TRANSLATION OF BIOLOGICAL AND SEDIMENTOLOGICAL POINT DATA TOWARDS HABITAT SUITABILITY MAPS OF BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES AND EUNIS LEVEL 5 MAPS. PART 2: FROM HABITAT SUITABILITY MAPS OF BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES TOWARDS EUNIS LEVEL 5 MAPS

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The full coverage habitat suitability maps of the macrobenthic communities serve as an input to apply the EUNIS classification on the Belgian Continental Shelf and to translate the maps into EUNIS habitat types (EUNIS level 5 maps). The whole analysis was performed within a GIS (Geographic Information System).

The habitat suitability maps were classified by means of the natural breaks classification scheme. Two derivative maps were generated, respectively exceeding probabilities of 60% and 70%. Subsequently, the derived habitat suitability maps were translated into EUNIS habitat types.

A large proportion of the Belgian shelf is covered and assigned to EUNIS classes. Each defined EUNIS habitat type has a habitat suitability percentage exceeding 60%. So far, only the *Macoma balthica* community matches within the current EUNIS classification. The other communities do not exactly match classes within the EUNIS classification. As such, only temporary codes are created and those need an expert review. The Habitat model (Degraer *et al.*, in prep.) does not foresee transitional communities; as such they cannot be mapped. Once these are defined, a complete full coverage EUNIS map can be attained.

References

Degraer S., E. Verfaillie, W. Willems, E. Adriaens, V. Van Lancker and M. Vincx (in prep.). Habitat suitability as a mapping tool for macrobenthic communities: an example from the Belgian part of the North Sea.

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(for Part 1, see p. 31, Degraer *et al.*)