“Piloting of eco-innovative fishery supply–chains to market added–value Adriatic fish products”

Priority Axis: Blue innovation

1.1 - Enhance the framework conditions for innovation in the relevant sectors of the blue economy within the cooperation area

D3.2.3 Sustainability guidelines

WP3 - Piloting of sustainable and eco-certified fishery productions/ A3.2. Selection of sustainable fisheries and guidelines on how to reach sustainability standards

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1. Introduction

These guidelines, corresponding to deliverable D3.2.3: *Sustainability guidelines* of the Activity 3.2 *'Selection of sustainable fisheries and guidelines on how to reach sustainability standards'* of the Prizefish Project (Italy-Croatia CBC Program),define the standards that need to be met by Adriatic fisheries operating within the GFCM-GSA 17 and GFCM-GSA 18 to achieve the Adriatic Responsible Fisheries Management (ARFM) certification label, which will be developed in the framework of the Prizefish project. These guidelines, therefore, are mainly used to develop the standards to be used in order to understand if a fishing activity can be considered as 'responsible' in the Adriatic Sea context during the following pre-assessment activities (deliverables 3.3.2 and 3.3.3).

The core aim of the Prizefish project is to innovate fisheries in the Adriatic area by piloting eco-labeled fish productions and fishery products derived, throughout the implementation of a cross-border, territorial and socio-economic developmental change in the cooperative renewable exploitation of Adriatic fishery resources, which would produce benefits in the long-term also to Adriatic marine ecosystems. This can be achieved, in particular, through the development of a certification scheme for an eco-label brand fully Adriatic, that would combine environmental protection with the social dimension and economic aspects.

These guidelines were created *ad-hoc* in order to take into account the peculiarities of the fishing activities along the coast of the Adriatic Sea. The proposed standards incorporate the most well known internationally-agreed set of principles for responsible fisheries management and have been outlined bearing in mind other certification programs for wild-capture fisheries developed at regional level, in particular the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program. Indeed, beside eco-certification initiatives conceived to be applied at a global level, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Friend of the Sea (FoS) certification programs (which is used in many Mediterranean regions such as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Morocco), in recent years alternative schemes have been developed, which are at once 'embedded in territorial practices and highly responsive to transnational governance norms and marketing conditions'. Territorial eco-certifications have risen, in particular, in Japan (the Marine

Eco-Label – MEL), Iceland (the Iceland Responsible Fisheries eco- label and eco – certification program – IRF), Alaska (the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program), Canada (pilot project) and the rest of United States (a proposal in progress). Territorial eco-certification initiatives are designed to promote a regional brand identity associated with responsible fisheries practices and can create a system of regional responsible governance, asserting the value of territorial industry identities and embracing, at the same time, transnational opportunities and challenges. This is particularly true for the Adriatic Sea, which is one of the most important and productive fishing grounds in the Mediterranean.

Certification standards defined in the present deliverable (D3.2.3) will be used, as a test, in the future activities of Work Package 3 of the Prizefish project: for the pre-assessment and for the development of specific action plans for the selected fisheries (for details, see D 3.2.1 and D 3.2.2).

In principle, all Adriatic fisheries are eligible to apply for the ARFM Program, but in the framework of PRIZEFISH project the pre-assessment will be carried out only on the fisheries selected during the consultation meetings (see D3.2.1 and D3.2.2).

2. The Adriatic Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program and Process

The Adriatic Responsible Fisheries Management (ARFM) Certification Program is a voluntary assessment process to verify whether an Adriatic fishery meets strict criteria to be certified as meeting 'Responsible Fisheries Management'. The ARFM Program consists of two seafood certification standards: 1) Fisheries Standard and 2) Chain of Custody Standard. This document applies to just the Fisheries Standard, while Chain of Custody Standards will be developed in the framework of WP4.

The remit of the ARFM Fisheries Standard and Program is:

> *'Responsible Fisheries Management, including enhancement practices (but excluding full cycle aquaculture), up to the point of landing, with the main objective being the biological sustainability of the 'stock under consideration', with consideration for conservation,*

biodiversity and ecosystem integrity; and due regard to social responsibility and the economic viability of the fishery'

The Fisheries Standard was developed by the National Research Council – Institute for Biological Resources and Marine Biotechnologies (CNR-IRBIM) and is based on the following FAO guidelines and other documents:

- Code of conduct for Responsible Fisheries 1995.
- Guidelines for Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products for Marine Capture Fisheries 2005/2009.
- The United Nations (UN) Resolution/Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) defining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The following FAO publications were also reviewed for relevance and integrated as deemed appropriate:

- International Guideline on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards 2011–IGBD (2011).
- International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing 2001– FAO-IUU (2001).
- FAO Technical Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries, Fisheries Management Supplement 4. Marine Protected Areas and Fisheries 2011– FAO FM/MPA (2011).
- FAO Scoping study on decent work and employment in fisheries and aquaculture: Issues and actions for discussion and programming.
- FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2015).

In addition to the international legal framework, the set of rules agreed at EU level for conservation of fish resources and management of fishing activities, i.e. the so-called Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) of the European Union, applies to the Adriatic Sea and was considered as a guidance for the present standards. The CFP covers the following areas: fisheries management; market, trade and social aspects; financial aspects; international dimension.

