

Ambitions and agreements

Theme 1 - Supply of sustainable fish/including certification

Joint ambition

To improve the supply of sustainably caught fish by striving towards MSC certification for

- Shrimp fishery (2009)
- Sole/static nets (2009)
- Plaice/lobster/twin rig (2010)
- Sole/plaice/beamtrawl (2012)
- Flyshooting (2011)

Other forms of fishery may also commence the certification procedure.

The ultimate ambition is for the demersal industry to be fully MSC, or the equivalent, certified by 2012, including ecological sustainability. This is an obligation of best intent, as individual businesses will have to take this decision.

Businesses will take the initiative for certification, whilst NGOs and the government will support the initiative.

Agreements

	Agreement	Who	Comments
1.1.	To take the initiative for a lead group per fishery that will pursue the certification process (MSC or equivalent)	Businesses	In this context, MSC or equivalent refers to a quality label that is in line with the FAO/UN requirements for ecolabelling fishery products ¹ .
1.2.	To strive towards a <i>Responsible Fishing Scheme</i> (RFS) certification for the demersal fishery as part of or a logical step towards certified operations	Businesses	RFS is a B2B label; it is not an ecological or other sustainability label and shall not be communicated or promoted as such.
1.3.	Willingness to give support to that part of the industry that is taking serious steps – e.g. active communication to	NGOs	Linked to support for the lead groups (1.1) by means of knowledge networks (1.5)

¹ Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries. FAO, 2005 (<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/008/a0116t/a0116t00.pdf>).

	society		
1.4.	To attempt to interest purchasers in purchasing and profiling sustainably caught fish	Businesses with support from NGOs	See also 1.3. Although the MSC or equivalent certified fish really is sustainable, the fact that fishermen may take specific steps in or in the wake of the lead groups must be taken into account.
1.5.	In principle, the certification processes and lead groups are supported with the knowledge-networks tool – developing <i>Best Practice</i>	Government	
1.6.	Endeavour to provide maximum support from EFF	Government	In principle, the EFF offers the opportunity for further support/contribution to the costs of the certification process (tender regulations for collective actions) as of 2009. A condition is that good proposals are submitted. Fishery Innovation Platform (VIP) plays an advisory role. In principle, EFF offers the opportunity for investment support for “ <i>best method/best practice</i> ”. Id fiscal. Each year, an inventory will be prepared by the knowledge networks and advice will be issued on which investments will be eligible for support. The idea is that this would concern specific measures that help to realise MSC certification or the equivalent.
1.7.	Request the Dutch Socio-Economic Council (SER) for advice on sustainability agreements in relation to free competition	Government	

Theme 2 - Communication (including the NGOs)

Joint ambition

- Where possible, to endorse each other in communications.
- Social organisations assess fish species on sustainability- see goedevis.nl and the Fish Purchase Guide for a summary. Joint assessment is a bridge too far, because the assessment is based on a method that has been established by the NGOs at international level after a lengthy process. However, the manner in which the assessments will be conducted shall be improved. In communications not everything will be tarred with the same brush if reality does not support this; link with theme 1.
- Agreements are made about the value of the claims/quality labels that are the topic of communication.

Agreements

	Agreement	Who	Comments
2.1.	Industry is involved earlier and better in the annual assessments for goedevis.nl by means of a sounding board/advisory group	NGOs	Goedevis.nl is the website from which the Fish Purchase Guide is derived. The Fish Purchase Guide is a temporary communication tool in campaigns.
2.2.	An independent scientific assessment will be incorporated for the fish species that are important to NL.	NGOs/Government	The government is prepared to finance a number of these independent scientific assessments.
2.3.	The assessments for goedevis.nl will do justice to the activities of the MSC lead groups	NGOs	“To do justice to” means that when fishery takes measures as a result of the lead groups, these are included in the assessment. They will also be communicated on goedevis.nl, and where possible in the Fish Purchase Guide.
2.4.	To develop a joint proposal for an ‘information point’ that will provide reliable information on sustainably caught fish and that supports companies that switch to sustainability.	All	(2008) In co-ordination with the Netherlands Nutrition Centre, Fish Marketing Board, CBL and purchasers. In principle, EFF offers opportunity for support for information on sustainably caught fish. Also concerns active communication of knowledge to the players in the chain.
2.5.	The parties inform each other on actions in order not to present each other with surprises	All	This is an obligation of best intent with the objective of informing each other. The parties are and remain responsible for the content of their actions.

Theme 3 - Education and training

Joint ambition

Sustainable fishery, ecology, policy, and market form an integral part of fishery education, both for future and existing fishermen.

