



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Compliance Statement of the FiTI International Board regarding progress in implementing the FiTI Standard (December 2018 – March 2022)

Date: 14 April 2023

Purpose of this document

The FiTI holds all FiTI implementing countries accountable to the same global standard by conducting regular **validations**, which assess an implementing country's compliance with the FiTI Standard per section D of the Standard.

The **FiTI Standard** is the only internationally recognised framework that defines what information on fisheries management should be published online by national authorities. The FiTI Standard was developed over two years in a global multi-stakeholder endeavour. Its objective is to contribute to the sustainability of marine fisheries by increasing the accessibility, credibility, and usability of national fisheries management information.

The **FiTI International Board**¹, FiTI's global supervisory body, is responsible for the validation process.

This Compliance Statement documents the FiTI International Board's final assessment for the first regular validation process of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (short 'Mauritania'). The timeframe under validation was from December 2018 until March 2022.

The assessment of Mauritania's compliance with the FiTI Standard is comprised of **three phases**, each building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous phase.² Consequently, this Compliance Statement – the final stage of the validation process – should be read taking into consideration the outputs of the other two phases, as well as the overall parameters set up by the [FiTI Standard](#) and [Guidance Note No. 3](#). The core deliverables of the first and second phases of the process can be found in Annex I and Annex II of this document.

Annex	Validation Phase	Deliverable	Responsibility	Date of publication
I	1	Baseline Assessment Report	FiTI International Secretariat	23 June 2022
II	2	Validation Report	Independent Validator (Mr. Stefaan Depypere)	19 December 2022

The FiTI validation process offers a unique opportunity to conduct an objective and standardised verification of a country's past performances (e.g. published FiTI Reports) as well as to identify lessons learned, enhancement opportunities, and corrective actions to strengthen further the operational effectiveness of the FiTI implementation and the overall impact of the FiTI on the sustainable management of a country's marine fisheries. As such, the validation process benefits

¹ <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

² For more information, please refer to the section 'Background of validation process' of this document.

national stakeholders in validated countries and FiTI's international stakeholders (e.g. business partners, donors, etc.).

However, the validation process in determining a country's level of compliance should not be mistaken for a purely technical, audit-like exercise. Instead, the validation process must balance the outcomes of a detailed, evidence-based assessment of a country's performance against the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard (as outlined in its sections B.1 to B.3) and the overall perception of the country's performance against the spirit of the initiative – as documented in the FiTI Principles. In this regard, greater flexibility during a country's first regular validation processes should be applied when suitable. Also, it is indispensable to consider the context in which fishing activities and the implementation of the FiTI happen in the country.

With this final Compliance Statement, the validation process for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania is concluded. The decision on the overall compliance designation of Mauritania is final and cannot be appealed. The Compliance Statement, including its annexes, is publicly available.

The FiTI International Board, in the process of assessing the overall country compliance, took into account provision E.2.2 of the FiTI Standard concerning the possible breach of principles and spirit of the initiative, as well as provision D.1.2. that states that the FiTI International Board evaluates the overall compliance with the FiTI Standard based on the assessment of the individual FiTI requirements and considering the following factors:

- i. The advice and recommendations of the Independent Validator.
- ii. The nature of the outstanding requirements and how close the requirements are to being met.
- iii. The magnitude and complexity of the fisheries sector of the country.
- iv. Other barriers to meeting requirements, such as but not limited to state fragility and recent or ongoing political change, and the extent to which the National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) has undertaken actions to resolve barriers encountered.
- v. The good-faith efforts undertaken by the National MSG to comply with the requirements.
- vi. The reasons and justifications for not complying with the requirements.
- vii. Any plans agreed by the National MSG to address the requirements in the future.

In assessing an implementing country's overall compliance, the FiTI International Board has to apply the same designations used to assess the individual requirements outlined in provision D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard.

1) The FiTI International Board's decision

Validation is the Fisheries Transparency Initiative's (FiTI) quality assurance mechanism to assess implementing countries on their ability to meet the provisions of the FiTI Standard.

This validation is the **first regular validation** for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (short 'Mauritania'). Under the FiTI Standard (section D.1), the FiTI International Board launched the country's validation process in September 2021, ending in April 2023. The Board set the period under validation from December 2018 until December 2021, and this timeframe was later extended to March 2022.³ Consequently, Mauritania's first FiTI Report (covering the calendar year 2018) and second FiTI Report (covering the calendar years 2019 and 2020) fall under the validation timeframe.

On 16 February 2023, the FiTI International Board determined that Mauritania had made 'meaningful progress' in implementing the FiTI Standard during the validation timeframe.⁴

The FiTI International Board congratulates Mauritania on this achievement, demonstrating that significant aspects of the validation requirements have been implemented.⁵ The validation of Mauritania underlines that the government of Mauritania has made transparency one of its primary policy objectives, and undeniable progress has been made in improving transparency around its fisheries sector management. Within this first validation period, increasing amounts of information have been made public on government websites, among it:

- a. A comprehensive list of laws and regulations on fisheries (including summaries);
- b. An online summary description of tenure arrangements of the five fisheries of Mauritania⁶;
- c. The contracts of all foreign fishing access agreements (as well as their amendments, if applicable)⁷;
- d. The summary of the status of the fish stocks;

³ Decision ID: BM-16_2022_D-03.

⁴ Decision ID: BM-19_2022_D-01

⁵ The validation of Mauritania covered a total of 21 *individual validation requirements*, as set forth in sections B.1., B.2. and B.3 of the FiTI Standard:

- Transparency (comprised of 12 individual requirements),
- Procedures related to the FiTI Report (comprised of 4 individual requirements),
- National Implementation Framework (comprised of 5 individual requirements).

⁶ Subsistence fishing (*traditional Imraguen and fishing outside the PNBA*), Exploratory fisheries, Sport fisheries, Scientific fisheries, and Commercial fisheries (*artisanal maritime fishing, coastal maritime fishing, offshore maritime fishing*).

⁷ With the European Union, Senegal, Japan Tuna, Convention for pelagic, Convention for tuna – other than for Japan Tuna.

- e. A list of large-scale fishing vessels (although not all attributes of the FiTI Standard are covered yet), as well as their payments in an aggregated form; and
- f. The total number of vessels and the total number of fishers operating in the small-scale fisheries sector.

Feedback from various stakeholders obtained during this validation process showed an appreciation for the FiTI process and recognition of the progress made in Mauritania. It has also been noted that the FiTI process has contributed to creating awareness about the value of transparency among various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. Further, the investment climate in Mauritania's fisheries is now seen as more favourable due to a decreased risk of uncertainty caused by the previous lack of information.

At the same time, transparency must not be seen as an activity to satisfy the information curiosity of stakeholders but as a catalyst for reforms in the sector. The impact of the FiTI in a country relies, therefore, not only on increasing public access to fisheries information but also ensuring that this information is used to enhance the public debate and participatory governance. Hence, successfully implementing the FiTI Standard in a country requires an enabling environment for stakeholder participation. Mauritania's FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) – comprising government, business, and civil society representatives – plays an essential role. Unfortunately, the group functioned only sporadically during the validation timeframe. The very modest resource base of the National MSG seems to be preventing it from assuming a more active role.

Furthermore, it is currently unclear how Mauritania's notable fisheries transparency achievements efforts will be sustained over time. More clarity regarding the necessary resources – financial, human, logistical, and in terms of political capital – is needed to give the FiTI process in Mauritania a long-term foundation, including addressing the long-standing issue of moving the FiTI Lead Ministry from the current Ministry of Economic Affairs to the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy.

Finally, this validation process has found that the operational basis for the FiTI process in Mauritania needs to be strengthened. This includes, among other things, endowing the National MSG and the FiTI National Secretariat with a modest but reliable operational basis in terms of logistics, human and financial resources. Further, it will require appointing a FiTI National Lead that exercises high level leadership, commits to the process's improvement and sustainability, reviews the composition and its functioning, and ensures effective participation of members in the National MSG.

Consequently, FiTI's International Board is including **five corrective actions** in this Compliance Statement that Mauritania's FiTI Lead Ministry and the National MSG must address for the country to advance from 'meaningful progress' to the final status of 'compliant.' Advancement in addressing these corrective actions (see Chapter 4) will be

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assessed as part of the country's second regular validation, scheduled to start on 30 June 2024.

Meanwhile, Mauritania will remain a **FiTI Candidate country**. Under the FiTI Standard, Mauritania's National MSG may request an extension of this timeframe or that the coming validation commences earlier than scheduled.

Per section E.2.3 of the FiTI Standard, failure to achieve satisfactory progress in the second regular validation will result in a temporary suspension or delisting.

2) Background of the validation process

Current FiTI country status:	FiTI Candidate country (as of 13 December 2018) ⁸
Request of validation process:	FiTI International Board, Decision: BM-14_2021_D-04 ⁹
Type of validation:	Regular validation ¹⁰
Timeframe of validation:	December 2018 until March 2022
FiTI Reports due within the validation timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ 2018 FiTI Report, published on 18 May 2021 ➔ 2019-20 FiTI Report, published on 24 March 2022
Baseline Assessment Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Baseline Assessment Report finalised by FiTI International Secretariat on 23 June 2022 (and submitted to Independent Validator, once he was appointed) ➔ Refer to Annex I
Validation Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Validation Report submitted by Independent Validator (Mr. Stefaan Depypere) to FiTI Chair on 19 December 2022 ➔ Refer to Annex II
Compliance Statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Overall compliance designation approved by FiTI International Board on 16 February 2023 ➔ Compliance Statement finalised by FiTI International Board (through designated Validation Committee) on 14 April 2023

⁸ <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

⁹ 14th meeting of the FiTI International Board, 9 September 2021

¹⁰ The FiTI International Board approved in its 16th meeting (17 February 2022) that the country validation for Mauritania must be completed prior to the publication of the country's third FiTI Report (instead of the second FiTI Report, as outlined in section D.4 of the FiTI Standard); Decision ID: BM-16_2022_D-02.

The assessment of Mauritania's compliance with the FiTI Standard was implemented in three stages or phases – each building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous one – as shown below:

FiTI Standard	Section D.2.1	Section D.2.2	Section D.2.3
Responsibility	FiTI International Secretariat	Independent Validator	FiTI International Board
Status for Mauritania	 (23 June 2022)	 (19 December 2022)	 (16 February 2023)

In the **first phase**, the FiTI International Secretariat prepared a Baseline Assessment Report (Annex I), which provided the Secretariat's initial evaluation of progress against the requirements of the FiTI Standard.¹¹ Primarily through desk-based research, the International Secretariat:

- Determined the level of compliance for each of the *21 individual validation requirements*:
 - Transparency (comprised of 12 individual requirements),
 - Procedural related to the FiTI Report (comprised of 4 individual requirements),
 - National Implementation Framework (consists of 5 individual requirements);
- Documented efforts that went beyond FiTI requirements;
- Provided recommendations to strengthen the FiTI implementation process further; and,
- Identified additional aspects for the consideration of the Independent Validator.

The International Secretariat finalised its Baseline Assessment Report for Mauritania on 23 June 2022.

¹¹ During its 15th meeting (November 2021), the FiTI International Board approved that the first step of the validation process for Mauritania should be conducted by the FiTI International Secretariat. Such step entailed a detailed desk review of the countries' compliance with the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard. On the other hand, the responsibility of conducting stakeholder interviews to provide objective verification of the assessment of each individual requirement, as well as to determine lessons learned and a recommendation for the overall compliance designation, was the exclusive purview of the Independent Validator. The Independent Validator's draft report was provided to the countries' National MSG for feedback before the final version was submitted by the Independent Validator to the FiTI International Board [BM-15_2021_D-03].

In the **second phase**, Mr Stefaan Depypere was selected by the FiTI International Board as the country's Independent Validator.¹² Primarily through stakeholder consultations¹³ (and complementary research), the Independent Validator:

- Reviewed the Secretariat's baseline assessment of each individual requirement as well as the country's progress performance;
- Identified opportunities to improve further the operational effectiveness as well as the impact of the national FiTI implementation in terms of promoting sustainable fisheries management; and
- Recommended the overall country compliance designation, following the categories in section D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard.

The Independent Validator documented his findings in the Validation Report, including feedback from the FiTI National Lead regarding the preliminary findings (obtained during a feedback process in the first weeks of November).

The Independent Validator submitted his final Validation Report for Mauritania to the FiTI Chair on 19 December 2022.

In the **third and final phase**, the FiTI International Board reviewed the assessments and recommendations documented in the Independent Validation Report. The FiTI Board decided on the final overall country determination during its 20th meeting held on 16 February 2023, taking into consideration the following aspects:¹⁴

Level of compliance for the 21 individual requirements of the FiTI Standard

After reviewing the Independent Validation Report and, where necessary, comparing it with the analysis in the Secretariat's Baseline Assessment Report, the designated Validation Committee noted its agreement with the Independent Validator's assessment regarding all of the 21 individual requirements of the FiTI Standard.

The International Board noted that the Independent Validator's and the International Secretariat's assessments differed only in one score. The Independent Validator's score for the requirement 'B.1.4 – The State of Fisheries Resources' was higher than the score granted by the FiTI International Secretariat. The International Board agreed to accept the score of the Independent Validator, which was higher for this particular requirement since the administrators have planned to update the stock assessments and intend to publish them.

¹² As per FiTI Board Circular No. 8 (Decision ID: BC-08_2022_D-01).

¹³ During a site visit to Mauritania between 12 to 20 September 2022.

¹⁴ The FiTI International Board did not conduct additional research or stakeholder interviews and relied solely on the documents provided in phases 1 and 2 of this validation process.

Breach of the principles or the spirit of the FiTI

The FiTI International Board agreed with the Independent Validator's assessment that there had not been any breaches of the FiTI principles or its spirit during the validation timeframe – as per section E.2.2 of the FiTI Standard.

Mauritania's overall compliance designation is in accordance with section D.1.2 of the FiTI Standard

The FiTI International Board agreed with the Independent Validator's overall compliance designation of 'meaningful progress' for Mauritania. This designation results from Mauritania's considerable and important efforts to improve and achieve a reasonable degree of transparency in its fishing sector. Mauritania has implemented significant aspects of most of the criteria contained in the FiTI Standard. Hence, it has fulfilled the broader objective of such criteria while acknowledging that further improvements in stakeholder participation and the institutionalisation of the FiTI process are needed.

3) Final Validation Scorecard

The Validation Scorecard documents the final compliance designation for each of the twenty-one requirements of the FiTI Standard (sections B.1 to B.3).

Mauritania: Final Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	
						<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (choose one)</i>
B.1 Transparency requirements						
B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations, and Official Policy Documents						<i>Not applicable*</i>
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.9 Labour Standards						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.3 Reporting Process						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						<i>Not applicable</i>

B.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.2 Governance and Support						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.5 Impact Report						<i>Not applicable</i>
Overall compliance designation						<i>Not applicable</i>
Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard (optional)						
<i>None</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Not applicable as this is the first validation process for Mauritania.</i> 						

4) Corrective actions

The FiTI Board Committee discussed the following corrective actions to be undertaken by Mauritania to move toward compliance with the FiTI Standard. Progress in implementing these actions would be assessed during the country's second validation, scheduled to commence on **30 June 2024**:

- 1) *As per section B.3.2. of the FiTI Standard, the government of Mauritania must maintain a ministry to lead the FiTI implementation (i.e. FiTI Lead Ministry).* In doing so, the government of Mauritania must, by the end of September 2023:
 - Clarify the responsibilities between the Ministry of Economic Affairs (currently acting as the country's FiTI Lead Ministry) and the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy – in case it is determined that the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy should assume the role of Mauritania's FiTI Lead Ministry:
 - Formalise this decision through an appropriate government statement (e.g. decree);
 - Appoint a new FiTI National Lead from within the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy;
 - Announce both decisions (change of FiTI Lead Ministry and new FiTI National Lead) publicly.

- 2) *As per section B.3.3 of the FiTI Standard, the FiTI Lead Ministry must maintain a National MSG to oversee the implementation of the FiTI with representatives from government, business, and organised civil society, which is appropriately qualified and fully, actively, and effectively engaged in the FiTI.* In doing so, the FiTI National Lead must, in collaboration with the current members of the National MSG, by the end of July 2023:
- Review and (if necessary) adjust the current composition of the National MSG (e.g. based on attendance records, the date of expiry of existing members' terms¹⁵), and perform an analysis of the organisations or entities that are relevant for sustainable marine fisheries in Mauritania but that are currently absent from the National MSG (if any);
 - Ensure that the procedures for nominating and replacing members of the National MSG are public and implemented in a way that is widely perceived as fair, open, and transparent. This process should incorporate the right of each stakeholder group to appoint its representatives;
 - Discuss the possibility of rotating the position of Chair of the National MSG between all three stakeholder groups that form part of the National MSG; and
 - Propose to the National MSG and select with its approval observers (such as international development organizations and partners based in Mauritania) to be invited to join and attend National MSG meetings, following the National MSG's Terms of Reference.
- 3) *As per section B.3.2 of the FiTI Standard, the FiTI Lead Ministry must provide administrative and operational support to the National MSG – in the form of a dedicated FiTI National Secretariat.* In doing so, the FiTI Lead Ministry must by the end of August 2023:
- Ensure that the FiTI National Secretariat has dedicated and sufficient financial and human resources available to provide administrative and operational support to the National MSG¹⁶; and
 - Facilitate a participatory process to define the responsibilities and resource needs of the FiTI National Secretariat, which must not only consider the requirements of the FiTI implementation process (as outlined in sections A-C of

¹⁵ According to Article 3 of Mauritania's FiTI National MSG's Terms of Reference, the initial term for members serving in the National MSG is four years. Consequently, the composition of the group should have been reviewed latest by December 2022.

¹⁶ In addition to the currently sole-acting Head of the National Secretariat.

the FiTI Standard) but also incorporate the views and expectations of the National MSG regarding such operational support.

- 4) *As per section B.2.4 of the FiTI Standard, Mauritania's FiTI National MSG must formalise an approach to ensure that the information published through the FiTI implementation process contributes to sustainable policy-making, effective oversight, accountability, and public debates.* By December 2023, the National MSG must conduct communications and capacity-building activities among national, regional, and international stakeholders.¹⁷ These efforts should also seek and build stronger linkages with other relevant institutions and endeavours, such as the High Authority of the Press and Audiovisual (HAPA) or the Mauritanian Information Agency (AMI).
- 5) *To ensure the long-term sustainability of the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania, the FiTI Lead Ministry (through the FiTI National Lead) and the FiTI National MSG must determine a long-term resource mobilisation and information distribution strategy.* To accomplish that, the parties mentioned above must by the end of December 2023:
 - Determine an annual budget for the national FiTI implementation process and obtain financial support from governmental or external (e.g. donor) resources, such as sectoral support provided under the European Union Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement;¹⁸
 - Determine an information distribution strategy to ensure that all the information included in the FiTI Reports is published on government websites. This must also address the ongoing maintenance (and possibly harmonisation) of the two websites currently displaying FiTI-related information¹⁹ – including, for example, harmonizing the information about laws and regulations presently displayed on both websites.

¹⁷ This should include increased circulation of the information published online and/or in FiTI Reports to raise awareness among *national authorities*, such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors, Ministry of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization of the Administration, or the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism; among *national and international non-governmental organisations*; and among *intergovernmental organisations*, such as the European Union, the FAO or the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

¹⁸ This should include, inter alia, the annual costs for the FiTI Report Compiler, annual operating costs for the FiTI National Secretariat, annual meeting costs of the National MSG, distribution and publication costs as well as capacity-building costs for national stakeholders to understand and engage in the FiTI process.

¹⁹ MPEM: <https://www.peches.gov.mr/> and FiTI National MSG: <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/>

The National MSG must document its comments and plans to implement these corrective actions in its next Workplan.

In case the above-mentioned deadline(s) cannot be met, the FiTI National Lead must inform the Chair of the FiTI International Board no later than **31 May 2023**, explaining the reasons why the deadline(s) cannot be met and propose a new deadline(s).



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Annex I

**Baseline Assessment Report of the
FiTI International Secretariat
(December 2018 – March 2022)**



Regular country validation:

Baseline Assessment Report for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (December 2018 – March 2022)

Prepared by: **FiTI International Secretariat**

Date: **23 June 2022**

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Abbreviations

BM	Board member
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CMNdb	Maritime district of Nouadhibou
DARE	Resource Planning and Studies Department
DGERH	General Directorate of Fisheries Resources Exploitation
DGI	Directorate General of Taxes
DMM	Directorate of Merchant Navy
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EEZM	Exclusive economic zone of Mauritania
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FITI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
FNP	National Federation of Fisheries
GCM	Mauritanian Coast Guard
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IEO	Spanish Institute of Oceanography
IMROP	Mauritanian Institute of Oceanographic Research and Fisheries
IISD	Institute for Sustainable Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JSC	Joint Scientific Committee
MSG	Multi-Stakeholder Group
MPEM	Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy Ministry

NGO	Non-governmental organization
NMSG	National Multi-Stakeholder Group
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OESP	Economic and Social Observatory of Fisheries
ONEC	Association and the National Order of Accountants
ONISPA	National Office of Sanitary Inspection of Fishery and Aquaculture Products
PNBA	Banc d'Arguin National Park
PRCM	Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation
SRFC	Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission
TAC	Total Allowable Catch


Executive Summary

Validation is an essential part of the FiTI process. It serves to assess an implementing country's compliance with the FiTI Standard (namely its *transparency requirements* and *procedural requirements*, as well as the country's *enabling environment* for multi-stakeholder participation and oversight). Validation also helps promoting dialogue and learning at the country level and safeguards the integrity of the FiTI by holding all FiTI implementing countries to the same global standard.

The provisions that must be applied when conducting validations are set forth in section D of the FiTI Standard.¹

The FiTI International Board, the initiative's global supervisory body, holds the overall responsibility for the validation process. It initiates the process and determines the implementing country's overall level of compliance in accordance with provision D.1.2 of the FiTI Standard.

The assessment of a country's compliance with the FiTI Standard is spread across three phases of validation - each building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous phase – as shown below:

FiTI Standard	Section D.2.1	Section D.2.2	Section D.2.3
			
Responsibility	FiTI International Secretariat	Independent Validator	FiTI International Board

For the *Islamic Republic of Mauritania* (short Mauritania), the FiTI International Board launched the country's first validation process in accordance with the FiTI Standard (section D.1) in September 2021, setting the validation timeframe from December 2018 until March 2022.² Consequently, Mauritania's first FiTI Report (calendar year 2018) as well as its second FiTI Report (calendar years 2019 & 2020) both fall within the timeframe of this validation.

As part of the first validation process step, the FiTI International Secretariat has documented its initial assessment of Mauritania's compliance against the criteria of the FiTI Standard in this report.

¹ <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard>

² Initially, the FiTI International Board determine the validation timeframe for Mauritania from December 2018 until December 2021 [Decision ID: BM-14_2021_D-04]. Due to delays in the publication of Mauritania's 2nd FiTI Report, the FiTI International Board extended the validation timeframe to March 2022 [BM-16_2022_D-03].

This assessment was primarily carried out via desk research, without the involvement of national or international stakeholders.³

In accordance with section D.2.1 of the FiTI Standard, this report does not include an overall assessment of compliance.

Key findings

Assessment of transparency requirements, in accordance with section B.1 of the FiTI Standard

Overall, comparing the situation prior to and at the end of this validation timeframe, significant advancements regarding the public availability of fisheries management information have been achieved in Mauritania by the government and the NMSG. This includes information that has long been requested by Mauritania's national and international stakeholders, such as the country's foreign fishing access agreements and a list of authorised industrial fishing vessels. At the same time, there are some areas where public information – as requested under the FiTI Standard – remains limited. For example, there have been only limited efforts to collate information on subsidies, while information on the application of labour laws in the fisheries sector is not comprehensive.

As part of the first FiTI reporting process, information held by Mauritania's national authorities was mainly published as part of the country's 2018 FiTI Report (as an interim measure). As part of the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, a significant amount of this, as well as updated information, was published on the newly established FiTI-Mauretania website.⁴ Notable examples of *information now freely accessible in the public domain* include:

- ➡ A comprehensive list of *laws and regulations* on fisheries (including brief summaries);
- ➡ An online summary description of *tenure arrangements* of the five fisheries of Mauritania, i.e.
 - Subsistence fishing (*traditional Imraguen and fishing outside the PNBA*),
 - Exploratory fisheries,

³ During its 15th meeting, the FiTI International Board approved a deviation from the validation procedures stated in section D.2.1. The FiTI International Board approved that the first process step of the validation process for Mauritania, tasked to be conducted by the FiTI International Secretariat, would involve only a detailed desk review of the countries' compliance with the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard. Consequently, the responsibility of conducting stakeholder interviews to provide an objective verification of the assessment of each individual requirement (as conducted by the FiTI International Secretariat), as well as to determine lessons learned and a recommendation for the overall compliance designation, would be given to the Independent Validator. The FiTI International Board also approved that only the Independent Validator's draft report will be provided to the countries' National MSG for feedback before the final version is submitted by the Independent Validator to the FiTI International Board (Decision-ID: BM-15_2021_D_03).

