

MarinTrust Improver Programme: Annual milestone report template

In this document the applicant should outline progress made towards the actions listed in the Fishery Action Plan (FAP) as part of the Fishery Improvement Project (FIP). This should be aligned with the MarinTrust Assessment criteria where possible. The progress actions should be updated in the following tables, and the relevant evidence linked to. It is important that evidence documents are publicly available. This will then be verified by the peer reviewers based on evidence submitted by the applicant.

This report should include an update on all actions outlined in the Fishery Action Plan, even if no demonstrable progress has been made since the last report.

FIP name	Mauritania small pelagics
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Template guidelines

To help ensure the review process can be carried out effectively and efficiently:

- Include specific citations to the evidence that substantiates it. This should include the exact page numbers and paragraph references where the evidence can be found.
- Where possible, include a hyperlink to any evidence referenced.
- Ensure that the supporting evidence documents are easily accessible and well-organised. They should be available in a format that allows for easy navigation, such as a table of contents, bookmarks, or an index.
- Use clear and concise language when referring to evidence to make it easy for readers to grasp why a particular piece of evidence supports a specific progress claim.

Note: MarinTrust will host all evidence documents on the MarinTrust FIP profiles. If there are any confidential and or draft documents that the applicant does not want made public, this should be made clear in the report.

IP Milestone report

Note: This is based on the MT fishery assessment updated to version 3 and associated revised FAP (May 2024). These documents have already been provided to MarinTrust as part of the application for an extension to the FIP's participation in the IP (September 2024). They are available on request to jo.gascoigne@cantab.net (as well as any other documents mentioned below) in case of need.

List of evidence documents

Note: All the documents were provided to MarinTrust as part of this submission

1. Terms of reference for review of PAP-PP implementation (Year 1) by GIZ, with FIP comments (DRAFT DOCUMENT - DO NOT DISTRIBUTE)
2. FIP external review by Global Trust Certifications (Ford 2024). This will be publically available on FisheryProgress once our annual update is completed and signed off (approximately end of October) at <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/mauritania-small-pelagics-purse-seine>
3. Summary of relevant legislation, prepared by the FIP. Publically available as above.
4. Some photographs of Turkish crew having training on monk seals with NGO CBD-Najah and IMROP.
5. Jeyid, Mohamed Ahmed 2024. Suivi des usines de farine and huile de poisson en Mauritanie: 2023. IMROP. Presentation to FIP meeting, May 2024 (extract).
6. A spreadsheet with data on catch by species by fleet up to and including 2023.
7. Braham, Cheikh-Baye; Mohamed Ahmed-Jeyid, Jilali Bensbai, Fambye Ngoum, Ad Corten and Jo Gascoigne. Overexploitation of round sardinella may lead to the collapse of flat sardinella: What lessons can be drawn for shared stocks? Fisheries Research 269, 106873.
8. FAO 2024. FAO working group on the assessment of small pelagic fish off NW Africa, 2024: Summary Report. Fishery Committee for Eastern Central Atlantic. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/search?query=CECAF%20Pelagic-North%202024>
9. Information on the otolith saw purchased by the FIP (OLVEA) for IMROP, to replace out-of-date and broken equipment.
10. Sarre, Abdoulaye; Hervé Demarcq, Noel Keenlyside, Jens-Otto Krakstad, Salaheddine El Ayoubi, Ahmed Mohamed Jeyid, Saliou Faye, Adama Mbaye, Momodou Sidibeh and Patrice Brehmer 2024. Climate change impacts on small pelagic fish distribution in NW Africa: trends, shifts and risks for food security. Nature 14, 12684.
11. IMROP 2023. Interim Report to Ocean Stewardship Fund (MSC). 31 December 2023.
12. Braham, Cheikh Baye; Mohamed El Moustapha Bouzouma, Mohamed Ahmed Jeyid and Wagne Oumar Hamet 2024. Rapport sur le suivi de débarquements des petits pélagiques, IMROP, March 2024.

