VALDUVIS: a fair price for sustainable fish

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Introduction

How sustainable is the fish on our plates? Where and how was it caught? How about the status of the stock in this area? Is the fishery associated with bycatch of vulnerable or protected species? The answer to these questions is not as straightforward as one might think. The eco-conscious consumer falls back on various seafood guides and eco-labels to make sustainable seafood choices. In practice, however, the usefulness of these seafood guides is limited due to insufficient information regarding catch area and fishing method on the product package. This shortage of information in fact characterizes the entire seafood supply chain, and forms the base of the VALDUVIS project (Valorization of Sustainably Caught Fish), which aims to score and visualize ecological, social and economic sustainability of fish landed in Belgian fishing ports (Zeebrugge, Oostende and Nieuwpoort).

Key element in VALDUVIS = STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

(fishermen, producer organizations, government, fish auctions, NGOs, etc.)

Scientifically sound reference system that is supported by a wide range of stakeholders

Feedback and approval

Stakeholders

Science

February 2013
Proposal for data gathering and transparency

December 2013
Proposal for indicator system and reference points

June 2014
Proposal for visualization of sustainability scores in auction

October 2014
Implementation through pilot project

Step 1: Gathering information about the trip

Information per individual fishing trip:
Vessel, fishing area, fishing method, species

Information derived from databases:
Stock status, carbon emissions, bycatch and discards, impact of gear on marine habitats, etc.

Step 2: Developing indicators for sustainability

A set of indicators describes fishing activity from an ecological, economic and social perspective

Stock status

Impact on marine habitats

Bycatch

Season

Carbon efficiency

Indicator Z

Indicator Y

Indicator X

Step 3: Visualizing sustainability

In the auction hall and on a secured website

This may result in improved market access and a better price for sustainably caught fish

Underlying goal: initiating a transition towards a sustainable Belgian fishing fleet by offering incentives to fish more sustainably