⁴ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/>

Country validation: Baseline Assessment Report Mauritania (2018-2022)



- Sport fisheries,
 - Scientific fisheries, and
 - Commercial fisheries (*artisanal maritime fishing, coastal maritime fishing, offshore maritime fishing*);
- ➔ The contracts of all *foreign fishing access agreements* (as well as their amendments, if applicable), i.e. with the European Union, Senegal, Japan Tuna, Convention for pelagic (*Libre pélagique*), Convention for tuna – other than for Japan Tuna (*Libre thon, autre que Japan Tuna*);
- ➔ The summary of the *status of the fish stocks*;
- ➔ The *list of large-scale fishing vessels* (although not covering all attributes of the FiTI Standard), as well as their *payments* in an aggregated form;
- ➔ The *list of public sector projects* related to fisheries and marine conservation, as well as information on their objectives, duration, and budget;
- ➔ The total number of vessels and the total number of fishermen operating in the *small-scale fisheries sector*.



It needs to be noted that it is currently unclear whether the FiTI-Mauretania website, which displays most of the information from the two FiTI reporting processes – as well as supportive information on the country's FiTI implementation process, such as the composition of the NMSG – can clearly be seen as a governmental website. While this website is currently maintained by the MPEP (through DARE), and there is a formal

link between the website of the MPEM and the FiTI-Mauretania website (as shown), there seems to be no formal (written) endorsement by the government. Furthermore, the current domain name of the FiTI website does not include the '.gov' sub-domain of governmental websites, and hence, not signalling that this is indeed a governmental website.⁵ It is therefore unclear who has the ultimate responsibility over this website (including the displayed content). Also, there seems to be no

⁵ Website of MPEM last accessed on 20 May 2022.

coordination between the NMSG, the FiTI Lead Ministry and the FiTI National Secretariat regarding ongoing updates and long-term maintenance of this website.

At present, there is no significant overlap of these two websites, as most of the information required under the FiTI Standard is not published on the website of the MPEP, and only on the FiTI-Mauritania website. However, there are already instances where information overlaps, such as on laws and regulations, which can create confusion. This might also become a further issue in the future (see 'Recommendations').

The advancements in online transparency mostly stem from the efforts of the government of Mauritania to implement recommendations made by the country's NMSG. In its 2018 FiTI Report, the NMSG determined *15 recommendations* on how to further strengthen the country's leadership in fisheries transparency. The current implementation status (as of April 2022) of these recommendations is as follows:

- ➡ 6 of these recommendations (i.e. 40%) were fully implemented between the launch of the country's 2018 and 2019-20 FiTI Reports (May 2021 – April 2022);
- ➡ 2 recommendations are in the process of being implemented (13%); and
- ➡ 7 recommendations remain open (47%).

These achievements are particularly noteworthy given that two major events affecting Mauritania fell within the timeframe of this validation: the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought major implications for an initiative based on stakeholder collaboration, as well as two changes to the Minister of the MPEM.

Nevertheless, several *important categories of information are still not publicly available* (either online on a government website, the FiTI-Mauritania website, or in the two FiTI Reports), despite the fact that such information is available to the government of Mauritania. This includes information on:

- ➡ A comprehensive *registry of large-scale fishing vessels with all 14 attributes* required by the FiTI Standard (this gap was already identified in the 2018 FiTI Report, but still not addressed in the 2019-20 FiTI Report);
- ➡ Information from previous (prior to 2018) and recent *national stakeholder consultations* undertaken with respect to the preparation, negotiation or monitoring of foreign fishing access agreements;
- ➡ the *Register of Convictions for Gross Misconduct*.

It is emphasised that the government of Mauritania has shown *no signs of wilfully withholding information the FiTI Standard requests to be published*⁶. Instead, information that is held by Mauritanian authorities but not yet published is mainly due to operational challenges, such as information not recorded electronically or scattered across multiple databases, as well as confidentiality concerns, such as the list of vessels convicted of offences. Additionally, the NMSG has issued explanations in cases where information has not been published or lacked credibility from their perspective.

Furthermore, both reporting processes (i.e. 2018 and 2019-20) identified information that is required under the FiTI Standard, but is *not yet available to the Mauritanian government at all*, as it has not been compiled or even collected yet.⁷ This includes information on:

- ➡ Information on the *number of small-scale fishing licenses* as well as details of related payments, for example, by category of fishing authorization or by gear type;
- ➡ Detailed information on *discards* in the large-scale commercial fishery (the only information available are those recorded in reports of IMROP scientific on-board observers);
- ➡ Information on *landings* in domestic and foreign ports and *transhipments* from vessels operating in the foreign regime;
- ➡ Information on *fishing subsidies*, including the amount of fuel subsidies in Mauritania;
- ➡ Information on the *human resources* deployed by the GCM to ensure compliance with the regulations.

Highlighting such information gaps helps to increase public understanding around the operational challenges national authorities face when managing the sector and striving to increase public access to information.

The assessment scores for each of the twelve transparency requirements – as set forth in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard – are shown below in the Validation Scorecard.

⁶ The FiTI International Secretariat notes that it was aware of an instance during the preparation of the first FiTI report, where several public officials of the MPEM were reluctant to share available information (*vessel registry, payment, catches per flag State, etc.*) with the FiTI Report Compilers. However, the Minister of the MPEM (who was in charge at that time) instructed the publication of required all information available to the MPEM.

⁷ The lack of such information clearly impedes the government's ability to manage fisheries sustainably, as well as stakeholders' ability to better understand their fisheries. However, it is acknowledged that this may be caused by Mauritania's national authorities targeting different priorities or simply do not have the technical, financial or human resources needed to produce such information.

Assessment of procedural requirements, in accordance with section B.2 of the FiTI Standard

Broadly speaking, the procedural requirements outlined in section B.2.1 of the FiTI Standard have only been partially met by Mauritania.

The *reporting requirements of the FiTI Standard* (section B.2.2), requiring Mauritania's NMSG to produce a FiTI Report annually, have been met through two FiTI Reports (for calendar year 2018 and for calendar years 2019 & 2020). The 2018 FiTI Report was published as one comprehensive document, while the NMSG decided to split the 2019-20 FiTI Report into a summary section – highlighting main findings – and a detailed section evaluating in greater depth the public availability of information demanded by each of the FiTI Standard's 12 transparency requirements. Information mentioned in the reports (e.g. policy documents, vessel registry etc.) typically include references to where it can be found in the public domain, and the NMSG made wide ranging recommendations on how the government of Mauritania can continue strengthening the public availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date fisheries management information.⁸ The second FiTI Report also explained significant deviations from findings included in the first FiTI Report.

It is noted that Mauritania did not comply with the *reporting deadlines*⁹ set forth in the FiTI Standard. As Mauritania obtained its FiTI Candidate country status in December 2018, the country was obliged to publish its first FiTI Report within the subsequent year of obtaining such a status. Hence, Mauritania's first report, containing information from 2018, was due by end of December 2019. However, no such report was received. Furthermore, Mauritania (through its FiTI National Lead) submitted the extension request for a delayed reporting deadline too late and failed to inform the FiTI International Board of further delays. Nevertheless, Mauritania eventually published its first FiTI Report in May 2021, i.e. 17 months later than the initial deadline. The FiTI International Secretariat clearly acknowledges that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this significant delay¹⁰, but also emphasises that not all should be attributed to this force majeure event.

Given the delay in the first reporting process, the deadlines for subsequent FiTI Reports were also missed.¹¹ For example, a second FiTI Report, covering calendar year 2019, was due by end of December 2020. Being aware that the initial late submission of the country's first FiTI Report will be causing reoccurring delays, it is noteworthy to emphasise that the NMSG decided to *combine two calendar years, i.e. 2019 and 2020*, in its second report, in order to become compliant with the FiTI

⁸ For more information, please refer to section 'Appraisal of progressive improvements' of this document.

⁹ In accordance with section B.2.2 of the FiTI Standard, the '*National MSG must publish their first FiTI Report within the subsequent year of becoming a FiTI Candidate country*'. Mauritania became a Candidate country on 11 December 2018 and published its first report on 18 May 2021.

¹⁰ For example, the appointed Report Compilers were not allowed to travel and conduct the required consultations with stakeholders most of 2020.

¹¹ More detailed information is provided in section 'Assessment of individual "Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports"' of this document.

Standard requirement. This combined FiTI Report was published in April 2022. While this means that this second report, with information for 2020 due by end of 2021 was again published late (i.e. three months later than the initial deadline), these efforts are seen as a demonstration of the NMSG's increasing commitment to comply with the reporting deadlines going forward. Through these efforts, Mauritania is now in line with the reporting deadlines, as its next FiTI Report (for calendar year 2021) is due by the end of 2022.

Both FiTI Reports comply with the *transparency requirements and reporting periods* of the FiTI Standard (section B.2.2). The country's first (2018) FiTI Report contained information on transparency requirements 1 – 6, set forth in section B.1, from the complete calendar year when the country becomes a FiTI Candidate country (i.e. 2019). The country's second (2019-20) FiTI Report contained information on all 12 transparency requirements, and, going beyond the requirements of the FiTI Standard, covering two consecutive years.

Finally, it is noted that the FiTI implementation in Mauritania lacks a wide dissemination of the FiTI Reports and subsequently, a *lack of public debate* around transparency in the country's fisheries sector. During the launch of Mauritania's first (2018) FiTI report, communication activities were initiated by the MPEM to raise awareness among the various national stakeholders. An international webinar was also organized by the FiTI International Secretariat to support the promotion of the first FiTI report internationally. However, apart from these ad-hoc actions, other activities by the NMSG to sensitize different stakeholders have not been documented. While this could have been caused by a lack of resources and restrictions related to COVID-19, a lack of engagement among NMSG members might have contributed to this. Consequently, while anecdotal evidence shows that the efforts of the FiTI Reports have been applauded by several non-governmental organisations as well as individuals engaged in the industry, significant work by the NMSG and the FiTI Lead Ministry is needed to ensure that future FiTI Reports promote discussions among the wider public and are used in *public decision-making*.

The assessment scores for each of the four procedural requirements – as set forth in section B.2 of the FiTI Standard – are shown below in the Validation Scorecard.

Assessment of Mauritania's national enabling environment, in accordance with section B.3 of the FiTI Standard

It is seen that the government of Mauritania provides an *enabling environment* for business and civil society participation, with regard to relevant laws, regulations, administrative rules as well as actual practice. This stems from a brief analysis of national (and international) laws and regulations, as well as anecdotal evidence, as shown further below.

Throughout the entire timeframe of this validation, the *FiTI Lead Ministry* (i.e. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors) as well as the *FiTI National Lead* (i.e. Mohamed Salem Nany) remained the same. Over time, it appeared that both bodies were increasingly absent from the operational FiTI implementation process, and that the advancements of the FiTI in the country were primarily driven by the MPEM. Efforts to transfer the FiTI Lead Ministry from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors to the MPEM have started, but are now pending for more than a year.

Furthermore, while the NMSG has undertaken positive work, including collating new information and summarising complex data to facilitate public access to information, there are concerns that this group has not done enough to use the FiTI information to facilitate public debate.

Whereas Mauritania's FiTI NMSG is generally seen to be sufficiently diverse to represent a range of different stakeholder, evidence suggests that some members are not active and fully engaged in the NMSG. This, as well as the lack of operational support through a well-resourced FiTI National Secretariat, are issues that need to be addressed. While this is not seen as a major concern for this validation timeframe (also acknowledging the impact of COVID-19), these aspects require additional improvements to bolster the impact of the FiTI in Mauritania.

Finally, Mauritania's *Impact report* is due by the end of 2022 (i.e. 3 years after Mauritania became an FiTI Candidate country). Therefore, this requirement has not been considered for this validation.

The assessment scores for each of the five requirements of a national enabling environment – as set forth in section B.3 of the FiTI Standard – are shown below in the Validation Scorecard.

Validation Scorecard

The Validation Scorecard documents the final compliance designation for each of the 21 requirements of the FiTI Standard (sections B.1 to B.3). The numerical scores for each requirement are not stated here.

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	
						<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)</i>
B.1 Transparency requirements						
B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.9 Labour Standards						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						<i>Not applicable</i>

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	
						<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)</i>
B.2.3 Reporting Process						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.2 Governance and Support						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.5 Impact Report						<i>Not applicable</i>
Overall compliance designation <i>(for Independent Validators and FiTI International Board only)</i>						<i>Not applicable</i>
Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard (optional)						
<i>None</i>						

Recommendations

As part of this initial baseline assessment of Mauritania's compliance with the FiTI Standard, the FiTI International Secretariat determined the following recommendations (relevant to the Mauritanian government and the NMSG) for the consideration of the Independent Validator:

Transparency requirements

- ➡ Determine a clear *publication strategy for fisheries management information* for the two websites currently displaying FiTI-related information – MPEM: <https://www.peches.gov.mr/> and FiTI-Mauretania: <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/> – including e.g. harmonizing information on laws and regulations currently displayed on both websites.
- ➡ Make *information publicly accessible, which is available to the government*, but neither published on a governmental website nor as part of the FiTI Reports¹², as stated above.
- ➡ Publish information, which is currently *only available in FiTI Reports*, on government websites, as stated above.
- ➡ *Produce information*, which has not yet been compiled or even collected by the Mauritanian government and make it publicly accessible, as stated above.

Procedural requirements

- ➡ Determine a formalised approach on how the *main findings of the FiTI Report* can contribute to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, or how this information can feed into public policy making (also see next section).
- ➡ Ensure increased *circulation of the information* published online and/or in FiTI Reports to raise awareness among:
 - national authorities, such as the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors, Ministry of Digital Transition, Innovation and Modernization of the Administration, or the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Handicrafts and Tourism;
 - national and international non-governmental organisations;

¹² This refers only to aspects that have not been addressed by the NMSG as part of their recommendations to the Mauritania national authorities.

- intergovernmental organisations, such as the European Union, the FAO, the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), to facilitate cross-checking of data submitted to both the FiTI and other such organisations and strengthen overall data reliability.
- ➡ Document important decisions of the NMSG in its *meeting minutes*, such as the endorsement of Report Compilers or the approval of annual FiTI Reports. This also includes ensuring all meeting minutes of Mauritania FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group are available online¹³.

National Implementation Framework

- ➡ Complete the official *transition process* for the FiTI Lead Ministry to the MPEP.
- ➡ Conduct an *attendance analysis and review member terms* to update (if necessary) the composition of the NMSG to ensure that the group's representatives are appropriately qualified and fully, actively and effectively engaged in the FiTI implementation process.¹⁴
- ➡ Explore *operational synergies* with the already established Secretariat for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and the FiTI National Secretariat (e.g. regarding beneficial ownership transparency).

Additional aspects for the consideration of the Independent Validator

As part of this initial assessment of Mauritania's compliance with the FiTI Standard, the FiTI International Secretariat determined that the following additional aspects should be considered during the stakeholder consultation phase, to be conducted by the Independent Validator:

- ➡ Assess stakeholder concerns (in particular from civil society) that the *current composition of the NMSG's business stakeholder group* favours representatives from one particular association (i.e. National Federation of Fisheries – FNP);
- ➡ Discuss with stakeholders and key informants about how to *ensure that the main findings of the FiTI Reports contribute systematically to public debates* on how the fisheries sector is managed as well as public policy-making processes (e.g. when negotiating foreign fishing access agreements);

¹³ At present (31 May 2022), only the minutes of the first two meetings of Mauritania's FiTI NMSG (from 2017) are published online (<http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/gmn-mr/>).

¹⁴ In case new members join the NMSG, the FiTI National Secretariat should request on-boarding training from FiTI International Secretariat for these new NMSG members

- ➡ Elaborate on how *civil society and small-scale fishers' involvement*, in particular those that are not directly represented in the NMSG, can be further strengthened;¹⁵
- ➡ Discuss with members of the NMSG how meetings *can become less administrative and more relevant for fisheries management* (e.g. 'Transparency in action').

¹⁵ This may also include any possible technical, financial or capacity constraints currently affecting stakeholder involvement in the FiTI (in particular civil society and small-scale fisheries)

1) Key parameters and scope of validation

This validation process is based on the following key parameters:

Target country:	Islamic Republic of Mauritania (short Mauritania)
Current FiTI country status:	FiTI Candidate country (as of 13 December 2018) ¹⁶
Request of validation process:	FiTI International Board, Decision: BM-14_2021_D-04 ¹⁷
Type of validation:	Regular validation ¹⁸
Timeframe of validation:	December 2018 until March 2022
FiTI Reports due within validation timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ 2018 FiTI Report, published on 18 May 2021 ➔ 2019-20 FiTI Report, published on 24 March 2022
Responsibility for report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <u>Author</u>: Mr Mansor Ndour (FiTI Regional Coordinator for West Africa) ➔ <u>Reviewer</u>: Mr Sven Biermann (FiTI Executive Director)
Cut-off date for information to be considered for this report:	31 March 2022

¹⁶ <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

¹⁷ 14th meeting of the FiTI International Board, 9 September 2021

¹⁸ The FiTI International Board approved in its 16th meeting (17 February 2022) that the country validation for Mauritania must be completed prior to the publication of the country's third FiTI Report (instead of the second FiTI Report, as outlined in section D.4 of the FiTI Standard); Decision ID: BM-16_2022_D-02.

The scope of this baseline assessment covers Mauritania's level of compliance against a total of **21 validation elements**, as defined in sections B.1 to B.3 of the FiTI Standard:¹⁹

Transparency requirements	Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports	Requirements for National Implementation Framework
<i>Section B.1 of the FiTI Standard</i>	<i>Section B.2 of the FiTI Standard</i>	<i>Section B.3 of the FiTI Standard</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents 2. Fisheries Tenure Arrangements 3. Foreign Fishing Access Agreements 4. The State of the Fisheries Resources 5. Large-Scale Fisheries 6. Small-Scale Fisheries 7. Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade 8. Fisheries Law Enforcement 9. Labour Standards 10. Fisheries Subsidies 11. Official Development Assistance 12. Beneficial Ownership 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reporting Requirements 2. Reporting Deadlines and Periods 3. Reporting Process 4. Report Dissemination and Public Debate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation 2. Governance and Support 3. Multi-Stakeholder Oversight 4. Annual Workplan 5. Impact Report

In accordance with the FiTI Standard (section D.1.1.) as well as Guidance Note #3 on “Validating countries”, the *level of compliance* for each requirement is indicated by applying one of the following designations:

¹⁹ The requirements for countries intending to implement the FiTI (sign-up steps), as set forth in section A of the FiTI Standard, have already been assessed by the FiTI International Board in December 2018 upon Mauritania's application to become a recognised FiTI Candidate Country and are therefore not reassessed during validation.

i.	Compliant	Validation demonstrates that all aspects of the requirement have been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has been fulfilled.
ii.	Meaningful progress:	Validation demonstrates that significant aspects of the requirement have been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has been fulfilled.
iii.	Inadequate progress	Validation demonstrates that significant aspects of the requirement have not been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement is not fulfilled.
iv.	No progress	Validation demonstrates that all or nearly all aspects of the requirement have not been implemented, and that the broader objective of the requirement is far from being fulfilled.

Furthermore, in accordance with Guidance Note #3 on ‘Validating countries’, only *mandatory requirements* are subject to this assessment. Nevertheless, where provisions are ‘encouraged’, findings will be stated, but are not considered in the assessment of compliance.

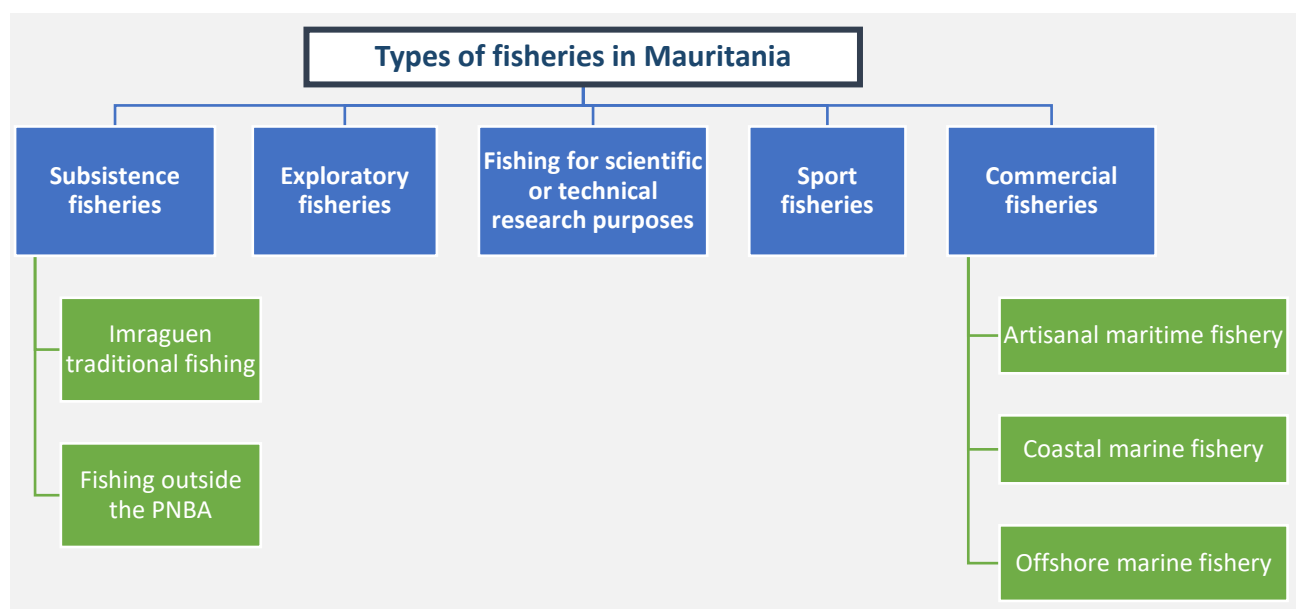
This report does *not* include an overall assessment of compliance.

2) Overview of the FiTI implementation in Mauritania

Mauritania's coastline faces the Atlantic Ocean, and stretches over a 720 km from the mouth of the Senegal River to the tip of Cap Blanc. Mauritania's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) comprises of an area of 234,000 km², including a large continental shelf of 39,000 km, and is renowned for the abundance, diversity and commercial importance of its fishery resources.²⁰

Marine fisheries is a key contributor to the social, economic and cultural fabric of Mauritania sector, regarding its contribution to the national economy, to the creation of wealth and employment and to the national food and nutritional security.²¹

There are *five types of fisheries in Mauritania*, as shown below in a simplified illustration.²²



²⁰ It is noted that these values, obtained from the website of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (<http://spcsrp.org/fr/mauritanie>) do not correspond with information available on other international websites, such as the UN-FAO GLOBEFISH country profile for Mauritania (<https://www.fao.org/3/cb9775en/cb9775en.pdf>)

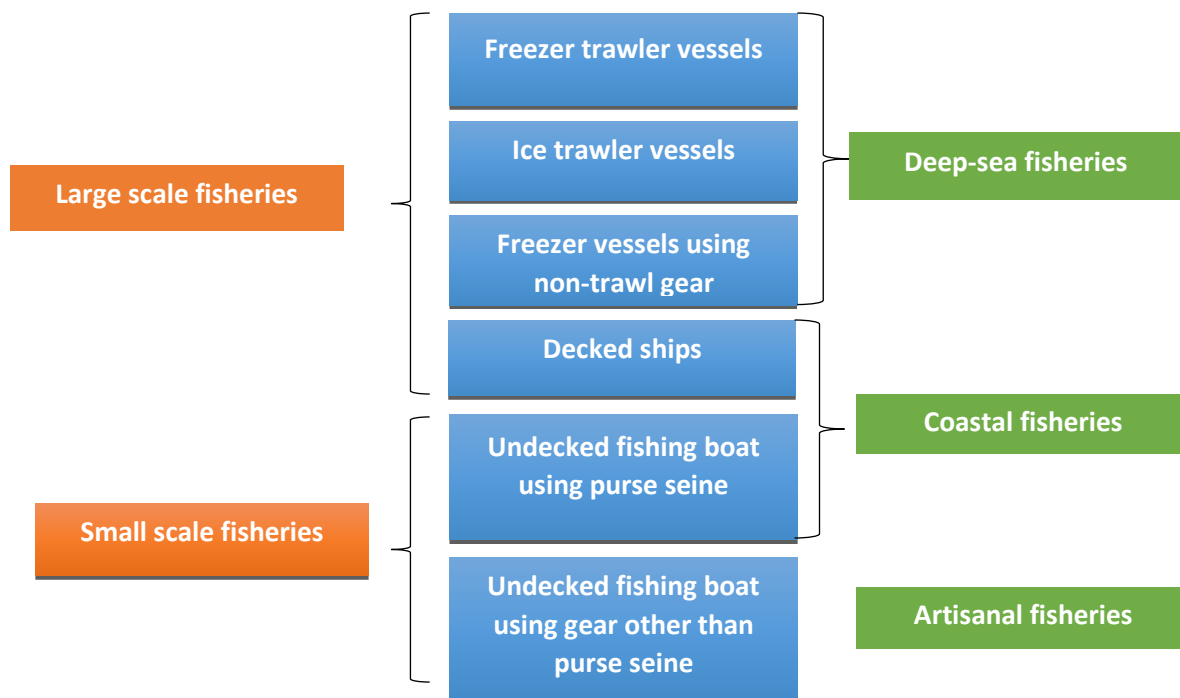
²¹ In 2020, the fisheries sector underwent a reform through the adoption of a new *National Strategy for Responsible Management for the Sustainable Development of Fisheries and the Maritime Economy for the period 2020-2024*, which was the subject of a consultation process with stakeholders.