Other regions and countries such as Alaska (USA), Louisiana (USA), Japan and Iceland also use the FAO Code and Guidelines for their certification program, and this model is also under consideration for use in other countries. The purpose is to build-up a robust, common sense, practical and cost-effective approach which would allow Adriatic fisheries to meet the FAO criteria for responsible certification. This program, once will be formally established, would also utilize certifiers who are accredited to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) by an International Accreditation Board member, the certifiers will be the Conformity Assessment Bodies which will be eligible to apply the ARFM program standards. The result is a model that is practical, verifiable and transparent, which incorporates the criteria and procedures outlined in the FAO Code and Guidelines.

The Adriatic RFM Fisheries Standard focuses on 3 Key principles or pillars for evaluating fisheries:

1. GOVERNANCE: The Governance System is efficient and adaptive and the Fisheries Management has clear objectives in term of sustainability and can assure monitoring, control and surveillance on fishing activities.
2. ENVIRONMENT: Availability of science based assessment of the status of the target resources and the ecosystem that hosts them, considering the specific impact of the fishing activity.
3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC: the fishing activity should be characterized by compliance with social and safety policies at work and by socio-economic indicators that highlight its fairness and viability.

Components 1-3 in turn contain nine Supporting Articles (SA), each made up of its relative Specific Indicators (SI). Note that Supporting Articles can be seen as summary clauses (i.e., not to be scored) for full assessment purposes (Table 1).

Table 1 – Structure of the Adriatic RFM Standards

Components	Supporting Articles (SA)	Specific Indicators (SI)
GOVERNANCE	There shall be a structured and legally mandated management system based upon and respecting international, national, and local fishery laws, for the responsible utilization of the target stock	Legislation Cooperation

	and conservation of the marine environment.	
	A clear decision-making process is part of the management system to achieve the objectives foreseen by international, national, and local fishery laws and has an appropriate approach to avoid conflicts.	Environmental policies Management plan or a set of management measures
ENVRIONMENT	There shall be an effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis system for stock management purposes.	Data collection/ Statistics
	To support its optimum utilization, there shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery resource—its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem—all undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards.	Institutional framework Data limited approach
	Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the aquatic environment shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient, a suitable method using risk assessment shall be adopted to take into account uncertainty.	Precautionary approach Absence of information
	Considerations of fishery interactions and their effects on the ecosystem shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk-based management approach to determine the most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts on the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.	Ecosystem impacts Food web

SOCIO-ECONOMIC	The economic, social, and cultural value of resources (e.g. where a fishery is based on local traditions) shall be assessed by the appropriate fisheries management organization in order to assist decision making on their use.	Economic conditions
	Excess fishing capacity shall be avoided and exploitation of the stocks shall remain economically viable.	Balance indicators
	The fishery activity shall work in full compliance with international laws on labour and human rights.	Human rights and safety on board

For each of the previous SA the SI are going to be listed in the following chapters. The Specific Indicators (SI) are used to evaluate the full, partial or non-compliance with detailed rules. In the case more than one SI in each SA show no compliance, a 5 years action plan needs to be developed. The aim of the action plan is to improve the fishery performance within the Specific Indicators found to be non-compliant with the standards, without going through a repetition of the whole evaluation process. Most of the SI will be quantitatively estimated, however in some cases expert judgment can be used to guess the level of compliance.

Component of Evaluation and Component of Accreditation

When assessing the eligibility of a particular candidate for ARMF certification, an assessment will be made at two levels: the first is the assessment of the condition of the fishery for which the application was submitted - Component of Evaluation (CoE), and the second is the assessment of the condition of a formal candidate for certification Component of Accreditation (CoA) . In particular:

1. **The Component of Evaluation (CoE)** considers primarily the species which makes up the principal target of the fishery and specifies the fishery under assessment, the gear type/s employed and the key management organization/s within GSA 17 and/or GSA 18. Associated non-target species in the CoE do not form part of the certified species claim. Therefore, the CoE is the reference framework, which include all the vessels practicing

the fisheries concerned in the concerned area (GSA 17 and GSA 18).

2. **Component of Accreditation (CoA)** is a subgroup of the CoE and is constituted by a group of vessel (or even a single vessel) targeting the same species of the CoE and using the same gear of the CoE active in a specific geographical area where the fishery is prosecuted within GSA17 and/or GSA 18. The CoA is the formal candidate applicant to enter in the certification process (fisherman or Producer Organization - PO).

Topics that will trigger immediate assessment failure

Certain fisheries management issues will trigger immediate fail in the fishery. If a vessel owner/crew is found to carry out the following activities, assessment will stop immediately and the applicant will fail automatically in its attempt to gain Adriatic RFM certification.

- Dynamiting, poisoning, and other comparable destructive fishing practices;
- Significant illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing activities in the country jurisdiction.

3. Certification process

In the framework of PRIZEFISH project, CNR-IRBIM will conduct the pre-assessment of applicant Adriatic fisheries selected during the consultation meetings, with the support of external experts . The CNR-IRBIM is responsible for ensuring the competency and consistency of assessment practices. The assessment will be carried out in a participatory framework and all stakeholder as well as project partners will be involved in the process. It is important to stress that the pre-assessments do not aim to certify a specific fishery (CoA) under evaluation but will produce clear indications of the potential of a fishery to enter in a certification process. The assessment will determine whether the selected candidate meets the requirements for obtaining an ARMF certificate.

