



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

**Compliance Statement
of the FiTI International Board
regarding progress in implementing
the FiTI Standard
(April 2022 – July 2024)**

Date: 30 April 2025

Purpose of this document

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 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 International Board**¹, the FiTI's global supervisory body, holds the overall responsibility for the validation process.

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania (short 'Mauritania') underwent its **second regular validation**. Under the FiTI Standard (section D.1), the FiTI International Board launched the country's validation process in July 2024, and it ended in April 2025. The Board set the period under validation from April 2022 until July 2024. Consequently, Mauritania's third FiTI Report (covering the calendar year 2021) and fourth FiTI Report (covering the calendar year 2022) fall within the timeframe under validation, as well as any other actions and progress achieved until July 2024.

This Compliance Statement documents the FiTI International Board's final assessment for the second regular validation process of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Mauritania's FiTI validation process for the above-mentioned period has concluded. The FiTI International Board decision on Mauritania's overall compliance designation for this validation process is final and cannot be appealed. This Compliance Statement, including its annexes, is publicly available on the FiTI website. Comments and questions are welcome and should be directed to the FiTI International Secretariat (Ms Dorothea Garff, Validation Coordinator, dgarff@fiti.global).

1) The FiTI validation process

The implementation of the FiTI Standard and the validation process are informed by some core principles around which this initiative was created.

As such, 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,

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

the validation process is beneficial for national stakeholders in validated countries as well as for FiTI's international stakeholders (e.g., business partners, donors, etc.).

However, the validation process should **not be mistaken for a purely technical, audit-like exercise**. Instead, when determining a country's level of compliance, 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) with the overall perception of the country's performance against the spirit of the initiative – as documented in the FiTI Principles.

In addition, **it is indispensable to consider the context** in which fishing activities and the implementation of the FiTI happen in the country.

Under the general principle of **'contextual mindfulness'**, validation needs to ascertain whether a current status or demonstrated progress correlates with the significance, relevance, and intent of the letter and spirit of the requirement, even if not all technical aspects have been fully complied with.

The FiTI emphasises the need for national authorities to develop and strengthen their systems for collating and publishing information online in a complete and accessible manner. For this, the country's National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) produces annual FiTI Reports that assess the availability, accessibility, and completeness of information in the public domain for all transparency requirements set forth in the FiTI Standard. Where available information is not yet published on government websites, the National MSG can utilise FiTI Reports to publish such information, but only as an interim mechanism. **The goal of the FiTI is to ensure that national authorities establish credible and comprehensive systems for publishing information on the fisheries sector online.** Consequently, implementing countries must demonstrate progressive improvement over time in collating and publishing accessible and complete information online, if applicable. Thus, the FiTI does not expect all countries to have all the data for every transparency requirement from the beginning or even when a country is declared compliant.

At the same time, the FiTI Standard clearly states a **minimum threshold that countries must achieve** to become formally eligible for an overall compliance designation. In accordance with section D.3 of the FiTI Standard, such a threshold is achieved if

- a 'compliant' designation on the assessment of the individual requirements regarding enabling environment for stakeholder participation and multi-stakeholder oversight (B.3.1 and B.3.3), and
- at least 'meaningful progress' designations on the assessment of the individual transparency requirements (B.1) are achieved.

The decision regarding the country's overall compliance level is determined by the designation categories stated in section D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard.

For more information about the FiTI validation process, please refer to the FiTI Standard (section D) as well as the accompanying Guidance Note #3 ‘Validating countries’.²

2) Mauritania’s validation process

The assessment of Mauritania’s compliance with the FiTI Standard was comprised of three phases, each building on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous phase, as shown below. Consequently, this Compliance Statement – the final phase of the validation process – should be read considering the outputs of the other two phases, as well as the overall parameters set up by the FiTI Standard and Guidance Note #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.

FiTI Standard	Section D.2.1	Section D.2.2	Section D.2.3
Deliverables			
Responsibility	FiTI International Secretariat	Independent Validator	FiTI International Board
Status	 25 September 2024 (Annex I)	 28 February 2025 (Annex II)	 30 April 2025

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.³ 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);

² <https://fiti.global/validation>

³ During its 25th meeting (July 2024), the FiTI International Board approved that the first step of the validation process for Mauritania 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.

- Procedural related to the FiTI Report (comprised of 4 individual requirements),
- National Implementation Framework (consists of 5 individual requirements);
- Documented the direction of progress for all 21 requirements;
- Documented efforts that exceeded and went beyond FiTI requirements;
- Evaluated the progressive improvement and implementation status of the recommendations made by the National MSG and due within the validation timeframe; and,
- Provided further recommendations to strengthen the FiTI implementation process further.

The Baseline Assessment Report was shared with the Chair of the FiTI International Board in September 2024 to receive comments and finalised in the same month. The report was then submitted to the Independent Validator once he was appointed.

In the **second phase**, the FiTI International Board chose Mr Stefaan Depypere as the country's Independent Validator.⁴ Primarily through stakeholder consultations⁵ (and complementary research), the Independent Validator:

- Reviewed the Secretariat's baseline assessment of each individual requirement as well as the country's 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
- Provided a recommendation for the overall country compliance designation, following the categories stated in section D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard.

The Independent Validator documented his findings in the Validation Report (see Annex II), which also included feedback from the FiTI National Lead and the National MSG regarding the preliminary findings (obtained during a feedback process during the month of February 2025).

The Independent Validator assessed the implementation of all the individual transparency requirements, and for nearly all requirements, his assessment largely coincided with that of the FiTI International Secretariat included in the Baseline Assessment Report. The Independent Validator diverged from the FiTI International Secretariat's assessment, documented in the Baseline Assessment Report, only on the validation requirement '**Multi-**

⁴ As per 25th meeting of the FiTI International Board, 2 July 2024 (BM-25_2024_D-01).

⁵ During a site visit to Mauritania from 9 to 16 December 2024.

Stakeholder Oversight’ (B.3.3), as part of the assessment area called ‘National Implementation Framework’:

- For the **validation indicator B.3.3_1** (“The government must maintain a National MSG as specified in requirement A.4.”) the Validator decreased the Secretariat’s score from ‘compliant’ to ‘meaningful progress’. The Validator questioned the very long interruption related to the transition between the old and the new MSG, even though the National MSG is currently composed and operational as described in this indicator.
- For the **validation indicator 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”) the Validator decreased the Secretariat’s score from ‘meaningful progress’ to ‘inadequate process’. The validator confirmed that the National MSG members were qualified and contributed valuable ideas, especially regarding transparency and how to use related information. However, based on the information the Validator received during his visit to Mauritania; a key issue was the infrequent meetings. Formal meetings mostly occurred to validate the report, and members often received information only during those sessions. There was confusion among some members about their membership status, which is understandable due to the transition period. The Validator assessed that currently, the National MSG is on a better path and has the potential to positively influence governance—provided it meets regularly and is well-resourced. It's recommended that the National MSG follow a clear work plan and replace any inactive members. The observer group could also be better utilised, including by involving international development organizations, an idea previously approved in the Baseline Assessment Report. By lowering the scores of these two indicators, the compliance designation for the validation requirement ‘Multi-Stakeholder Oversight’ requirement decreased from ‘compliant’ to ‘meaningful progress’.

The Independent Validator based these decisions on his perception of the National MSG’s apparent inactivity for more than a year, related to the renewal of the National MSG members and the transition to a new FiTI Lead. He explained that due to the transfer of the FiTI Lead Ministry from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors to the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (MPIMP) – fulfilling a corrective action that was issued by the FiTI International Board during Mauritania’s first validation – the National MSG was without leadership during this period (given that a new FiTI National Lead from MPIMP had to be appointed as well after the Ministerial transfer was completed).

The Independent Validator acknowledged that “the MSG seems more engaged now, despite evidence that a few members are still not fully engaged in the MSG's

activities.” He also considered that the National Secretariat remains engaged with the National MSG and is crucial for the continuity of FiTI implementation in Mauritania but noted that a lack of sustainable financial and technical support persists.

During the feedback period established by the FiTI Standard, Mauritania’s MSG provided additional information from the government and other stakeholders to the Independent Validator. The Validator reviewed the additional information without changing his assessment.

As the Independent Validator's overall assessment resulted in the non-fulfilment of the minimum requirements established by the FiTI Standard (D.3), he recommended **‘meaningful progress’** to the FiTI International Board as Mauritania’s overall compliance designation.

In the **third and final phase**, the FiTI International Board set up a Board Committee and reviewed the assessments and recommendations documented in the Independent Validation Report. The FiTI International Board decided on the final overall country determination during its 29th meeting on April 3, 2025.⁶

⁶ The FiTI International Board did not find it necessary to conduct additional research or stakeholder interviews and relied on the documents provided in phases 1 and 2 of this validation process as stated by the FiTI Standard.

The following table provides a **chronological overview of Mauritania's validation process**:

Current FiTI country status:	FiTI Candidate country (as of 13 December 2018) ⁷
Request of validation process:	FiTI International Board, Decision: BM-25_2024_D-01 ⁸
Type of validation:	Second regular validation
Timeframe of validation:	April 2022 until July 2024
FiTI Reports published within the validation timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ 2021 FiTI Report, published on 26 April 2023 ➔ 2022 FiTI Report, published on 15 December 2023
Baseline Assessment Report:	Baseline Assessment Report finalised by FiTI International Secretariat on 25 September 2024 (and submitted to Independent Validator, once he was appointed) → Refer to Annex I
Validation Report:	Validation Report submitted by Independent Validator (Mr Stefaan Depypere) to FiTI International Board on 28 February 2025 → Refer to Annex II
Compliance Statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Overall compliance designation approved by the FiTI International Board on 3 April 2025 ➔ Compliance Statement finalised by FiTI International Board (through designated Validation Committee) on 30 April 2025 and send to the Government of Mauritania on 9 May 2025.

⁷ <https://fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

⁸ 25th meeting of the FiTI International Board, 2 July 2024

3) FiTI's International Board Assessment of Mauritania's overall compliance

Based on the recommendation of the Board Committee that reviewed the Validator's report and recommendation, the FiTI International Board assessed and decided on Mauritania's overall compliance, considering also provision E.2.2 of the FiTI Standard about the possible breach of principles and spirit of the initiative. The Board also considered provision D.1.2. which 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 country's fisheries sector.
- 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 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 applied the same designations used to assess the individual requirements as outlined in provision D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard. **The most important outcome of the validation process is the decision regarding the country's level of overall compliance following the designation categories outlined below:**

Compliance designations	Description
Compliant	Validation demonstrates that all aspects of the requirement have been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has been fulfilled.
Meaningful progress	Validation demonstrates that significant aspects of the requirement have been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has been fulfilled.
Inadequate progress	Validation demonstrates that significant aspects of the requirement have not been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has not been fulfilled

Compliance designations	Description
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
Not collated	<i>Validation demonstrates that information for this requirement has not been collated by national authorities at all.</i>
Not applicable	<i>Validation demonstrates that this requirement is not applicable in the country.</i>

After reviewing the Independent Validation Report and, where necessary, making a comparison with the analysis in the Secretariat's Baseline Assessment Report, the designated Board Committee noted its agreement with the Independent Validator's assessment regarding 19 of the 21 individual validation requirements.

However, the Board Committee disagreed with the Validator's assessment of one transparency requirement (i.e. 'Fisheries Subsidies') as well as one requirement for the national implementation framework (i.e. 'Multi-Stakeholder Oversight').

Validation requirement B.1.10 'Fisheries subsidies':

The Board Committee recommended to adjust the **Validation score** of indicator 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") from **'meaningful progress' to 'not applicable'** and consequently change the overall score for validation requirement B.1.10 'Fisheries Subsidies' to 'not applicable'. following the rationale explained below.

- The Validator stated in his Report that the government cannot report any information under this requirement since the government has stopped providing subsidies to the fisheries sector. Further, the Validator informed that a Fuel Price Equalisation Fund⁹ is managed by the National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) and financed by a levy on exports. The agreement to implement this mechanism is publicly available, but not the value of funds redistributed. Therefore, the Validator (as well as the FiTI International Secretariat) scored this requirement as 'meaningful progress'. The Validator explained that – even though the government does not consider this scheme a subsidy – he did assess this scheme as such. Indeed, under the rules of the

⁹ Regarding Mauritania's Fuel Price Equalization Fund, the government can absorb fluctuations in global fuel prices by using the fund, allowing the country to keep domestic prices stable. This means that when international oil prices rise, the government can step in to prevent equivalent increases at the pump, effectively subsidising the fuel cost for consumers. This helps to shield the population from price shocks and promotes economic stability.

OECD, it would likely be considered a subsidy. However, the Board Committee acknowledged that there is a wide divergence about the *parameters that determine what a subsidy is* and is not.

As the FiTI Standard does not impose a definition regarding subsidies, the Board Committee accepted the decision of the Mauritania government in this regard. Furthermore, the government's decision has been clearly described in several of Mauritania's annual FiTI Reports and has not been questioned by the National MSG. It was also emphasised that while different stakeholders may interpret this situation differently (i.e. whether the support by FNP should be seen as a form of indirect government transfer) the National MSG published information about this situation on its website, including the actual agreement.¹⁰ Therefore, the Board Committee concluded that the government's and the MSG's decision not to consider this fuel price scheme as a government transfer stand; hence, this validation requirement should be assessed as 'not applicable'.

Validation requirement B.3.3 'Multi-Stakeholder Oversight':

The Board Committee recommended the adjustments of the following two validation scores for

- **Indicator B.3.3_1**, from 'meaningful progress' to 'compliant', and
- **Indicator B.3.3_2**, from 'inadequate process' to 'meaningful progress'.

Validation Indicator B.3.3_1 ("The government must maintain a National MSG as specified in requirement A.4").

