to-day running of the Union.

## ENQUIRIES

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