

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	NE Atlantic Blue Whiting
-----------------	--------------------------

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

Use the below tables to provide an update on actions in the Fishery Action Plan with links to relevant evidence documents. Additional lines may be added where necessary.

Example table

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
M1.1	Provide the original action as outlined in the action plan.	Provide an update on this action since the last report.	Provide any outstanding aspects to this action and explain why they are outstanding.	Provide a url link to any evidence and summarise relevant points for actions or updates. If evidence is not publicly available, include a copy in the evidence pack.	What is the current status of this action (i.e. complete, pending, ongoing)	Provide any additional information here.
M1.2						
Add rows to each table as necessary						

M – Management Framework and Surveillance, Control and Enforcement

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
<p>A3.2 Total fishery removals of this species do not regularly exceed the level indicated or stated in the stock assessment. Where a specific quantity of removals is recommended, the actual removals may exceed this by up to 10% ONLY if the stock status is</p>	<p>1. Engagement to Ensure Robust Harvest Strategies Adopted and Implemented</p>	<p>i) NAPA has reviewed its governance structure with a view to identifying where it may exert more influence on Coastal State decision-makers, and to promote the importance of developing robust harvest strategies. As part of the restructure, a new funding arrangement has been established and a dedicated Blue Whiting sub-group has been created, to deliver more targeted, species-specific advocacy campaigns for the stock. The Blue Whiting sub-group has also welcomed Dave Robb (Cargill Aqua Nutrition Group</p>	<p>NAPA intends to pursue the continued development of a supporting scientific and economic evidence base that will demonstrate the biological and socio-economic consequences of failing to reach agreement(s) in unequivocal terms. NAPA will progress this action with the support of its members’ data and the expertise of Dr Rob Blyth-Skyrme, Director of Ichthys Marine Ecological Consulting, who filled the role of NAPA Project Lead in September 2024. Dr Blyth-Skyrme brings vast experience</p>	<p><i>*Evidence is grouped into folders according to areas of focus at the below hyperlinks. Please note, the numbers below correspond to the numbering of the folders.</i></p> <p>1. Steering Group meeting papers – includes: agendas, presentations, minutes, and any additional papers from Steering Group meetings held in November and December 2023; January and March 2024.</p> <p>2. Full NAPA Partner meeting papers – includes: presentations from Full NAPA Partner meetings held in December 2023 and April 2024.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

<p>above the limit reference point or proxy.</p>		<p>Sustainability Lead) as the Chair.</p> <p>ii) A focused communications strategy and brand refresh have been developed for the Blue Whiting sub-group. This ensures strong species-specific messaging is upheld – which cuts to the core of the issues pertaining to lack of harvest strategies and ineffective decision-making – whilst also remaining recognisable and visually impactful.</p> <p>iii) NAPA has continued to advocate, communicate, and engage with Coastal States to promote the delivery of exploitation levels consistent with ICES advice. The</p>	<p>in seafood sustainability, commercial fisheries, and certification. He will play an important role in undertaking research and gathering evidence to support the FIP.</p>	<p>3. Blue Whiting sub-group meeting papers – includes: agendas, presentations, minutes, and any additional papers from Blue Whiting sub-group meetings held in April, June, August, and October 2024; list of Blue Whiting sub-group members.</p> <p>4. Coastal States engagement – includes: letters to Coastal States; Norway campaign advocacy and engagement materials; press releases/statements.</p> <p>5. Catching Sector engagement – includes: letters to catching sector; presentations from NAPA meetings with catching sector; minutes of follow up meetings with Dominic Rihan (Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation)</p>		
--------------------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

		<p>following actions have been taken: direct communication with Coastal State representatives including phone calls, letters, and emails; participation in public and private forums and events e.g. plenary sessions following TAC negotiations and NEAFC meetings. NAPA is engaged with NEAFC through a group of NGO Observers within which NAPA provides comment to NEAFC on its activities, including the Working Group on the Future of NEAFC; publishing organisational statements; publishing press and media articles; participating in press and media interviews; hosting workshops and</p>		<p>and Tim Heddema (Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association); website blog of annual meeting for Fiskebåt Sør.</p> <p>6. NEAFC engagement – includes: NAPA NEAFC Meeting Position Statement (November 2023) emphasising the importance of taking action and having “<i>an effective and responsive dispute resolution procedure, and supported by a strong science-policy interface</i>”; summaries of NEAFC plenary sessions.</p> <p>7. Salmon producer engagement – includes: letter to salmon producer companies; presentation from NAPA meeting with salmon producers; letter of support for NAPA</p>		
--	--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