The FiTI National MSG continues to comprise 15 representatives, equally distributed among representatives from the government, business and civil society stakeholder groups. In his report, the Independent Validator stated that Mauritania's National MSG is currently functioning in accordance with this requirement (e.g. "15 representatives equally distributed among Government, Business and Civil society"). The Validator did criticise "a very long interruption related to the transition between the old and the new MSG", which seemed to have influenced the scoring for this indicator.

The Board Committee disagreed with the intermixture of the composition of the group (as required under this indicator) with issues related to the operational functioning of the group (which needs to be assessed under indicator B.3.3_2). Given that government of Mauritania maintained a National MSG throughout the entire validation period¹¹ – despite

¹⁰ https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Convention_carburant_Peche-du-29-06-2022.pdf

¹¹ The Board Committee sees Mauritania's National MSG as qualified to oversee the implementation of the FiTI in the country, given that the MSG is organised as follows:

struggles in the transition of the FiTI Lead Ministry and the subsequent delayed appointment of a new FiTI National Lead – the Board Committee made the unanimous decision to recommend to the FiTI Board increasing the scoring of this indicator from ‘meaningful progress’ to ‘compliant’.

The Board Committee’s recommendation was further substantiated by the fact that in Mauritania’s first Validation Compliance Statement (issued by the FiTI International Board on the 24th of March of 2023), the Board requested several corrective actions in relation to this issue.¹² The Board Committee acknowledged that Mauritania’s government acted swiftly on several occasions. For example, in March 2023, the Board requested that changes in the composition of the National MSG to be made by the end of October 2023. At that time, the government – unknown to the Board – had already renewed the National MSG. Upon the recommendation of the then Validator, the government acted immediately, and the renewal took place in January 2023.

Based on the above analysis the FiTI International Board decided to assess indicator B.3.3_1 as ‘compliant’.

Validation indicator 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.”)

The Independent Validator argued that the National MSG members are well-qualified and have contributed valuable ideas, particularly related to transparency and its application.

-
- **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 National MSG. Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has two new members following the renewal of the National MSG.
 - **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. Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has one new member following the renewal of the National MSG. It should be noted that all representatives of this group are still only affiliated with the National Federation of Fisheries (FNP).
 - **Civil society Stakeholder group:** This group includes representatives of CSOs active in the field of fisheries, fisheries unions, the network of journalists, the Bar Association and the National Order of Accountants (ONEC). Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has two new members following the renewal of the National MSG.

¹² “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’ terms), 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); and

“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.”

However, the main issues identified were the long transition period between the two Ministries (and the subsequent absence of the FiTI National Lead and Chair of the National MSG) as well as the low frequency of formal meetings. The Validator stated that during the validation timeframe, the National MSG has primarily met to validate reports, and some members were unaware of their status or replacements due to a transitional period.

While the Validator acknowledged that the National MSG appears to be on more stable ground now, regular meetings and proper resourcing are crucial for its effectiveness in promoting good governance. He recommended creating a workplan, replacing inactive members, and further utilising observers, such as international development organisations.

The Board Committee disagreed with the Validator's scoring of 'inadequate progress' for this indicator, and made the unanimous decision to increase the scoring to 'meaningful progress', based on the following considerations:

- The FiTI Lead Ministry and appointing a new FiTI National Lead impacted the renewal and effective operation of the National MSG. However, the transition process to a new FiTI Lead and the appointment of new National MSG members must take into consideration a country's context (following the validation principle of 'contextual mindfulness'). Transferring the FiTI Lead Ministry from the Ministry of Finance to the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy was necessary to ensure stronger institutional engagement with the initiative. Over time, it became evident that the Ministry of Finance, which was renamed the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors (MEPSP) in March 2021, was not able to prioritise the FiTI enough, whereas the Ministry of Fisheries had a more direct and obvious commitment. However, such a transition was complex due to the administrative and legal complications related to transferring responsibilities from one ministry to another. This process, which involved two key government institutions, was ultimately completed in July 2022 through the joint decree 0734 MEPSP/MPPEM, which also redefined the composition of the National MSG to ensure a more effective and representative structure.

With the institutional framework in place, renewing the National MSG commenced in January 2023. Despite the challenges of restructuring, the appointment process for representatives from government, business, and civil society progressed swiftly and was completed within the same month. This efficiency signalled strong stakeholder commitment and the government's determination to ensure continuity in FiTI's implementation. The election process followed the FiTI Standard and complied with national regulations governing the composition of the National MSG. However, while the National MSG was fully reconstituted early in 2023, the appointment of a new FiTI National Lead (given that this person must come from the FiTI Lead Ministry, which was no longer the MEPSP but the Ministry of Fisheries), remained pending. Identifying a suitable candidate within the Ministry of Fisheries took longer than

anticipated, as the ministry was short-staffed, and the available personnel had varied professional qualifications. The selection process required careful deliberation to ensure that the appointed individual had the expertise to lead FiTI activities effectively.

During this period, broader political developments also affected institutional decision-making. Legislative elections in May 2023, including the election campaign period, significantly impacted the functioning of public offices, as is common in many countries. The Ministry of Fisheries experienced personnel changes, including the appointment of a new Minister in July 2023, which further affected the pace of decision-making. By November 2023, the FiTI National Lead was appointed, finalising the leadership structure. Although this appointment was delayed, it was crucial to secure a qualified and engaged leader that is fully committed to FiTI's long-term success.

Furthermore, the National MSG appointed a Vice-chair from the Civil Society stakeholder group for the first time, reinforcing the National MSG's inclusive governance.

- Despite these political transitions, the Board Committee assessed that the newly composed National MSG remained active and operational, ensuring that FiTI activities continued without major interruption. During the validation period, the National MSG met ten times, including five formal National MSG meetings and five additional informal meetings, such as workshops and stakeholder engagement sessions. This demonstrated a higher level of engagement than before the groups' reorganisation. The Board Committee also recognised that key decisions, such as approving the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Report Compiler, were efficiently communicated.
- Furthermore, the National Secretariat prepared a draft National MSG Action Plan, which was validated during the FiTI and Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation (PRCM) mission in Mauritania. This plan was finalised with active participation from the National MSG and submitted to Minister to explore funding.

The Board Committee clearly acknowledged that, despite the adequate composition of the National MSG and the qualifications of its members, evidence shows that several members remain inactive or not fully engaged. For example, the National MSG meets rarely (although the frequency is hard to determine, as no regular meeting minutes are publicly available). It appears that the National MSG only convenes to review the Report Compiler's Terms of Reference and to review and approve annual FiTI Reports. The minutes of these meetings are available on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

Given the importance of multi-stakeholder oversight in FiTI implementation – and in response to a corrective action from the first validation – several issues have been

addressed by the FiTI National Lead, the National Secretariat, and the National MSG during this validation period, such as:

- **Adjusting the composition of the National MSG based on stakeholder analysis:** The National Secretariat conducted an analysis to identify organisations relevant to sustainable maritime fisheries in Mauritania that were not yet represented in the National MSG. As a result, new organisations were admitted, in accordance with Joint Decree No. 0734 of 29 July 2022, which outlines the general composition of the National MSG.
- **Procedures for the appointment and replacement of National MSG Members:** Given the number of civil society organisations and professionals in the sector, the National MSG opted for representation through national federations affiliated with the Mauritanian Employer's Association. To invite new members, written requests were sent to these federations, asking them to designate representatives to the National MSG. This led to five new appointments, while other organisations reappointed their existing representatives. The correspondence is published on the National MSG website.
- **Possibility of rotating the Chair of the National MSG:** Article 4 of the Joint Decree No. 0734 of 29 July 2022 and Article 7 of the National MSG ToR defines that the FiTI National Lead serves also as the Chair of the National MSG. As a result, the MSG considered that rotating the Chair was not feasible from a regulatory standpoint. Additionally, the National MSG noted that, procedurally, a Chair from outside the public administration group would face challenges in convening representatives from other government agencies. However, in line with Article 7 of the ToR, a Vice-Chair (Mr Cheikhany), representing the Civil Society stakeholder group, was appointed by consensus at a recent National MSG meeting. This has been made public on the National MSG website.
- **Invitation of observers:** The National MSG acknowledged that the number of permanent observers is set at five (in accordance with Article 3 of Decree No. 90). However, only four permanent observers are currently participating. While the National MSG has approved the possibility of inviting international development organisations and partners to meetings to share their expertise, it remains to be seen whether this will be implemented in practice.

Based on the above analysis the FiTI International Board decided to assess indicator B.3.3_2, as 'meaningful progress'.

As a result of the FiTI Board Assessment of indicators B.3.3_1 and B.3.3_2 the overall compliance designation for validation requirement B.3.3 ('Multi-Stakeholder Oversight') is 'compliant'.

4) The FiTI International Board's Overall Compliance Designation decision

Validation is the FiTI's quality assurance mechanism for assessing implementing countries' ability to meet the provisions of the FiTI Standard.

On 3 April 2025, the FiTI International Board determined that Mauritania achieved an overall 'Compliant' status in implementing the FiTI Standard during the validation timeframe (April 2022 - July 2024).¹³

The Board's decision was taken unanimously and followed the Board Committee's recommendations. To make this decision the Board also verified that the **minimum requirements for the overall compliance designation** have been fulfilled, as follows:

- All individual *transparency requirements* received at least a 'meaningful progress' designation.
- The validation requirements 'B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation' and 'B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight' were assessed as 'compliant'.
- Mauritania has not breached one or more aspects of the principles or the spirit of the FiTI (as outlined in section E.2.2).

The FiTI International Board congratulates Mauritania on this significant accomplishment, demonstrating that all necessary aspects of the validation requirements have been met. The results of the second validation of Mauritania underline the progress the country has made toward achieving transparency in its fisheries sector management since joining the FiTI.

Within its second Validation period, the country maintained and partially increased the amount of information available on government websites and improved the quality of data in the public domain. In general terms, more information is now available online, and the quality of data has improved — for example, regarding the transparency requirements on the State of the Fisheries Resources or published data on small-scale fisheries vessels. The annual FiTI Reports themselves are also highly appreciated, and there is general recognition that the FiTI process has resulted in greater transparency. During the Validation process, stakeholders in Mauritania also expressed their expectation that the FiTI process should continue and their hope that it will lead to policy improvements and to more sustainable fisheries management.

While assessing the overall compliance status of Mauritania, the Board also recognised the FiTI's validation principle of 'contextual mindfulness'. Under this principle each validation needs to consider a country's current economic, cultural, and political landscape. This is particularly relevant when considering a country's level of implementation under

¹³ Decision ID: BM-29_2025_D-01

the principle of ‘progressive improvement’, and ultimately, its overall level of compliance, as outlined in section D.1.2 of the FiTI Standard¹⁴. Validations, therefore, need to strike a balance between ensuring that all countries are consistently held to the same global standard and taking each country’s unique situation into account.

For example, the Board took into consideration that Mauritania has only recently achieved a more stable democracy, with its government increasingly prioritising economic and social policies, as described by different independent studies and indexes. An important step towards greater participation in policymaking was the 2021 Associations Bill, which improved the legal environment for civil society by facilitating the establishment of civil organisations and allowing them to receive funding. While the government recognises civil society as essential to national development, building a strong and active civic sector has also been a relatively recent development. Also, the recent Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2024¹⁵ showed that indicators related to participation and participatory governance in Mauritania have been progressing, but Mauritania still remains relatively low in its ranking (41st out of 50 African countries).

Nevertheless, this validation process has identified **opportunities for further improvement** aiming to maintain the overall compliance status with the FiTI, particularly by incorporating data provisions and updates within the national framework. Thus, making it more independent from the FiTI reporting process. Data should also be used more actively by the National MSG, strengthening the MSG’s recommendations and overall oversight of policymaking. Additionally, the National MSG requires more financial and technical support to reach the level of effectiveness and involvement that is expected under the FiTI process.

The FiTI International Board has, therefore, in this Compliance Statement, set out **ten (10) corrective actions** (see below) that Mauritania’s government must address within their corresponding timeframes to maintain its status of ‘compliant.’ Progress in addressing these corrective actions within the define timeframes will be monitored by the FiTI International Board and assessed based on written reports to be delivered to the FiTI International Board by Mauritania’s National MSG according to the deadlines established below.

The FiTI International Board emphasises that even when a country has been found to be compliant as a result of a validation process, it must maintain the level of transparency already achieved, demonstrate further improvements in the future based on the Board’s recommendations and, address the corrective actions included in the Compliance Statement issued by the FiTI International Board. Only under these circumstances will the country maintain its current compliance level designation, which will be thoroughly assessed based on the written reports regarding the successful addressing of the corrective

¹⁴ FiTI Guidance Note #3 Validating Countries, Overview of the FiTI validation process, guiding principles.

¹⁵ <https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2024-10/2024-index-report.pdf>

actions and future validations. In accordance with section E.2.3 of the FiTI Standard, failure to achieve satisfactory progress would result in a lower compliance designation.

5) Corrective actions

The FiTI's Board Committee, delegated by the International Board, determined the following corrective actions to be undertaken by Mauritania to remain compliant with the FiTI Standard. The Mauritania National MSG must submit a written report regarding the progress in implementing these corrective actions to the FiTI International Board no later than the deadlines shown below.

By October 2025

Under Section B.3.2, the National MSG must maintain a properly authorised and resourced FiTI National Secretariat, as specified in Requirement A.5. An effective, well-resourced, and responsive FiTI National Secretariat is paramount for ensuring that the National MSG can achieve its FiTI-relevant activities and outcomes. Therefore, the Mauritania's FiTI Lead Ministry must:

- 1) Ensure **permanent financial support** for the national FiTI implementation process (including the National Secretariat), e.g. through a permanent budget line for National MSG activities or via additional donor funding. This would allow for more opportunities to raise awareness about Mauritania's fisheries sector among the wider public while at the same time providing greater independence of the National MSG and institutionalising regular activities.
- 2) Ensure that the FiTI National Secretariat has enough **time and human resources** to support the National MSG. This could be achieved by providing different or additional human resources to offer administrative and operational support, including a description of all needed tasks.
- 3) Ensure **regular National MSG meetings** at least four times per year, including timely preparation, follow-up, and the preparation and publication of the corresponding meeting minutes. In this context, to enhance the operational effectiveness of the National MSG it is recommended to establish task forces or sub-committees with specific functions and responsibilities, such as communication, oversight of the implementation status of recommendations, monitoring website data, etc.