13. Information on fish measuring boards being procured for ‘observer kits’.
14. Two student project proposals put forward by the FIP Coordinators in June 2024.
15. Proposal to Sustainable Fisheries Fund for funding for FIP social workplan (October 2023). Publically available at <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/mauritania-small-pelagics-purse-seine>
16. Scoping Report by Partner Africa for FIP social workplan. Will be publically available as per items 2 and 3.
17. Samba Abdellahi, Braham Cheikh-Baye and Bouzouma Mohamed 2024. Composition alimentaire des certains prédateurs de Petits poissons pélagiques. IMROP report, July 2024.

M – Management Framework and Surveillance, Control and Enforcement

MT clause	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
M1.5.2	Action 2 (support for management plan (PAP-PP) implementation)	The PAP-PP has been in implementation since Jan. 2023. The FIP intended to review implementation in 2024, with the objective of understanding which elements were being followed and which not, and the reasons. GIZ intended to conduct a similar review, so we instead contributed to defining their terms of reference (see evidence 1). However as of now, this review has not got any further. A decision will be taken at the end of the year as to whether to go ahead and review the PAP-PP independently.	The PAP-PP is intended to provide a framework for transparent decision-making, but we are still not confident of full implementation by the government.	1 - ToRs for PAP-PP review (GIZ) with FIP comments	Ongoing; behind target due to discussion with GIZ	
M2.1.2 M2.1.3 M2.2.2 M2.3.1	Action 5 (support for MCS on vessels and in factories)	The external review of the FIP (commissioned by us as a requirement of FisheryProgress) (evidence 2) highlights this issue as a weakness of the FIP activities up till now. New regulation has come thick and fast in recent years (see evidence 3) and we have not been able to obtain	New actions 5.4 and 8.4 added to FAP which aim to work initially with factories to review	2 - FIP external review by Global Trust	Ongoing and behind target as explained left	

	<p>much objective evidence about its enforcement (i.e. other than assurances from our participants). A major issue has been the difficulty in engaging with the Coast Guard (responsible for enforcement). However, at the most recent FIP meeting (May 2024) there was a productive discussion with the Coast Guard about information sharing, including a discussion around documentation and publication of rates of compliance, according to Coast Guard inspections (M2.3.1). After this meeting, IMROP was able to obtain the logbook data held by the Coast Guard. This will be followed up at the next meeting (planned for December). it is hoped that the external review report can be used to highlight the importance of this issue with the Comité de Pilotage.</p> <p>Another compliance issue which was raised in 2023 was the issue of violations of the monk seal closed area (the NGO (CBD-Najah) provided an analysis but based on old data, while the fishery argued that this was not an issue). After some difficulty engaging with CBD-Najah, a training / sensitisation day for the vessel crews was conducted by IMROP in collaboration with CBD-Najaf (see evidence 4).</p> <p>An issue has also arisen in 2023 on the declaration of the species composition of fishmeal raw ingredients by the factories, with the proportion identified by the factories as 'déchets' (waste) suddenly increasing from a low level (e.g. 3% in 2022, which was typical) to 47% in 2023 (evidence 5). It is unclear why this is but it may be</p>	<p>and support their compliance with regulations for product they are buying (species composition, quality and traceability being the most important), and subsequently to engage with the vessels as required.</p>	<p>3 – summary of relevant legislation</p> <p>4 – some photographs of monk seal training for the crews of coastal vessels</p> <p>5 – presentation on species composition of fishmeal (IMROP) (extract)</p>		
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		<p>associated with a tightening of regulations around the species permitted to be used for fishmeal (or the enforcement of these regulations). Declaring large proportions of the catch as déchets is not permitted under arrêté 465 (2022) which requires traceability of purchases by the factories (see evidence 3), and is of course very unhelpful for IMROP, although the FIP-supported enqueteurs are able to establish fully the species composition.</p>				
<p>M2.3.2 M2.3.3</p>	<p>Action 1 (data collection), Action 5 (factory compliance), Action 8 (traceability)</p>	<p>Data collection has been one of our main activities from the start, and continues (see evidence 5 and 6). The FIP (and other) factories are the key source of data on species composition and length-frequency, vital for stock assessment (see evidence 7). These data come from IMROP enumerators (supported by the FIP) who visit the factories. The factories also provide self-sampling data, but an analysis by IMROP this year suggests that it is not robust enough to contribute to stock assessments, and resources spent in training factory personnel are probably better spent collecting the data directly. However, reporting by factories remains important from a traceability and compliance point of view (see discussions above).</p>	<p>New actions 8.4 on documentation and reporting of purchasing in factories</p>	<p>5 – presentation on species composition of fishmeal (IMROP) (extract)</p> <p>6 – data on catch by species for 2023</p> <p>7 - stock assessments for sardinella (also provided in March update)</p>	<p>Action 1 ongoing on target, Action 5 behind target, Action 8 new elements just starting</p>	