	<p>meetings; posting content on social media.</p> <p>Colin Faulkner, Head of the UK Delegation, attended and presented at the NAPA Steering Group meeting in November 2023. NAPA also met with Eva Maria Carballeira, Head of the EU Delegation, in July 2024.</p> <p>The Blue Whiting sub-group held an online meeting with the Coastal State negotiators of Norway, Elisabeth Sjørdahl and Ann-Kristin Westberg, in August 2024 in which NAPA Partners expressed their urgency for a sustainable sharing agreement and highlighted the market consequences of inaction. NAPA is now</p>	<p>published by Global Salmon Initiative (GSI).</p> <p>8. Data and evidence gathering – includes: landings data profile for blue whiting; species brief.</p> <p>9. Communications strategy – includes: blue whiting communications strategy; refreshed NAPA branding guidelines.</p> <p>10. NAPA session at North Atlantic Seafood Forum – includes: NAPA presentation given at North Atlantic Seafood Forum, delivered by Aoife Martin (NAPA Chair), Dave Robb (Cargill), and Leif Kjetil Skjæveland (Skretting).</p> <p>11. Aquafeed industry events and forums – includes:</p>		
--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

		<p>seeking a similar meeting with the Icelandic delegation.</p> <p>iv) NAPA has increased its engagement and frequency of communication with the pelagic Catching Sector at a national level (rather than collectively) to better understand positions and forge closer connections that may lead to opportunities for collaborative advocacy between NAPA and the catching sector.</p> <p>Ian Gatt from the Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group attended and presented at the NAPA Steering Group meeting in November 2023.</p>		<p>Laksekonferansen 2024 Programme where NAPA was promoted by Leif Kjetil Skjæveland, Public Affairs and Sustainability Manager, Skretting; Aqua Ice Conference 2024 Programme where NAPA was promoted by Håvard Walde, General Manager, Skretting.</p> <p>12. NAPA website (napafisheries.org) – see News section for announcements and published press and media releases.</p> <p>13. NAPA LinkedIn</p>		
--	--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--

	<p>NAPA has met with and presented to the Norwegian and Danish catching sectors, including presentations at the annual meeting for Fiskebåt Sør in Norway (5 December 2023), and to the Danmarks Pelagiske Producentorganisation (DPPO) in Denmark (19 June 2024). Fiskebåt is the Norwegian organisation for the majority of deep-sea fishing vessels, and Fiskebåt Sør represents south Norway region. DPPO is the major Danish organisation for pelagic fish boat owners.</p> <p>v) NAPA has continued to collect scientific and economic evidence that will underpin the biological and socio-</p>				
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

		<p>economic consequences of failing to reach agreement(s). NAPA has produced a landings data profile for blue whiting and a detailed species brief.</p> <p>vi) NAPA has held regular Steering Group, Full NAPA Partner, and Blue Whiting sub-group meetings to review progress across the FIP and ensure continued alignment with NAPA's goals. The Blue Whiting sub-group has met four times since its establishment in April 2024.</p>				
	2. Dispute settlement legal framework and consultation processes	<p>i) NAPA has continued to lobby individual Coastal States to initiate mechanisms to aid cooperation and dispute resolution between the parties. NAPA has</p>	<p>NAPA intends to review and produce a document summarising the Coastal States' and NEAFC's dispute settlement protocols later in the project, to</p>	<p>See the above evidence, which relates to this action.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

		written letters to all Coastal States on this matter and met with the lead negotiators of the UK, EU, Norway, and Iceland to encourage them to initiate negotiations for a dispute resolution mechanism.	outline recommended mechanisms for addressing political disagreements and blockers within the negotiations.			
	3. Effective decision-making processes	i) NAPA has strengthened its approach to engaging with the pelagic Catching Sector at a national level (rather than collectively) to extend NAPA's reach and enhance influence from within the supply chain. NAPA has also sought follow-up meetings with individual Producer Organisations that share a common position regarding the need for sustainable catch shares and long-term	NAPA intends to pursue the continued development of a supporting scientific and economic evidence base that will demonstrate the biological and socio-economic consequences of failing to reach agreement(s) in unequivocal terms. NAPA will progress this action with the support of its members' data and the expertise of Dr Rob Blyth-Skyrme, Director of Ichthys	See the above evidence, which relates to this action.	Ongoing	