By December 2025

In accordance with Section B.1 of the FiTI Standard, countries must provide accessible and complete information on the fisheries sector in the public domain (i.e., online) according to

12 transparency requirements. At the same time, following the FiTI's key principle of 'progressive improvement', countries must demonstrate improvements over time in collating and publishing information online which is not yet available. Therefore, the National MSG must:

- 4) Develop a consolidated and comprehensive register of large-scale fishing vessels containing, if applicable, the 14 attributes recommended by the FiTI Standard. To this end, the country must merge the *Direction Générale Exploitation des Ressources Halieutiques* (DGERH) and *Agence Mauritanienne de Navigation Maritime* (AMAM) registers to produce a single register for national and foreign vessels.
- 5) Ensure that the following requirements are either already part of the **National MSG's recommendations** to the government or, if not, that new recommendations are made to progressively improve transparency:
 - Information required under the FiTI Standard and available to Mauritania's government, but which has not yet been made publicly accessible online (e.g., disaggregation of exports at species level), should be published
 - Information required under the FiTI Standard, which has not yet been collected by Mauritania's government, should be collected to the extent possible
- 6) Establish a documented process to regularly (e.g., quarterly) **monitor the implementation of all recommendations** submitted to the government to progressively improve transparency, as well as the corrective actions from this Compliance Statement and, if needed, issue new recommendations related to the availability, accessibility, understandability of information and (if deemed necessary) regarding stakeholder participation in Mauritania's fisheries management.
- 7) Add information about **Official Development Assistance (ODA) project evaluations** to the FiTI-Mauritania website regarding whether any project evaluation has or will be conducted for each project, and where the information related can be found for those projects where an evaluation has already been concluded.

By March 2026

In accordance with Section B.2.4 of the FiTI Standard, Mauritania's FiTI National MSG must determine a formalised approach to ensure that the information published through the FiTI implementation process contributes to sustainable policymaking, effective oversight, accountability, and public debates. Therefore, the National MSG must:

- 8) Facilitate the regular and periodic publication of government information, ensuring that data is uploaded consistently and at set intervals (e.g., weekly or monthly, as

collected by MPEM-DARE) to the current FiTI-Mauritania website, while also enhancing the visual presentation of summary information.

- 9) Discuss opportunities for the National MSG to utilise its already established and formalised multi-stakeholder collaboration to engage in broader national fisheries management discussions or policies using the published information (i.e. beyond transparency). This may include the creation of a formal framework for exchanges between the National MSG and fisheries consultation frameworks.
- 10) Strengthen its efforts to ensure that fisheries information (published via FiTI Reports, Mauritania's FiTI website, or other online media) is widely distributed or made to be known among key audiences, including government, parliamentarians, companies, civil society groups, academia, the media, and international stakeholders. Particular attention should be given to ensuring (i) relevant information reaches remote stakeholders, such as fishing communities, as well as non-fisheries-related stakeholders, e.g., schools or other business sectors and (ii) public debates are organised on the key findings of the FiTI reports.

6) Final Validation Scorecard

The Validation Scorecard below documents the compliance designation for each of the 21 requirements of the FiTI Standard (sections B.1 to B.3).

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (April 2022 – July 2024)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance ¹⁶					Direction of progress ¹⁷
	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>Better</i>
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						<i>No change</i>
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						<i>Better</i>
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						<i>Better</i>
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						<i>No change</i>
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						<i>Better</i>
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						<i>No change</i>
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						<i>No change</i>
B.1.9 Labour Standards						<i>No change</i>
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						<i>Not applicable</i>
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						<i>No change</i>

¹⁶ **Efforts exceeding the FiTI requirements** apply to all encouraged activities (should, may). Guidance Note #3, page 24: “The FiTI Standards lists multiple examples within sections B.1 to B.3 that are considered as optional actions or activities to further strengthen transparency and participation in the country....”. “For example, to further strengthen the dissemination of a FiTI Report and stimulate public debates, National MSGs are encouraged to contribute the lessons learnt and recommendations from FiTI Reports to policy dialogues and broader conversations about national reform efforts (section B.2.4 of the FiTI Standard)”. Those efforts should be documented during the validation process and recognised in the Validation Scorecard, column ‘Exceeding’ but are not considered when assessing compliance with the FiTI Standard.

¹⁷ **Direction of progress:** The International Secretariat in the Baseline Assessment Report conducts an evaluation of the country’s direction of progress in terms of meeting each FiTI requirement in comparison to the country’s most recent validation(s), indicating whether implementation is improving or deteriorating (either as ‘no change’, ‘worse than before’ or ‘better than before’). This aspect is, therefore, only relevant for the second and subsequent country validations.

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (April 2022 – July 2024)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance ¹⁶					Direction of progress ¹⁷
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	<i>Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (choose one)</i>
B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						No change
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						No change
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						No change
B.2.3 Reporting Process						Better
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						Better
B.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						No change
B.3.2 Governance and Support						Better
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						No change
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						No change
B.3.5 Impact Report						Not applicable
Overall compliance designation						Not applicable
Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard (optional)¹⁸						
<i>Information on the fish meal factories provides very valuable information.</i>						

¹⁸ **Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard** refers to activities that fall outside the scope of the FiTI Standard. Guidance Note #3, page 24: “For example, the National MSG may decide to include additional transparency requirements (beyond the 12 mandatory requirements stated in section B.1 of the FiTI Standard) into the scope of their annual FiTI Reporting process, such as the impacts of climate change or the interactions between fisheries and other sectors in the Blue Economy”.



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Annex I

Baseline Assessment Report of the
FiTI International Secretariat
(April 2022 – July 2024)



Regular country validation: Baseline Assessment Report for the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (April 2022 – July 2024)

Prepared by: FiTI International Secretariat

Date: 25 September 2024

Table of Content

ABBREVIATIONS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
KEY FINDINGS	5
RECOMMENDATIONS	17
ADDITIONAL ASPECTS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE INDEPENDENT VALIDATOR	19
1) KEY PARAMETERS AND SCOPE OF VALIDATION	20
2) OVERVIEW OF THE FITI IMPLEMENTATION IN MAURITANIA	23
3) ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ‘TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS’	27
PUBLIC REGISTRY OF NATIONAL FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS	27
FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS	28
FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS	30
THE STATE OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCES	32
LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES	35
SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES	43
POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE	47
FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT	51
FISHERIES SUBSIDIES	55
OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	57
BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP	58
4) ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL ‘PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FITI REPORTS’	61
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	61
REPORTING DEADLINES AND PERIODS	63
REPORTING PROCESS	64
REPORT DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC DEBATE	67
5) ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ‘NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK’	71
ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	71
GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT	73
MULTI-STAKEHOLDER OVERSIGHT	76
ANNUAL WORKPLAN	79
IMPACT REPORT	80
6) APPRAISAL OF PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENTS	81
7) ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	84
2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION	84

Abbreviations

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
IMROP	Mauritanian Institute of Oceanographic Research and Fisheries
IISD	Institute for Sustainable Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
JSC	Joint Scientific Committee
MPIMP	Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime Infrastructures and Ports (MPIMP)
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
WADAF	West African Association for the Development of Artisanal Fishing


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 initiated the country's **first regular validation process** in line with the FiTI Standard (section D.1) in September 2021, covering the period December 2018 – March 2022. The FiTI International Board recognised Mauritania's efforts to implement the FiTI Standard with a score of 'meaningful progress' and issued five corrective actions for Mauritania to undertake which, if properly addressed, could see the country progress to the status of a FiTI Compliant Country. Since then, Mauritania has remained a FiTI Candidate Country.

In accordance with section D.4 of the FiTI Standard, the FiTI International Board has tasked the FiTI International Secretariat to launch the **second regular validation process** for Mauritania (Decision BM-25_2024_D-01). The timeframe for this validation was set from April 2022 until July 2024, covering Mauritania's third FiTI Report (calendar year 2021) as well as its fourth FiTI Report (calendar year 2022).

¹ <https://fiti.global/fiti-standard>

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. This assessment was primarily carried out via desk research, without the involvement of national or international stakeholders².

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

This assessment underscores that Mauritania has maintained (or even enhanced) its notable levels of online transparency of fisheries management information (as documented in the country's first Compliance Statement). Therefore, a significant amount of information on Mauritania's fisheries sector is already collected and made publicly accessible by the national authorities through the MPIMP and its attached bodies. For some data the government has improved data accuracy, completeness and publication in line with the FiTI Standard, such as information on the flag of large-scale fishing vessels operating under the EU-RIM Fisheries Agreement, payments from small-scale fishing or subsidies.

In addition to the information which was already made accessible during the previous validation timeframe, notable examples of *advancing the transparency requirements of the FiTI Standard* are:

- ➡ The publication of the registry of fishing laws and regulations on the NMSG website.
- ➡ IMROP regularly updates and publishes research data and articles regarding resources or certain species on its website and has strengthened its cooperation with other research institutes.
- ➡ A description of the current fisheries subsidy situation, including fuel subsidies³.

During this validation period, the information held by the Mauritanian national authorities was mainly published on the MPIMP website (<https://www.peches.gov.mr>) and on the NMSG website dedicated to the FiTI (<https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr>). The NMSG website remains endorsed by the MPIMP, demonstrated, inter alia, through a direct link from the MPIMP website

² During its 15th meeting, the FiTI International Board approved for only the Independent Validator's draft report to be provided to the countries' NMSG for feedback before the final version is submitted by the Independent Validator to the FiTI International Board (Decision-ID: BM-15_2021_D_03).

³ The NMSG clarified that during the 2nd validation period, there is no data on the amount of fishing subsidies because the government has stopped subsidizing the fisheries sector. However, the FNP has implemented a fuel price mitigation strategy for fishermen and signed an agreement with the government in May 2024. The agreement is published online here: http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Convention_carburant_Peche-du-29-06-2022.pdf

to the NMSG website. The NMSG has decided to continue with the practice of providing a dedicated website to display information in accordance with the FiTI Standard, given that the MPIMP website still does not allow the visual display and organisation of this data as easily, and has also proven to be cumbersome to update.

The MPIMP website features a brief section about the FiTI on its homepage, including a link that allows stakeholders to move from the MPIMP website to the website of the NMSG. Fisheries-related information is updated regularly on the MPIMP site, whereas for the NMSG website, information is published annually during the FiTI reporting process. As all information collected during the process of developing the FiTI Reports is published on the NMSG website, the need to publish this information in the FiTI Report is continuously reduced.

It is important to underline that during this second validation timeframe, the NMSG made improvements to its website, such as:

- ➔ Information for each FiTI reporting year is clearly separated under a dedicated website tab 'Normes FiTI / Exigences', allowing stakeholders to have access to historic data.
- ➔ Links to the websites of the MPIMP, IMROP and the FiTI are displayed.
- ➔ A new 'progressive improvement' tab has been added to the website to display the follow-up sheet for FiTI Report recommendations and corrective actions issued by the NMSG and Mauritania's validations.⁴
- ➔ The creation of a specific tab for the publication of (i) the register of fisheries laws and regulations, and (ii) summaries of the different gear types requested by the FiTI.
- ➔ The creation of a specific tab for the publication of (i) the NMSG meeting minutes, (ii) action plan and (iii) legal document.
- ➔ The visual quality of the website has been significantly improved.
- ➔ The security of the website has been strengthened by adding a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) certificate that authenticates a website's identity and enables an encrypted connection.

It is also noted that ownership as well as maintenance aspects regarding the co-existence of these two websites (i.e. MPIMP and NMSG) have now been mostly clarified, which is a clear improvement from the first validation timeframe. The MPIMP – as the FiTI's Lead Ministry for Mauritania – demonstrates this through the following aspects:

- ➔ The NMSG website is administered by the MPIMP's webmaster;
- ➔ The website domain and other required license fees are paid by the administration, and;

⁴ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/amelioration-progressive/>

- ➡ The link between the MPIMP website and the NMSG website clearly indicates their relatedness, similar to other governmental websites, such as the Observatoire économique et sociale des Pêches (OESP) website.

Despite these notable efforts of the NMSG, it is acknowledged that access to the NMSG website is regularly disrupted (due to several technical difficulties), requiring the intervention of the webmaster to restore the situation. Given the importance of this website for the provision of fisheries information for Mauritania, this represents a constraint on access to information for national and international stakeholders.

Several of these advancements in online transparency stem from the efforts of Mauritania's government to implement the *recommendations made by the country's NMSG*. Since the beginning of the FiTI reporting process, the NMSG determined 21 recommendations, of which 15 recommendations were made as part of the country's 1st FiTI Report and 6 recommendations in the country's 2nd FiTI Report. The NMSG did not add any new recommendations to the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports; instead, these reports renewed the remaining recommendations by setting new deadlines: As of today, the implementation status of these 21 recommendations is as follows⁵:

- ➡ 11 recommendations (52%) have been fully implemented;
- ➡ 6 recommendations (29%) remain open since the deadline has not yet passed (only one recommendation is due in December 2024);
- ➡ 2 recommendations (9.5%) were rejected by Mauritania's government. It was noted that some recommendations lacked sufficient clarity, presenting challenges to implement, particularly those that required the intervention of another ministry or have significant financial implications.
- ➡ 2 recommendations (9.5%) were withdrawn by the NMSG, given that it was decided that these recommendations currently do not make sense in for Mauritania's context (for example, one recommendation calls for the collection of information on subsidies when the government has stopped subsidizing fishing).