Since the accomplishment of PRIZEFISH objectives, there would be the possibility that Adriatic RFM Standards would be formally registered and would be updated as a matter of process and procedure. Therefore, if interest is shown in issuing such certificate, procedures to formally issue

to the accepted standards can be implemented in the region. The updated Standards would be used for all new fisheries that wish to be certified ARFM and for fisheries seeking re-certification from the date of entry into force of the new standards. Certified fisheries could immediately use the new Standards but will be given a period of at least three years to come into compliance with the revised fishery standard. After certification, the fishery would enter in annual surveillance assessments for continuing certification. Recertification would occur after a certain number of years (possibly 5) of annual surveillance audits taking place within this period.

4. Guidance to perform evaluation

In the assessment process, each specific indicator will be associated with scoring guidance to ensure continuity and consistency across fisheries and assessment teams. Specific Indicator requires that evidence is provided outlining the process or system used by an applicant fishery to implement or maintain key aspects of fishery management practices. Examples may include systems for data collection, laws and regulations, stock assessment, and enforcement. If evidence on the current process/system of a given process-based requirement is scarce or non-existent, then the standard is not satisfied resulting in non-conformance. The assessment process is carried out against the CoE in term of conformance level while is carried out against the CoA in the confidence rating. As specified in Section 2, CoE refers to all vessels practicing the fishery within GSA17 and/or GSA 18, the CoA refers to the group of vessels or to the single vessel, included in the CoE, which apply to enter in the certification process.

The assessment team can score specific indicators as follows:

- **Full Conformance in the CoE – High Confidence Rating in the CoA:** Sufficient information/evidence is available to demonstrate full conformance to an indicator. In these cases, a high confidence rating is assigned. Sufficient evidence is that which allows objective determination by the Assessment Team that fishery at CoE level and applicant vessels at CoA level fully complies with a given Indicator in the Adriatic RFM Criteria;
- **Minor Non-Conformance– in the CoE – Medium/High Confidence Rating in the CoA:** Information/evidence is broadly available to demonstrate conformance to an Indicator

although there are limited gaps in information that, if available, could clarify aspects of conformance and allow the Assessment Team to assign a high confidence rating. In these cases, a minor improvement is needed. The Assessment Team will request further clarification of information with the Applicant and management organizations and this may result in the assignment of full confidence rating.

- **Major Non-Conformance in the CoE – Medium Confidence Rating in the CoA:** Information/evidence is limited to demonstrate conformance to an Indicator. In these cases, a major improvement is needed. The Assessment Team will request further clarification with the Applicant and management organizations. This would result in medium confidence rating. However, where further, substantive evidence is made available, assignment of high confidence also may occur.
- **Critical Non-Conformance in the CoE – Low Confidence Rating in the CoA:** Information/evidence is completely absent or contradictive to demonstrate conformance to an Indicator. Absence of information/evidence results in a low confidence rating. In these cases, a critical non-conformance and low confidence rating is assigned. A critical non-conformance will stop the certification assessment, unless the Applicant is able to provide information/evidence that demonstrate higher conformance of the fishery than that initially assessed.

5. ARFM Standards

Pillar 1 - Governance

The Fisheries Management System is efficient and adaptive with clear objectives in term of sustainability and can assure monitoring, control and surveillance on fishing activities.

Supporting article 1.1

There shall be a structured and legally mandated management system based upon and respecting international, national, and local fishery laws, for the responsible utilization of the target stock and conservation of the marine environment.

FAO CCRF[1] (1995) 7.1.3/7.1.4/7.1.9/7.3.1/7.3.2/7.3.4/7.6.8/7.7.1/

Specific Indicators:

1.1.1 Legislation

There shall be an effective legal and administrative framework established at international, European, national and local levels appropriate for fishery resource conservation and management. The management system and the fishery operate in compliance with the requirements of international, national, and local laws and regulations, including the requirements of any regional and/or international fisheries management agreement.

FAO CCRF (1995) 7.7.1

FAO Eco (2009) 28[2]

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)

[1]Paragraphs of Article 7, entitled 'fisheries management' of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (CCRF), relevant to define the SA 1.1. In the following paragraphs, references to the CCRF are intended as referring to the articles of the Code useful to define the SA and the SI concerned.

[2] Substantive requirement n. 28 of the Guidelines for Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products for Marine Capture Fisheries 2005/2009, concerning the management system. In the following paragraphs, references to the FAO Eco (2009) are intended as referring to the principles, criteria and requirements, as numbered in the Guidelines, useful to define the SA and the SI concerned.

At CoE level, the legal and administrative framework is **not** effective, established, and appropriate for fishery resource conservation and management. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not** operate in compliance with relevant fishery management requirements.	At CoE level, the legal and administrative framework is **insufficiently** effective, established, and appropriate for fishery resource conservation and management. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate **insufficiently** in compliance with relevant fishery management requirements.	At CoE level, the legal and administrative framework is **moderately** effective, established, and appropriate for fishery resource conservation and management. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate only **moderately** in compliance with relevant fishery management requirements.	At CoE level, effective legal and administrative framework established at the local and national level is appropriate for fishery resource conservation and management. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **operate in compliance** with the requirements of local, national and international laws and regulations, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management agreement.
Note: *this indicator is used to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the legal and administrative framework for fisheries conservation and management in the Adriatic Sea. The legal regime governing fisheries in the Adriatic Sea is a complex framework where international measures adopted also by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) are complemented by the EU legal framework (the EU Common Fisheries Policy, the EU 'Mediterranean Regulation', etc) and by national legislation and regulations adopted by the Adriatic Sea Countries (national management plans; fishing licenses regime; conservation and management measures; monitoring, control and surveillance etc).As regards administrative bodies, the main players of the management of marine stock in the Mediterranean Sea can be divided in four big entities: (i) the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with its own Regional Fisheries Management organization (RFMO), the GFCM, as well as its Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and regional projects, (ii) the European Commission (EC) and its bodies (i.e., STECF and JRC), (iii) the national authorities and iv) fisheries associations coordinated by the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC).* **Evidence basis:** *it may include at CoE level references to rule making, scientific research, stock and ecosystem assessments; at CoA level implementation of rules and regulations and enforcement activities.*			

1.1.2 Cooperation

Where transboundary, shared, straddling, highly migratory, or high seas fish stocks are exploited by two or more countries (neighboring or not), the applicant and appropriate management organizations concerned shall cooperate shall cooperate

and take part in the conservation and formal fishery commission or arrangements appointed to ensure effective management of the stock(s) in question and their environment.

