

Introducing a voluntary assessment scheme enabling transition towards a more sustainable fishery

Authors: Ellen Pecceu¹, Lancelot Blondeel¹, Katrien Verlé^{1,2}, Hans Polet¹

¹ Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), Animal Sciences Unit, Fisheries and Aquatic Production, Ankerstraat 1, 8400 Oostende, Belgium

² Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), Social Sciences Unit, Burg. van Gansberghelaan 115 bus 2, 9820 Merelbeke, Belgium

Abstract

The Belgian fishing fleet, mainly composed of beam trawlers, has faced numerous challenges in the past decade (high fuel prices, low market prices, additional rules and regulations, outflux of crew...). Consequently the number of fishing enterprises decreased considerably. Due to the nature of the fishery, fishermen could not get MSC certified unless they made drastic adjustments. As a result, all the main stakeholders agreed on the need to assess and monitor the sustainability of the Belgian fishery and to set targets to become a sustainable fishery by 2020.

This led to the development of a sustainability assessment tool called 'VALDUVIS' that was commissioned and supported by these stakeholders (Kinds et al., 2016). The tool would in a first instance be able to measure progress made to reach these goals. A second objective was to render this progress visible and to communicate it to the market. A participatory approach involving fishers and their representatives, government officials, NGOs, fish auctions, distributors, processors, retailers and researchers remained a strong focal point throughout the process. The aim has been to apply a step-by-step approach with progressively increasing thresholds for participation and to gradually convince and prepare fishers to change their current practices. This would enable the entire fleet to evolve in a more sustainable direction that would benefit everyone in the long-term. We explore the participatory process that shaped the tool and its subsequent applications and assess its effectiveness as a new governance framework for the Belgian fishery.

Keywords: Participation, Fisheries Improvement Plan, sustainability, governance

Introducing a voluntary assessment scheme enabling transition towards a more sustainable fishery

Ellen Pecceu, Lancelot Blondeel, Katrien Verlé & Hans Polet

Need for a sustainability assessment in Belgium

Ecological impact of beam trawl

Belgium



Increasing demand for sustainably caught fish



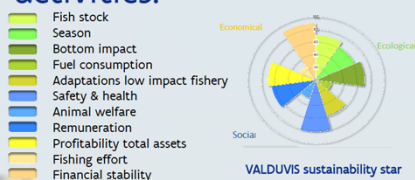
From 2012, ongoing

Development VALDUVIS

Multi-stakeholder process

What is VALDUVIS?

VALDUVIS is a tool using 11 indicators to score and visualize the ecological, social and economic sustainability of fishing activities.



LEARNING TOOL



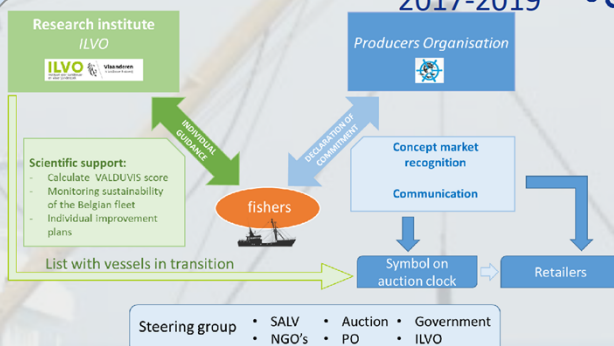
MONITORING TOOL



INFORMATION TOOL



2017-2019



Market recognition for vessels with

- minimum score
- commitment to improve sustainability score

Majority Belgian vessels involved!

Future challenges

- Keep fishermen motivated to improve their sustainability score
- Keeping system up-to-date with new scientific and policy developments

Want to know more?



www.Valduvis.be



Vlaanderen
is landbouw & visserij

ILVO



CONTACT

Ellen Pecceu
ellen.pecceu@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

Katrien Verlé
katrien.verle@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

Lancelot Blondeel
lancelot.blondeel@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