In collaboration with the FiTI International Secretariat, the NMSG conducted a meeting in June 2024⁶ to review the implementation state of the recommendations and acknowledged reasons why the NMSG and the FiTI Lead Ministry have been unable to implement the remaining recommendations on due time, such as:

⁵ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Fiche-de-suivi-des-recommandations-du-GMN.pdf>

⁶ This country mission enabled a meeting to be held with the NMSG on June 06, 2024, to take stock of the implementation of 5 corrective actions and identify priority actions to be implemented before the start of the second validation.

- ➡ The involvement of other government bodies in implementing the recommendation (e.g. revision of the fishing code and issuing of complementary decrees),
- ➡ The financial impact of the recommendation (e.g. recruitment of observers to collect information on industrial fishing discards).

While no recommendation from previous FiTI Reports is currently overdue, it is acknowledged that this is mainly due to the NMSG adjusting past deadlines.

Nevertheless, several *important categories of information are still not publicly available* (either online on a government website, the NMSG website, or published through FiTI Reports), *even though 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 during this validation period). However, it should be noted that the vessel registry published online has improved considerably during the second validation period based on the increasing number of attributes provided by the DGERH lists. An analysis of the attributes shows that only the following two of the 14 attributes required by the FiTI Standard are not yet provided:
 - i. the type of vessel, according to fishing gear or fishing method, following the definition set in the country's legislation, and
 - ii. the quantity and names of target species, permissible by-catch and discards that the vessel is authorised to fish, if specified in the vessel's fishing authorisation.
- ➡ Comprehensive information on the *application of labour laws* in the fisheries.
- ➡ The *record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector*.

It is the FiTI International Secretariat's perception that the government of Mauritania has shown its commitment to the FiTI principles and there are *no signs of wilfully withholding information required by the FiTI Standard*. 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.

Finally, both FiTI Reports that fall into this validation timeframe (i.e. 2021 and 2022) made transparent the *remaining information gaps* as well as obstacles hindering the full online

accessibility of government information⁷. Information that is not yet available to the Mauritanian government at all – as it has not been compiled or even collected yet – covers essentially the same categories of information as highlighted by the first validation. This includes, for example, that:

- ➡ Detailed Information on the *payments of small-scale fishing licenses*, for example, by category of fishing authorization or by gear type [it is noted that information on payments for small-scale fishing vessels, aggregated by payment heading and by operating regime (domestic and foreign), is already regularly published online on the NMSG website];
- ➡ 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 the *human resources* deployed by the NMSG to ensure compliance with the regulations.

It seems that these challenges are based on operational hurdles that national authorities face in their efforts to improve access to sector-specific information, particularly in fisheries. Nevertheless, 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.

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

In general, Mauritania has closely followed the procedural requirements set out in section B.2.1 of the FiTI Standard while producing its last two FiTI Reports.

The *reporting requirements of the FiTI Standard* (section B.2.1), requiring Mauritania's NMSG to produce a FiTI Report annually, have been met through two FiTI Reports (for calendar year 2021 and 2022). Each of these two FiTI Reports included 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 includes references to where

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.

it can be found in the public domain. As mentioned above, the NMSG has not issued any new recommendations on how the government of Mauritania can continue strengthening the public availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date fisheries management information.⁸ Instead, recommendations from previous FiTI Reports (2018 and 2019-2020 reports) that had not been implemented were renewed with new deadlines. One consequence is that none of the recommendations are overdue, based on the new deadlines set by the NMSG.

It is noted that Mauritania struggled again to meet the *reporting deadlines* of the FiTI Standard (section B.2.2) for the FiTI Reports that fall within this validation timeframe:

- Mauritania's 2021 FiTI Report was approved by the NMSG in March 2023 and published in April 2024. While this shows a deviation from the deadline stipulated in the FiTI Standard (the 2021 FiTI Report was due by end of 2022), Mauritania's NMSG did request an extension from the FiTI International Board. The request to publish the 2021 FiTI Report by April 2023 was approved by the FiTI International Board during its 19th meeting [BM-19_2022_D-04].⁹
- Mauritania's 2022 FiTI Report (*Detailed section*) was approved and published by the NMSG on-time (end of December 2023), but the Summary section – prepared with the support of the FiTI international Secretariat – was only published in March 2024.

Both FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022) comply with the scope of transparency requirements set forth in the FiTI Standard. The 2021 FiTI Report contained information on transparency requirements 1 to 6, whereas the 2022 FiTI Report contained information on all 12 transparency requirements.

Mauritania's next FiTI Report (covering calendar year 2023) is due by the end of 2024.

Additionally, Mauritania's 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports adhered to the *reporting process* outlined by the FiTI Standard. Both reports were compiled by an external Report Compiler (i.e. Dr Moustapha Kébé, in collaboration with M. Abderrahmane Boujoumaa, whose appointment was approved by the NMSG. Throughout the reporting processes, the Report Compiler engaged in numerous discussions with relevant stakeholders and was granted extensive access to fisheries information and data held by government entities. He collaborated closely with the NMSG to draft the reports, submitting initial drafts for the group's review and feedback. The NMSG reviewed and formally approved both reports before they were published.

Finally, it was noted during the first validation 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. This was also noted in one of the five *corrective actions* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania.¹⁰

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

⁹ <https://fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

¹⁰ Corrective action #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."

To address this correction action, the FiTI National Lead, the FiTI National Secretariat as well as members of the NMSG conducted several activities to enhance the *distribution of Mauritania's FiTI Reports* to key national and international stakeholders, e.g.:

- ➡ A TV debate was organized in 2022 with the participation of the FiTI National Secretary;
- ➡ Information and awareness-raising meetings on the FiTI were conducted in Nouadhibou and Mamghar in 2023 by the artisanal sub-section of the FNP;
- ➡ Workshops on transparency were held in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott in February 2024 as part of activities from the non-governmental organisation PRCM.

Most of these activities were financed by the FNP and the PRCM. An overview activity report regarding such NMSG endeavours is published on the NMSG website.¹¹ While these efforts are still not regular or systematically conducted (due to a lack of human and financial resources, effective support and training for its members) it could nevertheless be seen as progress of the NMSG's commitment, in particular compared to the first validation period.

It is also important to highlight that several organisations not part of the NMSG have benefited from WADAF's support to make the FiTI better known in Mauritania. Based on this example, a meeting was held in July 2024 with the FiTI National Secretariat to discuss how other fisher's organisations could support the NMSG in making the FiTI more visible in Mauritania.

While anecdotal evidence shows that these efforts 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 still needed to ensure that future FiTI Reports promote discussions among the wider public and are used in public decision-making.

Therefore, it is acknowledged that the above-mentioned *corrective action* issued in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement – relating to the report dissemination and public debate – has only been partially met.

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

The government of Mauritania continues to provide and maintain an *enabling environment* for business and civil society participation. This is supported by relevant laws, regulations, administrative rules as well as actual practice. The FiTI International Secretariat has also not

¹¹ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/activites-de-sensibilisations-communication/>

become aware of any notable cases where this regulatory framework was not put into practice with regards to the country's FiTI implementation process.

As a notable improvement, the Mauritanian government changed its *FiTI Lead Ministry* during the course of this validation timeframe from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors to the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (MPIMP)¹². Consequently, a new *FiTI National Lead* (from the MPIMP) was formally appointed: Mr. Sidi Ali Sidi Boubacar¹³ replaced Mr. Mohamed Salem Nany. Mr Side Boubacar has been Mauritania's FiTI National Lead since July 2022, providing stability to the oversight of the country's FiTI implementation. It is the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that this change in the FiTI Lead Ministry and the FiTI National Lead adequately fulfils the relevant *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania.¹⁴ While it is crucial to emphasise the importance of concluding this transfer, it also needs to be recognised that this transfer process took a very long time (approx. 15 months), resulting in negative impact on the FiTI process. During the transfer period the former FiTI Lead Ministry (and its appointed FiTI National Lead) was already inactive while the newly designated FiTI Lead Ministry could not yet officially assume its responsibilities before the transfer process was finalised by signing the interministerial decree. Furthermore, the process of appointing the new FiTI National Lead from within the MPIMP took another four months. Given that the FiTI National Lead also acts as the Chair of the NMSG, the NMSG was without leadership for over two years, and the FiTI implementation lacked the mobilisation of political and financial support. The few activities carried out by the NMSG were initiated and supervised by the FiTI National Secretary.

Another positive development relates to the NMSG itself. As a result of addressing a *corrective action* issued in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement – relating to the NMSG¹⁵ – the overall group seems more engaged now¹⁶, despite evidence that few members are still not fully engaged in the MSG's activities. This revitalised engagement is mainly due to the recruitment of five new members of the NMSG as well as the appointment of an NMSG Vice-Chair from the members of the civil society stakeholder group (for a period of one year). In addition, the NMSG has already approved the possibility of inviting international development organizations and partners to the NMSG meetings for their expertise depending on the issues addressed

¹² http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FiTI_MRT_Arrete-2e-GMN-20230427.pdf

¹³ http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MRT_Arrete-Responsable-national_20231122.pdf

¹⁴ Correction action #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)."

¹⁵ Correction action #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."

¹⁶ Contrary to the first validation timeframe, it is noted that the NMSG has made efforts to raise awareness of the FiTI, document meeting outcomes and publish them online, improve its NMSG website, etc.

Despite these positive signs of improvements, the FiTI International Secretariat is also aware that some professional fishing organisations feel excluded from the NMSG, as they were not asked to participate when the NMSG was renewed (or even when the first NMSG was established). Mauritania's public authorities justified this approach by the government's desire to cooperate solely with sectoral umbrella organizations that are members of the Mauritanian employers' association.¹⁷ For the fishing industry, the umbrella organization is the FNP, which is the State's sole interlocutor in matters of fisheries governance. The government's decision is intended to encourage all organizations to join the umbrella organization and avoid the creation of several competing federations with often conflicting relations. The government has shown its firm commitment to uphold this approach which has also been adopted for all other sectors. However, organisations not affiliated to the FNP have been offered the opportunity to attend NMSG meetings as non-voting observers.

It is therefore the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that the *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania – related to the NMSG – has been mostly fulfilled, but additional aspects, such as adding more observers and strengthening the group's administration and governance procedures (i.e. Terms of Reference) are still outstanding.

Finally, the insufficient role of the *FiTI National Secretariat* in Mauritania's FiTI implementation process has been noted in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement, resulting in a dedicated corrective action.¹⁸ Overall, the situation regarding the National Secretariat has not significantly improved compared to the first validation timeframe. It is positively noted that the Secretariat filled the void that was left in the lengthy transfer process between the FiTI Lead Ministries. It must be assumed that without this engagement, the FiTI implementation process would have been even further negatively impacted. At the same time, it is perceived that the Secretariat is not giving enough priority to support the NMSG in its operations and outreach activities. The International Secretariat does not see this as a lack of commitment. Instead, it seems to be mainly due to sufficient staff and financial resources. For example, while NMSG meetings are in general not a costly endeavour, certain financial resources are needed for in-person meetings, including travel support for non-governmental actors located in Nouadhibou. These financial resources are not provided by the FiTI Lead Ministry and are currently covered by other non-governmental partners. However, these cost coverages appear to happen primarily on an ad-hoc basis, without a long-term strategy to obtain the necessary funds (e.g. through an annual budget plan for the NMSG). In their latest NMSG meetings, different funding strategies

¹⁷ An umbrella organisation has been set up for each sector, seeking to bring together all organisations of that sector.

¹⁸ Correction action #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."

were discussed. The assessed options include funding from donor organisations¹⁹, retaining 1% of fish exports for the NMSG's activities, or the inclusion of a FiTI line item in the MPIMP budget. The NMSG also emphasised that the FiTI International Secretariat does not support the financing of the NMSG activities. The NMSG also tried to approach external partners, but their grant and disbursement procedures did not allow the support of all NMSG members (only for those who could not afford travels), according to the National Secretariat. This is why the NMSG prefer the option of financing through the MPIMP budget.

Furthermore, the Minister of MPIMP has already agreed in principle to support the operation of Mauritania's National Secretariat and NMSG on the basis of an annual costed Action Plan. This commitment must be followed up to ensure that it is put into practice.

It is therefore the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that the *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania – related to the FiTI National Secretariat – has only partially been fulfilled.

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.

¹⁹ It is the FiTI International Secretariat's perception that, based on discussions with international donor organisations in Mauritania, financial support for the FiTI process could be obtained. However, neither the FiTI National Lead nor the FiTI National Secretariat have started to explore such funding opportunities.

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 (April 2022 – July 2024)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)
B.1 Transparency requirements						
B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents						Better
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						No change
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						Better
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						Better
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						No change
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						Better
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						No change
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						No change
B.1.9 Labour Standards						No change
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						Better
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						No change
B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						No change
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						No change
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						No change
B.2.3 Reporting Process						Better
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						Better

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (April 2022 – July 2024)

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.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						<i>No change</i>
B.3.2 Governance and Support						<i>Better</i>
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						<i>Better</i>
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						<i>No change</i>
B.3.5 Impact Report						<i>No 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 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

- ➡ Publish online the following information, which is available to the government, but neither published on a governmental website nor as part of the FiTI Reports:
 - 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 during this validation period). However, it should be noted that the vessel registry published online has improved considerably during the second validation period;
 - Comprehensive information on the *application of labour laws* in the fisheries.
 - The *records of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector*.
- ➡ Seek to collate information that is not yet available to national authorities in Mauritania, such as:
 - Detailed Information on the payments of small-scale fishing licenses, for example, by category of fishing authorization or by gear type. It is noted that information on payments for small-scale fishing vessels, aggregated by payment heading and by operating regime (domestic and foreign), is already regularly published online on the NMSG website.
 - 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 transshipments from vessels operating in the foreign regime;
 - Information on the human resources deployed by the NMSG to ensure compliance with the regulations.
- ➡ Assess opportunities for middle and long-term improvements of online fisheries transparency:
 - The current website of the NMSG would benefit from a more visualised and integrative approach, e.g. showing data from multiple years in one report.