In its vision, the national strategy sets as objectives the sustainable management of fisheries resources and marine environments from the perspective of the ecosystem approach, the integration of the fisheries sector into the national economy and an equitable sharing of the fisheries rent. It has advocated a new fisheries management paradigm centered on the control of catches (replacing the management system focussed on the control of fishing effort) to allow for a better regulation of fishing activity and access to resources, the increase of the quantities landed in Mauritania, the improvement of the modes of processing and valorization of fishery products, the development of infrastructures and an equitable sharing of the income generated by the exploitation of fishery resources.

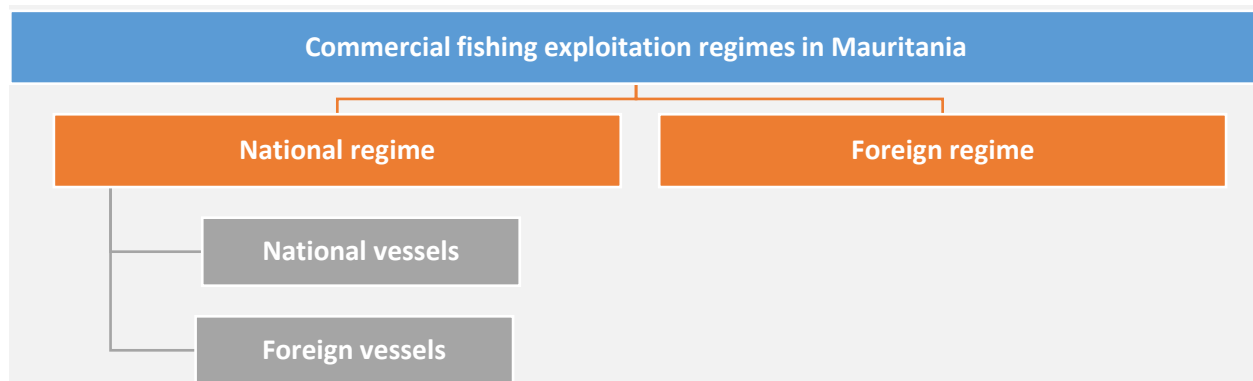
²² The types of fisheries in Mauritania are defined by Law No. 017-2015 (29 July 2015); the Maritime Fisheries Code and Decree No. 2015-159 (01 October 2015); implementing Law No. 017-2015 (29 July 2015) on the Maritime Fisheries Code, amended by Decree No. 2018-044 (01 March 2018).

The terminologies of large-scale fishing and small-scale fishing – as used by the FiTI Standard – are not clearly used within Mauritania’s fisheries. According to the NMSG, the *large-scale commercial fishery* includes the deep-sea (offshore) fishery and a part of the coastal marine fishery (industrial coastal fishery, without the Senegale’s purse seiners).

Consequently, the *small-scale commercial fishery* includes the artisanal maritime fishery and the other part of the the coastal (inshore) marine fishery fishery (purse seiners)



In order to promote the domestication of catches, which is essential for a better integration of the fishing activity into the national economy and the increase of its local added value, Law No. 2015-017 of 29 July 2015 on the maritime fisheries code instituted *two regimes for the commercial exploitation of the fishery resources* of the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mauritania (EEZM): a national and a foreign regime.



The *national regime*, which is the principle regime for the exploitation of fishery resources, is granted to concessionaires landing, processing and marketing the products of their catches from Mauritania. It is essentially aimed at maximizing the benefits of post-harvest activities for the national economy. One of the additional merits of this regime is that it allows concession holders to exploit fishery resources by foreign vessels, in accordance with the conditions listed by Article 26 of Decree 2015-159 of October 1, 2016. This is the case, for example, for:

- for vessels operating under the Establishment Agreement signed on 7 June 2010 between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the *Fuzhou HongDong Pelagic Fishery Company* (the Societe Poly-Hondone Pelagic Fishery Co); or
- for *chartered bareboat* vessels and chartered purse seines.

The *foreign regime* is an exceptional exploitation regime granted to the holders of concessions of rights of use, obtained within the framework of international agreements, for the exploitation of fishery resources that justify a proven surplus confirmed and estimated by research through IMROP. Vessels operating under this regime are obliged to land their catches in Mauritanian ports or to transship them in port for control purposes.

Mauritania initiated the FiTI in early 2015, when (former) Mauritanian President H.E. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz — serving as the Chair of the African Union at this time — announced at the ‘High level conference on transparency and sustainable development in Africa’ the establishment of a new global initiative for fisheries transparency²³.

Since then, the government of Mauritania has been collaborating in the development of the FiTI. During the FiTI’s conceptual phase (i.e. July 2015 – April 2017) a representative of the Mauritanian government served as a member in the International Advisory Council. The country’s official commitment to the FiTI was announced at the 1st International Conference of the FiTI in Nouakchott/Mauritania, on 3 February 2016.²⁴

Afterwards, various initial sign-up requirements were completed, which included:

- ➡ the appointment of the *Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors* as the FiTI Lead Ministry, and within this ministry, naming *Mr. Mohamed Salem Nany* as the country’s FiTI National Lead;
- ➡ the establishment of *Mauritania’s FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group* in January 2017. The first meeting of the NMSG was held on 15 March 2017. It is unknown how

²³ <https://www.fiti.global/empowering-citizens-to-reap-fair-benefits-from-their-fisheries>

²⁴ This commitment was documented in the ‘Nouakchott Declaration on the Fisheries Transparency Initiative: https://www.fiti.global/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/FiTI_1stIntConfDeclaration-EN_20160212.pdf

many times the NMSG has met since then, as no meeting minutes are published online. At present, the Mauritania's NMSG consists of 15 members, equally representing government, business, and civil society, as shown below:²⁵

Government representatives	Business representatives	Civil society representatives
M. Mohamed Salem Nany ²⁶	M. Sidi Ahmed Abeid	Mme Nedwa Mactar Nech
Mme Azza Mint Jiddou	M. Mohamed Ould Saleck	M. Ahmed Taher
M. Sidi Mouhamed Adabe	M. Cheikhany Mohamed Beittatt	M. Jedna Deida
M. Ahmed Salem Bouheda	M. Ahmed Khoubah	M. Sid'Ahmed Ould Taleb Ahmed
M. Housseinou Bal	M. Simon Zhang	M. Mohamedou Tijani

In December 2018, the FiTI International Board announced its approval of the country's application, making Mauritania the first country to be granted the status of a *FiTI Candidate country*.²⁷

In its approval letter, the FiTI International Board requested that amendments to the composition of the business stakeholder group are needed to guarantee a more pluralistic and diverse representation of the fisheries sector. However, as of today, all initial business sector representatives are still serving in the NMSG.

In May 2021, Mauritania officially published the country's first ever *FiTI Report* (for calendar year 2018).²⁸ 11 months later, in April 2022, Mauritania published its second FiTI Report (for calendar years 2019 and 2020).

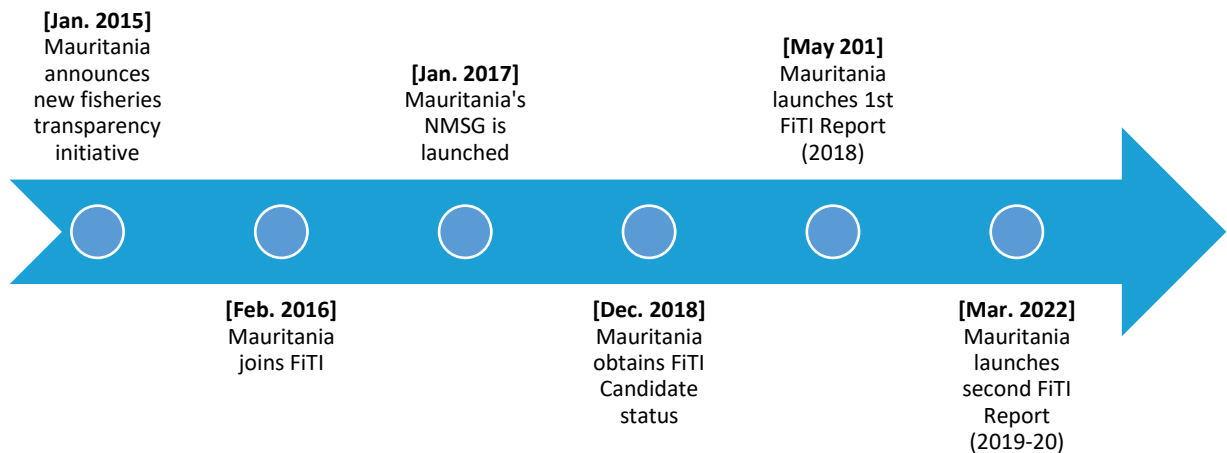
²⁵ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/gnm-mr/>

²⁶ Chair of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group

²⁷ <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

²⁸ <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-launches-its-1st-fiti-report>

Key milestones of Mauritania's FiTI implementation (2015 – 2022)



3) Assessment of individual 'transparency requirements'

The assessment of Mauritania's compliance with the transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard consists of *twelve validation requirements*, in accordance with section B.1 of the FiTI Standard. This assessment covers both of Mauritania's FiTI Reports that fall within the validation timeframe (for 2018, for 2019 & 2020).

Furthermore, in accordance with the FiTI Principles 4 and 6, and as set out in requirement B.1, implementing countries must report on all FiTI transparency requirements. The public availability of *credible information* is important to ensure that the transparency achieved through the FiTI can result in better fisheries management. Therefore, this section also assesses whether any indication exists that Mauritania has wilfully provided misinformation and/or wilfully withheld accurate information, acts which would be considered to constitute a fundamental breach of the initiative's *principles, requirements and spirit*.

Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents

The objective of this requirement is to ensure public access to all aspects of the legal and regulatory framework around which Mauritania fisheries sector is structured.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.1_1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all national legislation and official policy documents related to the marine fisheries sector.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.1_2	The National MSG must decide on which areas of fisheries this applies to; however, at a minimum, copies of national laws, decrees and policy documents on fisheries management, trade and investment, as well as fisheries management plans must be included.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
		<i>Compliant [Avg. 2.5]</i>

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.1_1]** At the beginning of the validation timeframe, no such online, up-to-date registry existed in Mauritania.

As part of the country's FiTI reporting efforts, a consolidated list of national legislation and official policy documents was published in the 2018 FiTI Report. This also includes the notable effort of summarizing laws, regulations, and policy documents – and adding the dates when they were first introduced – which enhances the list's ability to facilitate public understanding.

During the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, this list was updated and made publicly accessible on the FiTI-Mauritania website.²⁹ The website also includes now the list for 2018.

However, it is noted that the website of the MPEM³⁰ also publishes information regarding laws and regulations, although not as complete and informative as on the FiTI-Mauritania website. It is therefore recommended to harmonise these efforts.

Furthermore, the NMSG recommended that a structured and orderly summary document of all fisheries laws and regulations (including summaries and links to the websites where it is published) should be developed, published online and regularly updated. Such a document may also include a list of repealed legislation [ID: 2018_1; Priority: Medium; Due date: December 2021].³¹

²⁹ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/>

³⁰ <https://www.peches.gov.mr/>

³¹ The 2019-20 FiTI Report stated that the national authorities of Mauritania deferred implementation to July 2022.

- ➡ **[B.1.1_2]** The above-stated list, published on the FiTI-Mauritania website, includes the main laws and regulations related to marine fisheries and related to fisheries and conservation, as well as major official policy documents related to marine fisheries, fisheries plans and strategies, and other documents, such as fisheries development and management plans or the Banc d'Arguin National Park (PNBA) conservation plan. However, the list does not include the main international treaties, policy instruments and best practices to which Mauritania is a signatory of or adheres to.

Fisheries Tenure Arrangements

The objective of this requirement is to ensure public access to information about how fishing rights are accessed, used, and managed across Mauritania's marine fisheries. Official rules on tenures arrangements are one of the most critical aspects of sustainable fisheries management because they influence the sector's social, ecological and economic impacts.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.2_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of laws and decrees on fisheries tenure arrangements, including information as specified in requirement B.1.2 of the FiTI Standard.	Compliant [3]
B.1.2_2	In case tenure, access or user rights are not codified, information on the current and planned approaches to securing such rights must be published.	Not applicable
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.2_1]** At the beginning of the validation timeframe, no summary descriptions of laws and decrees regarding fisheries tenure arrangements existed by national authorities. Most information was publicly available but spread across several different regulations and policy documents.

As part of the country's FiTI reporting efforts, the NMSG published summary descriptions relating to the country's five main fisheries (i.e. subsistence, sport, exploratory, scientific, and commercial) on the FiTI-Mauritania website – including information on fees payable,

duration, fishing conditions, transferability and divisibility of such rights.³² This is the first time that such information has been made accessible to the wider public in Mauritania.

To further facilitate public understanding around this complex matter, the NMSG broke the summary descriptions down into an intuitive FAQ format. These descriptions, in its FAQ format, have also been published on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

The FiTI International Secretariat highlights this as a significant enhancement of transparency in fisheries, as the lack of understanding of how fisheries tenure work in Mauritania, in particular confusion around foreign vessels operating under the national regime, was a long-standing criticism.

Furthermore, the NMSG recommended that decrees specifying the conditions of exercise of the different types of fishing must be issued in accordance with Article 14 of the Decree implementing the Maritime Fisheries Code [ID: 2018-3; Priority: Medium; Due date: November 2021]. However, this recommendation has not been implemented yet. The 2019-20 FiTI Report stated that Mauritania's national authorities deferred the implementation to July 2022.

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] Mauritania's public authorities made additional information related to tenure arrangements publicly available, such as assessments of the fishing quota policy, as well as studies/analyses of the exploitation policy of the concessions of the rights of use (national regime/foreign regime) and parameters for the exploitation of the national regime with the bareboat chartering of foreign vessels publicly available.

- ➔ **[B.1.2_2]** Tenure access or user rights are all codified, including for the Imraguen fishing (an ethnic group or tribe of Mauritania and Western Sahara). Furthermore, it is clearly stated in the FiTI Reports that there are no 'traditional sites' in Mauritania related to fisheries, apart from the known fishing ports and landing sites scattered around various districts.

³² It is noted that rules and procedures for Mauritania-flagged vessels to obtain authorisations to fish in a third country or the High Seas have not been examined by the NMSG, as the country does not have vessels operating in these areas.

Foreign Fishing Access Agreements

The objective of this requirement is to ensure public access to all contractual arrangements that Mauritania has entered into with any foreign party. Transparency around access agreements provides the basis for public awareness of the rights enjoyed and responsibilities assumed by foreign fishing vessels operating in Mauritanian marine jurisdictional waters, as well as Mauritanian-flagged fishing vessels operating in the waters of third countries.³³

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.3_1	The implementing country must publish the contracts of all foreign fishing access agreements, including their associated protocol(s). ³⁴	Compliant [3]
B.1.3_2	The implementing country must publish studies or reports undertaken by national authorities or foreign parties to an agreement providing evaluation or oversight of the agreement, if available.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.3_3	The implementing country must publish documentation derived from any national stakeholder consultation undertaken with respect to the preparation, negotiation or monitoring of the agreements, if available.	Inadequate progress [1]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.3_1]** At the beginning of the validation timeframe, no foreign fishing access agreements were published online by national authorities, nor was it even known in the public how many of such agreements existed. In addition, particular interest had been noted for the fishing convention entered between the government of Mauritania and the Fuzhou HongDong company in 2010.

Due to the FiTI reporting processes the MPEM has now released information on all foreign fishing access agreements in force in 2018, 2019 and 2020 (international agreements, as well as access arrangements for foreign fishing vessels operating under

³³ These agreements provide compensation to the coastal state for fishing opportunities in its waters, such as monetary transfers, commitments for investments and services, or reciprocal access to overseas fishing grounds for the coastal state's national fishing fleet.

³⁴ This includes agreements that allow access for foreign vessels to fish in the country's marine jurisdictional waters (i.e. Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone). There are any agreements that allow nationally flagged vessels to fish in a third country.

the foreign regime for the exploitation of user rights concessions in waters under Mauritanian jurisdiction). The texts of these agreements are publicly accessible on the FiTI-Mauritania website.³⁵

Furthermore, the NMSG invested additional efforts to provide information on the access arrangement with the company Fuzhou HongDong, established in Mauritania within the framework of an Establishment Agreement signed on 7 June 2010. It was clearly stated in the FiTI Reports that under this agreement, the company's vessels obtain the Mauritanian flag and fish under the national regime and thus, the NMSG decided that this agreement does not classify as a foreign fishing access agreement.

It is highlighted that the NMSG invested additional efforts to improve public understanding by summarising key information from each of the agreements active in 2018 in tabular form, stating the total number, names and contractual parameters for most of these agreements. This facilitates the comparisons of the different agreements and their contents. The 2019-20 FiTI Report updated these tables.

- ➡ **[B.1.3_2]** Only the EU-Mauritania Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement has been subject to a formal evaluation, undertaken and paid for by the European Commission. At the beginning of the validation timeframe, Mauritania's national authorities had not made these evaluation reports accessible to the wider public. However, the EU publish these reports on its own website. These reports are now also published on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

The evaluations of the Fisheries Partnership between Mauritania and the EU provided an assessment of the sustainability of resulting fisheries and the benefits derived for both parties. However, these evaluations do not cover information on the use of funds earmarked for sectoral support. Both reports do not assess the compliance of signatories with the terms and conditions of the EU/Mauritania fisheries agreements. Nevertheless, it is known that EU evaluations also concern financial aspects, in particular sectoral support to fisheries. However, the NMSG failed to highlight the existence of mechanisms to improve the monitoring of the sectoral support that Mauritania receives in the framework of the protocol of the EU/Mauritania Partnership Agreement for sustainable fisheries.

[Best available information] In its two FiTI reports, the NMSG did not mention any instances where the accuracy of information relating to impact assessments of these

³⁵ Mauritania has not signed any agreement allowing vessels under Mauritanian flag to access waters under the jurisdiction of a foreign country, nor is there any provision in its legislation allowing such agreements.

foreign fishing access agreements could be improved by considering alternative sources, such as studies by non-governmental organisations, the private sector or academic institutions. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment. However, given that there have been extensive independent evaluations of the EU-Mauritania agreement in recent times, this should be reviewed by the Independent Validator.

- ➔ **[B.1.3_3]** No information is published online by Mauritania's national authorities regarding stakeholder discussions and consultations prior to (re)negotiation and signing of new foreign fishing access agreements.

However, in its FiTI Reports, the NMSG did not provide information whether stakeholders, such as fishing professionals, were involved in such discussions. It is therefore unclear whether information is available to the national authorities (e.g. meeting protocols), but have not been published yet.

The NMSG also failed to highlight regular controversies related to these access agreements, particularly due to concerns expressed by the country's artisanal fishing community.

The State of the Fisheries Resources

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information regarding the health of Mauritanian marine fisheries resources. This is particularly important for fish targeted by commercial fisheries, given that their overfishing can put unsustainable pressure on stocks whose abundance is essential for ensuring national development and food security.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.4_1	The implementing country must publish the most recent national reports on the state of fish stocks, including any information on trends in the state of stocks and conclusions on the reasons for change, as well as studies or reports undertaken by National Authorities that assess the sustainability of fishing.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.4_2	The implementing country must provide information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.4_3	The implementing country must publish on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments.	No progress [0]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.4_1]** Before the validation period, IMROP already published on its own website³⁶ the national report as well as various scientific articles on the state of fish stocks. The main information relating to the state of the stocks is available and accessible online on government sites, in the form of IMROP Working Group Reports. These Working Groups are organized every four (4) years to assess the main stocks and make recommendations for decision-making in the sustainable management of these resources.

This information has been referenced by the NMSG in its FiTI Reports. *As the NMSG recognized the importance of stock status information, it has further included a summary table to facilitate understanding and analysis by stakeholders.*

For the 2019-20 FiTI Report, the national authorities have published information from the CECAF³⁷/FAO Small Pelagic Working Group on the assessment of small pelagics off Northwest Africa organized in 2019 and 2021³⁸.

[Best available information] Both FiTI Reports state clearly that the NMSG found no instances relating to the state of fisheries resources where information published by national authorities is clearly misleading. Likewise, the NMSG found no instances where published information could be improved by considering alternative sources, such as studies by non-governmental organisations, the private sector, or academic institutions. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment. However, in particular the stock assessments on small-pelagic have received some criticisms in recent times, and the concept of 'best available information' should therefore be reviewed here by the Independent Validator.

³⁶ <https://www.imrop.mr/>

³⁷ Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic

³⁸ <https://www.imrop.mr/document/synthese-du-rapport-groupe-de-travail-de-la-fao-sur-levaluation-des-petitspelagiques-au-large-de-lafrique-nord-occidentale-2021/>

- ➡ **[B.1.4_2]** Details of the methods used to undertake the stock assessments are available as part of the FiTI Reports published by the NMSG.
- ➡ **[B.1.4_3]** No information on ongoing or planned efforts to update and extend the fish stock assessments have been described in the FiTI Reports, despite the fact that such information is available to the national authorities. Consequently, this must be seen as non-compliance with the FiTI Standard. However, as national authorities (in particular IMROP) typically publish detailed information regarding the state of marine fisheries resources, there is no assumption of wilful withholding of information.

Large-Scale Fisheries

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information regarding the industrial fishing vessels allowed to fish in the EEZM (and for Mauritania-flagged vessels in third country waters/on the High Seas), as well as how much these vessels pay for fishing opportunities and the quantities of fish they are catching.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.5_1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all nationally flagged and foreign-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, and of all nationally-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in third countries' marine jurisdictional waters and on the High Seas, including information on 14 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.1.5_2	The implementing country must publish accessible and complete information on payments made by each vessel listed in the vessel registry for their fishing activities, including information on 4 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard. ³⁹	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.5_3	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by nationally flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry, including according to species or species groups, disaggregated by	<i>Compliant [3]</i>

³⁹ Information on payments to port authorities must be separated from payments for fishing activities.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
	fishing authorisations or gear type as well as marine jurisdictional waters, High Seas and third country waters.	
B.1.5_4	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by foreign-flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type, presented for each flag State separately.	Compliant [3]
B.1.5_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded landings in national ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately.	Inadequate progress [1]
B.1.5_6	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.5_7	The implementing country must publish information on recorded quantities of discards according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately, if available. ⁴⁰	Not collated
B.1.5_8	The implementing country must publish the most recent studies and reports on recorded fishing effort by vessels, disaggregated by fishery or gear type and by flag State, if available.	Compliant [3]
B.1.5_9	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the large-scale fishing sector, if available.	Not collated
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 2.3]

⁴⁰ This must include information on how information on discards is gathered by national authorities.

Detailed remarks:

As stated in section ‘Overview of the FiTI implementation in Mauritania, the country’s laws and regulations do not specifically define *large-scale commercial fishing*. Therefore, the NMSG determined that large-scale fishing in Mauritania includes the *deep-sea (offshore) fishery*, as well as the *coastal (inshore) fishery*, without undecked fishing boat using purse seines.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_1]** At the beginning of the validation period, the national authorities of Mauritania did not publish their own online register of large-scale vessels authorized to fish in the country's waters.