Agreements

	Agreement	Who	Comments
3.1.	To explore the options, in consultation with educational institutions, to realise this in the curriculum	Businesses with support from the others	Concerns an exploration of the possibility to include this in standard curriculum and of the possibility of offering framework modules/courses. In first instance this will be on the basis of the currently optional ProSea modules. Make a link with knowledge that is developed in the knowledge networks and the businesses that are active in those.
3.2.	To offer the knowledge that is developed by the knowledge networks to all industry members	Businesses	This will be facilitated by the knowledge-network supervisors, and therefore by the government.

Theme 4 - Details of protected areas for Natura 2000 and OSPAR at sea

Joint ambition

- To organise a proper national and international joint process for formulating objectives and measures for protected areas in the North Sea, whereby the ultimate responsibility for objectives and measures remains with the government.
- Where possible, to elaborate the idea of deploying protected areas as a 'lever' for forms of sustainable fishery, with a link to self-regulation/certification where possible. It is a precondition that this is reconcilable with nature objectives.
- To realise protected areas/nature MPAs and sustainable use in the rest of the North Sea.
- To evaluate and learn lessons from the plaice box at European level.

Comments: Marine protected areas will be established under Natura 2000 and OSPAR from the point of view of protecting important local natural assets and biodiversity. Improving fish stocks is not an aim as such, but could be an added effect.² Fishery must accept that biodiversity objectives may lead to a full or partial closure of areas, but closure is never an aim in itself. Depending on the objectives, certain forms of fishery may be permitted in the protected areas, depending on their influence. Conversely, it is a challenge to formulate the access requirements in such a manner that this creates a link with the certification requirements. This would create maximum synergies between themes 1 and 4.

Agreements

	Agreement	Who	Comments
4.1.	A joint project will be started in order to arrive at <ul style="list-style-type: none">* joint objectives and measures* feasible details of the lever concept	All	Following the example of the EMPAS ³ project. The government will facilitate this process. If there is no consensus, the government will decide on the objectives and the measures.
4.2.	This approach and the concept of organising a lever will be communicated to other North-Sea nations and to the EU Commission. To work actively on coalitions.	All	International consultations are required in any case in order to prevent fishermen from having to deal with a complex patchwork of measures and an administrative burden. From the point of view of nature policy this would also be an undesirable situation.
4.3.	Communicate this concept to NSRAC	Businesses/NGOs	

² The WWF and the North Sea Foundation strive towards an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas. See the WWF report The Dutch Case; A Network of Marine Protected Areas (http://assets.wnf.nl/downloads/the_dutch_case__a_network_of_marine_protected_areas_by_e_hugenholtz_2008.pdf) and the brochure 'Natuurgebieden op Zee' ('Nature Areas at Sea'). (www.noordzee.nl)

³ EMPAS: ICES/BfN project "**Environmentally Sound Fishery Management in Protected Areas**". **The principal objective is the development of fishery management plans for each of the 10 German Natura 2000 areas. Started in February 2006.**

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4.4.	To explore the opportunities to evaluate the Plaice Box - feasibility study	Government	See how the NSRAC proposal can be moved forward. It must be noted that the plaice box is a type of fishery MPA, i.e. it is primarily driven by fishery policy
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Theme 5 - Management of flatfish stocks

Joint ambition

- To bring the stocks within safe biological limits⁴ in order to operate the MSY principle (annual maximum catch for healthy stocks) in fishery management as of 2015, taking account of the mixed nature of demersal fishery. Reducing fishing mortality is the starting point.
- Multiannual agreements, like those for sole and plaice, are useful, because they offer clarity and stability and are focused on bringing stocks to safe biological limits, working towards MSY, and keeping the stocks at healthy levels.
- To develop a joint knowledge base for flatfish.

Agreements

5.1.	The parties are transparent in their research agenda and try to co-ordinate this in the best possible way	All	Currently, a large amount of research money is spent on studying relatively few stocks. Is a very expensive affair, and the demands for research are increasing - the situation is not tenable. A discussion on the effective use of means is required.
5.2.	Involving fishermen in stock recording must form part of the scientific methodology. The starting point is the review of the Data Collection Regulation.	Government/businesses	This concerns scientifically sound use of data from fishermen. The data-collection method must be transparent, including for the NGOs.
5.3.	Good information exchange on biological advice and the NL input/aims in Brussels.	Government	
5.4.	The parties commit to properly operating RACs	All	Stumbling blocks - does Brussels take RAC advice seriously, do RACs have means to answer knowledge-based questions, and are the parties encouraged to participate (is currently a 'labour of love')? Jointly put on the agenda in Brussels.
5.5.	Businesses prepare a discard-reduction plan that strives towards a substantial reduction of discards	Businesses	This will take account of the cost effectiveness of measures, including on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. There is also a link with theme 1.
5.6.	NGOs will be involved with existing research collaboration on flatfish	Government/businesses	

⁴ Concerns both fishing mortality and spawning stocks