- The annual collection of information needed to compile a FiTI Report is still significant (also compared to other similar FiTI implementing countries), partially due to reconciliation of data sets from the source system (e.g. SPSS) to the FiTI requirements. Such enhancement opportunities should also be taken into consideration when assessing budget requirements for the FiTI implementation process. To facilitate the collection of information for the FiTI, the IT administrator of the NMSG's website suggested the creation of a data collection interface, managed by DARE.

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).
- ➡ 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's NMSG are drafted within the timeframe specified in the ToR for the NMSG and are available online.²⁰
- ➡ The NMSG should 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 Tourism²¹;
 - National and international non-governmental organisations;
 - 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.

National Implementation Framework

- ➡ Improving participation in the NMSG by evaluating more activities, such as involving external experts or high-level personalities, to increase the visibility of the NMSG, FiTI, and their work.
- ➡ Evaluating ideas on how to strengthen and institutionalize FiTI in the middle and long term by providing even more independence to the MSG, levelling the importance of all

²⁰ During the second validation period, the NMSG published online the minutes of the validation meetings of the last two FiTI Reports. (<http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/gmn-mr/>).

²¹ For example, by presenting the FiTI Report during a Cabinet meeting of the entire government.

members, and securing technical and financial support from the government and potentially other sectors (private sector or international organizations), etc.

- ➡ Provide regular training sessions for NMSG members and other stakeholders on the FiTI Standard, validation processes, and the importance of transparency in fisheries management. This ensures that all participants are well-informed and can actively contribute to the process.
- ➡ Identify funding opportunities to be pursued by the FiTI National Lead and/or the FiTI National Secretariat on the group's behalf (e.g. from within the MPIMP or through external funds, such as the EU sectoral support) – already partially in progress.
- ➡ Explore opportunities to engage with other FiTI implementing countries for peer-learning experiences on how the FiTI implementation process can be improved.

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 and small-scale fisher's organisations) that the *current composition of the NMSG's business stakeholder group* limits representatives to only 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);
- ➡ Discuss with the FiTI National Lead and the FiTI National Secretariat on how to systematically obtain financial resources for the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania;
- ➡ Discuss with members of the NMSG how meetings *can become less administrative and more relevant for fisheries management* (e.g. 'Transparency in action');
- ➡ Discuss with the FiTI National Lead on how to strengthen the institutionalisation of the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania.

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) ²²
Request of validation process:	FiTI International Board, Decision: BM-25_2024_D-01 ²³
Type of validation:	Regular validation
Timeframe of validation:	April 2022 until July 2024
FiTI Reports due within validation timeframe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ 2021 FiTI Report, published on 26 April 2023 ➔ 2022 FiTI Report, published on 27 March 2024²⁴
Responsibility for report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <u>Author:</u> Mr Mansor Ndour (FiTI Regional Coordinator for Francophone Africa) ➔ <u>Reviewer:</u> Ms Dorothea Garff (FiTI Validation Coordinator)
Cut-off date for information to be considered for this report:	31 July 2024

²² <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

²³ 25th meeting of the FiTI International Board, 2 July 2024

²⁴ The detailed version of the report was published in December 2023. The summary version of the report - drawn up by the FiTI International Secretariat - was published by the FiTI on March 27, 2024.

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:²⁵

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"> Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents Fisheries Tenure Arrangements Foreign Fishing Access Agreements The State of the Fisheries Resources Large-Scale Fisheries Small-Scale Fisheries Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade Fisheries Law Enforcement Labour Standards Fisheries Subsidies Official Development Assistance Beneficial Ownership 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting Requirements Reporting Deadlines and Periods Reporting Process Report Dissemination and Public Debate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation Governance and Support Multi-Stakeholder Oversight Annual Workplan 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:

i. Compliant	Validation demonstrates that all aspects of the requirement have been implemented and that the broader objective of the requirement has been fulfilled.
---------------------	---

²⁵ 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.

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.

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.

Compared to Mauritania’s first regular validation, and in accordance with Guidance Note 3#, this second regular validation took the following two additional aspects into consideration:

- ➡ the level of *progressive improvement* in making previously unavailable or unpublished information publicly accessible is included in the determination of the level of compliance; and
- ➡ the *direction of progress* of meeting each FiTI requirement in comparison to the country’s most recent validation, is evaluated. The direction of progress is an additional aspect to be evaluated for this second, subsequent validation. The evaluation has been made in terms of meeting each FiTI requirement in comparison to the country’s first validation, indicating whether implementation is improving or deteriorating (page 25, Guidance Note #3). The direction of progress is an indication for stakeholders to understand the overall orientation of a requirement. It is not included in the determination of the level of compliance.

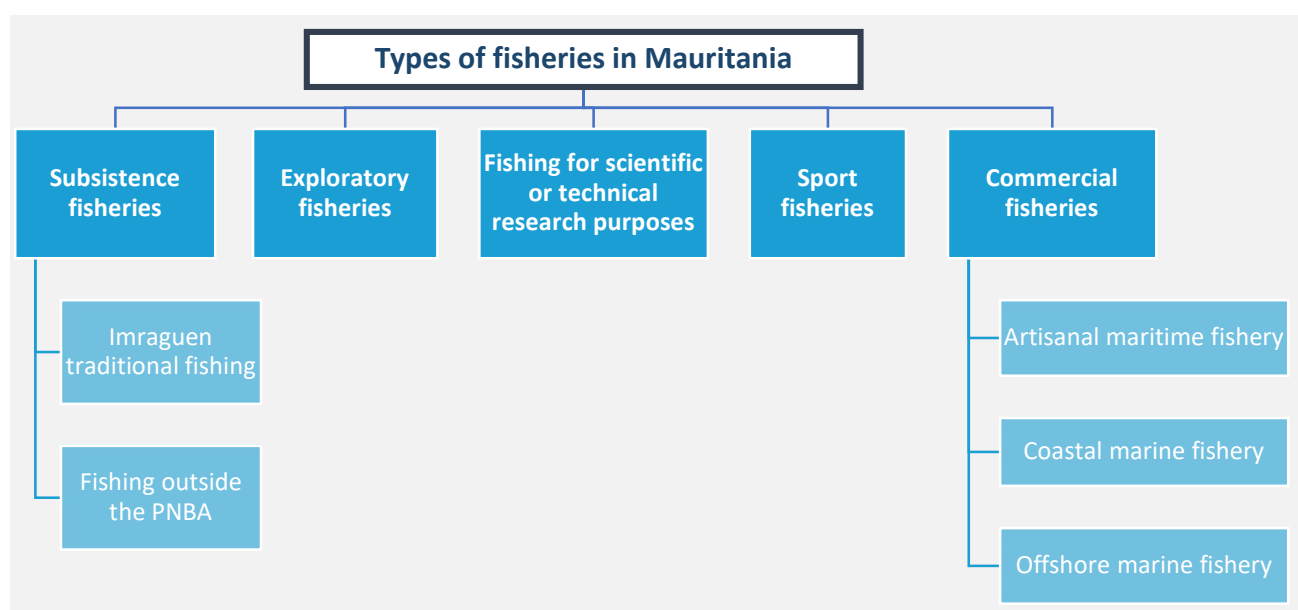
This report does not include an overall assessment of compliance.

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.²⁶

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.

There are *five types of fisheries in Mauritania*, as shown below in a simplified illustration.²⁷

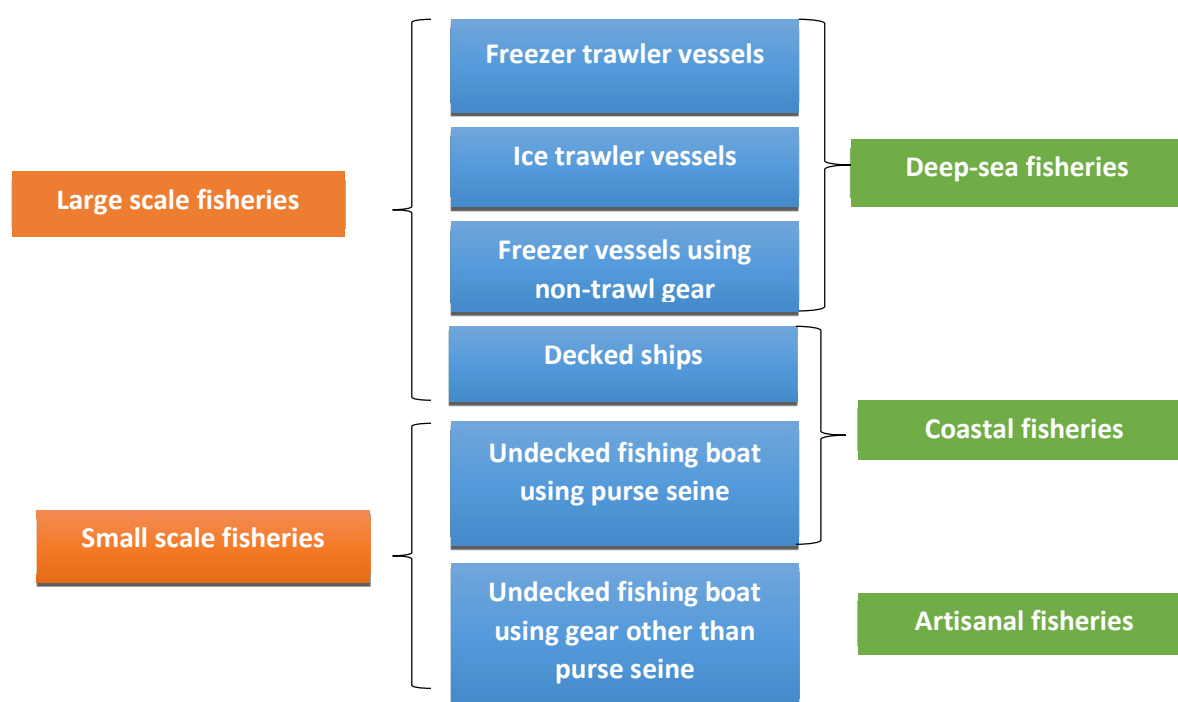


The terminologies of large-scale fishing and small-scale fishing – as used by the FiTI Standard – are not clearly used within Mauritania's fisheries. According to the NMSG, the *large-scale commercial fishery* includes the deep-sea (offshore) fishery and a part of the coastal marine fishery (industrial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

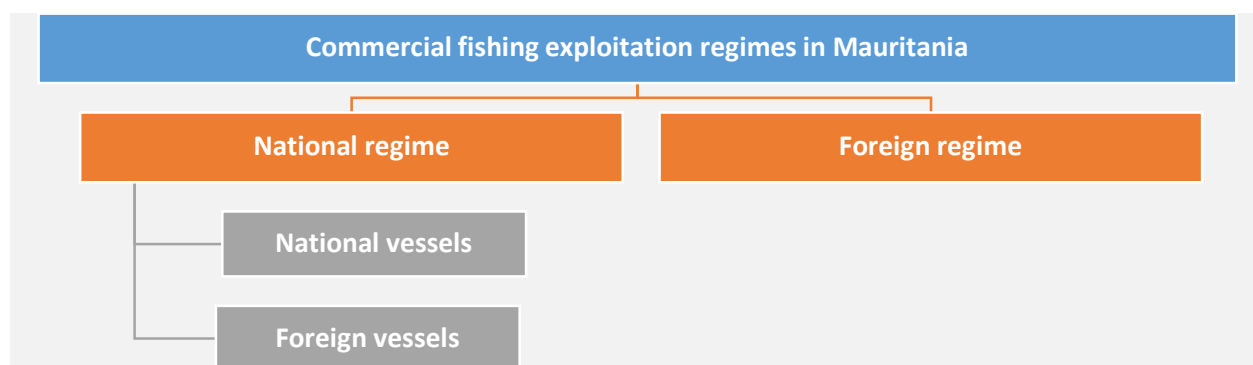
Consequently, the *small-scale commercial fishery* includes the artisanal maritime fishery and the other part of the coastal (inshore) marine fishery (purse seiners)

²⁶ It is noted that these values, obtained from the website of the Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (<http://spcsrp.org/fr/mauritania>) 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>)

²⁷ 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).



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 23 September 2021 between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the *Fuzhou HongDong Pelagic Fishery Company* (or Poly-HongDong 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 tranship 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 transparency²⁸.

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 2016.²⁹

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*.³⁰

Since then, Mauritania’s NMSG has published already four annual FiTI Reports:

- ➡ For calendar year 2018: May 2021;
- ➡ For calendar years 2019 and 2020: April 2022;
- ➡ For calendar year 2021: April 2023;
- ➡ For calendar year 2022: March 2024;
- ➡ For calendar year 2023: *In progress (due by 31st December 2024)*.

In 2021, the NMSG created a website dedicated to the FiTI (<https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr>) with financial support from PRCM. All available information required by the FiTI Standard as well as information on the NMSG is published on this website.

In February 2023, the FiTI International Board concluded its first validation on Mauritania’s compliance with the FiTI Standard and recognised Mauritania’s efforts with a score of "meaningful progress". The validation covered the period from December 2018 to March

²⁸ <https://www.fiti.global/empowering-citizens-to-reap-fair-benefits-from-their-fisheries>

²⁹ 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

³⁰ <https://www.fiti.global/mauritania-becomes-1st-fiti-candidate-country>

2022. Since then, Mauritania remained a FiTI Candidate Country until the overall assessment of compliance concludes the ongoing second validation process.

In 2023, new members were elected to the NMSG. At present, the NMSG consists of 15 members, equally representing government, business, and civil society, as shown below:³¹.