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, there is **no cooperation** informal fishery commission or arrangements that have been appointed to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s)in question. At CoA level, the applicant **does not** take actively part in the cooperation.	At CoE level, there is **insufficient** cooperation in formal fishery commission or arrangements that have been appointed to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s)in question.At CoA level, the applicant takes part **insufficiently** in the cooperation.	At CoE level, there is **moderate** cooperation in formal fishery commission or arrangements that have been appointed to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s)in question. At CoA level, the applicant takes part **moderately** in the cooperation.	Where transboundary, straddling or highly migratory fish stocks and high seas fish stocks are exploited by two or more States, the applicant/management organizations concerned cooperate and take part(CoA level) in formal fishery commission or arrangements that have been appointed to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s)in question (CoE level).

Note:the Adriatic Sea is one of the largest areas of demersal and small pelagic shared stocks in the Mediterranean (UNEP-MAP-RAC/SPA,2015).The recognition of the shared-stock status of the most important commercial species is performed by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean – GFCM (http://www.fao.org/gfcm/activities/fisheries/stock-assessment/sharedstocks/en/) and ICCAT (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas).

Evidence basis: the applicant and appropriate management organizations concerned cooperate and take part in formal fishery discussions or arrangements that have been appointed at CoE level to ensure effective conservation and management of the stock(s) and fisheries in question. Examples may include evidence of formal agreements, records of meetings, and decisions, participation in international cooperation projects on sustainability fisheries and environment issues as well as evidence of specific contribution of the applicant to the preparation of opinions on fisheries management and socio-economic aspects, technical solutions and recommendations issued by the Mediterranean Advisory Council (MEDAC).

Supporting article 1.2

A clear decision-making process is part of the management system to achieve the objectives foreseen by international, national, and local fishery laws and has an appropriate approach to avoid conflicts.

FAO CCRF (1995) 10.1.1, 10.1.2, 10.1.4, 10.2.1, 10.2.2, 10.2.4

Specific Indicators:

1.2.1 Environmental policies

Within the fisheries management organization's jurisdiction, an appropriate policy, legal, and institutional framework shall be adopted in order to achieve sustainable and integrated use of living marine resources, allowing for determination of the possible uses of resources and governing access to them.

FAO CCRF (1995) 10.1.1, 10.1.3, 10.2.3

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, an appropriate policy, legal and institutional frameworks **is not** adopted in order to achieve sustainable and integrated use of living marine resources, allowing for determination of the possible uses of resources and governing access to them. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not** operate in compliance with the policy, legal and institutional framework established.	At CoE level, policy, legal and institutional frameworks have been adopted but are **insufficient** to achieve sustainable and integrated use of living marine resources**,** allowing for determination of the possible uses of resources and governing access to them. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate **insufficiently** in compliance with the policy, legal and institutional framework established.	At CoE level, policy, legal and institutional frameworks have been adopted but are **moderately** achieving sustainable and integrated use of living marine resources, allowing for determination of the possible uses of resources and governing access to them. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate **moderately** in compliance with the policy, legal and institutional framework established.	At CoE level, an appropriate policy, legal and institutional framework has been adopted in order to achieve sustainable and integrated use of living marine resources, allowing for determination of the possible uses of resources and governing access to them. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **operate fully** in compliance with the policy, legal and institutional framework established.

Note: *The Adriatic Sea is significantly rich in biodiversity but many species (animals and vegetation) are endangered. As regards marine living resources, increase in fishing effort, pollution levels and other stressors (e.g., invasive species, climatic changes, habitat modifications etc) have significant negative impacts on fish stocks and on the fishing industry in general.*

Evidence basis: *At CoE level, examples may include reference to protected areas established in the Adriatic Sea as well as to policy documents and normative frameworks established at the EU, international and national level concerning protection of marine environment, with specific reference to the achievement of Good environmental status (GES) in the framework of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). Assessment teams shall document, in addition, how existing authorities and/or processes cooperate and interact together to manage resources (living and non-living) in a transparent, organized, and sustainable way that minimizes environmental issues while taking into account the socio-economic aspects, needs, and interests of the various stakeholders. At CoA level, the applicant will be requested to provide information on actions and investments undertaken to contribute to the achievement of environmental objectives as outlined above.*

1.2.2 Management plan or a set of management measures

Long-term management objectives shall be translated into a plan or other management document and be subscribed to by all interested parties.

FAO CCRF (1995) 7.3.3

FAO ECO (2009) 28.1

N.B: For the purposes of this document, 'long-term' is intended as 5-10 years management objectives. In the absence of a specific management plan, also a set of rules agreed by fishers a local level can be used as relevant management document.