A – Category A: Data Collection, Stock Assessment, Harvest Strategy and Stock Status

MT clause	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
A3.1	Action 1 (data collection), Action 2 (PAP-PP), Action 7 (stock assessments)	<p>The PAP-PP covers limits on mortality from implementation of TACs and quotas in Mauritania, as well as elements on international cooperation. It does not include an explicit mechanism to limit mortality to a specific level across the entire stock of each small pelagics species, because of course these stocks are shared between Mauritania and other countries*. As regards the mortality imposed by Mauritanian fisheries, via TACs and quotas, while these are technically in place, more scientific work is needed to link them clearly to the status of each stock.</p> <p>The first element of this is of course the data collection, which the FIP continues to support under Action 1. For 2023, under the factory sampling programme, 429 samples were taken covering 150,000 t landings. 32,821 individuals were measured covering sardinella, horse mackerel, sardine, mackerel and anchovy. For 2024 to September, 625 samples were taken covering 112,000 t of landings, with 47,558 individuals measured (Mohamed Ahmed Jeyid and Cheikh-Baye Braham, IMROP, pers. comm.); IMROP are working on a report setting out these data.</p>	<p>New Action 2.3 on ensuring removals from Mauritania can be controlled as required</p> <p>New Action 4.2.2 on discussion with Senegal over sardinella removals</p>	<p>7 - stock assessments for sardinella</p> <p>8 – CECAF summary report 2024</p> <p>9 – information on the otolith saw</p>	Ongoing with a lot of different elements, mainly on target, some new not yet started	

	<p>The second element is improved stock assessments, which the FIP also supports under Action 7 (see evidence 7 and 8).</p> <p>We are currently applying for an Ocean Partnership Grant with IMROP and Bangor University (https://oceangrants.org.uk/apply/partnership-grants/; contact Dr Phil Hollyman) under which we propose collaborative scientific work to elucidate age and growth and stock structure of flat sardinella (our main FIP species alongside sardine, and the most critical species for food security). The objective of this work is threefold: i) to further improve stock assessments by allowing age-based methods; ii) to understand the appropriate scale of management (is this in fact a single shared stock, or several more local stocks, as the information about spawning areas suggests); and iii) to use the improved stock assessments to provide the government with advice on the partition of available sustainable biomass between different fisheries (fishmeal vs human consumption) and hence an appropriate level of capacity for the fishmeal industry in Mauritania. As a preliminary for this work, the FIP has purchased an otolith saw for the laboratory at IMROP, since their previous one was unsuitable, and broken (evidence 9).</p> <p>(The deadline for the Ocean Partnership Application was provisionally set for October, but in fact the call for proposals has not yet opened, so the deadline will be later, and is not yet known. The application will be submitted by</p>				
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		Bangor University but the FIP coordinators are currently writing some elements of it on behalf of IMROP.)				
A3.2 A3.3	Action 7 (stock assessments)	The current reference points used by CECAF and IMROP are not suitable for these requirements, since Bmsy and Fmsy are set as limit reference points (see evidence 8, p.11). The intent of this if exceeded is they act as a trigger for (a discussion about) management action, whereas the intent of the 'limit reference point' in these two clauses of the standard is that management ensures a low probability of these limits being reached. There are currently not any reference points with this specific intent which are applied to these stocks.	New action 7.2 on reference points suitable to apply MarinTrust requirements	8 – CECAF summary report 2024	New, just starting	
A4.1	Basically all of the actions	In the assessment of the fishery relative to MT v3 (May 2024) a gap was identified in relation to the stock status of the two sardinella species. Since then, however, the summary report for the CECAF small pelagics northern working group has been published (September 2024) with updated stock assessments (evidence 8, Table 3). The analysis is updated below. Previously there was a gap related to sardinella, and now this extends also to sardine, although fishing mortality remains at an appropriate level. (2023 was an exceptionally warm year, which does not suit sardine as a more temperate species; see evidence 10.) Sardine stock C: $B_{2023}/B_{0.1}$ estimated at 0.71 and $F/F_{0.1}$ at 0.98 - Gap	Improving the status of the stocks is the end-point goal of all the actions relating to building a more robust management system – data collection, stock assessment, implementation of the management plan, regional cooperation etc. See the rest of this	8 – CECAF summary report 2024 10 – Sarre et al. 2024		