Government representatives	Business representatives	Civil society representatives
Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime Infrastructures and Ports (MPIMP) (M. Sidi Ali SIDI BOUBACAR) ^(X) ³²	National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) – Artisanal fishing section (M. Sidi Ahmed Abeid)	National Order of Chartered Accountants (ONEC) (M. Mohamedou Tijani)
Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime Infrastructures and Ports (MPIMP) (Mme Azza Mint Jiddou)	National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) (M. Mohamed Ould Mohamed CHEIKH) ^(X)	Fishing journalists network (M. Jedna Deida)
Ministry of the Environment and Développement Durable (MEDD) (M. Sidi Mouhamed Adabe)	National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) – Fishing plant (M. Cheikhany Mohamed Beittatt)	Bar Association (ONA) (M. Cheikhany Jules) ^(X) ³³
Central Bank of Mauritania (BCM) (M. KOITA Abdoulaye) ^(X)	National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) – Industrial fishing section (M. Ahmed Khoubah)	ZAKIA NGO (M. Brahim BOIDAHA) ^(X)
Nouadhibou Free Zone Authority (M. Housseinou Bal)	National Federation of Fisheries (FNP) – Foreign operators established in Mauritania (M. Simon Zhang)	Fishing Syndicate (M Ahmed Taher)

Members marked with an (X) have joined the NMSG during this second validation timeframe. In addition, *a Vice-Chair of the NMSG was appointed in June 2024 from among the members of the civil society group.*

³¹ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/gnm-mr/>

³² Chair of the NMSG.

³³ Vice-Chair of the NMSG.

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 (calendar year 2021 and 2022).

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**.

According to Section D of the FiTI Standard, for subsequent regular validations, the level of **progressive improvement** in making previously unavailable or unpublished information publicly accessible has been included in the determination of the level of compliance. The evaluation also comprises the **direction of progress** in terms of meeting each FiTI requirement in comparison to Mauritania’s most recent first validation.

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.	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]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.5]

Detailed remarks:

- ➞ **[B.1.1_1]** In July 2024, the NMSG published an updated registry of fishing laws and regulations on its NMSG website. This registry is listed under the “A PROPOS” tab for easy access. It is a well-structured and organised summary document of all fisheries laws and regulations (including summaries and links to the websites on which it is published) and this has satisfied a long-standing NMSG recommendation [ID: 2018_1; Priority: Medium; Due date: December 2021].

Notwithstanding the registry published online, the NMSG publishes in each report the list of new laws and regulations passed during the year. This list is used to update the online register each year.

- ➞ **[B.1.1_2]** The online register and annual lists published on the NMSG 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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates progress towards better levels of transparency, in particular due to the publication of the registry of fishing laws and regulations on the NMSG website.

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]

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
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]** As part of the country's first FiTI reporting efforts (i.e. 2018 FiTI Report), the NMSG has published summary descriptions relating to the country's five main fisheries (i.e. subsistence, sport, exploratory, scientific, and commercial) on the NMSG website – including information on fees payable, duration, fishing conditions, transferability and divisibility of such rights.³⁴ 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.

These efforts were reinforced during the current validation period by the online publication – under the “A PROPOS” tab – of summaries of the types of fisheries in Mauritania, in order to satisfy a long-standing NMSG recommendation.

In addition, the NMSG has kept the information up to date with the few changes to fisheries tenure systems that occurred within this validation timeframe, e.g.: access agreement for fishing vessels of HongDong Fishery Co. Ltd operating in the national regime. The new basic protocol for the years 2021-2025, signed on 23 September 2021, has been published online on the NMSG website.

- ➡ **[B.1.2_2]** Not applicable, as 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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there has been no change in the implementation of this requirement, meaning that Mauritania maintained its already high level of transparency for fisheries tenure arrangements.

³⁴ It is noted that rules and procedures for Mauritanian-flagged vessels to obtain authorisations to fish in a third country or on the High Seas are not applicable, 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.³⁵

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). ³⁶	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.	Compliant [3]
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.	Meaningful progress [2]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.6]

Detailed remarks:

- ➔ **[B.1.3_1]** The process of publishing fishing agreements in force initiated since the first FiTI (2018) continued during this validation period. During this validation period, only extension and renewals were noted by the NMSG. These changes are presented in the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, and the actual documents (e.g. protocols) are publicly available on and can be downloaded from the NMSG website.
- ➔ **[B.1.3_2]** Since the start of the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania, only the Mauritania/EU (RIM/EU) Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement been subject to a formal evaluation, in 2019, undertaken and funded by the European Commission. This evaluation has already been made available online on the NMSG website during the first validation timeframe. No additional evaluation on this particular agreement

³⁵ 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.

³⁶ 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.

has been conducted. However, the NMSG has made available online the Report of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Joint Scientific Committee on the RIM/EU agreement of February 2021³⁷.

No such evaluations have been conducted for the other existing foreign fishing access agreements, i.e. with Japan Tuna Fisheries Cooperative Association, Senegal, Convention libre pélagique, and the Convention libre thon (other than Japan Tuna).

[Best available information] In its two FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022), the NMSG did not mention any instances where the accuracy of information relating to impact assessments of these 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]** During the first validation period no information was published online by Mauritania's national authorities regarding stakeholder discussions and consultations prior to (re)negotiation and signing of new foreign fishing access agreements, or the tacit renewal and extension of fishing access agreements. The NMSG stated that (i) two memorandums of understanding for renewal of the RIM/EU agreement were signed in 2021 (renewal for one year, 2021- 2022) and 2022 (renewal for 6 years, 2022 – 2028), following exchanges of letters between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, (ii) renewal letters was sent to the President of Japan Tuna Cooperative Association by MPIMP in 2021 and 2022, the new RIM/Senegal Memorandum of Understanding signed on July 12, 2021. All these documents are published online on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

Fishing professionals have confirmed that they are not involved in discussions for the negotiation and signing of any fishing agreements, which explains the lack of information for the requirement. The NMSG failed to acknowledge such controversies related to these access agreements in its recent 2021 or 2022 FiTI Reports, particularly the concerns expressed by the country's artisanal fishing community.³⁸

³⁷ At its last meeting, on 10 and 14 December 2020, the Joint Commission (CM) mandated the Joint Scientific Committee (CSC) to organize an extraordinary meeting to formulate a scientific opinion on the zoning audit commissioned by the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy of Mauritania and made public in September 2020. In addition, the CM asked the CSC to provide an answer to the technical question, concerning category 6, relating to the possibility of fishing sardines while preserving sardinella.

³⁸ For example: <https://www.ege.fr/infoguerre/peche-en-mauritanie-theatre-dun-affrontement-economique-et-informationnel>

The FiTI National Lead stated that Mauritania has a Monitoring Committee appointed by Ministerial decree, which is published online. This Committee represents the government at the EU Joint Commission. The Committee met several times during the 3 years of negotiations before the renewal of the RIM-EU agreement. Other stakeholders are not admitted to the Committee meetings, but they can attend the meetings of the EU Joint Commissions in the same way as European stakeholders.

However, there is evidence³⁹ that IMROP has published information on its website concerning the negotiation of the renewal of the RIM/EU fisheries agreement as well as the monitoring of sectoral support. There is also a 'Ministerial Decree No. 1238 of 2 November 2021 relating to the creation, organization and operation of the RIM/EU sectoral budget support coordination unit'⁴⁰.

In fact, during this validation period, IMROP has published information from the follow-up meeting⁴¹ on the visibility of the EU's sectoral support program for the fisheries sector in Mauritania held on 3 March 2021, on the premises of the Ministry of Fisheries. The aim of the meeting was to take stock of the implementation of projects financed by the European Union in the fisheries sector in 2020, and to outline the outlook for 2021. IMROP has also published on its website information on the seventh round of negotiations⁴² for the renewal of the fisheries agreements between the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, held at IMROP headquarters by videoconference on 25 February 2021.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates a slight increase in transparency. This relates in particular to an explicit statement of the NMSG that non-governmental professionals are not involved in the negotiation of agreements. The information also includes that a negotiation of the agreement, published by IMROP, took place.

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

³⁹ <https://www.imrop.mr/7eme-tour-de-negociation-pour-laccord-de-peche-rim-ue/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.msgg.gov.mr/sites/default/files/2022-04/J.O.%201506F%20DU%2030.03.2022.pdf>

⁴¹ <https://www.imrop.mr/reunion-de-suivi-du-programme-appui-sectoriel-mpe-ue/>

⁴² <https://www.imrop.mr/7eme-tour-de-negociation-pour-laccord-de-peche-rim-ue/>

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.	Compliant [3]
B.1.4_2	The implementing country must provide information on the methods and data used to assess fish stocks.	Compliant [3]
B.1.4_3	The implementing country must publish on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 3]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.1.4_1\]](#) Prior to this validation period, IMROP already published on its own website⁴³ 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 organised every four (4) years to assess the main stocks and make recommendations for decision-making in the sustainable management of these resources.

IMROP's efforts continued during this validation timeframe, and the information provided has been referenced by the NMSG in its 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports and published online on the NMSG website.

As part of the 2021 FiTI reporting process, Mauritania's national authorities published online⁴⁴:

- The synthesis of the report of the FAO Working Group on the assessment of Small Pelagics off North-West Africa 2021;
- A brief note on the status of the octopus resource in Mauritania in 2021;
- A comparison of three data-poor stock assessment methods for the pink spiny lobster fishery in Mauritania;

⁴³ <https://www.imrop.mr/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.fiti-mauritaniamr/2021-2-2/>

- The summary report of the scientific observation missions in 2021; and
- The report of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Joint Scientific Committee relating to the fisheries agreement signed between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the European Union (“How can catches of sardinella be avoided without closing the catch of sardines or other small pelagics⁴⁵”).

As part of the 2022 FiTI reporting process, the NMSG published on its website the results of the CECAF/FAO Working Groups organized in 2022⁴⁶.

[Best available information] FiTI Reports covered by the validation period 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.

- ➡ **[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 (based on information published in IMROP publications).
- ➡ **[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. However, IMROP has published information on research projects and research partnership agreements on its website⁴⁷. It is not clear whether IMROP intends to extend the list of species to be assessed. Thus, the lack of information may be due to the absence of programmed activities. 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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates progress towards better levels of transparency. It is noted that IMROP has made efforts to update and publish research data on its website over the years. It has also strengthened its cooperation with other research institutes to improve the data collected and pool resources. IMROP also regularly publishes articles to document specific events

⁴⁵ http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/report-jsc-mauritania-2021-02_fr.pdf

⁴⁶ <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/d9acb629-4c99-4847-a2c9-3d9b46bb9216/content>

⁴⁷ <https://www.imrop.mr/?s=Projet&lang=fr>

noted on resources or on certain species (for example, the stranding of mullet in Mauritania⁴⁸).

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.	Meaningful progress [2]
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. ⁴⁹	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]
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.	Meaningful progress [2]
B.1.5_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded landings in national ports	Inadequate progress [1]

⁴⁸ <https://www.imrop.mr/echouage-massif-de-mulet-noir-mugil-capurrii-dans-la-baie-darchimede-nouadhibou/>

⁴⁹ Information on payments to port authorities must be separated from payments for fishing activities.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
	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.	
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.	Inadequate progress [1]
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. ⁵⁰	Compliant [3]
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. 2.2]

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]** During the first 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. Instead, as part of the reporting process and as a mitigation measure, the NMSG published online a spreadsheet of large-scale fishing vessels authorised to fish in Mauritanian waters drawn up by the Direction de la Marine Marchande (DMM). This spreadsheet included 12 attributes but only a few vessel

⁵⁰ This must include information on how information on discards is gathered by national authorities.

attributes required by the FiTI Standard, such as the name of the vessel, its length, the name of the consignee⁵¹, the radio call sign, the fishing zone and the name of the fishing gear used. Consequently, this spreadsheet did not cover all 14 vessel attributes required by the FiTI Standard. At that time, the NMSG had not given reasons why the government had not compiled all 14 attributes⁵², but had made a recommendation to fill this information gap [ID: 2018_7; Priority: High; Deadline: December 2021].

During this validation timeframe, the NMSG has now re-confirmed that Mauritania still does not have a FiTI Standard-compliant large-scale fishing vessel register. It was further noted that the current vessel registry spreadsheet has improved significantly in 2021 and 2022 compared with the information required by section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard for vessel registration. At present, the DMM list contains 13 attributes (vessel name, former name, IMO number, length, beam, gross tonnage, date of entry in the register, registration number, year of build, country of vessel builder/flag, vessel owner, targeted species, reason for acquisition), some of which are not required by the FiTI Standard but are considered useful by the country.

The NMSG also pointed out in its 2022 FiTI Report that the DMM vessel list was now compatible with the DGERH vessel list (based on payments targets). This made it possible to address a concern about discrepancies between the two lists raised during the first validation. It is also noted that the DGERH list for foreign vessel is broken down by type of fishing agreement (Japan tuna, EU, pelagic fishing, free tuna fishing) and contains, for each agreement, 8 vessel attributes (*License number, name of the vessel, nationality, Date of obtaining the license, license start date, license end date, concessionaire, group of targeted species*). Further additional criteria have been provided for the DGERH list for chartered vessels (*vessel name, flag, length, beam, gross tonnage, concession number, authorized species group, contract start, contract end, contract duration, consignee, charterer, owner, crew*).

For national vessels 18 attributes are provided: contract reference, licensee, registration, license number, license start date, license end date, current and former name, vessel name, power, length, beam, gross tonnage, fishing segment, authorized species group, fishing gear, hull type, nationality, construction date.

However, the Report Compiler carried out investigations during the preparation of the 2022 FiTI Report, which showed that the DMM register only provides information

⁵¹ 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.

⁵² Vessel name, legal owner, registered port, flag state, identification number, type of vessel, physical characteristics, vessel agent name if applicable, access agreement, fishing authorisation, quantity and names of targeted species, duration of the fishing authorization, the rights holder, authorized country or high sea if applicable.

on foreign vessels: Poly HongDong vessels (Mauritanian-owned), bareboat charters, CNM boats and foreign vessels operating under the foreign regime. On the other hand, the DGERH vessel register all vessels, including those owned by Mauritians.