As part of the first FiTI reporting process, the Directorate of the Merchant Navy (DMM) stated that the official vessel registry was under construction and therefore, as a mitigating measure, compiled a spreadsheet of large-scale fishing vessels authorised to fish in Mauritanian waters in 2018. This spreadsheet included only few vessel attributes, such as the *name of the vessel*, its *length*, the *name of the consignee*⁴¹, the *radio call sign*, the *fishing area* and the name of the *fishing gear* used. Therefore, this spreadsheet did not cover all of the required 14 vessel attributes of the FiTI Standard. The FiTI International Secretariat assumes that most of the attributes are recorded on the individual vessel license application sheets and thus, available to the national authorities (but most likely not in a consolidated, electronic form). The NMSG failed to give reasons for the government's failure to compile the 14 attributes, but made a recommendation to address this information gap [ID: 2018_7; Priority: High; Deadline: December 2021].

However, despite the fact that the vessel list from the DMM did not include the attribute of flag State, the NMSG was able to obtain such information (as well as on the country of origin) from the list of payments of large-scale fishing vessels. Therefore, the NMSG was able to break down the number of total large-scale fishing vessels authorised to fish in Mauritania’s EEZ by country of origin and flag State in the 2018 Report. This is seen as particularly important, as due to the re-flagging of certain vessels (e.g. vessels of Fuzhou HongDong operating under the national regime), vessels that are shown as Mauritanian-flagged are not necessarily owned by Mauritians. This additional effort also showed that the country of origin and the flag State for 66 foreign bareboat charter vessels were not recorded by the Mauritanian national authorities.

The recommendation of the NMSG to provide an updated vessel registry for the next (second) FiTI reporting process was not met by the national authorities, as only the

⁴¹ A consignee is a natural or legal person who acts as an agent appointed by the owner of a vessel to represent her/him in a port where the latter does not have a permanent office.

attribute of the *flag State* was officially added during the 2019-20 reporting process. As a result, the recommendation was renewed in the second FiTI Report [ID: 2020_5; Priority: High; Deadline: December 2022].

In addition, the NMSG clearly stated in its 2019-20 FiTI Report that the vessel list must be seen as incomplete, due to discrepancies between this list and the list of individual payments received by the DGERH⁴². While the NMSG published the lists of the DMM as well as the DGERH, no efforts were made to consolidate these two information sources into one comprehensive list.

Given that information on the vessel attributes is available to the national authorities, yet such information has not been updated over the course of two FiTI reporting cycles, this validation indicator is assessed with 'inadequate progress'.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_2]** At the beginning of the validation period, no information on payments made by large-scale fishing was published online by national authorities. Such information was only collected by the DGERH and kept in a database and on physical files.

During the 2018 FiTI reporting process, the DGERH provided the list of individual vessel payments for publication in the FiTI Report on a provisional basis, but the NMSG felt that this was outside the scope of the report to review and publish this list, due to the length and complexity of the payment sheets. Instead, *summary tables of payments* were prepared and published on the FiTI-Mauritania website. Furthermore, the NMSG made a recommendation [ID: 2018_8; Priority: High; Deadline: December 2021] to publish annual information on payments made by large-scale fishing vessels for their fishing activities on a *per vessel basis*.

This recommendation was fully implemented by the national authorities during the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process with the publication of the list of individual payments of large-scale fishing vessels operating in both the national and foreign regime on the FiTI-Mauritania website. This list contains important vessel attributes, such as the vessel's name, its flag State, date of payment, the receipt number and the purpose of the payment. As this DGERH list contained the names and flag States of the vessels, the NMSG was able to compile a consolidated list of vessels which clearly indicated that the vessel registry provided by the DMM was not complete.

⁴² General Directorate of Fisheries Resources Exploitation

Information on payments to port authorities was not compiled by the NMSG as part of the FiTI reporting processes. This is not seen as an act of wilful withholding information, but most likely due to an operational omission.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_3]** At the beginning of the validation period, data on retained catches of large-scale fishing vessels (Mauritania-flagged) operating in the EEZM was available in the MPEM database, managed by the DARE, but this data was not accessible online. This data included annual catches recorded by the large-scale fishing fleet per flag State, with the exception of tunas, which are managed and monitored by the ICCAT. These catches are disaggregated by groups of species (*cephalopods, crustaceans, aux and pelagics and broken down by type of concession*) and published in aggregate form through the annual reports of the Economic and Social Observatory for Fisheries (OESP).

Due to the two FiTI reporting processes, aggregated catch data from large-scale, Mauritanian-flagged fishing activities is now published online (in the FiTI Report as well as the FiTI-Mauritania website), further disaggregated by authorisations and by group of species. Catch data has not been disaggregated by gear type (as required under the FiTI Standard), even though the list of vessels by gear type could be used to provide such information. However, national authorities do provide catch data by authorisations, which seems to be the preferred way to support the analysis of Mauritania's fisheries management system by Total Allowable Catches (TAC).

Furthermore, both FiTI Reports clearly state that *Mauritania does not have national-flagged large-scale vessels fishing in a foreign country or on the High Seas*.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_4]** Similar to the previous aspect, data on the retained catches of foreign-flagged large-scale fishing vessels operating in the EEZM were available in the MPEM database, managed by DARE, but have not been made accessible online. However, these catches are recorded by species groups (*cephalopods, crustaceans, aux and pelagics*) and published in aggregated form in the annual reports of the OESP (with the exception of tunas, which are managed and monitored by the ICCA). These reports are published on the OESP website.

As part of the two FiTI reporting processes, this information has been published in the FiTI Reports, further broken down by *type of authorisation and flag State*.

Unfortunately, catches by vessels operating under the foreign regime are not disaggregated by different access agreements, impacting the ability of stakeholders to

assess compliance of these vessels (and their catches) with the conditions set forth in their underlying access agreements.

- ➔ **[B.1.5_5]** Prior to this validation timeframe, data on annual landings and transshipments recorded in the national ports of vessels operating in the large-scale fisheries of Mauritania were already available online through the annual statistical reports of the OESP. However, the published data is broken down by authorisations only, but not by fishing gear or by the vessels' flag State.

In order to ensure the country's compliance with the FiTI Standard, the NMSG made a recommendation [ID: 2018_10, Priority: low; Deadline: December 2021] to publish annual information on landings in national ports as well as transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports, in accordance with the FiTI Standard. As stated in the 2019-20 FITI Report, this recommendation has not been met by the reports of the MPEM's Technical Committee on Statistics. No information has been provided why this recommendation has not been met yet. It is therefore unclear whether such information is available at all, or whether it is collected by Mauritania's national authorities, but not yet published.

- ➔ **[B.1.5_6]** Prior to this validation period, data on annual transshipments recorded at sea or landings in foreign ports of large-scale fisheries were neither available online nor presented in the statistical reports on fisheries.

As with landings and transshipments in domestic ports (see B.1.5_5), the process of developing the two FiTI reports has allowed for the landings in foreign ports to be reported as a percentage of the total retained catch, but without providing detailed information on their specific composition and flag State. Given that through the FiTI Report information is now partially available, this indicator has been assessed with 'meaningful progress'.

- ➔ **[B.1.5_7]** Prior to this validation period, the annual recorded quantities of discards by large-scale fisheries were neither available online nor presented in the national statistical reports on fisheries.

However, the 2018 FiTI Report stated that as part of the monitoring of fishery resources under Mauritanian jurisdiction, IMROP has a scientific observer program aimed mainly at estimating discards (but without clearly stating for which fishery). Therefore, such data was seen as not comprehensively collected by the national authorities, and the NMSG made a recommendation [ID: 2018_11; [Priority: Medium; Deadline: December 2021] to

strengthen observation on board high seas fishing vessels to have regular information on discards at sea.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report the NMSG highlighted that the programme to strengthen the observation on board high seas fishing vessels was revitalized in 2019 and 2020, and that the number of missions carried out by IMROP under its *Scientific Observation Program* has increased from 4 in 2018 to 19 in 2019 and then to 15 in 2020. Furthermore, both FiTI Reports stated the country's efforts to put in place an effective protocol to collect data on discards as well as by-catch. This includes the implementation of the recommendation of the *Joint Scientific Committee (CSC)* on the Fisheries Agreement signed between the IMROP and the European Union which calls, among other things, for the harmonization of the sampling protocols of IMROP and the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO) in order to ensure compatibility of the data collected by the two institutions on size structure, species biology, by-catches and discards by trawlers.

However, the NMSG noted that despite these efforts, data on discard is not fully available to the national authorities. The above-stated 2018-recommendation was not implemented by national authorities and therefore renewed by recommendation 2020_8 [Priority: Medium; Deadline: December 2022]. Furthermore, no information was provided on why this information is not available to national authorities,

[Best available information] The NMSG found no instances relating to the assessments of catches and information on by-catch/discards, where information provided or published by national authorities is clearly misleading, or could be improved by considering alternative sources of information, such as studies by non-governmental organisations, the private sector or academic institutions. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_8]** Prior to this validation timeframe, data on fishing effort by large-scale vessels was published online, through the reports of the IMROP Working Group. However, it is important to note that the IMROP Working Group are only held every four years and therefore, Mauritania cannot publish annual data on fishing efforts of large-scale fishing vessels.⁴³ However, as the FiTI Standard asks for the publication of the 'most recent studies and reports on recorded fishing effort', this indicator is seen as compliant.

⁴³ It is worth noting that in the OESP 2020 statistical report, information on fishing effort is presented by 'number of active vessels', whereas IMROP presents fishing effort in 'number of fishing trips'. This different data presentation makes it difficult for the public to understand fishing effort.

[Best available information] The NMSG found no instances relating to the fishing effort by large-scale vessels, where information used by national authorities is clearly misleading, or could be improved by considering alternative sources of information, such as studies by non-governmental organisations, the private sector or academic institutions. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment.

- ➔ **[B.1.5_9]** Prior to this validation timeframe, assessments of the economic, social, food and nutritional contribution of the large-scale fisheries sector were only partially undertaken and published, within the framework of the annual statistical reports of the OESP. Further information was published in the minutes of the MPEM Technical Committee on Statistics, published online on the MPEM website.

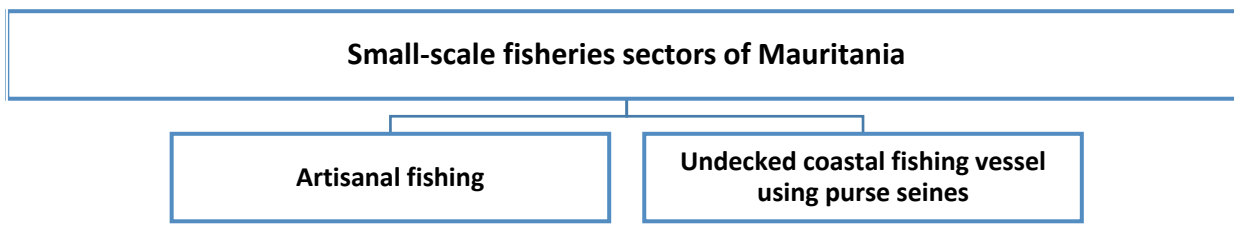
The economic information provided by these two documents concerns, among others, the annual revenue of the Treasury Department, the jobs generated by the fisheries sector (on-board jobs, onshore jobs, induced jobs), the value added of fishing, the main private investments, the consumption of fish at the national level, etc.

For this assessment, given that these efforts only address certain aspects of the large-scale fisheries contribution, this indicator is seen as ‘not collated’.

[Best available information] The NMSG found no instances relating to the information on evaluations of social and economic impacts of Mauritania’s large-scale fisheries, where information provided or published by national authorities is clearly misleading, or could be improved by considering alternative sources of information, such as studies by non-governmental organisations, the private sector or academic institutions. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment.

Small-Scale Fisheries

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information around the scope as well as economic, social and food & nutrition contributions of Mauritania’s small-scale fisheries.



ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.6_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing or gear types.	Compliant [3]
B.1.6_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of fishing licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of fishers engaged in the fishing sector, indicating the gender of fishers and the proportion that are engaged in full-time work, seasonal or part time fishing, occasional fishing or recreational fishing.	Compliant [3]
B.1.6_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total payments made from small-scale fisheries related to fishing authorisations, catches and landings, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations or gear types and indicating the recipient of these payments.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of catches, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_6	The implementing country must publish information on the total volumes of discards, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.	Not applicable
B.1.6_7	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the small-scale fisheries sector, if available.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.5]

Detailed remarks:

As stated in section ‘Overview of the FiTI implementation in Mauritania, the country’s laws and regulations do not specifically define *small-scale commercial fishing*. Therefore, the NMSG determined that small-scale fishing (often also referred to as local fisheries) in Mauritania includes artisanal fishing and fishing with undecked coastal fishing boats using purse seines.

- ➡ **[B.1.6_1]** Prior to this validation timeframe, information on small-scale fishing vessels was compiled on an annual basis through the Framework Survey Reports of IMROP. However, these reports were not made publicly available.

Due to the FiTI reporting process, these reports can now be downloaded from the FiTI-Mauritania website. Furthermore, the information on the total numbers of small-scale fishing vessels is summarised in a table format, further broken down by the type of boats (*plastic pirogue, wooden pirogue, launch, boat, lanche, aluminum pirogue, canoe*), which is not required under the FiTI Standard.

It is important to note that in both FiTI Reports, the NMSG specified that a comprehensive list of small-scale fishing vessels, including attributes such as the vessels name, length, license type) is not available and that it is being developed. This was highlighted as an important aspect in order to identify those vessels that are compliant with fisheries regulations (licenses, registrations, etc.), and those that are not.

Thus, the NMSG had, in its 2018 report, made the recommendation 2018_13 asking the government to "*continue the process of developing the listing of artisanal fishing vessels operating along the Mauritanian coastline and proceed to publish it online.*" [Priority: High; Deadline: December 2021]. As this recommendation was not met by the country, it was renewed in the second FiTI report (2019-20) with a high priority due in July 2022.

However, it is important to highlight that the national authorities of Mauritania made an effort to improve the quality of information on small-scale fishing vessels for the 2019-20 FiTI Report by adding information on fishing gears used, as well as by country of origin. Although the latter is not a requirement of the FiTI Standard, it can nevertheless be seen as a demonstration of Mauritania's efforts in improving the information value of the published data on small-scale fishing vessels.

- ➡ **[B.1.6_2]** No information on licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels is available to national authorities for the period covered by this validation, as such information will be included in the small-scale vessel registry, which is still under development (see B.1.6_1).

This lack of information was explained by the NMSG in its 2018 FiTI Report, further stating that such information will be available once the census operation of small-scale fishing boats is completed, and the listing is established.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG clarified that although there is not (strictly speaking) a register that lists all small-scale fishing vessels – indicating which vessels have or have not an active fishing license – it is nevertheless possible to estimate the number (or percentage) of vessels without a fishing license by reconciling the *total* number of licenses issued with the *total* number of small-scale fishing vessels established by the framework survey.⁴⁴

The *current lists of licenses*⁴⁵ issued to artisanal fishing vessels operating along the Mauritanian coastline in 2018, 2019 and 2020 are published on the MPEM website. These lists do not mention the names of the vessels but only give information on the date of issue, the period of validity, the access regime and the type of concession under which the vessel operates.

Despite this important initiative in terms of public disclosure of information, this does not allow for the verification of the compliance of small-scale fishing vessels with the fishing license.

- ➡ **[B.1.6_3]** Similar to the number of vessels, information on small-scale fishers is regularly (i.e. annually) compiled through the Framework Survey Reports of IMROP.

The NMSG compiled in both FiTI Reports this information and published these summaries also on the FiTI-Mauritania website. Information about gender and the type of occupation (e.g. full-time/part/time) is also provided.

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] In addition to the significant progress in the quality and accuracy of the data published during the preparation of the country's 2019-20 FiTI Report, the information on the number of fishers has further been complemented by their nationalities, demonstrating the will of Mauritania's national authorities to continuously improve the usefulness of published information.

⁴⁴ To build on the information from B.1.6_1, it is currently not possible to then identify the individual names of the vessels without a license, as this information will only become available once the vessel registry is completed. However, publishing a list of small-scale fishing vessels with names is not a required of the FiTI Standard.

⁴⁵ <https://www.peches.gov.mr/-ilds->

- ➞ **[B.1.6_4]** Prior to this validation deadline, no information on payments made from small-scale fisheries was published online, although this information is available to Mauritania's national authorities.

As part of the 2018 FiTI reporting process, the total amount paid by small-scale fisheries (including a flat rate access fee and a surveillance fees) was provided to the NMSG and published in the FiTI Report. No further details, as required by the FiTI Standard, were provided. Therefore, the NMSG made a recommendation [ID 2018_14; Priority: Medium; Deadline: December 2021] to gather disaggregated information on small-scale fishing vessel payments.

In the 2019-20 FiTI Report, payments were published by segment (artisanal fisheries, inshore fisheries), by fee type (flat rate access fees, monitoring fees, direct access fees), as well as by access regime. This is seen as a significant progress.

This new, more granular information allowed the NMSG to realize that the information on payments provided in its 2018 FiTI Report was incomplete, as it had not taken into account the payments of Senegalese purse seiners, which are also classified as small-scale fisheries.

- ➞ **[B.1.6_5]** Prior to this validation timeframe, information on catches of the small-scale fisheries was already published in the annual statistical reports of the OESP, complemented by other sources, such as the IMROP's Bulletin of Marine Fisheries Statistics and the Report on the Main Results of the IMROP Working Group.

The published information on catches includes the total catches by segment (artisanal, coastal) as well as their breakdown by groups of species or authorisation (pelagic, demersal, cephalopods and crustaceans).

It should be noted that the information concerning the breakdown of catches by type of fishing gear or by species (only species groups) has not been published. Such disaggregated information does not seem to be a priority for Mauritania's national authorities, as the disaggregated information of catches by authorisations seems to be more important for the monitoring of the TACs (see below).

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] Additional information regarding catches is published by the types of authorisations in relation to the TAC, as part of the OESP reports. This allows the public to follow the rate of catches made in relation to the exploitable potential defined by the research.

- ➔ **[B.1.6_6]** Information on discards in the small-scale fisheries of Mauritania is not collected by the national authorities, as the volume of discards in these fisheries is generally considered to be very low or even zero. This has also been explicitly confirmed by the NMSG in both FiTI Reports.
- ➔ **[B.1.6_7]** Assessments or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the artisanal fisheries sector have been carried out and published by the national authorities of Mauritania through the IMROP Working Group for 'The development of scientific advice on measures for the preservation of resources and the marine environment, development and management of fisheries'.

The annual OESP reports published online also provide information on the contribution of small-scale fisheries to employment and food security.

It is emphasised that the following 6 transparency requirements (B.1.7 – B.1.12) have only been covered by the NMSG in its 2019-20 FiTI Report.

Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to key information in the post-harvest value chain, in particular the scope of Mauritania's reliance on fish-related import and exports. Fish is the most traded agricultural product in the world (in monetary terms), providing an important source of revenues and foreign exchange. The inflow and outflow of fish from a country also has substantial implications on the availability of food, contributing to national food security. Furthermore, this requirement includes employment-related information of Mauritania's commercial (and informal) fisheries sector (if applicable). This is in particular relevant for efforts to increase the visibility and appreciation of post-harvest activities (e.g. processing and selling of fish), as well as the role of women in the overall fisheries value chain.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.7_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of fish and fish products produced, disaggregated by species and fish products.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
B.1.7_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of imports of fish and fish products,	<i>Not applicable</i>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
	disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their origin.	
B.1.7_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantities of exports of fish and fish products, disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their destination.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.7_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.7_5	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in informal fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.	Not collated
B.1.7_6	The implementing country must publish reports or studies on wages in the post-harvest sector, if available.	Not collated
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.7_1]** Information on the total quantity of fish and fish products landed and marketed is published online on the MPEM website through the annual statistical reports of the OEPS. However, no disaggregated information according to species and fish products is covered in these reports.

Furthermore, the NMSG stated in its 2019-20 FiTI Report that no information was received on the quantities of fish processed in factories and by artisanal processing sites and marketed at the national and foreign levels. Therefore, the data in the OEPS reports must be seen as incomplete.

The NMSG also pointed out that the monitoring carried out by national authorities only concerns exports (quantities and values), indicating that the lack of information should not be seen as a case of withholding information, but rather that such information has not been collected at all yet.

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] It is highlighted that Mauritania's national authorities are already publishing the number of fish processing

plants online, as part of the OESP reports and the minutes of the MPEM's Technical Statistics Committee. This is not a required of the FiTI Standard, but it allows the public to follow, among other things, the rate of establishment of fish processing plants in the country, including fish meal and fish oil plants.

- ➔ **[B.1.7_2]** The NMSG has not been able to collect information on the volume of imports of fishery products, which it considers to be very negligible and mainly concerns canned fish, which are considered foodstuffs. It was furthermore stated by the NMSG that Mauritania does not import whole fish products (fresh or frozen).
- ➔ **[B.1.7_3]** Information on exports of fish and fishery products is collected by the Government of Mauritania and made publicly available through the annual OESP reports. The information published is considered complete and mostly meets the requirements of the FiTI Standard. Only the disaggregation by species is lacking.

Given the lack of export information by species, the government has provided information on the breakdown of exports by type of processing (*frozen, fresh, processed*), type of finished product (*cephalopods, lobsters, shrimp, demersal, pelagic, oil and meal, dried salt*). This information has been summarised by the NMSG in tables and published in their second FiTI report as well as on the FiTI-Mauritania website. It is noted that based on the information provided by the national authorities regarding exports by type of finished product, it can be assumed that the government has detailed information on exports by species. However, the NMSG did not appear to prioritize the provision of information on the breakdown of exports by species, as no recommendation was made to do so.

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] Mauritania's public authorities also publish the value of exports, disaggregated by type of processing and type of product, in addition to export data by quantities.

- ➔ **[B.1.7_4]** Employment information on the fisheries sector is collected by the Government of Mauritania and made available online to the public through the annual OESP reports.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG stressed that in the absence of regular monitoring of fisheries sector employment statistics in Mauritania, the statistics are still based on estimates. These estimates have enabled the government to assess the total number of employees of the fishing establishments and factories on land as well as the number of

fish traders and fish sellers operating in the different ports and landing sites. The number of indirect jobs has also been estimated by the government.

All the information concerning direct and indirect employment is now published on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

However, it is important to note that employment information regarding gender, the government has published only an estimate of the number of women fish sellers.

- ➔ **[B.1.7_5]** Employment information for the informal fishing sector has not been collected yet by the government of Mauritania.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG stated that due to challenges in defining 'informal employment, collecting such information is problematic, particularly in a context of low professionalization of the artisanal fishing trades.

However, it was stated in the FiTI Report that currently the national authorities estimate that more than 70% of the above-mentioned onshore and indirect jobs are informal jobs. Also, informal jobs are more recurrent in the artisanal sector where it is generally estimated that in Mauritania, each job on board the artisanal fishery generates an average of three (3) jobs onshore.

The collection and publication of information on employment in the informal fishing sector has not been considered as a priority by the NMSG, as it has issued no such recommendation to improve this lack of information.

[Best available information] The NMSG did not find any cases related to employment statistics in the informal sector in Mauritania where information published by the national authorities is clearly misleading or could be improved by considering other sources of information, such as studies by non-governmental organizations, the private sector, or academics. No conflicting information was found by the FiTI International Secretariat during this assessment.

- ➔ **[B.1.7_6]** No information on wages in the post-harvest sector is collected by the government of Mauritania, and no reports or studies have been published to date on this topic.⁴⁶ This lack of information has not yet been addressed in a recommendation from the NMSG to the national authorities in Mauritania.

⁴⁶ The government has published an online report by the *National Statistics Office* on the "Situation of Employment and the Informal Sector in Mauritania in 2012" which provides information on the percentage of employees receiving a fixed salary and the method of payment for informal sector workers. This study also provides information on the wages and payment methods of women in the informal sector.

Fisheries Law Enforcement

The objective of this requirement is to enhance the public access to information around the scale and impact of non-compliance with national fisheries regulations, such as those associated ‘*Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated*’ (IUU) fishing, as well as Mauritania’s strategies and activities to respond to these challenges, including their ability to enforce compliance with national laws and regulations and to administer effective and fair criminal justice.