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)

At CoE level, there are **no** long term management objectives translated into a plan or other management document. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not** operate in compliance with the plan or other management document.	At CoE level, there are **insufficiently** clear long term management objectives translated into a plan or other management document that take into account best available scientific evidence and are consistent with the sustainable use of the resource, and subscribed by important fishery stakeholders. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate **insufficiently** in compliance with the plan or other management document.	At CoE level, there are **moderately** clear long term management objectives translated into a plan or other management document that take into account best available scientific evidence and are consistent with the sustainable use of the resource, and subscribed by important fishery stakeholders. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate **moderately** in compliance with the plan or other management document.	At CoE level, Scientifically based long term management objectives consistent with the sustainable use of the resource are translated into a plan or other management document which is subscribed by all interested parties. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery operate in compliance with the plan or other management document.

Note: As an example, in the framework of the GFCM, several multiannual management plans have been developed for the Mediterranean. The first multiannual management plan was established for small pelagic fisheries in the Adriatic Sea in 2013.
Evidence basis: At CoE level, scientifically based long-term management objectives consistent with the sustainable use of the resource are translated into a plan or other management document which is subscribed to by all interested parties. Examples may include the existence/or absence of fishery management plan/framework or legal rules. At CoA level, the applicant will be requested to demonstrate the level of compliance with the plan (i-e. absence of infringement procedures or remedy actions undertaken in case of etc).

Pillar 2 - Environment

Science based assessment of the status of the target resources and the ecosystem that hosts them, considering the specific impact of the fishing activity.

Supporting article 2.1

There shall be an effective fishery data (dependent and independent) collection and analysis system for stock management purposes.

Specific Indicators:

2.1.1 Data collection and statistics

All significant fishery removals and mortality of the target species shall be considered by management. Specifically, reliable and accurate data required for assessing the status off fishery and ecosystems, including data on retained catch and discards shall be collected. These data shall be collected, at an appropriate time and level of aggregation, by relevant management organizations and provided to relevant fisheries organizations.

FAO CCRF (1995) 7.3.1, 7.4.6, 7.4.7, 12.4

FAO Eco (2009) 29.1-29.3

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, there is **no** consideration of all fishery removals and mortality of the target stock through collection of reliable and accurate data on the status of fisheries and ecosystems (including data on retained catch, bycatch, discards and waste) performed by relevant management organizations at appropriate time and level of aggregation, provided to relevant States or organizations as appropriate. At CoA level,	At CoE level, there is **insufficient** consideration of all fishery removals and mortality of the target stock through collection of reliable and accurate data on the status of fisheries and ecosystems (including data on retained catch, bycatch, discards and waste) performed by relevant management organizations at appropriate time and level of aggregation, provided to relevant organizations, as appropriate. At CoA level,	At CoE level, there is **moderate** consideration of all fishery removals and mortality of the target stock through collection of reliable and accurate data on the status of fisheries and ecosystems (including data on retained catch, bycatch, discards and waste) performed by relevant management organizations at appropriate time and level of aggregation, provided to relevant organizations, as appropriate. At CoA level,	At CoE level, all fishery removals and mortality of the target stock(s) are considered by management. Specifically, reliable and accurate data required for assessing the status of fishery/ies and ecosystems - including data on retained catch, bycatch, discards and waste are collected. Data can include relevant traditional, fisher or community knowledge, provided their validity can objectively be verified. These data are collected, at an appropriate time

the applicant **is not able** to provide relevant data.	the applicant cannot provide a **sufficient level** of relevant data.	the applicant can provide a **moderate level** of relevant data.	and level of aggregation, by relevant management organizations connected with the fishery, and provided to relevant sub-regional, regional and global fisheries organizations, as appropriate. At CoA level, the applicant **can provide** reliable and accurate data.

Note: There is a process or system that allows for effective data collection (including data on retained catch, bycatch, discards and waste) on the status of fisheries and ecosystems for management purposes. In the case of stocks fished by more than one state, this includes a system or agreement with other states to ensure mortality and removals data are available for the entirety of the biological stock. Some fisheries and/or fish stock are hard to monitor for various reasons, including remoteness of operation/distribution and complexity of fishing operations, posing particular challenges with the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information. Assessors shall acknowledge and explain these challenges, data collection and maintenance to cover all stages of fishery development, in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

Evidence basis: Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include stock assessment reports, catch and observer data collected at level of aggregation (in the CoE) and by single applicant operators (in the CoA).

Supporting article 2.2

To support its optimum utilization, there shall be regular stock assessment activities appropriate for the fishery resource—its range, the species biology, and the ecosystem—all undertaken in accordance with acknowledged scientific standards.

Specific Indicators:

2.2.1 Institutional framework

An appropriate institutional framework shall be established to determine the applied research required and its proper use (i.e., assess/evaluate stock assessment model/practices) for fishery management purposes.

FAO CCRF 12.2, 12.6

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, establishment of appropriate institutional framework for applied research does not exist. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not** take part in research development and implementation.	At CoE level, the appropriate institutional framework is established to determine the applied research required, but there is **insufficient** use for fishery management purposes. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery take part **insufficiently** in research development and implementation.	At CoE level, the appropriate institutional framework is established to determine the applied research required, but there is **moderate** use for fishery management purposes. .At CoA level, the management system and the fishery take part **moderately** in research development and implementation.	At CoE level, an appropriate institutional framework is established to determine the applied research required, and its proper use(i.e., assess and evaluate stock assessment models or practices) for fishery management purposes. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **take actively part** in research development and implementation.