	<p>management strategies, and who may be open to exploring opportunities for collaborative advocacy.</p> <p>At their request, NAPA met with Tim Heddema (Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association) and Dominic Rihan (Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation) separately to discuss areas of alignment and opportunities for collaboration.</p> <p>ii) NAPA has curated campaigns targeted at engaging individual Coastal Staes (rather than collectively) to promote the delivery of effective decision-making processes. By tapping into specific intelligence on cultural</p>	<p>Marine Ecological Consulting, who filled the role of NAPA Project Lead in September 2024. Dr Blyth-Skyrme brings vast experience in seafood sustainability, commercial fisheries, and certification. He will play an important role in undertaking research and gathering evidence to support the FIP.</p>			
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--

	<p>fishing references and domestic seafood trends, more targeted and constructive engagement with Coastal States has been possible.</p> <p>NAPA hosted an in-person workshop at the North Atlantic Seafood Forum (NASF) in Bergen, Norway in March 2024, to set out the issues and challenges affecting the blue whiting fishery, and in turn the aquafeed and farmed salmon sector. Aoife Martin (NAPA Chair), Dave Robb (Cargill), and Leif Kjetil Skjæveland (Skretting) presented. This formed part of a targeted blue whiting campaign focused on the Norwegian</p>				
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

	<p>Government, to raise awareness of marketplace impacts and forge connections with Norwegian salmon producers – thereby leveraging additional stakeholder support and expertise from the salmon sector.</p> <p>Consequently, since the NASF, four salmon companies have joined NAPA as full fee-paying members: Grieg Seafood, Lerøy Seafood Group, Cermaq, and Salmon Group. In addition, the CEO of the Global Salmon Initiative (GSI), Sophie Ryan, publicly voiced support of NAPA’s work on blue whiting in a letter to the fisheries ministers of the UK and Norway.</p>				
--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

	<p>The GSI represents over 40% of the global farmed salmon industry.</p> <p>iii) NAPA has presented at several aquafeed industry events and forums, including: online meeting entitled “Status for NE Atlantic Pelagic Stocks and Feed Industry Perspectives” hosted by Marine Ingredients Denmark for European stakeholders (19 January 2024); Laksekonferansen 2024 in Bergen, Norway, hosted by the Norwegian Seafood Council (11 June 2024); Aqua Ice Conference in Harpa (Lagarlíf, Iceland), supported by which is a two-day, annual conference and exhibition for the aquaculture industry in</p>				
--	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--	--	--	--

		Iceland where the Icelandic Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries attended (8 October 2024); Icelandic Fishmeal Association (FIF) , which is the organisation for fishmeal producers in Iceland, with several of the members also owning fishing vessels (9 October 2024).				
	4. Ensure Key Data Elements (KDE) information is collected on vessels supplying MarinTrust factories	This action will aim to start later in the project.	By year 5, NAPA will aim to ensure KDEs for whole fish are collected – fishing vessel(s), species, catch area, and date of landings. KDEs will be collected through stakeholder meetings with the fishmeal supply chain.	Pending	Pending	

B – Category B Stock Status

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

C – Category C Stock Status

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

SOCIAL CRITERION

MT clause (if relevant)	Action in plan	Action update / progress made	Outstanding actions and rationale	Evidence	Status of action	Additional comments
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additional Information

The following section is for any information provided by the fishery in support of this Milestone Report which does not relate directly to any of the Milestones above, but which is relevant to the ongoing monitoring of fishery management status.

The NE Atlantic Blue Whiting FIP is the foundation of NAPA’s work to drive sustainability into the management of the blue whiting stock. The FIP was granted an extension in October 2024 for a further two years. Under the extension, there is no departure from the original intention to design this FIP as a “policy FIP”, however there is greater focus on delivering more efficient, effective, and impactful actions building on the solid progress that NAPA has made over the last three years, irrespective of whether that progress has been reflected at Coastal State level. In parallel to this, NAPA has also recently secured an extension to the mackerel and Atlanto-Scandian herring FIP.

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.