The DGRH list also include foreign vessels monitored by DMM. This help the NMSG to check the conformity and completeness of the DMM list. The NMSG recommendation to provide an updated vessel register has not been fully complied with by national authorities. However, several attributes were added during the 2021 and 2022 reporting process. As a result, the recommendation was renewed twice, and a new deadline was set in the fourth FiTI Report [ID: 2022_5; Priority: High; Deadline: December 2025]. One of the challenges raised by the administration is the fact that the license to operate a concession in Mauritania is divisible⁵³.

The first validation process had also highlighted the lack of effort to consolidate the two sources of information on vessels (DGERH list and DMM list) into a single comprehensive list. It turned out that the mandate of DGERH and DMM are different; the former deals with the monitoring of foreign-owned vessels, the latter monitors national vessels and licenses (for all vessels). In fact, MPIMP would have a single information system with several parameters, including information on individual catches, and other information considered sensitive by the government. Each body would handle specific information concerning it. The DMM Excel sheet as well as the DGERH list would be extracted from this information system. However, it is not clear whether the information concerning the 14 attributes required by the FiTI Standard is integrated into the fisheries information system. The independent validator could review this information.

However, an analysis of the information on the various lists shows that only two attributes of the 14 required by the FiTI Standard are missing: i) the type of vessel, according to fishing gear or fishing method, as defined in the country's legislation, and ii) the quantity and names of target species, authorized by-catches and discards that the vessel is authorized to catch, if this is specified in the vessel's fishing authorization; this information is probably provided by access agreements (for foreign vessels) and the description of fishing concessions and licenses.

Given that efforts have been made to strengthen information on large-scale fishing vessels during the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, this validation indicator is assessed with “meaningful progress”.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_2]** During the process of developing the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, the DGERH continued providing the list of individual vessel payments for publication on the NMSG website. In addition to the list of individual payments (per vessel),

⁵³ This means that several vessels can share a concession (quota).

summary tables of payments were prepared by the Report Compiler and published on the NMSG website and in the FiTI Report. For foreign vessels, payments were broken down by type of fisheries access agreement.

Information on payments to *port authorities* was not compiled by the NMSG as part of the FiTI reporting processes. However, the NMSG indicated in its 2022 FiTI Report the annual revenues of other institutions (MPIMP, customs, etc.). Payments to port authorities are included in these revenues. However, the information received by the NMSG is not precise enough to extract information on payments to port authorities. This was not considered a priority by the NMSG, and no recommendation has been issued to this effect.

- ➔ **[B.1.5_3]** The efforts made by the NMSG to make accessible the data on retained catches of Mauritanian-flagged large-scale fishing vessels (including Mauritanian vessels of PolyHong Dong) operating in the EEZ continued during the validation period. These catch datasets do not include tuna, which are managed and monitored by ICCAT. Online catch information is disaggregated by species groups (cephalopods, crustaceans, and pelagic) and broken down by type of concession. For this purpose, the NMSG has established a summary table published through the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports and on the FiTI website.

Catch data has not been disaggregated by gear type (as required under the FiTI Standard). However, national authorities provide catch data by concessions⁵⁴ which is the strategic option chosen by Mauritania for fisheries management according to Total Allowable Catches (TAC).

Furthermore, both FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022) 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, the NMSG has continued its efforts to make accessible the data on retained catches of large foreign-flagged fishing vessels (including bareboat chartered vessels) operating in Mauritanian's EEZ. The catches published online by the NMSG on its website are presented by species groups (cephalopods, crustaceans, tunas and pelagics) and broken down by flag. These catch data are also published in aggregate form in the annual reports of the OESP (except for tunas, which are managed and monitored by ICCAT) and the CTS reports of the DARE. These reports are published on the MPIMP website.

⁵⁴ Mauritania has taken the option of managing fisheries by means of the TAC and not by means of fishing effort. To this end, concessions constitute the main lever for fisheries management in Mauritania and not the number of vessels. This is how, for example, fishing licenses in Mauritania are divisible (see above).

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]** The practice of publishing data on annual landings and transshipments recorded in national ports of vessels operating in large-scale fishing in Mauritania continued in this second validation timeframe. While the recorded catches are very well detailed (by flag and species groups), only a percentage of the overall catches recorded was provided online on landings and transshipments in national ports. Compared to the first validation period, no change was noted for this indicator.

To ensure the country's compliance with the FiTI Standard, the NMSG had 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. In the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, only the percentages were published on the FiTI Mauritania website (similar to the first validation). However, the NMSG indicated in its 2019-2020 It is unclear whether the NMSG was satisfied with this partial provision of information, or whether it simply cancelled its previous recommendation regarding the requirement.

- ➡ **[B.1.5_6]** As with landings and transshipments in national ports (see B.1.5_5), the NMSG published in its 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports (and on its website) data on annual transshipments recorded at sea or landings in foreign ports as a percentage of total retained catches, but without providing detailed information on their specific composition and flag State.

- ➡ **[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.

During the first validation period, the NMSG 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).

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. In 2022, only five scientific observation missions were carried out, including two on board Russian industrial pelagic trawlers, a single mission for shrimp fishing and two for pelagic coastal fishing. Consequently, the NMSG stressed in its 2022 FiTI Report that

“precise information on the total volume of discards is not accessible to national authorities”. The Reports of these missions is published by IMROP on its website⁵⁵.

Furthermore, no information has been provided on the reasons why this information is not accessible to national authorities. According to DARE, the failure to take the above-mentioned recommendation into account is linked to the difficulties in boarding scientific observers (reluctance of vessels owners and lack of resources to mobilise observers).

However, the report of the 7th working group⁵⁶ gives detailed information on the quantity of discards by type of fishing, which is currently dated.

[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]** During the first reporting process, the NMSG published information on fishing effort expressed in number of trips. Due to the lack of updates, the information on fishing effort published in 2018 was carried over to the 2019-2020 and even the 2021 FiTI Reports.

For the 2022 FiTI Report, the NMSG published online information on fishing effort in terms of number of fishing hours. According to the 2022 FiTI Report Compiler, Mauritania does not give enough priority to monitoring the fishing effort because the country has adopted fisheries management through fishing quotas. Thus, access is placed on monitoring the TAC for each concession.

[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.

⁵⁵ <https://www.imrop.mr/document/synthese-des-missions-dobservation-scientifiques-2022/>

⁵⁶ [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344439855 Rapport du septieme groupe de travail de l%27IMROP sur l%27evaluation des ressources et amenagement des pecheries de la ZEE Mauritanienne](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344439855_Rapport_du_septieme_groupe_de_travail_de_l%27IMROP_sur_l%27evaluation_des_ressources_et_amenagement_des_pecheries_de_la_ZEE_Mauritanienne)

- ➡ **[B.1.5_9]** Prior to the first 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 MPIMP Technical Committee on Statistics, published online on the MPIMP 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. Given that these efforts only address certain aspects of the large-scale fisheries contribution, this indicator was seen as ‘not collated’ during the first validation.

The NMSG continued to publish the same types of information on the economic, social, food and nutritional contribution of the large-scale fisheries sector as during the first validation period. Only certain information was updated by the national authorities, such as revenues, while other information has not been updated (such as data for jobs and added value). Data which was updated has been published online by the NMSG through a summary table.

[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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates no significant progress regarding the levels of transparency. On the one hand, the spreadsheet-based vessel registry improved in 2021 and 2022 compared to the previous validation timeframe and the report of the scientific observation missions to collect data for the discard is now published online. On the other hand, several other areas within large-scale fisheries have shown no relevant progress, despite NMSG recommendations from the first validation timeframe.

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.	Compliant [3]
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]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.6]

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]** During this second validation timeframe, the NMSG continued its efforts to publish small-scale fisheries information on its website and through the FiTI Reports, presenting the total number of artisanal fishing vessels summarized in the form of tables, broken down by type of fishing and by type of fishing gear, thus ensuring compliance with this requirement.

In addition, the government also made public information on small-scale fishing vessels broken down by type of vessel (*plastic pirogue, wooden pirogue, launch, boat, lanche, aluminium pirogue, canoe*) and by country of origin even if this information is not required by the FiTI Standard. The NMSG also published information on the total number of concessions allocated to small-scale fishing in 2021 and 2022.

In its first two reports (2018 and 2019-2020), the NMSG had specified that a complete list of artisanal fishing vessels, including attributes such as vessel name, length, type of license, was not available and that it was being developed. This had been highlighted as an important aspect in order to identify vessels that comply with fishing regulations (licenses, registrations, etc.) and those that do not. The NMSG issued recommendation 2018_13 asking the government to “continue the process of developing the directory of artisanal fishing vessels operating along the Mauritanian coast and to put it online”. As part of this validation, this recommendation is considered to be fully implemented by the government. Indeed, in its FiTI 2022 report, the NMSG published on the FiTI website *two downloadable lists* – for coastal and artisanal fisheries respectively – of registered fishing vessels⁵⁷ (i.e. officially recognized by the administration) including the following information: *vessel registration number, fishing license number, license start date, license end date, concession (species)*.

- ➡ **[B.1.6_2]** Information on licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels is available and made public by national authorities for the period covered by this validation through the two aforementioned lists which include information on fishing licenses (see B.1.6_1). Thus, the current lists of licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels operating along the Mauritanian coast in 2021 and 2022 are published on the NMSG

⁵⁷ There are most likely unregistered pirogues engaged in illegal fishing.

website. Separate lists have been produced for each of the two segments (coastal and artisanal fisheries) of small-scale fisheries. Each list provides information on (i) the name of the vessel (or its registration number), (ii) the license number, (iii) the date of issuance of the license, (iv) the end date of the license, (v) the access regime and the type of concession under which the vessel operates.

Unlike in the first validation period, these lists published on licenses by the government now allow to verify the compliance of small-scale fishing vessels with the fishing license. This represents an important advancement regarding the informational value of the data published on small-scale fishing vessels.

- ➔ **[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 (2021 and 2022) this information and published these summaries also on its 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 2021 -22 FiTI Reports, the information on the number of fishers has further been complemented by their nationalities.

- ➔ **[B.1.6_4]** During this validation period, the NMSG continued its efforts to update and publish on its website the payments by segment (small-scale fisheries, coastal fisheries), by type of fees (flat-rate access fees, surveillance fees, direct access fees), as well as by access regime.

It is note that the MSG recommendation to collect disaggregated information on (individual) payments from small-scale fishing vessels has not been fully implemented by the government. Given that total payments are published and further disaggregated by access regime, type of fisheries and type of fishing agreement, it is assumed that information on individual payments is available to the government. As the NMSG has not been complained about this matter, it seems that they do not give enough priority to individual payments and instead, being more interested in monitoring annual licenses that are subject to the upfront payment of the fee.

- ➔ **[B.1.6_5]** During this validation period, the NMSG continued its efforts in collecting and publishing information on catches. For this purpose, summary tables have been compiled by the NMSG and information on total catches by segment (artisanal, coastal) as well as their distribution by species groups or concession (pelagic, demersal, cephalopods and crustaceans) is published.

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 has not been 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 2021 and 2022.
- ➡ **[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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates notable progress towards better levels of transparency, since the information on the total number of small-scale fishing vessels and their licenses has improved, as well as the quality and accuracy of the published data.

It is emphasised that the following 6 transparency requirements (B.1.7 – B.1.12) have only been covered by the NMSG in its 2022 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.	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
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:

- ➡ [\[B.1.7_1\]](#) The NMSG has continued its efforts in collecting and publishing online (on the MPIMP website through the OEPS annual statistical reports, as well as on the NMSG website and in its 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports) information on the total

quantity of fish and fishery products landed and marketed. However, as in the past, no disaggregated information by species and fishery products is covered in these reports. The information is disaggregated by species group (*cephalopods, crustaceans, demersals and pelagic*).

Furthermore, the NMSG stated in its 2022 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.⁵⁸ Therefore, the data in the OEPS reports must be seen as incomplete, as the information has not been collected.

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 yet been produced or collected.

[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 MPIMP's Technical Statistics Committee. This is not required by the FiTI Standard, but it allows the public to track, among other things, the rate of establishment of fish processing plants in the country, including fish meal and fish oil plants.

[Progressive improvement] Compared to the first validation period, the NMSG has continued its efforts to collect and publish online on the FiTI Mauritania website and in the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, updated data in relation to this requirement. However, no progress has been noted in relation to the publication of information on the quantities processed by factories and processing sites as well as their breakdown.

- ➡ **[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). According to the FAO GlobeFish's Market Profile 2020 for Mauritania, the imports of fish and fish products into Mauritania is indeed value at around 2 million USD, whereas the value of exports is shown as 773 million USD.
- ➡ **[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

⁵⁸ According to the NMSG, the MPIMP has a software, but it is not yet working. The question arises of how to institutionalize the software at the level of the Technical Committee for Statistics of the MPIMP and at the level of other structures concerned by this data (Central Bank, National Office of Statistics, Customs, etc.).

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 2021 and 22 FiTI Reports as well as on its 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 OESP and CTS annual reports as well as the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports.

Similar to the first validation period, the absence of regular monitoring of fisheries sector employment results in statistics still being 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.

In its 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports, the NMSG published information on jobs at sea (number of Mauritanian sailors and number of foreign sailors). Regarding jobs on land, the NMSG pointed out in its 2022 FiTI Report that it was unable to find official and precise information on the number of jobs on land for that calendar year. However, information on the number of direct jobs has been published; the gap comes from indirect information as – according to the NMSG – no survey took place in 2022 to accurately estimate the number of indirect jobs.

All the information concerning direct and indirect employment is published on the NMSG website. However, it is important to note that, regarding gender-specific employment information, 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 2022 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 each job on board 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, and therefore, no recommendation to improve this data gap has been issued to the national authorities of Mauritania.

[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.⁵⁹ This lack of information has not yet been addressed in a recommendation from the NMSG to the national authorities in Mauritania.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there is no change in the direction of progress for this transparency requirement.

⁵⁹ 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 it is known 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.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
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.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
B.1.8_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
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.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
		<u><i>Meaningful progress</i></u> <i>[Avg. 2. 2]</i>

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 (2020 -2024), both of which are published online on the website of the MPIMP⁶⁰.