Note: There is an established institutional framework for fishery management purposes that determines applied research needs and use. There is evidence to substantiate that essential research for fishery management purposes is determined and carried out. This research generally includes routine stock(s) and ecosystem assessment reports.

Evidence basis: Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. At CoE level, examples may include description of the overall process of research assessment and peer review, stock and ecosystem assessment reports. At CoA, the assessment takes into account the collaboration/participation of the applicant in research efforts (i.e.: involvement of operators in research projects, participation of fishers in partnerships with researchers etc).

2.2.2 Data limited approach

Less elaborate stock assessment methods are frequently used for small-scale, data poor stocks or low-value capture fisheries resulting in greater uncertainty about the status of the stock under consideration. A more precautionary approach to managing fisheries on such resources shall be required, including, where appropriate, a lower level of resource utilization. A record of good management performance may be considered as supporting evidence of the adequacy of the management system.

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, with the use of less elaborate methods for stock assessment frequently used for small scale or low value capture fisheries, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **not** required, including where appropriate, lower level of utilization of resources. At CoA level, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **not applied.**	At CoE level, with the use of less elaborate methods for stock assessment frequently used for small scale or low value capture fisheries, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **insufficiently** required, including where appropriate, lower level of utilization of resources. At CoA level, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **insufficiently** applied.	At CoE level, with the use of less elaborate methods for stock assessment frequently used for small scale or low value capture fisheries, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **moderately** required, including where appropriate, lower level of utilization of resources. At CoA level, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **moderately** applied.	At CoE level, with the use of less elaborate methods for stock assessment frequently used for small scale or low value capture fisheries, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are required, including where appropriate, lower level of utilization of resources. At CoA level, more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries on such resources are **adequately** applied.

Note: if the fishery for the stock under consideration has sufficient data collected through regular stock assessment activities for its management then this clause can be scored with full conformance. There is a process that allows for the application of more precautionary approaches to managing fisheries (e.g. low exploitation rates) on resources assessed through stock assessment methods resulting in greater uncertainty about the state of the stock under consideration. There is evidence for the application of precautionary approaches to managing fisheries (e.g. lower exploitation rates) on resources assessed through stock assessment methods resulting in greater uncertainty about the state of the stock under consideration.

Evidence basis: Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include stock assessment reports and other data.

Supporting article2.3

Management actions and measures for the conservation of stock and the aquatic environment shall be based on the precautionary approach. Where information is deficient, a suitable method using risk assessment shall be adopted to take into account uncertainty.

Specific Indicators:

2.3.1 Precautionary approach

The precautionary approach shall be applied widely to conservation, management, and exploitation of ecosystems to protect and preserve them. This should take due account of fishery enhancement procedures, where appropriate. Absence of scientific information shall not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures. Relevant uncertainties shall be taken into account through a suitable method of risk management, including those associated with the use of introduced or translocated species.

FAO CCRF (1995) 7.5.2

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, The precautionary approach is **not** applied to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources. At CoA level, precautionary	At CoE level, the precautionary approach is **insufficiently** applied to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources. At CoA level, precautionary	At CoE level, The precautionary approach is **moderately** applied to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources. **.**At CoA level, precautionary	At CoE level, the precautionary approach is applied to conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic

measures **are not** applied by the applicant.	measures are **insufficiently** applied by the applicant.	measures are **moderately** applied by the applicant.	environment. At CoA level, precautionary measures are **fully** applied by the applicant.
Note: There is evidence for the practical application of the PA to resource management and conservation. Note that the PA may be integrated in stock assessment practices, in specific management measures enacted for everyday fisheries operations, or other measures. Application of the PA takes in due account of stock enhancement procedures, where appropriate, and relevant uncertainties are taken into account using a suitable method of risk assessment, including those associated with the use of introduced or translocated species. **Evidence basis:** Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include stock assessment reports, fishery management plans and other documents.			

2.3.2 Absence of information

In the absence of adequate scientific information, appropriate research shall be initiated in a timely fashion.

FAO CCRF (1995) 7.5.1, 12.3

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, in the absence of adequate scientific information, appropriate research is	At CoE level, in the absence of adequate scientific information, appropriate research is	At CoE level, in the absence of adequate scientific information, appropriate research is	At CoE level, in the absence of adequate scientific information, appropriate research is

not initiated in a timely fashion. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not provide scientific information/does not participate** in any specific research.	**sometime** initiated in a timely fashion. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery- **sometime** provide scientific information/ participate in specific research**.**	**often** initiated in a timely fashion. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **often** provide scientific information/ participate in specific research**.**	initiated in a timely fashion. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **regularly** provide scientific information/ participate in specific research

Note: There is evidence that such a process has been applied in the case of the fishery under assessment, including examples of initiated research. Depending on the situation, appropriate research or further analysis of the identified risk is initiated in a timely fashion.

Evidence basis: Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include various data or scientific reports.

Supporting article 2.4

Considerations of fishery interactions and their effects on the ecosystem shall be based on best available science, local knowledge where it can be objectively verified, and a risk-based management approach to determine the most probable adverse impacts. Adverse impacts on the fishery on the ecosystem shall be appropriately assessed and effectively addressed.

Specific Indicators:

2.4.1 Ecosystem impacts

The most probable adverse impacts of fishery on the ecosystem/environment, shall be assessed and, where appropriate, addressed and/or corrected, taking into account available scientific information. This may take the form of an immediate management response or a further analysis of the identified risk. In the absence of specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishery under assessment, generic evidence based on similar fishery situations can be used for fisheries with low risk of severe adverse impact. However, the greater the risk, the more specific evidence shall be necessary to ascertain the adequacy of mitigation measures.