At the institutional level, the *Mauritanian Coast Guard (GCM)* is the competent authority responsible for enforcing the national legislation on wild capture fisheries. To this end, it carries out regular control operations through inspections at sea and in ports. Sanctions are imposed in the case of infractions, in accordance with the provisions of the current Maritime Fisheries Code.

Sanitary control is very important in the management of post-harvest activities and the marketing of fishery products. It is a strategic function of public health and securing access of seafood products to national, regional and international consumer markets, safeguarding national approval in particular. This is even more necessary when we know that the orientation is to promote the export of valued and healthy products. The *National Office of Sanitary Inspection of Fishery and Aquaculture Products (ONISPA)* is the sanitary authority of fishery products

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.8_1	The implementing country must publish information on the national activities and strategies used for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.8_2	The implementing country must publish information on the financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.8_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports.	Compliant [3]
B.1.8_4	The implementing country must publish a record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector for the last five years, indicating the name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed.	Meaningful progress [2]

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
		<i>Meaningful progress</i> [Avg. 2. 2]

Detailed remarks:

- ➞ **[B.1.8_1]** The National Strategies to ensure compliance of fishing vessels and the post-catch sector are included in the National Strategies for Responsible Management for Sustainable Development of Fisheries and the Maritime Economy (2015-2019 and 2020-2024), both of which are published online on the website of the MPEM.

In addition, decisions taken concerning sanitary inspection are published on the ONISPA website.

However, no comprehensive report on the activities aimed at ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector is published online by the national authorities.

- ➞ **[B.1.8_2]** The Government of Mauritania is regularly providing information on the efforts and expenditures of the relevant agencies involved in fisheries law enforcement (GCM and ONISPA) through the annual finance laws published on the Ministry of Finance website by the Directorate General of Taxes (DGI).⁴⁷

As part of its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG prepared summary tables providing information on the financial resources allocated to the GCM and the ONISPA as well as information on the human resources deployed by ONISPA. These tables were also published online on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

However, the NMSG stated that although available, information on human resources deployed by the GCM to ensure compliance with national fisheries legislation was not published for the calendar years 2019 and 2020. No further information for explaining the lack of this data has been provided.

- ➞ **[B.1.8_3]** Information on the total number of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in port is collected by the government and published online. Data on inspections are compiled quarterly by the GCM and the annual totals are published as part of the minutes of the quarterly working meetings of the *Technical Committee on Statistics*

⁴⁷ <http://impots.gov.mr/DGI/>

chaired by the DARE for 2019 and 2020. These minutes are published online on the MPEM website and contain detailed information on inspections at sea and in ports.

- ➡ **[B.1.8_4]** A record of convictions for serious infringements in the fisheries sector for 2020 and 2019 is available to the GCM, but not published on its website. Instead, a list of infringements for 2019 and 2020 is published online on the MPEM website, for all types of fisheries (deep-sea, coastal and artisanal).⁴⁸ This list contains the following information: *year, month, type of infraction, fisheries, number of infractions*.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG highlights that the published information does not include the name of the vessel, due to data privacy aspects. Furthermore, it seems that the NMSG has focussed its attention on the convictions of fishing vessels. However, no information is provided on other fisheries-related convictions, such as illegal sourcing of fish for fishmeal production. It is recommended that such information should be included in future FiTI Reports.

Labour Standards

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information around strategies and activities of Mauritania's national authorities to ensure that labour standards are applied to all parts of Mauritania's fisheries sector and that their efforts to enforcing these standards are well documented.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.9_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of national laws on labour standards applicable for national and foreign workers employed in the fishing sector at sea and in the post-harvest fisheries sector.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.1.9_2	The implementing country must publish information on the public authorities responsible for monitoring and enforcing laws on labour standards.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.9_3	The implementing country must publish documents, including policy statements and evaluations, regarding a national strategy, if applicable, or related activities for enforcing the laws on labour standards in the fisheries sector, including total figures on the financial and human resources deployed by the government.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>

⁴⁸ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/ph-liste_infraction_2017-2020-3.pdf

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.9_4	The implementing country must publish information on the role and legal standing of any body that has a governmental mandate to receive labour-related complaints from workers in the fishing sector and in the post-harvest sector.	Compliant [3]
B.1.9_5	The implementing country must publish the total number of offences committed by employers in the fisheries sector that have been resolved by the authorities.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 2.2]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.9_1]** Labour standards in Mauritania's fisheries sector are defined primarily in the 2013 Merchant Marine Code and the 2016 Maritime Labour Collective Agreement (amended in 2020). While the first document is published and accessible online on the MPEM website, the latter is not.

However, national authorities have not published a summary of the national labour standards laws applicable to domestic and foreign workers employed in the marine and post-harvest fishing sectors; neither did the NMSG.

- ➡ **[B.1.9_2]** The national authority responsible for monitoring and enforcement of labour standards in the marine fisheries sector in Mauritania is the MPEM, through the DMM and the Maritime district of Nouadhibou (CMNdb).

Through the preparation of the country's 2019-20 FiTI Report, this information is now clearly stated on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

- ➡ **[B.1.9_3]** There are various documents that address specific areas of labour standards, which are available online at third-party websites, including:
- *International Labour Organization (ILO)* standards (five conventions and two recommendations) relevant to the fishing sector⁴⁹;

⁴⁹ <https://docbweb.act.gov.pt/docbwebb/multimedia/associa/pdf/4647-m.pdf>

- Working conditions in the fishing sector - Comprehensive standards (one convention supplemented by one recommendation) on work in the fishing sector⁵⁰.

As part of the process of preparing the country's 2019-20 FiTI Report, these documents are all published on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

However, no information has been provided regarding the existence of a national strategy or related activities for enforcing the laws on labour standards in the fisheries sector, including total figures on the financial and human resources deployed by the government. It is therefore unclear whether such information exists (but has not been published).

- ➔ **[B.1.9_4]** The two main bodies with a government mandate to receive complaints from workers in the fisheries sector are the CMNdb and the DMM. The CMNdb deals with individual disputes, while the DMM deals with collective disputes.

However, such information on the role and legal standing of these two bodies is not published on their respective websites. As part of the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, this information has been stated in the FiTI Report as well as on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

- ➔ **[B.1.9_5]** The number of offences committed by employers in the fisheries sector is not published by national authorities of Mauritania, even though such information is available.

However, as part of the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, the NMSG compiled summary tables presenting information on the number of complaints received as well as the most frequent disputes and the rate of dispute resolution by subject matter of the complaints. These tables have been published in the FiTI Report as well as on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

In addition, the NMSG recommended [ID: 2020_13; Priority: High; Due date: July 2022] that the government of Mauritania should continuously publish information on compliance with labour standards legislation in the fishing sector.

⁵⁰ <https://www.ilo.org/public/french/standards/relm/ilc/ilc92/pdf/rep-v-1.pdf>

Fisheries Subsidies

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information around the extent and purpose of government subsidies offered to Mauritania's fisheries sector.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.10_1	The government must publish information on the type, values and recipients of government financial transfers or subsidies to the fisheries sector.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.10_2	The government must publish information on the average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel in nominal and percentage terms.	Meaningful progress [2]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed remarks:

[B.1.10_1] A comprehensive report on the type, value and beneficiaries of government financial transfers and subsidies to Mauritania's fisheries sector is not compiled by the Government of Mauritania.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG pointed out that the fisheries sector in Mauritania (deep-sea fishing, coastal fishing and artisanal fishing) is benefiting from certain types of benefits, such as a partial exemption of fuel costs as well as a total exemption on engines, nets and octopus pots. The provision of such subsidies has not been published by the government of Mauritania, but has been clearly stated in the FiTI Report.

Overall, the NMSG acknowledged that it is very difficult to find compiled information on fisheries subsidies, even in hard copy. It nevertheless conducted various analysis of data sources to collect and summarize some of the available information, e.g. on the cost reduction of fuel in form of waivers. This information was published in the FiTI Report as well as the FiTI-Mauritania website.

As the NMSG undertook efforts to provide a first set of information on fisheries subsidies, despite the fact that – while several types of subsidies are granted by national authorities – no such information is available in a compiled format, this assessment sees ‘meaningful progress’ for this validation requirement. It is however also clearly noted that significant efforts need to be invested by national authorities in Mauritania to be able to demonstrate progressive improvement over time. This also includes a clear working

definition of the scope of subsidies for Mauritania's fisheries sector, including also government financial transfers or subsidies for the post-harvest sector, such as reduced taxes for fishmeal factories.

Similarly, the NMSG recommended [ID: 2020_16; Priority: High; Due date: July 2022] that the government of Mauritania proceeds with the collection and monitoring of information on subsidies granted to the fisheries sector (industrial, coastal and artisanal), including fuel subsidies.

- ➔ **[B.1.10_2]** The government has not published information on the average annual value of any fuel subsidy.

In its 2019-20 FiTI Report, the NMSG noted that it could not obtain official compiled information, even in hard copy, on the amount of fuel subsidies in Mauritania. Thus, it presented in this report an estimate of the overall value of the fuel subsidy for the industrial fleet targeting sardinella based on estimates from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

It also emphasised that no information has been given by public authorities regarding fuel subsidy granted to the artisanal fishery other than the statement that a 42% discount is offered on fuel at the pump for Mauritanian-flagged vessels refuelling in Mauritania.

Official Development Assistance

The objective of this requirement is to increase public access to information regarding Official Development Assistance (ODA), which can represent an important source of funds and support for a country's fisheries sector. In particular, it is relevant to provide information on the value, purpose and outcomes of public sector development projects.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.11_1	The government must publish information on public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors, including information on the projects' value, purpose and outputs.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
B.1.11_2	The government must publish corresponding project evaluations, if applicable.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 1.5]

Detailed remarks:

- ➞ [B.1.11_1] At the beginning of the validation period, there was almost no information available on the website of the MPEM regarding public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation in Mauritania. Also, no links or references to websites of funding or implementing partners were provided, even though Mauritania is a recipient of such support.

As part of the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, the NMSG compiled a list of known public sector projects at the national level (i.e., excluding regional or global projects). The same was done for marine conservation-related projects. Both lists are now published in the FiTI Report as well as on the FiTI-Mauritania website. However, without sufficient information provided by national authorities, the NMSG stated that it is unclear whether these lists can be seen as complete.

In order to improve public accessibility and completeness of information, the NMSG made a recommendation [ID: 2020_17; Priority: High; Due date: July 2022] to compile and publish a list of all projects currently being implemented in both fisheries and marine conservation.

- ➞ [B.1.11_2] At the beginning of the validation period, information on project evaluations of public sector development projects was not published online by Mauritania's National Authorities.

As part of the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, the list of public sector development projects (as stated above) was further complemented by information on the dates of project assessments.

However, the Government of Mauritania has not published information on assessments where there is evidence these have been undertaken.

Beneficial Ownership

The objective of this requirement is to enhance public access to information around the existing legal and procedural framework of who ultimately owns and controls the companies operating in Mauritania's fisheries sector.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.12_1	The government must publish the legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in the country.	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_2	The government must publish the country's legal definition of beneficial ownership.	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_3	The government must publish information on the availability of a public register of beneficial owners.	Not collated
B.1.12_4	The government must publish the rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by companies to corporate regulators, stock exchanges or agencies regulating the access to fisheries.	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_5	The government must publish the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.1.12_1\]](#) The legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in Mauritania (e.g. Law No. 2000-05 of January 18, 2000) are all published online on the FiTI-Mauritania website.
- ➡ [\[B.1.12_2\]](#) Article 60 of Decree No. 2021-033 of March 11, 2021, on the Trade and Personal Property Security Register defines the beneficial owner of legal persons and legal arrangements. This decree is published online. This definition of Article 60 takes into account companies, legal entities such as associations, legal arrangements such as trusts, legal entities such as foundations, and legal arrangements similar to trusts
- ➡ [\[B.1.12_3\]](#) Mauritania does not have a public register of beneficial owners. Article 39 of Law No. 2000-05 of January 18, 2000, on the Commercial Code, as amended by Law No. 2015-32 of September 10, 2015, states that '*All natural and legal persons, Mauritanian or foreign, carrying out a commercial activity on Mauritanian territory must be registered in the Commercial Register.*' However, it is unclear whether this legal provision also applies to documenting the beneficial owner.

- ➔ **[B.1.12_4]** The general rules and procedures regarding beneficial ownership, such as the incorporation of beneficial ownership in the declarations of companies, are published by the government of Mauritania (e.g. in Article 62 of Decree No. 2021-033 of March 11, 2021, on the Trade Register and Securities).
- ➔ **[B.1.12_5]** The NMSG stressed that the debates on transparency of beneficial ownership in the fisheries sector are very lively at the international level. At the national level, the debates are mainly focused on joint ventures in the context of the Mauritanian vessel or fish processing plant ownership process.

In order to improve public accessibility and completeness of information, the NMSG recommended [ID 2020_16; Priority: Medium; Due date: July 2022] to the government to establish a Public Register of Beneficial Owners in the Mauritanian fisheries sector for vessels and plants.

4) Assessment of individual ‘procedural requirements for FiTI Reports’

The assessment of the procedural requirements of Mauritania’s FiTI Reports consists of *four validation elements*. The assessment looks at both of Mauritania’s FiTI Reports that fall within the validation timeframe (2018, 2019 & 2020).

In accordance with FiTI Guidance Note #3 (‘Validating countries’), certain procedural requirements that the FiTI Standard lists under section B.2 have already been assessed in the previous section. Therefore, only the remaining relevant aspects are evaluated.

Reporting Requirements

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.2.1_1	The National MSG must produce a FiTI Report annually.	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_2	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must provide a succinct summary of the main findings according to the FiTI Report’s reporting period (B.2.2).	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_3	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must include a reference on where detailed information can be found in the public domain, if applicable.	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_4	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must provide an explanation of significant deviations from previous reporting periods, if applicable.	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_5	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must include recommendations for improvements on how to strengthen the availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date information in the public domain, if applicable.	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.2.1_1]** Mauritania provided two FiTI reports in the validation period, covering information for three calendar years, i.e. 2018, 2019 and 2020. No gaps exist between these reports.

- ➔ **[B.2.1_2]** Both FiTI Reports clearly state in their summary sections whether information is available to the government, whether the information published on a government website is freely accessible, and whether the information is seen as complete by the NMSG. The NMSG's assessment for each of those questions is shown via Harvey balls, facilitating an intuitive understanding of the current situation.

Furthermore, in the detailed section of the two FiTI Reports, in-depth information is presented for each of the relevant requirements of the FiTI Standard, indicating with an even higher level of detail whether information is available, accessible and complete.

- ➔ **[B.2.1_3]** Both FiTI Reports include references (i.e. hyperlinks, typically as footnotes) to where information can be found online on government website as well as the FiTI-Mauritania website.

- ➔ **[B.2.1_4]** The 2019-20 FiTI Report provides explanations for significant deviations from the previous reporting period (i.e. 2018 FiTI Report). Such explanations cover two aspects:

- 1) *Deviations in the underlying information* (e.g. number of vessels) are clearly shown in the 2019-20 FiTI Report by comparing the current information to information from the previous calendar year (2018). This allows for a simple comparison between the two reporting periods. Furthermore, the second FiTI Report also shows yearly values for 2019 as well as for 2020 and thus, providing information that spans a total of 3 years.
- 2) *Deviations in the transparency performance* are explained in the 2019-20 FiTI Report (e.g. information that was made available only in the 2018 FiTI Report has now been published online, such as the summary descriptions of tenure arrangements).

- ➔ **[B.2.1_5]** Both FiTI Reports include recommendations from the NMSG for how the Mauritania's government can strengthen the availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date information in the public domain. More information on the scope, level of detail as well as implementation status is described in chapter 6 of this document: '*Appraisal of progressive improvements*'.

Reporting Deadlines and Periods

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.2.2_1	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must be published within the subsequent year of becoming a FiTI Candidate country.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.2_2	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must contain information on transparency requirements 1 – 6, set forth in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard.	Compliant [3]
B.2.2_3	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must contain information from the complete calendar year when the country became a FiTI Candidate country.	Compliant [3]
B.2.2_4	Following the 1 st FiTI Report, subsequent FiTI Reports must be published on an annual basis, comprising information from the complete calendar year preceding the year addressed in the last FiTI Report.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.2_5	Every second FiTI Report must include information on transparency requirements 7 – 12 set forth in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard, and this information must be disaggregated by calendar years.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.6]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.2.2_1]** Mauritania became a FiTI Candidate country in 2018. Therefore, the country was obliged to publish its first FiTI Report by the end of 2019, containing information from 2018. However, no such report was received by this deadline. Furthermore, the government of Mauritania submitted an extension request – to apply for a delayed reporting deadline – too late (i.e. 17 January 2020)⁵¹. Therefore, the initial extension request was not granted to Mauritania, and in accordance with section E.2.1 of the FiTI Standard, the maximum deadline for submitting the country's first FiTI Report for 2019 was

⁵¹ According to the FiTI Standard (section C.1.2), such a request must be made in advance of the deadline. The extension request was submitted by Mr Cheikh El Kebir Moulaye TAHER, then Minister of Economy and Industry of Mauritania, asking for an extension of this deadline until 31 December 2020.

determined for no later than 30 September 2020. Furthermore, the country was temporarily suspended. These decisions were communicated by the FiTI Chair to Mr Abdel Aziz DAHI, then Minister of Economy and Industry, on 20 February 2020.

On 15 September 2020 the FiTI International Secretariat received a letter from Mr. Mohamed Salem NANY, FiTI National Lead for Mauritania and FiTI International Board Member, requesting an additional extension for the submissions of the FiTI Reports for 2019 as well as for 2020, due to delays caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Board approved the additional extension request from Mauritania to submit its 2019 FiTI Report (based on 2018 data) no later than 31 December 2020, and the country's 2020 FiTI Report (based on 2019 data) no later than 30 June 2021. The Board further emphasised that failure to meet this extended deadline for the 2019 FiTI Report may trigger the public delisting of Mauritania from the initiative.⁵²

The FiTI International Secretariat received an advanced draft FiTI Report for 2018 on 30 December 2020. The final report, which was approved by its NMSG was eventually published in May 2021.

Based on the delayed publication of the country's first FiTI Report by 17 months, 'Inadequate progress' is the most intuitive compliance designation for this procedural requirement. However, given the fact that Mauritania continuously increased its information updates to the Secretariat throughout 2020, and – most importantly – considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country (e.g. travel restriction for the Report Compilers to travel to Mauritania to collect information and meet with stakeholders, as well as a presidential election in this timeframe – the FiTI International Secretariat merits the assignment of a 'Meaningful progress' compliance designation.

- ➔ **[B.2.2_2]** Mauritania's first FiTI Report for 2018 covered the requested six mandatory transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard.
- ➔ **[B.2.2_3]** According to the FiTI Standard, a country's first FiTI Report must contain information for the full calendar year in which it became a FiTI candidate country. In the case of Mauritania, this is for calendar year 2018, which is the timeframe that is covered in its first FiTI Report.

⁵² More detailed information is provided in the minutes of the FiTI International Board's 10th meeting (24 September 2020). <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

- ➡ **[B.2.2_4]** Following the 2018 FiTI Report published in May 2021, Mauritania was already delayed with its 2019 FiTI Report, which would have to be published by the end of 2020. Furthermore, in order to comply with the annual reporting sequences of FiTI Reports, as required under the FiTI Standard, Mauritania had to publish its third FiTI Report (for calendar year) 2020 by the end of 2021 – and thus, two additional reports only 7 months after the publication of its first report.

Being aware that the initial late submission will be causing reoccurring delays, it is noteworthy to emphasise that the NMSG decided to combine two calendar years, i.e. 2019 and 2020, in its second report, in order to become compliant with the FiTI Standard requirement. This combined FiTI Report was published in April 2022. While this means that this second report – with information for calendar year 2019 due by 2020 and for calendar year 2020 due by end of 2021 – was again published late (i.e. three months later than the initial deadline), these efforts are seen as a demonstration of the NMSG's commitment to comply with the reporting deadlines going forward.

Given this significant commitment, and the recognition that this delay was still partially caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the FiTI International Secretariat assesses that the broader objective of this requirement has been fulfilled and therefore – despite the fact that Mauritania did not request formally an extension – merits the assignment of a 'Meaningful progress' compliance designation, instead of an 'Inadequate progress' designation.

It is also noteworthy to emphasise that with this combined report, Mauritania is now in line with the reporting deadlines, as its next FiTI Report (for calendar year 2021) is due by the end of 2022.

- ➡ **[B.2.2_5]** Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report addressed the *first six requirements* of the FiTI Standard. Mauritania's 2019 FiTI Report would therefore have to address all 12 transparency requirements, whereas its 2020 FiTI Report would then have to address again only the first six requirements.

However, as stated in the previous section, the NMSG published a second FiTI Report which combined two calendar years (i.e. 2019 and 2020) and addressed all 12 transparency requirements for both years. Furthermore, this 2019-20 FiTI Report clearly states the information for calendar years 2019 and 2020 separately.

Reporting Process

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.2.3_1	The country's FiTI Reports must be compiled by an independent, credible, trustworthy and technically competent Report Compiler.	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_2	The engagement of the country's Report Compilers must be based on Terms of Reference, which must include minimum procedures for FiTI Reports, as endorsed by the FiTI International Board. ⁵³	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_3	The appointment of the country's Report Compiler must be endorsed by the National MSG.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.3_4	The National MSG and the Report Compiler must work jointly to ensure that the entire FiTI reporting process is perceived as open and inclusive.	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_5	The Report Compiler must consult with relevant national and international organisations to ensure that the assessment on the transparency requirements is perceived as credible and trustworthy, and that all appropriate sources of information are considered.	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_6	The Report Compiler must seek to resolve the discrepancies between published government information and information from other stakeholders, if applicable. ⁵⁴	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_7	The Report Compiler must consolidate the findings in a preliminary FiTI Report and submit it to the National MSG for review.	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_8	The National MSG must review the preliminary findings of the Report Compiler and provide comments. ⁵⁵	Compliant [3]

⁵³ The FiTI Standard states that ToRs may be adapted to include additional transparency requirements beyond those established in the FiTI Standard, if this is agreed upon by the National MSG.

⁵⁴ This also includes information that is published on government websites vs. information that is provided in a FiTI Report.

⁵⁵ The FiTI Standard encourages the National MSG to consult with others outside of the National MSG in undertaking this review. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and therefore, falls outside of the scope of the validation.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.2.3_9	The National MSG must formally approve the FiTI Reports and publish them afterwards.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.3_10	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The National MSG must consult with the FiTI International Secretariat prior to publishing its first FiTI Report to review completeness against the FiTI reporting requirements.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> <i>[Avg. 2.8]</i>

Detailed remarks:

- ➔ **[B.2.3_1]** Both FiTI Reports were prepared by Dr Moustapha Kébé and by Dr Mohamed Mayif, acting as Reports Compilers. Dr Kébé is based in Senegal and is a marine scientist and consultant with extensive experience in fisheries management, marine research, policy formulation and climate change strategies. Dr Mayif is based in Mauritania and has a good knowledge of the fisheries sector of Mauritania and the sub-region having worked for many years at the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC). Both Report Compilers were not part of the NMSG during this validation period.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_2]** Both FiTI Reports were financed by an external donor, the *Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM)* under their funding agreement with the MAVA Foundation. Recruitment of Mauritania's Report Compilers was therefore conducted through PRCM's own procurement processes. Nevertheless, the engagement was based on Terms of Reference that comply with the minimum procedures for FiTI Reports, as outlined in the FiTI Guidance Note #2 on 'Compiling FiTI Reports'.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_3]** It was stated that the appointments of the Report Compilers for both FiTI Reports were endorsed during meetings of the NMSG. However, these endorsements have not been formally documented in the meeting minutes of the NMSG.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_4]** No evidence was found that the NMSG and the Report Compiler failed to work together jointly to ensure the entire FiTI reporting process (for both FiTI Reports) was open and inclusive. It is noted that the Report Compilers primarily collaborated with the head of the FiTI National Secretariat, Mr Lamine Camara, and few members of the NMSG during the operational reporting process. However, this is not seen as a deliberate act to

restrict collaboration opportunities, but was primarily caused by the inactiveness of several NMSG members.