	<p><i>Sardinella aurita</i>: B_{2023}/B_{msy} estimated at 0.21 and F/F_{msy} at 1.03 (JABBA) or 0.14 and 1.57 (SPiCT) – Gap</p> <p><i>S. maderensis</i>: B_{2023}/B_{msy} estimated at 0.32 and F/F_{msy} at 3.73 (JABBA) or 0.41 and 2.26 (SPiCT) – Gap</p> <p>Mackerel: $B_{2023}/B_{0.1}$ estimated at 1.05 and $F/F_{0.1}$ at 0.93 (Biodyn) or 1.09 and 0.89 (XSA) - Pass</p> <p><i>Trachurus trachurus</i>: $B_{2023}/B_{0.1}$ estimated at 1.47 and $F/F_{0.1}$ at 0.97 - Pass</p> <p><i>T. trecae</i>: $B_{2023}/B_{0.1}$ estimated at 1.17 and $F/F_{0.1}$ at 0.46 - Pass</p>	report for details on individual actions!			
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* Some shared stocks are certified MSC in a single jurisdiction, on the basis that the management in that limits mortality over enough of the stock to influence the dynamics of the entire stock (e.g. see Australian swordfish and PNA skipjack). There is no explicit limit for how much of the stock a fishery should cover for this to be permitted, but as far as I recall, the fisheries involve take in the range 50-65% of the total landings. (This information may now be out of date, but it applied at the time the fisheries were certified.) It would be useful to have a discussion with MarinTrust about the extent to which the regulations across other jurisdictions need to be integrated with the regulations in Mauritania, in order for each stock to meet clause A3.1 in the standard, given the relative level of catch of each species in Mauritania vs other jurisdictions.

B – Category B Stock Status

No actions

C – Category C Stock Status

No actions

D – Impacts On Species Categorised as Vulnerable by D1-D3

No actions

E – Impacts on ETP Species, Impacts on Habitats and Ecosystem Impacts

MT clause	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
E1.1.2 E1.1.3	Action 1 (data collection), Action 6 (bycatch and discards)	<p>The FIP is supporting data collection on interactions with ETP species via the IMROP observer programme, for which we previously obtained a grant from MSC (see previous reports), which has been supporting observer deployments since 2023 (9 deployments in 2023 and 6 deployments so far in January-August 2024) (see evidence 11 and 12). The FIP is also in the process of purchasing robust fish measuring boards, to be given out as part of ‘observer kits’, with the aim of equipping and training a larger cohort of observers (evidence 13). These deployments so far suggest that interactions with ETP species in this fishery are rare; however, work is continuing.</p> <p>There is not, however, an explicit requirement for the vessels themselves to report such interactions, which is now a requirement under v3 (E1.1.2). Logbooks have been a problem in this fishery, because a transition from paper to electronic logbooks is half completed, but some vessels lack the facilities / ability / will to make the switch – there seems to be some IT glitch but what is for the moment unclear. The paper and electronic versions of the logbooks are not the same. The issue remains in abeyance because IMROP are sceptical about the value of the information received from</p>	New Actions 1.1.4-6 under Action 1.1 on logbooks, to revise the logbooks to include reporting of ETP species, and to provide training.	<p>11 – interim report to MSC</p> <p>12 – report on observer deployments, 2023</p> <p>13 - information on fish measurers</p>	Ongoing – on target for observers, logbook review is a new action	