FAO Eco (2009) 30.4, 31, 31.4

FAO Eco (2011) 41.4

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At the CoE level, there is **no** accounting of most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem/environment. Few or no probable impacts are considered.	At the CoE level, there is **insufficient** accounting of most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem/environment. Many probable impacts	At the CoE level, there is **moderate** accounting of most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem/environment. Some probable impacts	At the CoE level, the most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem/environment are considered, taking into account available scientific information,

There is **no-** use of generic evidence on the ecosystem impact of fishing for the unit of certification. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures **are not respected.**	are not considered. There is **insufficient** availability or use of generic evidence on the ecosystem impact of fishing for the unit of certification. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **insufficiently** respected.	are not considered. There is **moderate** availability or use of generic evidence on the ecosystem impact of fishing for the unit of certification. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **moderately** respected.	and local knowledge. In the absence- of specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishing for the unit of- certification, evidence based on similar fishery can be used. Fisheries should be classified with **low risk** of severe adverse impact. However, the greater the risk the more specific evidence is necessary to ascertain the adequacy of mitigation measures. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **fully** respected.
Evaluation parameters **Note:** There is specific information on the ecosystem impacts of fishing for the component of accreditation (CoA) present. Also, there is at CoE level a mechanism in place by which the most probable adverse impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem and environment are assessed using the best available scientific knowledge (which may include traditional knowledge where this is verifiable), and management objectives aimed at avoiding these impact are developed. **Evidence basis:** Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include various stock and ecosystems assessment reports.			

2.4.2 Food web

The role of the stock under consideration in the food web shall be considered, and if it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, management objectives and measures shall be in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent preys and predators.

FAO Eco (2009) 31.2

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At the CoE level, there is **no** consideration of the role of the "stock under consideration" in the food web, especially **there is no evaluation** if it is a key species in the ecosystem, to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent preys and/or predators. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures **are not respected.**	At the CoE level, there is **insufficient** consideration of the role of the "stock under consideration" in the foodweb, especially there is no evaluation if it is a key species in the ecosystem, with objectives and measures to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent preys and/orpredators. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **insufficiently** respected.	At the CoE level, there is **moderate** consideration of the role of the "stock under consideration" in the foodweb, especially there is minimal evaluation if it is a key species in the ecosystem, with objectives and measures to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent preys and/or predators. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **moderately** respected	At the CoE level, the role of the "stock under consideration" in the foodweb is considered, and for a key species in the ecosystem, with objectives and management measures are in place to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent preys and/or predators. At the CoA level, management plan or a set of other management measures are **fully** respected.

Note: There is a mechanism in place by which the role of the stock under consideration in the food web is assessed and monitored, and its relative importance as a key species is determined. If the species is considered by the relevant scientific authority to be an important key species, there shall be specific management objectives relating to minimizing the impacts of the fishery on dependent preys and/or predators. At CoA, it should be assessed whether the relevant plan or additional management measures are respected.

Evidence basis: Availability, quality, and adequacy of the evidence. Examples may include various stock and ecosystems
assessment reports.

Pillar 3 - Socio-economic dimension of Adriatic fisheries

Supporting article 3.1

The economic, social, and cultural value of resources shall be assessed by the appropriate

fisheries management organization in order to assist decision making on their use and the fishing activities should be managed in coherence with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits.

FAO CCRF (1995) 10.2.2
Art. 2, point 1 of the EU Common Fishery Policy Basic Regulation – Reg. (EU) No 1380/2013

Specific Indicators:

3.1.1 Economic conditions

The economic conditions under which fishing industries operate shall contribute to a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities. Fisheries under assessment shall promote sustained and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment.

Art. 2, point 5f) of the EU Common Fishery Policy Basic Regulation – Reg. (EU) No 1380/2013
SDG n. 8

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, there is an **absence** of favourable economic conditions that promote a fair standard of living for those who depend on fishing activities. At CoA level, fishing **industries do not operate in economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fisheries.**	At CoE level, there is an **insufficient** presence of favourable economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fishing. At CoA Level, fshing industries **insufficiently operate** in economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fisheries.	At CoE level, there is a **moderate** presence of favourable economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fishing. At CoA level, fishing industries **moderately operate** in economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fisheries.	At CoE level, there is a **full** presence of favourable economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fishing. At CoA level, fishing industries **fully operate** in economic conditions that promote a fair and responsible fisheries.

Note: From an economic point of view, many fisheries in the Adriatic Sea would have a clear interest in improving their economic performance, sometime held back by low prices. In particular, where POs are really operating, fishers can benefit of marketing action aimed to promoting the creation of added value products and of price stability. A certification approach could help if producers are able to coordinate their actions: bigger is the number of producers following the certification, higher would be the result in terms of impact on the market. As regards small-scale companies, impacts on the market can depend on promotion and knowledge of what is behind a label. In addition, in many fisheries added-value products could be incremented through development of new processed products. Indeed, it is important to take into account that it could happen that a fishery is sustainable from an environmental point of view but it's not profitable. Trade-offs among the different dimensions are very likely to happen and action plans, foreseen under the certification approach, could help in reducing these trade-offs. In any case, certification helps in creating value, by differentiating fishery products from others, hence enhancing viability.