- ➔ **[B.2.3_5]** The Report Compilers consulted an extensive amount of organisations (primarily Mauritania-based) to ensure that the FiTI Reports are seen as credible and trustworthy, and that all appropriate sources of information are considered. Detailed lists of those consultations are documented in the Annex of both FiTI Reports.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_6]** Several discrepancies were noted by the Report Compilers, in particular during the preparation of the second FiTI Report (2019-20). For example, the number of vessels monitored by the DMM did not match the number of vessels for which the DGERH documented payments. Similarly, discrepancies were noted between the number of factories stated in the OESP 2020 Report and the number provided by the Technical Committee Report on Statistics published on the website of the MPEM. The Head of the FiTI National Secretariat, the FiTI International Secretariat as well as members of the NMSG were consulted to resolve these discrepancies, or, if this was not achieved, clearly documented in the FiTI Report(s).
- ➔ **[B.2.3_7]** During both reporting processes, the Report Compilers consolidate their findings in several preliminary FiTI Reports and submitted them to the NMSG for review.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_8]** For both reporting periods, members of the NMSG reviewed the preliminary findings of the Report Compilers and provided comments. It is perceived that more members of the NMSG were involved in the review of the country's first (2018) FiTI Report, then in the second (2019-20) FiTI Report.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_9]** It was stated that both FiTI Reports were approved by the NMSG during their meetings. However, these approvals have not been formally documented in the meeting minutes of the NMSG.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_10]** Prior to the publication of Mauritania's first (2018) FiTI Report, the Report Compilers as well as the country's FiTI National Secretary consulted extensively with the FiTI International Secretariat. This was necessary, as Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report was the first report to ever be published in West Africa. Thus, the collaboration included not only regular reviews of the completeness against the FiTI reporting requirements, but also the report structure and layout.

Report Dissemination and Public Debate

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.2.4_1	FiTI Reports must be comprehensible and written in a clear and accessible style.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.2.4_2	FiTI Reports must be widely distributed among key audiences, including government, parliamentarians, companies, civil society groups, academia, the media, and international stakeholders.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.2.4_3	The National MSG must ensure that the main findings of the FiTI Report contribute to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, enabling relevant stakeholders as well as citizens of FiTI implementing countries to demand reforms towards better governance of their marine fisheries. ⁵⁶	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.2.4_4	FiTI Reports must be published online under an open license.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.2.4_5	The National MSG must make users aware that information can be reused without prior consent.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 1.6]

Detailed remarks:

- ➞ **[B.2.4_1]** Both FiTI Reports are seen as being written in clear, non-technical language and due to the usage of various visualisation elements (e.g. charts, Harvey balls, icons) in a very accessible style.

Stakeholder feedback obtained on an anecdotal level (in particular after the publication of Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report) supports this assessment.

As the length of the 2019-20 FiTI draft Report exceeded 100 pages, the NMSG decided to split this second FiTI Report into a summary section (targeted for the wider general public) and a detailed section (targeted at fisheries' stakeholders).

Furthermore, a reduction in the overall length of the 2019-20 to the 2018 FiTI Report can be seen, as for the 2018 report, information was largely absent from government

⁵⁶ The FiTI Standard encourages National MSGs to contribute the lessons learnt and recommendations from FiTI Reports to policy dialogues and broader conversations about national reform efforts. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and therefore, falls outside of the scope of the validation.

websites and had to be published as part of the report. Such information is now available online (albeit primarily on the FiTI-Mauritania).⁵⁷

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] The FiTI Standard encourages FiTI Reports to be translated into appropriate languages. The official language of Mauritania is Arabic, while French, which is widely used as a working language, was the primary working language used for the two FiTI Reports. Therefore, the NMSG obtained financial support to have the French versions of the FiTI Report translated also into Arabic.

- ➔ **[B.2.4_2]** There is evidence that FiTI Reports have been distributed among key stakeholders. For example, the launch of both reports was supported by a *national launch forum / national press conference*⁵⁸, and Mauritania's media outlets feature the publication of both reports, including newspaper articles.

Furthermore, the NMSG produced a *2-page overview flyer* for the 2018 FiTI Report, summarising the main findings of the reporting period to facilitate public understanding. However, no individual efforts of members of the NMSG were documented to further distribute the key findings of these reports.

In addition, the dissemination of the FiTI Reports was supported by the FiTI International Secretariat, through a global email campaign as well as regular contributions via the Secretariat's social media channels (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn).

While several positive examples showed that the publication of these FiTI Reports were noted and appreciated, anecdotal evidence from national stakeholders as well as international partners suggest that the distribution of the FiTI Reports did not always reach key audiences, in particular outside of the FiTI. For example, in comparison to the process of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Mauritania, the FiTI implementation process is not widely known, or stakeholders are not even aware of the existence of the FiTI in the country.

[Efforts that exceed the requirements of the FiTI Standard] The FiTI Standard encourages outreach events, whether organised by government, civil society or business, to spread awareness on and facilitate dialogue around the FiTI across the entire country. In the

⁵⁷ Given that the second report included two calendar years and all 12 transparency requirements, the reduction in length due to an increased publication of information online was mostly offset by the extended scope of information.

⁵⁸ <https://www.peches.gov.mr/communique-de-presse-sur-le-1er-rapport-fiti-mauritanie-2018>

case of Mauritania, its 2018 FiTI Report was launched at a high-level forum on 18 May 2021. The launch ceremony was attended by the Minister in charge of fisheries as well as several national directors and heads of fisheries organizations in Mauritania.

- ➔ **[B.2.4_3]** While it can be assumed that the provision of information to the general public through the FiTI, such as regarding access agreements or the list of vessels authorised to fish in Mauritanian waters, the FiTI Reports are contributing to an environment that is beginning to become more appreciative and understanding of the need for such restrictions and regulations. Anecdotal evidence suggest that this is in particularly in Mauritania's neighbouring countries, such as Senegal, where the publication of such information is seen as highly favourable. Nevertheless, no concrete examples have been noted by the FiTI International Secretariat that the publication of these reports have prompted stakeholders to demand reforms for better governance of their marine fisheries.

However, the NMSG has not yet established a formalised approach to how the main findings of the FiTI Report can contribute to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, nor how this information can feed into public policy making.

- ➔ **[B.2.4_4]** Both FiTI Reports have been published online on the website of the MPEM as well as the FiTI-Mauritania website). However, there is no evidence that the reports have been published under an open and unrestricted license, such as those developed by Creative Commons.
- ➔ **[B.2.4_5]** The NMSG has not made users explicitly aware that information published within both FiTI Reports can be reused. However, it is explicitly stated on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

5) Assessment of individual requirements for the ‘National Implementation Framework’

The assessment of Mauritania’s National Implementation Framework, as part of this Baseline Assessment Report, consists of **five validation elements**, in accordance with section B.3 of the FiTI Standard.

Furthermore, in accordance with the FiTI Principles 3 and 5, and as set out in requirements B.3.1 and B.3.3, the meaningful participation of representatives from each of FiTI’s three stakeholder groups is fundamental in achieving the objectives of the FiTI. Therefore, this section also assesses any potential breaches of the **principles and spirit** of the initiative, i.e. ad-hoc restrictions on the participation of a FiTI NMSG or its representatives.

Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.1_1	The government must maintain an enabling environment for business and civil society participation as specified in requirement A.2.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➞ **[B.3.1_1]** Mauritania is seen as a country providing an environment that allows stakeholders to engage openly in public debates and express their opinions. Freedom of expression is guaranteed under Mauritania’s Constitution.⁵⁹ Article 10 of the Constitution guarantees, among other things, freedom of opinion and thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly.

Furthermore, press offenses were decriminalized in Mauritania in 2011. A law passed in 2006 and amended in 2011 strengthens press freedom and incorporates general principles on the right to information and the protection of sources. However, it contains

⁵⁹ <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/sc/sc001en.pdf>

numerous restrictions on the exercise of journalism, while the adoption of a new cybercrime law in 2020 with liberticidal tendencies is a source of concern.⁶⁰

In February 2021, the President of Mauritania pledged to implement a series of proposals to strengthen freedom of expression, including the establishment of a *National Information Council* and improved access to public information.

Mauritania's enabling environment is also assessed by several international initiatives, such as:

- *Freedom of the press* in Mauritania, as determined by the international non-governmental organisation *Freedom House* (latest for 2021) is seen as 'Partly free', an improvement from the country's 2019 score of 'not free'.⁶¹
- Mauritania ranked number 40 in 'Overall Governance' in the *Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)* – out of 54. The low score of 35.1 of 100 for the category 'Participation, rights and inclusion' is however, something that needs to be closely monitored regarding its impact on an enabling environment for stakeholder participation.⁶²

With regards to an *enabling environment for stakeholder participation specifically in the FiTI*, it is seen that the government is demonstrating a commitment towards relevant laws, regulations, and administrative rules as well as actual practice in implementation of the FiTI. This entails that relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to members of the NMSG, are able to:

- engage in public debate related to the FiTI;
- express their opinions about the FiTI without restraint, coercion or reprisal;
- operate freely in relation to the FiTI;
- communicate and cooperate with each other regarding the FiTI;
- engage fully, actively and effectively in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the FiTI; and
- speak freely on fisheries governance issues.

Anecdotal evidence shows that non-governmental fisheries stakeholders are speaking critically to and about the government and/or fishing companies regarding matters that concern them.

⁶⁰ <https://rsf.org/fr/pays/mauritanie>

⁶¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/mauritania/freedom-world/2022>

⁶² <https://iiag.online/data.html?meas=GOVERNANCE&loc=MR&view=overview>

This includes, for example, public critique about a previous lack of involvement of non-governmental stakeholders in the negotiation of foreign fishing access agreements, or general concerns around foreign fishing in Mauritanian waters (e.g. under the agreement with the European Union).

This assessment found no legal, regulatory or administrative obstacles that prevent or limit the involvement of business and/or civil society stakeholders in Mauritania's FiTI implementation process. Similarly, regarding the actual practice of stakeholder participation, this assessment found no evidence illustrating civil society or business representatives were:

- ➔ restricted from providing input for key documents of the FiTI implementation process, such as the FiTI Reports. *However, concerns were raised from few NMSG members, which indicated that the composition of the business stakeholder group favours a particular association (i.e. FNP);⁶³*
- ➔ hindered from engaging in public debate, or refrained from expressing their opinions due to fear of reprisal;
- ➔ discouraged from communicating information and opinions related to the FiTI implementation to the media, or the media from publishing such information and opinions due to threats of administrative measures, sanctions, or bars on publication;
- ➔ restricted from carrying out activities relating to the FiTI due to registration requirements or related fees;
- ➔ unable to consult, engage with, share with or seek information from local communities regarding issues related to the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania or the NMSG's work;
- ➔ unable to cooperate with colleagues in civil society, business and government, either within or outside Mauritania in relation to discussions about NMSG representation or the FiTI process;

However, it must be noted that civil society and business involvement in Mauritania's FiTI implementation process is currently limited to the members of the NMSG (see below). Outside of this group, little attention is given to Mauritania's efforts to enhance transparency in fisheries management through the FiTI. This is not seen as the result of any legal or practical restrictions on engagement, but rather due to a lack of engagement as well as a clear communication and outreach strategy. For example, the International Secretariat is not aware of any stakeholder meetings held by members of the NMSG outside of NMSG meetings. Also,

⁶³ For more information, please refer to [B.3.3_2].

there appears to be very little communication or advocacy activities from civil society organisations (not part of the NMSG) on issues related to the FiTI.

It is currently unclear whether the lack of involvement, in particular from civil society organisations, is mainly due to a lack of interest in fisheries management, or due to a lack of adequate capacity and support to participate meaningfully in the FiTI (e.g. sufficient information, resources, time).

Governance and Support

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.2_1	The government must maintain a FiTI Lead Ministry and a FiTI National Lead as specified in requirement A.3.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.3.2_2	Changes to the FiTI Lead Ministry or the FiTI National Lead must be made public, if applicable.	<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.2_3	The National MSG must maintain a properly authorised and resourced FiTI National Secretariat as specified in requirement A.5.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
		<i>Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]</i>

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.3.2_1]** Throughout the entire timeframe of this validation, the FiTI Lead Ministry (i.e. Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors) as well as the FiTI National Lead (i.e. M. Mohamed Salem Nany) remained the same.

However, it must be recognised that the current FiTI Lead Ministry has not given enough priority to the FiTI process over the last 12-24 months. The FiTI seems to still be treated as a 'niche' initiative, and is not well integrated in wider governance efforts in Mauritania. While the government has recognised this challenge and is striving to change the FiTI Lead Ministry to the MPEM (and consequently also the FiTI National Lead), this process has already been ongoing for several months, indicating either a lack of political will or priority.

- ➔ **[B.3.2_3]** The FiTI National Secretariat is headed by Mr Lamine Camara, Director of Resource Planning and Studies (DARE)⁶⁴. While Mr Camara has been very active, in particular, in the preparations of the two FiTI Reports, the FiTI National Secretariat lacks operational support from more operational staff to ensure that meetings are properly organised and documented, as well as that regular communication and outreach activities are conducted. It is further noted that while the FiTI International Secretariat perceives the National Secretariat as properly authorised, it also sees the National Secretariat as not properly resourced, in particular regarding human resources. It seems that the Secretariat only comprises of Mr Camara and does not have any operational budget or staff. It is acknowledged that through-the financial support of the PRCM, the National Secretariat has been equipped with computer equipment, which has improved its functioning.

The FiTI Standard also encourages NMSGs to explore operational synergies with similar secretariats or organisations supporting other multi-stakeholder initiatives already established in the country. In the case of Mauritania, the country is also a member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). However, it appears that such potential synergy effects have not been explored yet.

Multi-Stakeholder Oversight

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.3_1	The government must maintain a National MSG as specified in requirement A.4.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.3.3_2	Representatives from government, business and organised civil society must be appropriately qualified and fully, actively and effectively engaged in the FiTI.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
B.3.3_3	Representatives from organised civil society must be operationally, and in policy terms, independent from government and/or business.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.3.3_4	Changes to the National MSG or to its Terms of Reference must be made public, if applicable.	<i>Not applicable</i>
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.7]

⁶⁴ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/designation_secretaire.pdf

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.3.3_1]** The FiTI NMSG of Mauritania comprises of 15 representatives, equally assigned to the government, business and civil society stakeholder group.
- ➡ **[B.3.3_2]** The NMSG is seen as qualified to oversee the implementation of the FiTI in Mauritania.

- 1) *Government stakeholder group:* This group includes three representatives from Mauritania's executive branch (i.e. from ministries) as well as two other representatives; one from the Central Bank of Mauritania and the other from the Nouadhibou free trade zone. While it is positive to note the presence of the Ministry of Fisheries alongside the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Environment, no representative of parliament is designated. However, this has been mitigated with the appointment of the President of the Parliamentary Group for Fisheries and Maritime Economy as an observer to the NMSG.
- 2) *Business stakeholder group:* This group includes two representatives of the artisanal fishery, two representatives of the large-scale fishery and one representative of foreign shipowners.

It should be noted that all the representatives of this group are still only affiliated with the *National Federation of Fisheries (FNP)*. This aspect was already criticised during the review of Mauritania's Candidate application in 2018. The status of Mauritania as a Candidate Country was given based on the condition that Mauritania implements amendments to the current composition of the business stakeholder group to guarantee a more pluralistic and diverse representation of the fisheries sector. The government has emphasised that the five current representatives for the business sector in the NMSG come from different legally recognized organizations and that the FNP is an umbrella organization. However, the participation of representatives of other associations or initiatives, such as the 'national advocacy coalition for transparency in the management of small pelagics', established in 2019, could further improve the composition of the NMSG.

- 3) *Civil society stakeholder group:* This group includes representatives of NGOs active in the field of fisheries, fisheries unions, the network of journalists, the Bar Association and the National Order of Accountants (ONEC).

Whereas the NMSG is seen as mostly sufficiently diverse to a range of different stakeholder views, evidence suggests that several members are not active and fully

engaged in the NMSG. For example, the NMSG met very rarely (how often is difficult to assess, as no meeting minutes are publicly available). It seems that the NMSG has only met during the validation of the Report Compilers' Terms of Reference as well as the reviews and approvals of the FiTI Reports.

As a FiTI validation needs to take into account whether a country acts in accordance with the spirit of the FiTI – as well as evaluating how compliant it is against the requirements of the initiative – the fact that the NMSG managed to oversee the publication of two FiTI Reports (comprising three calendar years) and at the same time defied the several challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic⁶⁵ - the FiTI International Secretariat merits the assignment of a 'Meaningful progress' compliance designation, instead of 'Inadequate progress'. Nevertheless, a more effective composition and engagement of the NMSG needs to be thoroughly assessed during the country's next validation. This includes also a review of the term of the current NMSG members.

- ➔ **[B.3.3_3]** This assessment found no evidence that the civil society representatives of Mauritania's NMSG are operationally, and in policy terms, dependent on government and/or business. However, it is recognised that as of today, there is no formal process in place within the NMSG to identify or report such dependencies. This should be corrected in the future.
- ➔ **[B.3.3_4]** The initial size of the NMSG (i.e. 15 members) as well as its Terms of Reference have not changed within the timeframe of this validation.

Annual Workplan

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.4_1	The National MSG must provide an updated Workplan for each upcoming reporting period.	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>
B.3.4_2	Each Workplan must provide a summary of FiTI activities undertaken in the previous reporting period, including an	<i>Not applicable</i>

⁶⁵ This refers not only to the obvious challenges of meetings during times where such meetings were mostly prohibited and the technical infrastructure of the country did not allow an effective online mitigation, but also to the large macroeconomic aspects that this pandemic brought on the country, which included a shift in political priorities as well as a reduction in operating budgets.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
	assessment of the level of progress in achieving the objectives set out in the previous Workplan(s).	
B.3.4_3	Each Workplan must outline objectives, constraints, activities and outputs in accordance with requirement A.6. ⁶⁶	Not applicable
B.3.4_4	Each Workplan must be approved by the National MSG two months prior to the upcoming reporting period.	Not applicable
		<u>Inadequate progress</u> [Avg. 1.0]

Detailed remarks:

As this validation covers the timeframe of activities after Mauritania became an official FiTI Candidate country, the country's first workplan (2018-2019) is not included in this assessment.

- ➡ **[B.3.4_1]** Since the initial workplan for 2018-19, the NMSG has failed to provide any updated follow-up workplans, e.g. no workplans for 2020, 2021 or 2022 were provided.

Impact Report

In accordance with section B.3.5 of the FiTI Standard, a NMSG must publish an Impact Report every three years, preferably aligned with upcoming validations. Mauritania' first Impact Report is therefore due by the end of 2022 (i.e. 3 years after Mauritania became an FiTI Candidate country). Therefore, this element is not taken into account in this validation.

⁶⁶ This includes information about uncompleted objectives of previous Workplan(s), if applicable; activities planned for the upcoming reporting period; recommendations identified by the NMSG in previous FiTI Report(s), if applicable; and recommendations from validations, if applicable.

6) Appraisal of progressive improvements

Progressive improvement is a key aspect of a country's FiTI implementation and subsequently also of its validation. The concept is anchored in FiTI Principle 7 which stipulates: *'Increasing transparency and participation must be feasible and introduced progressively in order to ensure the wide acceptance of this initiative.'* In other words, the FiTI does not expect all countries to have complete data for every transparency requirement from the beginning. Instead, public authorities must disclose the information they have, and where important gaps exist, they must demonstrate improvements over time. In accordance with the FiTI Standard, it is the responsibility of the NMSG to collectively agree on recommendations for addressing such gaps, and for the FiTI implementing country's government to follow up on these recommendations.⁶⁷

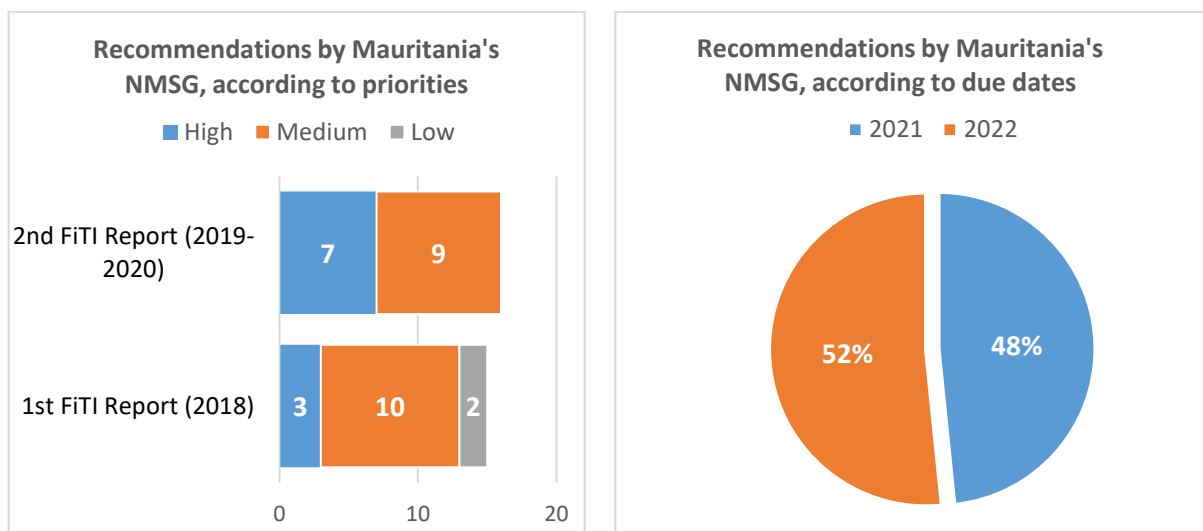
The principle of progressive improvement therefore has practical implications for the validation process, as a country can still initially achieve *'compliant'* status, even if some information required by the FiTI Standard is not available. This principle is in particular relevant when determining a FiTI implementing country's level of compliance during its first validation, as Guidance Note #3 on 'Validating countries' clearly stipulates that during a country's first regular validation, a country must not be validated as non-compliant with the FiTI Standard in case information is not available to the government. This is the case even if the NMSG considers the missing information to be important for achieving sustainable management of the fisheries sector.

Furthermore, progressive improvement is not directly evaluated during a country's validation (e.g. as a standalone criterion/requirement). Nevertheless, the scope and extent of a country continuously improving transparency in its fisheries sector, e.g. by its government implementing recommendations issued by its NMSG via FiTI Reports, is an important guide when determining the overall assessment of compliance.

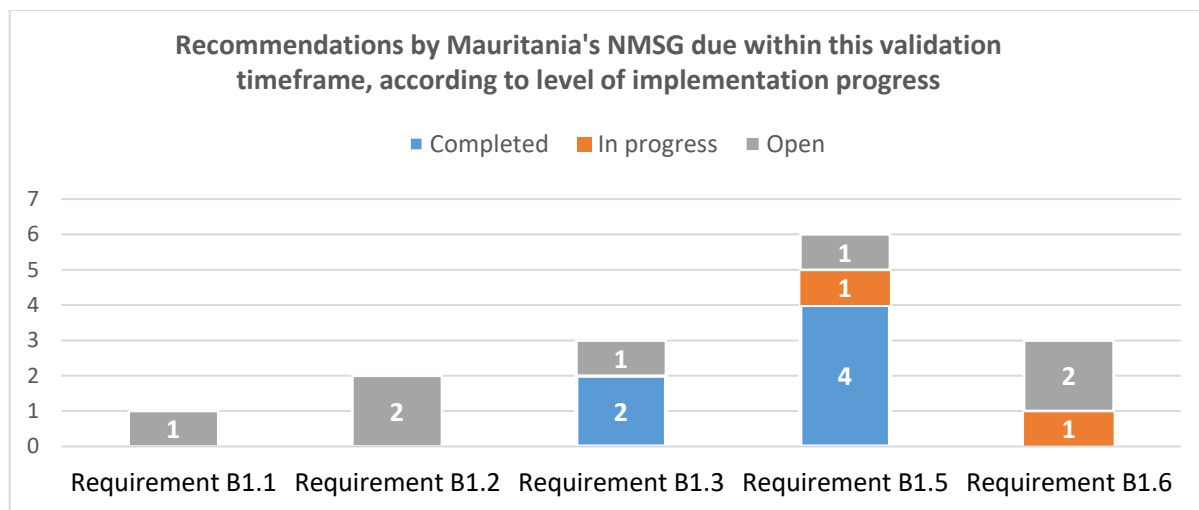
As part of Mauritania's first two FiTI Reports, the NMSG made a total of 31 recommendations to the government of Mauritania to improve transparency in its fisheries management. Unfortunately, this total number includes unfulfilled recommendations for the first FiTI Report that the NMSG unfortunately renewed in the second report. If only unique recommendations are considered, the NMSG made 24 recommendations in total.

⁶⁷ A government is not obliged to implement the recommendations of the country's National MSG. In case the government decides not to follow a recommendation, or to address it at a later point in time then proposed by the National MSG, the reasons for this need to be clearly stated.