		logbooks (possibly rightly so). However, IMROP plans an internal meeting to evaluate the electronic vs paper logbooks and the data received from them, in 2024 (Cheikh-Baye Braham, pers. comm.).				
E3.1.3 E3.2.1 E3.3.2	Action 3 (ecosystem requirements)	This action has had a slow start, largely due to a lack of data, because of past difficulties with Action 6 (which since the MSC grant is going better – see above). Two graduate student projects were proposed by the FIP Coordinators for 2024-5, but we do not yet know if they have been picked up (evidence 14). However, some preliminary work has been done on diet composition of predatory fish as part of the MSC project (evidence 17).	Estimation of biomass of prey required by predator populations, which can be factored into management decisions on partition of the available biomass (see under A3.1 above).	14 – student project proposals 17 – Samba et al. 2024		

SOCIAL CRITERION

We are preparing a separate social workplan based on the HRIA conducted under the auspices of the Global Roundtable on Marine Ingredients by Partner Africa, last year. We received a grant from the Sustainable Fisheries Fund for this work (evidence 15), which is being carried out by Partner Africa and IMROP at the moment. We have received the Scoping Report from Partner Africa (evidence 16) and currently consultations are underway prior to finalising the social workplan.

Amended timeline

The following section allows the applicant to explain if there are any amendments to the improvement timelines and provide the reasons and evidence for this. This should reference the specific actions as outlined in the progress report.

The timeline for the FIP has been extensively revised and amended this year. The FIP applied for an extension to their participation in the Marin Trust IP, and were granted one to a revised end date of 8 December 2028. As part of that process, the fishery was evaluated relative to version 3 of the MarinTrust fishery standard, and the FIP FAP revised accordingly, with new actions included to cover new parts of the standard. At the same time, the entire FAP was reviewed as to its timeline and deadlines. This Progress Report is based on this revised FAP. The table below explains for each Action in the FAP, the previous deadline, the new deadline, the reasons why revision was required and whether any new actions were added to the Action.

Action	Previous deadline	New deadline	Reasons for adjusted timeline	New actions added?
Action 1 (data collection)	end 2023	end 2026 (although note that this is an ongoing activity)	E.1.1.2 on ETP species in logbooks, plus ongoing confusion regarding paper vs electronic logbooks, and the transition to electronic	1.1.4-1.1.6 revision of logbooks
Action 2 (management plan)	Sept. 2023	end 2028	PAP-PP process ran late (out of our hands); further focus on implementation of management plan, specifically control of removals (A3.1)	2.3 on control of removals
Action 3 (ecosystem)	end 2023	end 2028	Relies on completion of Action 6 which ran consistently behind until grant received from MSC	no
Action 4 (shared stocks)	end 2025	end 2028	Extremely difficult action to implement. New ideas for engagement with Senegal on sardinella for 2025-6, still in discussion stage.	4.2.2 on discussions with Senegal around sardinella
Action 5 (surveillance and control)	end 2023	end 2027	M2.3.1-2.3.3 on compliance data, robustness of control system and traceability; plus difficulties engaging with Coast Guard (which might be improving)	5.2.3 on statistical analysis of compliance; 5.4 on compliance in factories
Action 6 (ETP species)	end 2023	end 2026 (end date MSC project)	This got going very slowly, as previous MT peer reviewers have not failed to notice! Covid was a problem with observer deployments in this fishery as elsewhere.	no

Action 7 (stock assessments)	end 2022	end 2027 (depending on timely PAP-PP implementation)	A3.2, A3.3. and A4.1 – current CECAF reference points are not suited to these requirements, as explained above	7.2 on appropriate limit reference points
Action 8	none specifically given	end 2026	M2.3 on effective traceability, plus stricter MT factory standard, plus slow progress with participating factories due to erratic market and regulatory conditions	8.4 on quality and traceability in factories