Evidence basis: There is evidence for the general economic value of the resource and its benefit to fishermen. There is enforcement data that supports the occurrence of responsible fishing practices. Where best scientific evidence available determines that it is necessary, there are management measures in place to ensure the economic conditions under which the fishery operates promote responsible fisheries. Examples may include economic reports or enforcement data.

Supporting article 3.2

Excess fishing capacity shall be avoided and exploitation of the stocks shall remain economically viable.

Art. 22 of the EU Common Fishery Policy Basic Regulation – Reg. (EU) No 1380/2013

Specific Indicators:

3.2.1 Fishing capacity

Based on the data available and the most recent assessments and advice from relevant scientific bodies on stock status and their exploitation rates, estimates indicators to judge about fleet overcapacity.

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, there is no measurement of fleet capacity operating, and	At CoE level, there is **insufficient** measurement of fleet capacity	At CoE level, there is **moderate** measurement of capacity for the fleet	At CoE level, there is collection of measurement of fleet

no maintenance of regularly updated statistical data on all fishing operations allowed. Furthermore, mechanisms are not established where excess capacity exists, to reduce capacity to levels commensurate with sustainable use of the resource. **At CoA level, the fishing capacity of the concerned segment of the fleet is not in balance** and **there is no action plan to achieve the balance**.	operating, and maintenance of regularly updated statistical data on all fishing operations allowed. Furthermore, mechanisms are **insufficiently** established where excess capacity exists, to reduce capacity to levels commensurate with sustainable use of the resources. At CoA level, the fishing capacity of the concerned segment of the fleet **is not in balance,** and action plan to achieve the balance **is insufficiently implemented**.	operating, and maintenance of regularly updated, statistical data on all fishing operations allowed. Furthermore, mechanisms are **moderately** established where excess capacity exists, to reduce capacity to levels commensurate with sustainable use of the resource. At CoA level, the fishing capacity of the concerned segment of the fleet **is not in balance**, and action plan to achieve the balance **is moderately implemented**.	capacity operating in the fleet, and maintenance of regularly updated, statistical data on all fishing operations allowed. Furthermore, mechanisms are established where excess capacity exists, to reduce capacity to levels commensurate with sustainable use of the resource. At CoA level, the fishing capacity of the concerned segment of the fleet **is in balance,** or an action plan to achieve the balance **is properly implemented**.

Note: In the Adriatic Sea, fleet capacity is monitored in the framework of the EU law. Member States are obliged to report annually on the balance between the fishing capacity of their national fleets and the fishing opportunities, following the guidelines prepared by the European Commission. For fleet segments with overcapacity the Member State has to take measures under an action plan, to achieve the balance, for instance through publicly funded decommissioning of vessels. When a Member State fails to report or does not implement the action plan, this may lead to proportionate suspension or interruption of the relevant EU funding. The Commission maintains an EU fleet register with the necessary vessel information, which it receives periodically from the Member States.

Evidence basis: There is a system to measure fleet capacity and maintain regularly updated data on all fishing operations. Research has been conducted to determine or estimate the fishing capacity commensurate with the sustainable use of the resource. There are mechanisms in place to measure the total fishing capacity within the component of evaluation, and to reduce this capacity if it is determined to exceed the sustainable level. Examples may include fleet reports or other documents or reports.

Supporting article 3.3

The fishery activity shall work in full compliance with international laws on labor,

human rights and safety.

Specific Indicators:

3.3.1 Human rights and safety on board

International norm shall clearly be followed in fishing fleet under assessment, such as fisheries should not participate in slavery or other human rights abuses and shall promote decent work for all.

ILO standards [Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)]
SDG n. 8

Low Confidence Rating (Critical NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Major NC)	Medium Confidence Rating (Minor NC)	High Confidence Rating (Full Conformance)
At CoE level, international norms **are not** followed in fishing fleet under assessment, such as fisheries participate in slavery or other human rights abuses. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **participate** in slavery or other human rights abuses.	At CoE level, international norms such as fisheries should not participate in slavery or other human rights abuses are **insufficiently** observed in fishing fleet under assessment. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not participate** in slavery or other human rights abuses but working conditions onboard **need to be improved.**	At CoE level, international norms such as fisheries should not participate in slavery or other human rights abuses are **moderately** observed in fishing fleet under assessment. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not participate** in slavery or other human rights abuses but working conditions onboard **should be improved.**	At CoE level, International norms are clearly followed in fishing fleet under assessment, such as fisheries not participate in slavery or other human rights abuses. At CoA level, the management system and the fishery **do not participate** in slavery or other human rights abuses and working conditions onboard are **fully in line with** EU and international standards.

Note: From a social point of view, Adriatic fisheries comply with the main security and health requirements stemming from the International Labour Organization Work (ILO)Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188)and from the social pillar of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Furthermore, some of the fisheries have a strong cultural component, being in most cases traditional fisheries or iconic for local consumers, also as regards their practice with traditional methods by local fishermen.

Evidence basis: Examples may include at CoE level implementing laws and regulations and enforcement activities; use of data related to the social dimension of the fisheries sector collected under the National programmes for the collection of data for the fishery sector in accordance with Regulation (EC) 199/2008, Commission Decision 2016/1251 and recent Regulation (EU) 1004/2017; studies, publications and reports on social/cultural/economic value of the fishery resources; conferences, workshops; research projects and other initiatives. At CoA level applicant organisations must demonstrate compliance with human rights standards through employment contracts or similar documents, as well as compliance with workers' safety standards including safety equipment and devices such as on board fishing vessels.