Country validation: Baseline Assessment Report Mauritania (2018-2022)



The level of government progress for implementing recommendations due within this validation timeframe can be summarised as follows:



Implementing the recommendations of the NMSG has resulted in tangible improvements in the availability and accessibility of government information in Mauritania, most notably:

- ➡ An online summary description of *tenure arrangements* of Mauritania's five fisheries;⁶⁸
- ➡ An online provisory large-scale *vessel registry* of all Mauritania-flagged and foreign-flagged vessels authorised to fish in Mauritania marine jurisdictional waters, including certain attributes of the FiTI standard;

⁶⁸ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2018-2/>

- ➡ Detailed information on [*payments for large-scale fishing vessels*](#) operating in Mauritania is published online and publicly available

The reasons why some recommendations that were to be implemented by the end of 2021 have not yet been implemented by the National Authorities in Mauritania have not been indicated in the assessment of recommendations (Appendix D of the 2019-20 report). This assessment found no indication that such a lack of implementation constitutes a breach of the principles of this initiative.

7) Additional considerations

COVID-19 pandemic

As an initiative that is based on stakeholder participation and collaboration, the FiTI has been significantly impacted by the **COVID-19 pandemic**, on the international governance level, as well as in national implementations. The Mauritania's validation timeframe of December 2018 to March 2022 included the entire timeframe of the disruption caused by the pandemic. In particular, several restrictions on meeting were in place in Mauritania during this timeframe, limiting face-to-face meetings between relevant stakeholders and posing problems for the NMSG's efforts to keep up the momentum for the FiTI.

Therefore, the publication of two FiTI Reports amid a global pandemic is seen as a remarkable achievement and underscores Mauritania's sincerity and commitment to enhancing transparency in fisheries management.

Presidential election 2019

Mauritania's 2019 presidential election took place in June 2019, electing a new president for a five-year term. Given that the outgoing President was not eligible for re-election, a new president had to be elect. This process did not go without controversies. For example, in April 2019, two months before the election, the government rejected an invitation from international observers to oversee the elections and report irregularities, claiming that Mauritania's electoral system was sufficiently reliable.

A new president, from the previous ruling party, was sworn into office in August 2020. The transition resulted in the appointment of a new Cabinet (including a Minister of Fisheries). Despite such upheaval, it should be noted that Mauritania's commitment towards implementing the FiTI has remained consistent, and there has been no indication of any discussions within the new government to reverse the country's commitment to the initiative.



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Annex II

Validation Report of the
Independent Validator
(December 2018 – March 2022)

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT VALIDATOR FiTI MAURITANIA (DECEMBER 2018 – MARCH 2022)

Stefaan Depypere

19/12/2022

Report funded by [PROBLUE](#)



ABBREVIATIONS

BAR	Baseline Assessment Report
CG	Coast Guard
COPACE	Comité des Pêches pour l'Atlantique Centre-Est
DMM	Directorate of Merchant Navy
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FITI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
GCM	Mauritanian Coast Guard
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IEO	Spanish Institute of Oceanography
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IMROP	Mauritanian Institute of Oceanographic Research and Fisheries
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MPFM	Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy Ministry
MRT	Mauritania
MSG	Multi-Stakeholder Group
OEPS	Observatoire Economique et Social des Pêches
SSF	Small-scale fisheries
WB	Worldbank

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that strengthens transparency and collaboration in marine fisheries management by making fisheries management more transparent and inclusive. The FiTI provides an internationally recognized framework (the FiTI Standard, organized into 12 thematic areas) that defines which information on marine fisheries should be published by governments.

The reputation of the FiTI as an initiative promoting good governance in fisheries, in particular transparency, participation and accountability, is one of the initiative's greatest assets and robust and objective assurance procedures play an important role in creating and maintaining FiTI's reputation to ensure equal treatment of all countries. Validations of implementing countries are therefore an essential part of the FiTI process (see also 'Guidance note #3: Validating countries' for more information). Validation verifies compliance of the country against the FiTI Standard's transparency requirements, procedural requirements, meaningful involvement of the stakeholders and impact of the FiTI in the country.

Regular validations occur in three steps - each building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous phase – (see section D of the FiTI Standard). First, the FiTI International Secretariat prepares a Baseline Assessment Report making an initial evaluation of compliance against requirements in accordance with the FiTI Standard. Second, the Independent Validator, appointed by the FiTI International Board, must conduct a verification of the Secretariat's initial assessment and also determine recommendations to further strengthen the impact of the FiTI in the country. And third, the FiTI International Board reviews the Validator's assessments and recommendations and makes the final determination (Compliance statement) whether the individual

requirements are met or not and determines the implementing country's overall level of compliance in accordance with provision D.1.2.

FiTI Standard	Section D.2.1	Section D.2.2	Section D.2.3
Responsibility	FiTI International Secretariat	Independent Validator	FiTI International Board

Whereas Mauritania's Baseline Assessment Report (date: 23 June 2022), prepared by the FiTI International Secretariat is mainly based on desk-based research, the independent validation process is primarily focus on gathering information and viewpoints from stakeholders and key informants in the country (supported also by a previous desk-based research).

With that purpose, the validation process was carried out from July to October 2022. The independent validator conducted a site visit to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania between 12 and 21 September, 2022 to collect the stakeholder's viewpoints on the initiative. The validation phase, as foreseen in the FiTI process, consisted of a series of interviews with critical stakeholders who were confronted, on the one hand with the conclusion of the FiTI report and the baseline assessment and, on the other hand with the transparency issues in general¹. Around 30 stakeholders were involved²:

- 60 % of whom Mauritanian interests, 40% international;
- 45% representing some form of Government or Institution, 25 % Economic operators, 30 % Civil society or Press.

Generally speaking, the claims of the FiTI report as evaluated by the assessment in the baseline assessment were acknowledged³. Whereas the Government services and FiTI received much acclaim with a variety of stakeholders, there were also a number of instances for which transparency was considered to be insufficient or work in progress. For that matter, this also transpires from the very thorough baseline assessment report.

It is fair to recognise that the Government has made transparency one of its major policy objectives and that in the last couple of years, very good results have been achieved.

Transparency as a vector for good governance has been added to the strategic sector plan (2020-2024) and its recent update ("L2P")⁴. It is generally recognised that the progress that was made over the last few years is remarkable, though admittedly, the country started from a modest baseline.

The country is now adhering with a significant number of requirements from the FiTI Standards. Anecdotally, civil society representatives testified that, somehow unexpectedly, they now found data which were unavailable a

¹ Hence, the validation report reflects the perceptions and views expressed by relevant stakeholders.

² Some 45 stakeholders were contacted but only around 30 were willing or capable to offers their views.

³ Details are given in Chapter B. For a limited number of criteria or sub-criteria, one could suggest to slightly adapt the detailed qualifications such as proposed by the baseline assessment report. These instances do not however, alter the overall qualifications.

⁴ L2P is an impressive document, outlining policy plans and result indicators in great detail for virtually all domains of the subsectors of fishery products.

few years ago. All this bodes well for the future of transparency and good governance⁵, at least if the efforts can be sustained.

The latter comment is very critical. Whereas the policy plans are very clear, coherent and ambitious, one would like more clarity regarding the resources⁶ that will be engaged to succeed on a sustainable basis. Compiling information and a data set once, is quite an achievement but updating them on a consistent basis is still at another level. What will be the means to realise the ambitions laid down in the strategic plans? Clearly, this is a challenge for the country, its political leaders and its administrative and scientific bodies but also for the international community that wants the country to succeed.

Regarding FiTI itself in particular, the country is in a transition phase. The second report was very elaborate and well done, the MSG met and functioned but now the MSG process has somehow paused pending a renewal of the mandate. All decisions to adapt the structure have been prepared but they now need to be finalised. The national FiTI lead will probably move from the ministry of Economic Affairs to the Ministry of Fisheries and the nomination of the lead is pending⁷. Also, the composition of the MSG will be updated as well as its resource basis. Reportedly, the resource basis was too modest in the past. Especially if the results are to be more widely disseminated and discussed in relevant places throughout the country, more permanent basic⁸ resources should be available. The second FiTI report, in particular contains many pertinent recommendations for policy choices and policy enforcement. These are also reflected in the above-mentioned strategy documents⁹.

As to the availability of resources to continue in the short term, during the validation mission we learned good news: a renewal of the contribution by GIZ is underway. So, for at least two more years, the needs will be covered. At least the FiTI report for 2021 can be produced.

As to the question whether the country can already be considered to be FiTI compliant, which is the basic question after two reports, the assessment and the validation, a qualified reply is needed.

The country has played a pioneering role (the first one to commit to the FiTI Standard and the second country, after Seychelles, to publish its inaugural FiTI Report¹⁰) and may be a catalyst for the broader west African region which would benefit considerably from moving into the same direction. The FiTI process is widely and generally acknowledged both by operators in the country and by international operators as having contributed to creating awareness about the value of transparency and having led to concrete results. There exists general expectation also that this effort should be recognised and continued. Somehow the FiTI process is seen as a gamechanger that lays the foundation for good governance in the country.

⁵ Again, we consider that transparency is an enabler and a driver for good Governance though admittedly, transparency alone is not enough. It must be expected though that bad governance will not last if there is full transparency about it. Relatively quickly, one should expect indignation and calls for improvement.

⁶ Financial, human, logistical and in terms of political capital.

⁷ i.e. it was “in the works” in September 2022. Unsure how far it advanced since then.

⁸ This is not a plea for a bloated administration. Yet the operators of the secretariat should clearly know what can be made available reliably so as to allow decent planning. This as well, is a matter of transparency.

⁹ In fact, to use a French expression, “il suffit de le faire”. In an English expression variant, “Just do it”.

¹⁰ This must be recognised as a very brave decision. By doing so, the country imposed a challenging deadline on itself.

Yet, at the same time, it seems somewhat difficult to proclaim a clean bill of health. On certain important aspects, transparency remains to be improved^{11,12} and, importantly, the country must demonstrate that the results can be sustainably maintained.

It is for the International Board to assess how this conundrum can be solved¹³ and how it can show appreciation for the enormous progress made whilst also indicating that there is still some way to go.

In recent years, several international institutions¹⁴ have supported the Transparency effort. It would be most useful if this support was continued in some form. Fortunately, this is likely to happen. Finally, I wish to mention specifically the support offered by the [PROBLUE](#) programme of the World Bank. Without PROBLUE, the present report could not have been made.

In conclusion, I would **recommend** the Board to make an **overall designation** of the Country as “**Meaningful progress**”. This designation is based on the fact that Mauritania has made very important efforts and has achieved a good degree of transparency. It has implemented significant aspects of most criteria and has thus fulfilled the broader objective of these criteria. Furthermore, with some sustained effort, it is well on its way to becoming compliant.

2 - VERIFICATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS

B1 – ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL “TRANSPARANCY REQUIREMENTS”

B1.1 PUBLIC REGISTRY OF NATIONAL FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.1_1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all national legislation and official policy documents related to the marine fisheries sector.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.1_2	The National MSG must decide on which areas of fisheries this applies to; however, at a minimum, copies of national laws, decrees and policy documents on fisheries management, trade and investment, as well as fisheries management plans must be included.	Meaningful Progress [2]	Meaningful Progress [2]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.5]	Compliant [Avg. 2.5]

¹¹ Obviously, also “Rome was not built in one day”. The challenge of full FiTI transparency is considerable.

¹² In certain cases, also, the data to comply with the FiTI standard could possibly be collected (at some cost) but the Government services considered that the value added from collecting and publishing the data did not justify the cost. Other stakeholders seemed to agree with this assessment.

¹³ for instance, by delaying its decision or by refining its procedure and introducing something alike a graduation in stages.

¹⁴ The most visible support came from the Worldbank, KfW and GIZ and the European Union. Unclear how and how much other stakeholders, like Japan, intervened.

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.1_1] There is general (i.e. literally everybody agreed on this) recognition of the effort, major progress and achievement made by Mauritania in this domain. As to the medium, there is also a wide comment that the management of the website should be improved. Basically, a wealth of information is available but various stakeholders argued that, whilst the information is available, it is not always easily accessible. This may have been sufficiently remedied by now because the link to the new website with all the FiTi-related information is on the starting page of the Ministry's website ('[Site Web FiTi Mauritanie](https://www.peches.gov.mr/index.php?lang=fr)'): <https://www.peches.gov.mr/index.php?lang=fr>

No stakeholder, however, questioned the assessment that Mauritania is compliant with this FiTi Standard.

[B.1.1_2] I confirm the qualification of meaningful progress. This is widely recognised. Various stakeholders, however, expressed concern about the regularity and continuity of the MSG activity.

B1.2 FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.2_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of laws and decrees on fisheries tenure arrangements, including information as specified in requirement B.1.2 of the FiTi Standard.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.2_2	In case tenure, access or user rights are not codified, information on the current and planned approaches to securing such rights must be published.	Not applicable	Not applicable
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]	Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.2_1] Some stakeholders considered this as done (compliant). Others considered that this information ought to be published clearly on the MPEM website with clear references as to the validity date of the information. Generally, all stakeholders agreed with the “compliant” determination. Regarding the reporting on 2022, we refer to the general comment that the MSG activity in 2022 has been limited (see also Chapter A – Validation Report).

[B.1.2_2] Not applicable

B1.3 FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.3_1	The implementing country must publish the contracts of all foreign fishing access	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

	agreements, including their associated protocol(s) ¹⁵ .		
B.1.3_2	The implementing country must publish studies or reports undertaken by national authorities or foreign parties to an agreement providing evaluation or oversight of the agreement, if available.	Meaningful Progress [2]	Meaningful Progress [2]
B.1.3_3	The implementing country must publish documentation derived from any national stakeholder consultation undertaken with respect to the preparation, negotiation or monitoring of the agreements, if available.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
		Meaningful Progress [Avg. 2.0]	Meaningful Progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.3_1] Whilst stakeholders agreed that enormous progress was made in relation to this standard, there is some divergence of opinion whether the information is complete. There is some semantic disagreement, in particular whether or not the agreements with Turkish operators qualify as an access agreement or not. The administration is adamant that the Turkish vessels operate under a national regime and are, therefore, not to be qualified as access agreements. Various international and civil society stakeholders beg to differ, arguing that, whilst the Turkish vessels mostly fly the MRT flag, they are clearly international operators and on various occasions they even continue to fly the Turkish flag. Questioned about its statute, the MPEM explained that the Turkish fleet does not operate under a fishery agreement but rather under a bareboat chartering arrangement with a national regime that is applicable for all chartered vessels, independent of their nationality. This information came after the sequence of validation conversations. I could not confront other stakeholders with this information and ask for further comments or qualifications.

On balance, I can agree with the “compliant” qualification. The Turkish vessels issue remains to be considered.

[B.1.3_2] The interviewed stakeholders were not aware of independent full evaluations of the EU agreement. The general comment was however, that it would be worthwhile evaluating the other agreements as well. The stakeholders were not aware of any such evaluations. However, in terms of transparency there was no claim that what is available is withheld from being published.

[B.1.3_3] There is agreement¹⁶ that more should be done to consult the national stakeholders on the preparation, negotiation and monitoring of the agreements. The comments pointed however to the absence of prior consultation as such rather than to the absence of transparency on such a consultation process. Hence, in terms of the FiTI process, the question is whether there is an absence of transparency or an absence of a process to be transparent about.

Regarding the Fuzhou HongDong agreement, there is convergence of opinion that the text as such of the agreement is now transparently available but there is also convergence of view that it is not clear how this agreement can be monitored and evaluated.

B1.4 STATE OF FISHERIES RESOURCES

¹⁵ This includes agreements that allow access for foreign vessels to fish in the country’s marine jurisdictional waters (i.e. Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone). There are no agreements that allow nationally flagged vessels to fish in a third country.

¹⁶ This view was expressed mostly, as could be expected, by civil society and non-governmental professional organisations. The official Mauritanian interviewees did not really take position on this matter

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.4_1	The implementing country must publish the most recent national reports on the state of fish stocks, including any information on trends in the state of stocks and conclusions on the reasons for change, as well as studies or reports undertaken by National Authorities that assess the sustainability of fishing.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.4_2	The implementing country must provide information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.4_3	The implementing country must publish on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments.	No progress [0]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Meaningful Progress [Avg. 2.0]	Compliant [Avg. 2.7]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.4_1]

- Various stakeholders agreed that efforts are made and commended the work of IMROP but they also said that it would be highly desirable to increase the frequency of the stock evaluations, considering the life cycle of the species (esp. small pelagics). IMROP does not question that this would be desirable but points at the cost and resources issues.
- One international expert referred to the regional situation: more effort ought to be made in cooperating with the neighbouring countries (Senegal in particular) and the FAO and the regional bodies also ought to step up their effort.
- As all information on the status of the stocks might help determining appropriate TACs, it might be useful to allow non-official comments and data sets (Best Available Information) to be published or referred to (e.g. in a special section of the website of IMROP)
- It is worth mentioning, in this context, that KfW indicated its willingness to work with IMROP and -for that matter- with the Coast Guard to improve their resources bases.
- One international expert mentioned existing supplementary intermediary assessments by IMROP for the MPEM.

[B.1.4_2] There were no comments on this. There is a general acceptance that IMROP relies on standard methods based on evolution of catch data, supplemented by non-fishery related indicators.

[B.1.4_3]

- The Government¹⁷ states that it is willing to step up its evaluations. Intermediate evaluations (e.g. after two years) should be possible (“even annually for cephalopods”). But it is also looking at the regional instances (e.g. COPACE) to support such efforts. If this can be achieved then the management plans can be adjusted accordingly.

¹⁷ C.q. IMROP

- A two-year cycle is considered reasonable. An annual assessment would be considered prohibitively costly.
- To be noted that the new KfW project should facilitate ambitions and efforts in this domain.
- As conclusion: whereas the planned efforts to update the stock assessments are not yet published, they do exist in the minds and the plans of the administrators and the intention to publish these efforts is present. We may propose to consider that Mauritania is making **meaningful progress** in this domain. This will need to be confirmed in the future and this qualification can only be maintained if the stocks are effectively assessed more frequently.

B1.5 LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.5_1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all nationally flagged and foreign-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, and of all nationally-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in third countries' marine jurisdictional waters and on the High Seas, including information on 14 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.1.5_2	The implementing country must publish accessible and complete information on payments made by each vessel listed in the vessel registry for their fishing activities, including information on 4 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard ¹⁸ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.5_3	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by nationally flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry, including according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type as well as marine jurisdictional waters, High Seas and third country waters.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.5_4	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by foreign-flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type, presented for each flag State separately.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

¹⁸ Information on payments to port authorities must be separated from payments for fishing activities.

B.1.5_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded landings in national ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.1.5_6	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.5_7	The implementing country must publish information on recorded quantities of discards according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag State separately, if available ¹⁹ .	Not collated	Not collated
B.1.5_8	The implementing country must publish the most recent studies and reports on recorded fishing effort by vessels, disaggregated by fishery or gear type and by flag State, if available.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.5_9	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the large-scale fishing sector, if available.	Not collated	Not collated
		Meaningful Progress [Avg. 2.3]	Meaningful Progress [Avg. 2.3]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.5_1]

- This is an area to work on. Various stakeholders confirmed that the registry is still inadequate. They do recognise that DMM²⁰ has made efforts to produce a data set but the result remains below standard in terms of quality and regularity. One (civil society) operator referred to another west African country with an extensive fleet register that manages to update its register monthly²¹. The DMM itself explained that there are various data sets: one of which is published ("the FiTI register"), another one compiled for the IMO (vessels above 100 tonnes) and lastly an internal one. The latter two seem to comprise all vessels including non-fishing vessels. It was not entirely clear why it is difficult to produce the register such as required by FiTI.
- To be noted that the Coast Guard has developed its own application to register the fishing fleet.

¹⁹ This must include information on how information on discards is gathered by national authorities.

²⁰ Direction de la Marine Marchande

²¹ I took note of this statement but did not check whether it is correct.

- The provisional conclusion on this standard is that the baseline assessment is confirmed: there is inadequate progress. Yet, whilst we need to confirm the qualification of inadequate progress, it seems possible for DMM to step up the effort and -in the future- become compliant or at least make meaningful progress.

[B.1.5_2] No further comments received, except a small “bmoI” on the quality of data where one international stakeholder mentioned that there were omissions in the list (e.g. pre-payments were featuring but not final payments). This would not alter the “compliant” qualification.

[B.1.5_3] No disagreement with this qualification by any interviewed stakeholder.

[B.1.5_4] No disagreement with this qualification by any interviewed stakeholder.

[B.1.5_5] One stakeholder (civil society) confirmed that “there is no progress” in this domain. See also next point.

[B.1.5_6] The administration stated that basically all catch must be landed in national ports so the recommendation to publish data on landing in foreign ports is not understood (exceptions here in relation to Senegal and final fishing trip for large foreign vessels). This would be a point of attention for the MSG when it starts meeting again. Comments made by the administration lead us to believe that progress could be made in this domain.

[B.1.5_7] Various stakeholders confirmed that this is a weak point in terms of collecting the basic information rather than in terms of transparency. Within IMROP, this is work in progress, undertaken inter alia in cooperation with the EU (including IEO). There was no indication of any wilful withholding of information.

[B.1.5_8] IMROP is willing to step up its work programme on stock assessments and effort evaluation, resources permitting. From conversations with IMROP itself and stakeholders willing to support IMROP with resources one must deduct that this bodes well. In terms of transparency assessment, the “compliant” qualification is justified. To be followed up in the future.

One stakeholder (civil society) questioned whether effort per vessel should be a priority. Aggregation per gear type was deemed rather sufficient at the present stage.

[B.1.5_9] Several stakeholders commented on the importance of developing data sets about the contribution of the various subsectors to the value creation in the MRT economy. This topic was raised mainly by civil society, federations and international stakeholders. At present these data are not sufficiently collected, published and evaluated on a systematic basis.

This being said, it should be possible to spend more effort on developing and publishing a usable dataset. In terms of strategy, this would allow to steer the sector into the direction that permits to extract more value from the combination of human effort and available financial and natural resources.

B1.6 SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.6_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing or gear types.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

B.1.6_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of fishing licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of fishers engaged in the fishing sector, indicating the gender of fishers and the proportion that are engaged in full-time work, seasonal or part time fishing, occasional fishing or recreational fishing.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.6_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total payments made from small-scale fisheries related to fishing authorisations, catches and landings, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations or gear types and indicating the recipient of these payments.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of catches, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.6_6	The implementing country must publish information on the total volumes of discards, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.1.6_7	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the small-scale fisheries sector, if available.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.5]	Compliant [Avg. 2.5]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.6_1] The administration referred to a list that was basically made in 2018 but it is not clear to what extent this list is dynamically managed (whether new registrations are possible and under which conditions). Clearly there is a link between this list and the illegal activity of certain newly added (but unregistered) vessels and with the issue of excessive use of catch for fishmeal. The Coast guard is aware of the issue and does its best to take out irregular vessels. Formally, MRT is compliant on this criterion but work needs to be done to maintain a transparent and reliable register. This would be a focus area for the new MSG. Our understanding was that DMM could make progress in this area if it is tasked to do so.

[B.1.6_2] See comment above. This is very much work in progress. It is not just a transparency issue but also a problem of defining and following up authorisations to add new small vessels to the fleet and then collecting the corresponding licence fees. So, we can confirm that there is meaningful progress but also that more basic work is needed.

[B.1.6_3] No stakeholder formally questioned this qualification. Yet, it was also made clear that there exists a significant number of informally employed. For the fishers themselves, the question of gender was not understood as all fishers are men. In the downstream sector, this is the reverse.

[B.1.6_4] Qualification not questioned by any stakeholder. One, civil society, stakeholder argued that this information was less relevant except if it could be a basis for allocating revenue to local communities to improve common logistics.

[B.1.6_5] Qualification not fundamentally questioned by most stakeholders, even if it was argued by one stakeholder that more effort is needed, especially if some larger -foreign owned- vessels try to appear as SSF.

[B.1.6_6] Not applicable

[B.1.6_7] See comments above on the value added per segment of the sector. See also in line with criterion B7. Various stakeholders underlined the benefit of producing more data on the value added per sector.

B1.7 POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.7_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of fish and fish products produced, disaggregated by species and fish products.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.7_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of imports of fish and fish products, disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their origin.	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.1.7_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantities of exports of fish and fish products, disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their destination.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.7_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.7_5	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in informal fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.	Not collated	Not collated
B.1.7_6	The implementing country must publish reports or studies on wages in the post-harvest sector, if available.	Not collated	Not collated

	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]
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Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.7_1] Here, various stakeholders mentioned again the scarcity of data. As a result, it is difficult if not impossible to calculate the net value added by the various sub-sectors. Yet this would be a very important tool, it is argued, to steer the policy into the direction of maximising the total return of the sector for the national economy (in financial terms and in terms of food security). It would also allow, for instance, to guide a distribution of quota under the TAC.

[B.1.7_2] Not applicable

[B.1.7_3] Should be doable. Of course, to be evaluated, in terms of timing, whether this information is sufficiently precious to make it a high priority.

[B.1.7_4] Various stakeholders commented on this point. The informal sector is employing many people. As a consequence, estimates are the best source of information. This, again, would matter a lot to evaluate the value added in the various subsectors. For the OEPS, this would be a point to work on in basic terms (trying to find information) and in transparency terms (publishing what exists).

[B.1.7_5] See above. Same comment.

[B.1.7_6] See above. Here also, to find information (if need be, through estimate and sampling) would matter and the ensuing transparency on these data would be very useful for economic observers. This also related to the estimation of value added in the various sub-sectors (see above). For the Minister and the MPEM to decide but would probably be a domain where an ad hoc extra effort could yield interesting data.

B1.8 FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.8_1	The implementing country must publish information on the national activities and strategies used for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.8_2	The implementing country must publish information on the financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.8_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.8_4	The implementing country must publish a record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector for the last five years, indicating the name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.8_1] Services allege that the information is available and published. It is a matter of effort to transform the scattered information into a comprehensive report.

[B.1.8_2] The MRT services confirm that this information is available through the general information on public services. Whilst this may be correct, it is clear also that the information could be more clearly presented and made available on the sites. One stakeholder, from civil society, underlined the importance of having enough resources dedicated to an efficient control system. Transparency on the availability of these resources gives reassurance.

[B.1.8_3] No stakeholder questioned this qualification.

[B.1.8_4]

- The information on serious infringements is available and the services state that they are ready to publish the information if so required. It therefore seems to be a matter of political decision taking to advance on this matter and to publish the serious infringements systematically.
- The issue of “fish for fishmeal” is complex and the concept of “illegal fishing for fishmeal” even more so. The prevailing declared policy consists of limiting the use of fish for fishmeal production. Only damaged fish and fish otherwise unfit for human consumption can be used to produce fishmeal. The underlying idea is that waste should be avoided and if fish can no longer be consumed, it might as well be used for fishmeal. Basically, this is a perfectly acceptable principle. The only problem is that fishermen can be tempted to make sure that fish is damaged or becomes unfit for consumption (for instance, to benefit from higher prices offered by fishmeal producers as compared to prices offered for consumption). Hence the information on “illegal sourcing for fishmeal production” does not really exist, nor can it really exist: when the CG intercepts IUU catch, it is not clear ex-ante, whether this was “fish for fishmeal”. Combatting excessive fishmeal production is a matter of general policy definition²² rather than transparency. Equally in this context, the data on value added per subsector would be very instrumental to decide on the acceptable extent of the fishmeal production and on the declared policy of steering away from it.

B1.9 LABOUR STANDARDS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.9_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of national laws on labour standards applicable for national and foreign workers employed in the fishing sector at sea and in the post-harvest fisheries sector.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.1.9_2	The implementing country must publish information on the public authorities responsible for monitoring and enforcing laws on labour standards.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.9_3	The implementing country must publish documents, including policy statements and evaluations, regarding a national strategy, if applicable, or related activities for enforcing the laws on labour	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]

²² Combining elements of definition of TAC, constraint of the effort (number of vessels, hence vessel registry), rigorous control and law enforcement.

	standards in the fisheries sector, including total figures on the financial and human resources deployed by the government.		
B.1.9_4	The implementing country must publish information on the role and legal standing of anybody that has a governmental mandate to receive labour-related complaints from workers in the fishing sector and in the post-harvest sector.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.9_5	The implementing country must publish the total number of offences committed by employers in the fisheries sector that have been resolved by the authorities.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.9_1] Mainly civil society stakeholders confirm the low standard of labour standards whereas a representative of the fishermen referred to the general standards. All agreed that labour legislation is not very developed and that there is a lot of informal employment, especially involving non-nationals. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to publish what exists. Hence, whilst we confirm the qualification of inadequate progress, this should be relatively easy to remedy the transparency issue as such²³.

[B.1.9_2] Qualification not questioned by any stakeholder. Yet, see above, there is work to be done on stepping up labour standards.

[B.1.9_3] We refer to our comment sub 1. Mutatis Mutandis, the same applies.

[B.1.9_4] Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.9_5] Qualification not questioned.

B1.10 FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.10_1	The government must publish information on the type, values and recipients of government financial transfers or subsidies to the fisheries sector.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.10_2	The government must publish information on the average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel in nominal and percentage terms.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

²³ Though probably very complex to develop better labour legislation.

[B.1.10_1] There is quite some confusion around this topic. Fisheries officials refer to the treasury department. Stakeholders argue that they cannot access information. All non-government stakeholders argue that this information would be highly appreciated. There exists anecdotal information on the existence of aid but it is not clearly codified and described.

Equally in this context, the estimation of the value added per subsector would matter a lot (where possibly, subsidies are brought into the equation with a minus).

There may be progress, thanks to the awareness of the issue, but quite some supplementary effort will be needed to advance. This could be a focus area for the next MSG.

[B.1.10_2] Equally in this domain confusion reigns supreme. Even operators disagree whether there is a price differentiation in favour of the fishery sector in general and whether there is an internal price differentiation between operators. One operator mentioned a scheme that was discontinued, another one alleged internal discrimination (between national and international operators). If there exists progress in this domain (see qualification) it remains very timid. It should be fairly easy, nevertheless, for the prices of fuel and possible the preferential prices to be published.

B1.11 OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (CAN REPRESENT AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF FUNDS AND SUPPORT)

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.11_1	The government must publish information on public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors, including information on the projects' value, purpose and outputs.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.11_2	The government must publish corresponding project evaluations, if applicable.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.5]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.5]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.11_1] This is an area where much progress could be made. Stakeholders are not aware of a systematic data source on available finance and utilisation of the resources, much less of the results. One stakeholder (civil society) complained that this absence of transparent data allows a systematic underutilisation of available resources to remain below the radar. There is some information on the FiTI site (but not on the MPEM site) and the information on the FiTI site is not complete (said one International organisation whose programme is absent from the information).

Whereas some information has become available, the qualification of progress can be accepted but clearly, this is a domain where further progress should be possible. Equally, it is a domain where increased transparency can immediately lead to better policy, i.e. a fuller utilisation of available resources. Several stakeholders/donors have confirmed that they will maintain their commitment. This is very encouraging. It falls on the policy makers to make full use of the resources made available.

[B.1.11_2] Stakeholders confirmed that there is no progress in this domain. The government itself carries out little evaluation. International donors do carry out evaluations but these are not published on the national websites.

B1.12 BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.1.12_1	The government must publish the legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in the country.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_2	The government must publish the country's legal definition of beneficial ownership.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_3	The government must publish information on the availability of a public register of beneficial owners.	Not collated	Not collated
B.1.12_4	The government must publish the rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by companies to corporate regulators, stock exchanges or agencies regulating the access to fisheries.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.1.12_5	The government must publish the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]	Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.12_1] Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_2] Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_3] Qualification not questioned. On beneficial ownership only one (civil society) stakeholder questioned the 'compliant' qualification. Reference was made exactly to this B1.12_3 sub-standard where the question would be to obtain the real names of the owners, rather than the names of companies. This would be a question for the next MSG and for the authorities to decide.

[B.1.12_4] Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_5] Qualification not questioned. Nevertheless, the comment above (sub-standard 3) ought to be considered.

B2 - ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL "PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS" FOR FITI REPORTS

B2.1 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.2.1_1	The National MSG must produce a FiTI Report annually.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_2	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must provide a succinct summary of the main findings according	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

	to the FiTI Report's reporting period (B.2.2).		
B.2.1_3	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must include a reference on where detailed information can be found in the public domain, if applicable.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_4	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must provide an explanation of significant deviations from previous reporting periods, if applicable.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.1_5	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must include recommendations for improvements on how to strengthen the availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date information in the public domain, if applicable.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]	Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

The various stakeholders could not really comment on the successive sub-standards.

[B.2.1_1] The FiTI report 2021 was not yet commissioned when the validation visit took place, for lack of resources. However, one donor²⁴ confirmed that the decision to support the new report was underway. So, it will be undertaken, be it with some delay.

[B.2.1_2 to 5] No comments were made.

B2.2. REPORTING DEADLINES AND PERIODS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.2.2_1	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must be published within the subsequent year of becoming a FiTI Candidate country.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.2_2	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must contain information on transparency requirements 1 – 6, set forth in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.2_3	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The country's 1 st FiTI Report must contain information from the complete calendar year when the country became a FiTI Candidate country.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.2_4	Following the 1 st FiTI Report, subsequent FiTI Reports must be published on an annual basis, comprising information from the complete calendar year preceding the year addressed in the last FiTI Report.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]

²⁴ GIZ

B.2.2_5	Every second FiTI Report must include information on transparency requirements 7 – 12 set forth in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard, and this information must be disaggregated by calendar years.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.6]	Compliant [Avg. 2.6]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.2.2_1 to 3] No comments were made.

[B.2.2_4] The FiTI report 2022 was not yet commissioned when the validation visit took place, for lack of resources. However, one donor confirmed that the decision to support the new report was underway. So, it will be undertaken, be it with some delay.

[B.2.2_5] No comments were made.

B2.3 REPORTING PROCESS

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.2.3_1	The country's FiTI Reports must be compiled by an independent, credible, trustworthy and technically competent Report Compiler.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_2	The engagement of the country's Report Compilers must be based on Terms of Reference, which must include minimum procedures for FiTI Reports, as endorsed by the FiTI International Board ²⁵ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_3	The appointment of the country's Report Compiler must be endorsed by the National MSG.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.3_4	The National MSG and the Report Compiler must work jointly to ensure that the entire FiTI reporting process is perceived as open and inclusive.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_5	The Report Compiler must consult with relevant national and international organisations to ensure that the assessment on the transparency requirements is perceived as credible and trustworthy, and that all appropriate sources of information are considered.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_6	The Report Compiler must seek to resolve the discrepancies between published government information and	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

²⁵ The FiTI Standard states that ToRs may be adapted to include additional transparency requirements beyond those established in the FiTI Standard, if this is agreed upon by the National MSG.

	information from other stakeholders, if applicable ²⁶ .		
B.2.3_7	The Report Compiler must consolidate the findings in a preliminary FiTI Report and submit it to the National MSG for review.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_8	The National MSG must review the preliminary findings of the Report Compiler and provide comments ²⁷ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_9	The National MSG must formally approve the FiTI Reports and publish them afterwards.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.2.3_10	<i>[Only for Mauritania's 2018 FiTI Report]</i> The National MSG must consult with the FiTI International Secretariat prior to publishing its first FiTI Report to review completeness against the FiTI reporting requirements.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.8]	Compliant [Avg. 2.8]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.2.3_1] There is general recognition by all stakeholders that the most recent FiTI report is a high-quality document, compiled by credible, trustworthy and technically competent experts. It accurately reflects the present situation and also contains the necessary recommendations for future action.

[B.2.3_2 - 10] No detailed comments were made.

B2.4 REPORTING DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC DEBATE

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.2.4_1	FiTI Reports must be comprehensible and written in a clear and accessible style.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.4_2	FiTI Reports must be widely distributed among key audiences, including government, parliamentarians, companies, civil society groups, academia, the media, and international stakeholders.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.2.4_3	The National MSG must ensure that the main findings of the FiTI Report contribute to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, enabling relevant stakeholders as well as citizens of FiTI implementing countries to	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]

²⁶ This also includes information that is published on government websites vs. information that is provided in a FiTI Report.

²⁷ The FiTI Standard encourages the National MSG to consult with others outside of the National MSG in undertaking this review. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and therefore, falls outside of the scope of the validation.

	demand reforms towards better governance of their marine fisheries ²⁸ .		
B.2.4_4	FiTI Reports must be published online under an open license.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.2.4_5	The National MSG must make users aware that information can be reused without prior consent.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.6]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.6]

Detailed comments independent validator:

The national FiTI implementation process in Mauritania relies very much on communication via the websites (FiTI website and MPEM website). Whereas this is an excellent medium, it could be perfected in its presentation and features (e.g. cross references) and reliability and furthermore, it might make sense for the FiTI MSG to reach out also using complimentary media. In the latter category, local public events spring to mind. Incidentally, as from 13/9, the website of the MPEM was not accessible because the SSL certificate had expired. Unsure if this is an isolated incident but this does not inspire much confidence. The responsibility for the incident lies with the Ministry of New Technology. The MPEM has no role in the technical IT provision.²⁹

Furthermore, it would be very useful to find cross references on the various sites. On the FiTI site, one could consider adding links to the MPEM site and on the MPEM site one could add the structure of the FiTI criteria with outcome links. For each criterion, the standard would be listed and below it would be the link to the relevant document. For example, criterion B1 (national legislation) would mention the criterion and then list the relevant legislation (either document itself or link to relevant document), for criterion B3 (foreign access agreements) the agreements themselves or the links to the agreements would be added.

Several interlocutors complained -or at least mentioned- that the information may very well be available “somewhere” on the MPEM or other Gvt Sites but that this not imply that it is easily accessible. As a validator, I can confirm this. This explains the occasional divergence of perception between the public bodies who, rightfully, claim that information is publicly available and stakeholders who find it difficult to find it. This comment does not devalue the ambition and the effort of the administration to become fully transparent. As validator, I did not encounter a single stakeholder who cast any doubt on the latter. So, this is a matter of perfecting the system.

[B.2.4_1] See comment under point B.2.3_1. All stakeholders confirmed that they found the FiTI report well written, clear and accessible.

[B.2.4_2 -5] No comments were made

Concluding on the issue of B.2.4, the lack of public debate after the release of the report is recognized by several stakeholders (unsurprisingly, this comment stems mostly from civil society actors). This should be an action point for the new MSG. The quality of the FiTI report is such that it deserves a wider attention and a focus on a better follow-up. In the end, this should be beneficial for all involved. Also the MPEM should benefit from the positive energy that comes from a wide public debate.

²⁸ The FiTI Standard encourages National MSGs to contribute the lessons learnt and recommendations from FiTI Reports to policy dialogues and broader conversations about national reform efforts. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and therefore, falls outside of the scope of the validation.

²⁹ It should also be noted that the FiTI website is not updated between two FiTI reports. The configuration and management of this site must be improved.

B3 - ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR 'NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK'

B3.1 ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.3.1_1	The government must maintain an enabling environment for business and civil society participation as specified in requirement A.2.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]	Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.1_1] The results of FiTI are well known in the national and international community and extensively acclaimed by the stakeholders which were contacted. Whilst stakeholders may give comments on detailed aspects of the transparency process, there is broad recognition of the efforts made and results obtained. There is general recognition of the value of the FiTI process and expectation that this effort should continue. Some international stakeholders have commended Mauritania for starting this process and are citing it as an example to be followed.

B3.2 GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.3.2_1	The government must maintain a FiTI Lead Ministry and a FiTI National Lead as specified in requirement A.3.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.3.2_2	Changes to the FiTI Lead Ministry or the FiTI National Lead must be made public, if applicable.	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.3.2_3	The National MSG must maintain a properly authorised and resourced FiTI National Secretariat as specified in requirement A.5.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.2_1-2] The organisation of the FiTI lead Ministry and FiTI national Lead are presently -i.e. at the time of the validation interviews- being reviewed. The Minister and his administration confirmed that the decision was fully prepared and was "in the works" for confirmation by the various decision takers involved.

[B. 3.2_3] Effectively the secretariat seems to have been limited to Mr. Camara and his service who, however, had no dedicated budget or staff for this activity. This is not really sustainable. The Minister mentioned plans to set up a transparency house, combining efforts under FiTI with EITI. This would be a great project though one should probably caution that the main operational effort will always remain with the MPEM.

B3.3 MULTI-STAKEHOLDER OVERSIGHT

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.3.3_1	The government must maintain a National MSG as specified in requirement A.4.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.3.3_2	Representatives from government, business and organised civil society must be appropriately qualified and fully, actively and effectively engaged in the FiTI.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
B.3.3_3	Representatives from organised civil society must be operationally, and in policy terms, independent from government and/or business.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.3.3_4	Changes to the National MSG or to its Terms of Reference must be made public, if applicable.	Not applicable	Not applicable
		Compliant [Avg. 2.7]	Compliant [Avg. 2.7]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.3_1] Formally, the MSG was still in place even if it had ceased to function at the time of the validation review (see below).

[B. 3.3_2] The MSG is said to have functioned properly during the FiTI reporting period though the contribution by the various participants has reportedly been somewhat unbalanced. However, presently, it seems to have come to a stop. Even the National Lead did not react to a request to meet (even though the request was repeated several times using different channels). Of the other members of the MSG, only one -representing civil society- responded and was able to provide insights and give comments. The secretary of the MSG was very available and helpful. One can speculate about the reasons but it is not excluded that the members await the renewal of the MSG with a possible modification of the participation and are therefore reluctant to further invest time and effort in the operation until their personal further implication is clarified. Various contacts confirmed the inactivity of the MSG in 2022. Yet, as a positive indication, we also learned that GIZ wishes to continue its support until June 2024. It will finance the drafting of the FiTI report for 2021 as well as the further operational support for the MSG. This is good news and the MPEM was not yet fully aware of this. Unsure if there will also be resources for the secretariat itself.

An active participant of the MSG commented on the unequal participation and contribution of the various members to the group. A national stakeholder non-member complained about not being a member. It seems clear that the MSG did meet and that minutes were made (though not published). The real impetus came when the FiTI reports were made and presumably, the authors of the reports were also themselves the main drivers of the transparency effort. In other words, presumably they collected and provided much of the information that should have been transparently published by the administration.

One stakeholder attributed this to the relative scarcity of resources for the MSG process and argued that the FiTI MSG ought to have the benefit of a small support secretariat with clear ToR and a verifiable work programme. The wider dissemination of results should be a part of this work programme.

[B. 3.3_3] No stakeholder commented on this. The independence of the civil society representatives seems unquestioned.

[B. 3.3_4] Presently, new decisions have been prepared to launch the new MSG, redefine the responsibility (new FITI lead) and transfer the process from the Ministry of Economic Affairs to the MPEM. This makes eminent sense and bodes well for the reinvigorated restart of the process. It is also encouraging that more than one donor declared availability to support this effort.

B3.4 ANNUAL WORKPLAN

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.3.4_1	The National MSG must provide an updated Workplan for each upcoming reporting period.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.3.4_2	Each Workplan must provide a summary of FITI activities undertaken in the previous reporting period, including an assessment of the level of progress in achieving the objectives set out in the previous Workplan(s).	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.3.4_3	Each Workplan must outline objectives, constraints, activities and outputs in accordance with requirement A.6 ³⁰ .	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.3.4_4	Each Workplan must be approved by the National MSG two months prior to the upcoming reporting period.	Not applicable	Not applicable
		Inadequate progress [Avg. 1.0]	Inadequate progress [Avg. 1.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.4_1] See explanation mentioned above. Presently, the process is in the doldrums.

[B. 3.4_2-4] No comments were made.

3. ASSESSMENT OF BREACHES OF PRINCIPLES AND SPIRIT OF THE FITI

No breaches of principle and spirit of the FITI were identified during the stakeholder consultation phase. During the site visit, the government of Mauritania did not show signs of wilfully withholding information the FITI Standard requests to be published. All the validator requests were attended, including access to private agreements, FITI workplans, etc. and clear explanations were given to the independent validator in cases where information was not published, e.g., by acknowledging administrative constraints, lack of data, etc.

4. KEY OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

³⁰ This includes information about uncompleted objectives of previous Workplan(s), if applicable; activities planned for the upcoming reporting period; recommendations identified by the NMSG in previous FITI Report(s), if applicable; and recommendations from validations, if applicable.

The key outcomes of the broad stakeholder consultation can be summarized as follows:

- Wide appreciation for the FiTI process and recognition of the progress made;
- Broad expectation (the more sceptical stakeholders expressed this as a hope rather than an expectation) that the FiTI process should continue and lead to policy improvement;
- A certain degree of frustration -with certain stakeholders- that the recommendations of the second FiTI report are not -or not sufficiently quickly- implemented;
- Confirmations by sponsoring stakeholders that they maintain their commitment;
- Need to improve the functioning of the NMSG. The group should consolidate its operation, based on a reliable commitment by its members and a permanent resources basis;
- Broad appreciation for the efforts of the technical departments such as the FiTI secretariat of the MPEM, IMROP, Coast Guard and for the political will displayed by the Minister;
- Recognition of the positive role of transparency as a catalyst for fostering good policy and good Governance in general;
- Yet, also, agreement that further improvement is needed.

5. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OVERALL COMPLIANCE DESIGNATION OF MAURITANIA

The draft of the present report was transmitted to Mauritania ³¹. As validator I received one element of feedback from the MPEM, with factual information. This information was integrated into the final report. I have received no indications, however, of a discussion within the National Multi Stakeholders Group and, a fortiori, I received no feedback from this group. Given the prior information that the Group is presently in a form of hibernation, I was not entirely surprised. Nevertheless, this is somewhat disappointing.

Mauritania has made very important efforts over the last years to improve the transparency in the fishery sector. Admittedly starting from a low base, it has achieved a good degree of transparency on the various aspects of the FiTI standard. These results are recognised and commended by all stakeholders involved. **However, in my view as independent validator, the results are still just below the level aspired by the FiTI standard.** In order to become compliant with the standard, extra efforts ought to be made -as indicated in the comments on the detailed criteria- and -perhaps more importantly- a solution must be found to make the results more permanent and sustainable. The good news, however, is that all the elements are present to move further forward and “close the gap”.

I would therefore recommend the Board to make an overall designation of the Country as “Meaningful progress”. This designation is based on the fact that Mauritania has made very important efforts and has achieved a good degree of transparency. It has implemented significant aspects of most criteria and has thus fulfilled the broader objective of these criteria. Furthermore, with some sustained effort, it is well on its way to becoming compliant.

6. EFFORTS THAT GO BEYOND FITI REQUIREMENTS

I was not made aware of efforts that go beyond the FiTI requirements. Worth to mention nevertheless, an idea that was floated by the Minister, to create a transparency centre.

7. SUGGESTED CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN MAURITANIA’S COMPLIANCE WITH THE FITI STANDARD

This is already contained -to some extent- above under Point4.

³¹ Together with a courtesy translation into French

The following can be suggested:

- Re-establish the NMSG on a sound footing, with committed participants;
- Appoint a national FiTI lead showing commitment to the process;
- Endow the NMSG and the FiTI secretariat with a modest but reliable operational basis in terms of logistics, human and financial resource;
- Establish a formal list of issues to be clarified or solved (e.g. fleet register, status of TRK fleet,..) and revisit this list on a regular basis, keeping track of the replies and solutions;
- Launch a regular awareness campaign about the website.

8. SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPACT OF TRANSPARENCY ON SUSTAINABLE MARINE FISHERIES IN MAURITANIA

In addition to the recommendations under Point 7. One might also suggest to consider further ideas such as:

Organise also physical info channels: articles in the written press, a coverage on MRT television, leaflets, info or discussion meetings. This could be done also on a decentral basis, e.g. in Nouadhibou;

Create – on the FiTI website- a special section, labelled “Extra comments and references corner” (or similar). This would be a section where third parties -if clearly identified- could post information and opinions. The MPEM and FiTI secretariat would clearly indicate that the information is solely the responsibility of the third party. Such a section might foster debate and the exchange of ideas.

9. AREAS OF PARTICULAR ATTENTION FOR THE FITI INTERNATIONAL BOARD

It would be good if the International Board would receive a sort of road map from Mauritania on how it intends to pursue its FiTI effort. If at all feasible, one might suggest that a regular (e.g. semi-annual) rendez-vous conversation take place between the FiTI lead and the International FiTi Executive Director with a status report being sent to the chair of the International Board.

Annex I: Validation Scorecard

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	
						<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)</i>
B.1 Transparency requirements						
B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents						<i>Not applicable</i>

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)

Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	
						<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)</i>
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.9 Labour Standards						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.3 Reporting Process						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.2 Governance and Support						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.5 Impact Report						<i>Not applicable</i>

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (December 2018 – March 2022)

Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)</i>
Overall compliance designation <i>(for Independent Validators and FiTI International Board only)</i>						<i>Not applicable</i>
Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard <i>(optional)</i>						
None						