In addition, decisions taken concerning sanitary inspection are published on the ONISPA website. The NMSG highlighted in its 2022 FiTI Report that ONISPA benefited from the renewal of its accreditation in 2022.

Although it is noted that the national authorities have not published online any comprehensive report on activities aimed at ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector, it is important to highlight that the Final Report of the Audit of the Zoning of Maritime Fisheries-Mauritania of 2022⁶¹ devotes a chapter to the zoning and efficiency of fisheries control and surveillance.

- ➡ **[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).⁶²

As part of its 2022 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 its 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 by the government. 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* chaired by the DARE for 2022. These minutes are published online on the MPIMP website and contain detailed information on inspections at sea and in ports. The

⁶⁰ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/version_finale_de_la_l2p_adoptee_en_cm_en_juillet_2022_fr_-_final.pdf

⁶¹ https://fisheryprogress.org/sites/default/files/documents_actions/Audit%20zonage%202020%20Rapport%20final%20d%C3%A9finitif.pdf

⁶² <http://impots.gov.mr/DGI/>

NMSG presented in its 2022 FiTI Report (and on its website) tables summarising the information in relation to the requirement (results of surveillance activities at sea and on land, amount of fines imposed and recovered).

- ➡ **[B.1.8_4]** A record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector for 2022 is available to the GCM, but not published on its website. Instead, a list of infringements for 2022 is published online on the MPIMP website, through the 2023 CTS report, for all types of fisheries (deep-sea, coastal and artisanal).⁶³ This list contains the following information: *year, month, type of infraction, fisheries, number of infractions*.

In its 2022 FiTI Report, the NMSG highlights that the published information does not include the name of the vessel, due to data privacy aspects. During the first validation time frame, the NMSG focused its attention on convictions of fishing vessels, and, for example, no information was provided on other fisheries-related convictions, such as illegal sourcing of fish for fishmeal production. Now, analysis of the information published online by NMSG during this second validation period shows that the results of land-based surveillance operations were also included and that NMSG does not focus solely on convictions of fishing vessels. Violations concerning illegal sourcing of fish for fishmeal factories are drowned in the category of “violations of rules relating to related operations”⁶⁴. This demonstrates a sign of progress by Mauritania regarding the requirement.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there is no notable change in the direction of progress for this transparency requirement.

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	<i>Inadequate progress [1]</i>

⁶³ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/ph-liste_infraction_2017-2020-3.pdf

⁶⁴ Cf. Rapport CTS 2023

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
	applicable for national and foreign workers employed in the fishing sector at sea and in the post-harvest fisheries sector.	
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]
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.	Inadequate progress [1]
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 MPIMP website, the latter is not.

Furthermore, 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 MPIMP, through the DMM and the Maritime district of Nouadhibou (CMNdb).

This information has now been clearly indicated on the FiTI-Mauritania website since the first validation period. As no changes occurred during the second validation period, the information remains the same.

- ➡ **[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 sector⁶⁵;
 - Working conditions in the fishing sector – Comprehensive standards (one convention supplemented by one recommendation) on work in the fishing sector⁶⁶.

As part of the process of preparing the country's 2019-20 FiTI Report, these documents were 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.

The role and legal status of these two organizations are published in the 2022 FiTI Reports and on the NMSG website.

- ➡ **[B.1.9_5]** During the validation period, the NMSG compiled summary tables presenting information on the number of complaints received as well as the most frequent disputes and the dispute resolution rate by subject of the complaints. These tables were published in the 2022 FiTI Report as well as on its website.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there is no notable change in the direction of progress for this transparency requirement.

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.

⁶⁵ <https://docbweb.act.gov.pt/docbwebb/multimedia/associa/pdf/4647-m.pdf>

⁶⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/public/french/standards/relm/ilc/ilc92/pdf/rep-v-1.pdf>

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.	Not applicable
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [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. Overall, the NMSG acknowledged that it is very difficult to find compiled information on fisheries subsidies, even in hard copy.

During the FiTI country mission in June 2024, the NSMSG stated that for the second validation period, there is no data on the value of fishing subsidies because the government has stopped providing subsidies to the fisheries sector since 2021. *This has been clearly stated in the NMSG website⁶⁷.*

However, the FNP has implemented a fuel price mitigation strategy for fishers and signed an agreement with the government in May 2024. The agreement determines fuel pricing parameters for fisher: If the selling price set by fuel companies is higher than the price set by the FNP, the FNP has to pay the difference. To this end, the FNP has set a tax on exports (1%), and the amount collected serves as a solidarity fund that works as guarantee fund. Oil companies are reimbursed from this guarantee fund every year. An agreement has been signed to this effect.

The fact that the NMSG publishes the agreement⁶⁸ (which is not seen as a government fishing subsidy by the NMSG), but a kind of "self-subsidy" from the fisher is notable.

- ➡ [\[B.1.10_2\]](#) As the agreement with FNP is not considered a government subsidy, this transparency requirement is seen as not applicable. However, the 2022 Fishing Fuel

⁶⁷ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2022-2/>

⁶⁸ https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Convention_carburant_Peche-du-29-06-2022.pdf

Price Mitigation Agreement has provided information on the forecast amount to be mobilized; this information is also published online on the NMSG website⁶⁹.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, the current publicly available information indicates progress towards better levels of transparency. In particular, it is noted that the NMSG clearly stated that for the second validation period, there is no data on the value of fishing subsidies because the government has stopped providing subsidies to the fisheries sector since 2021. Also, the NMSG published the fuel agreement initiated by the FNP on its own website, even though this is not seen as a government subsidy.

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>
		<i>Meaningful progress</i> <i>[Avg. 1.5]</i>

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.1.11_1]** In its 2022 FiTI Report, the NMSG compiled a list of 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 NMSG website. However, without sufficient information provided by national authorities, the NMSG stated that it is unclear whether these lists can be seen as complete.

⁶⁹ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2022-2/>

In order to improve public accessibility and completeness of information, the NMSG made a recommendation [ID: 2020_17; Priority: High; Deadline: July 2022] to compile and publish a list of all projects currently implemented in the areas of fisheries and marine conservation. The NMSG has extended the deadline to July 2024⁷⁰.

- ➔ **[B.1.11_2]** As part of the FiTI 2022 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 undertaken assessments.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there is no notable progress for this transparency requirement. However, given that improvement recommendations by the NMSG have been addressed by the national authorities and the NMSG maintain its effort to collect and publish ODA information on its website, it must be stated that there is no change in the direction of progress.

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.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.12_2	The government must publish the country's legal definition of beneficial ownership.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.1.12_3	The government must publish information on the availability of a public register of beneficial owners.	<i>Not collated</i>
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.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>

⁷⁰ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Fiche-de-suivi-des-recommandations-du-GMN.pdf>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.1.12_5	The government must publish the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries.	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.75]

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 NMSG 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 online⁷¹. 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 laws, rules and procedures regarding beneficial ownership, such as the inclusion 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).

The NMSG had made recommendation 2020_16 [ID: 2020_16; Priority: Medium; Deadline: July 2022] to establish a Public Register of Beneficial Owners in the fisheries sector in Mauritania for vessels and factories. The NMSG has extended the deadline to July 2025.

No progress has been noted on the requirement, and it does not seem that Mauritania's national authorities are in the process of addressing the NMSG's recommendation.

⁷¹ <https://www.msgg.gov.mr/sites/default/files/2021-04/J.O.%201481F%20DU%2015.03.2021.pdf>

- ➡ **[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. Information on the status of these discussions is published online on the NMSG website and in the 2022 FiTI Report.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there is no notable change in the direction of progress for this transparency requirement.

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 (calendar years 2021 and 2022).

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.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
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).	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
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.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.2.1_4	For each transparency requirement, FiTI Reports must provide an explanation of significant deviations from previous reporting periods, if applicable.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
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.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>
		<u><i>Compliant</i></u> <i>[Avg. 2.8]</i>

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.2.1_1]** Mauritania’s NMSG published two FiTI Reports in this validation period, covering information for two calendar years, i.e. 2021 and 2022. No gaps exist between these reports.

- ➡ **[B.2.1_2]** Both FiTI Reports (2021 & 2022) clearly stated 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 (as well as on the NMSG website), 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 (2021 & 2022) include references (i.e. hyperlinks, typically as footnotes) to where information can be found online on government website as well as the NMSG website.

- ➡ **[B.2.1_4]** The 2022 FiTI Report provides explanations for significant deviations from the previous reporting period (i.e. 2021 FiTI Report). Such explanations cover two aspects:

- 1) *Deviations in the underlying information* (e.g. number of vessels) are clearly shown in the 2022 FiTI Report by comparing the current information to information from the previous calendar year (2021). This allows for a simple comparison between the two reporting periods.
- 2) *Deviations in the transparency performance* are explained in the 2021 & 2022 FiTI Reports (e.g. information that is now published online following recommendations of the NMSG, such as the list of licensed small-scale fishing vessels, etc.).

- ➡ **[B.2.1_5]** Mauritania's NMSG did not provide new recommendations on how to strengthen the availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date information in the public domain. Only previously made recommendations were updated (in particular regarding the due date). While this is an acceptable practice, both FiTI Reports do show several other areas of progressive improvements where no recommendation has been issued by the NMSG. The FiTI International Secretariat therefore perceives that the NMSG is not taking sufficient advantage of the important principle of 'progressive improvement' in the annual reporting process. However, the NMSG considers that formulating new recommendations when previous ones are not yet fully implemented could create a problem. Therefore, the NMSG has chosen to implement the recommendations already in place before identifying new ones, given the operational and institutional difficulties it faced during the validation period.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, and despite the fact that the NMSG has not issued any new recommendation on how Mauritania's national authorities can further improve transparency in fisheries management, there is no notable change in the direction of progress.

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.	Not applicable
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.	Not applicable
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.	Not applicable
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.	Compliant [3]
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. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.2.2_1\]](#) Not Applicable.
- ➡ [\[B.2.2_2\]](#) Not Applicable.
- ➡ [\[B.2.2_3\]](#) Not Applicable.

- ➡ **[B.2.2_4]** In accordance with the FiTI Standard, the NMSG's 2021 FiTI Report was due by the end of 2022, but published only in April 2023. However, the NMSG had previously requested an extension of the deadline for the submission of this report (to publish the report by April 2023). This request was approved by the FiTI International Board during its 19th meeting [BM-19_2022_D-04].⁷² Hence, while delayed, the NMSG's third FiTI Report was still published in compliance with the reporting deadlines stated in the FiTI Standard. While the 2022 FiTI detailed Report was approved and published by the NMSG on the 15th of December 2023, the actual publication of the summary report (prepared with the support of the FiTI international Secretariat) took place only in March 2024, due to the required effort to design of the summary section of the FiTI Report.
- ➡ **[B.2.2_5]** Mauritania's 2021 FiTI Report addressed the first six requirements of the FiTI Standard. Mauritania's 2022 FiTI Report addressed all 12 transparency requirements.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, no notable progress has been demonstrated regarding this requirement.

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.	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
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. ⁷³	<i>Compliant [3]</i>
B.2.3_3	The appointment of the country's Report Compiler must be endorsed by the National MSG.	<i>Meaningful progress [2]</i>

⁷² <https://fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

⁷³ 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 NMSG.

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
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. ⁷⁴	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. ⁷⁵	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_9	The National MSG must formally approve the FiTI Reports and publish them afterwards.	Compliant [3]
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.	Not applicable
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.9]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.2.3_1\]](#) Both FiTI Reports were prepared by Dr Moustapha Kébé as the Lead Report Compiler (with support by Abderrahmane Boujoumaa). 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 Kébé also acted as the Report Compiler for Mauritania's first two FiTI Reports (2018, 2019-20). Abderrahmane BOUJOUMAA is based in Mauritania and has a good

⁷⁴ This also includes information that is published on government websites vs. information that is provided in a FiTI Report.

⁷⁵ The FiTI Standard encourages the NMSG to consult with others outside of the NMSG in undertaking this review. However, this is not a mandatory requirement and therefore, falls outside of the scope of the validation.

knowledge of the Mauritania fisheries information system, particularly that of the OESP. He is a qualified IT specialist in MIAGE (Computer Methods Applied to Business Management). Both Compiles are not part of Mauritania's NMSG.

- ➡ **[B.2.3_2]** Both FiTI Reports were financed by an external donor, the GIZ as part of the special initiative "*One World Without Hunger - SEWOH*" of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Recruitment of Mauritania's Report Compilers was therefore conducted through GIZ'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. Furthermore, the legal engagement of the Report Compilers was done by the GIZ following their own internal processes ((initiated by the NMSG which developed and transmitted the ToRs to the GIZ). After the selection of the preferred Report Compiler by the GIZ, the NMSG was informed and did not object this selection.
- ➡ **[B.2.3_4]** No evidence was found that the NMSG and the Report Compilers 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 (previous) NMSG members. Furthermore, it is indicated in Annex B of each report (Consultations for the preparation of the FiTI Report) that exchanges were also carried out with the members of the NMSG at the beginning and end of the Compiler's mission to Mauritania, when two working sessions were organised.
- ➡ **[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. The work of the Report Compilers was based on the mapping initially carried out by the NMSG (regarding transparency requirements and national data providers/owners). Detailed lists of those consultations are documented in annex B of both FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022).

- ➔ **[B.2.3_6]** The main discrepancy noted by the Report Compilers, particularly during the preparation of the 2021 FiTI Report, concerns the lack of consistency between the number of vessels monitored by the DMM and the number of vessels for which the DGERH documented payments. These discrepancies were fully addressed during the preparation of the 2022 FiTI Report.
- ➔ **[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. Draft versions of the reports were submitted in advance to the FiTI International Secretariat as well for possible comments and suggestions.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_8]** For both reporting periods, members of the NMSG reviewed the preliminary findings of the Report Compilers and provided comments for the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_9]** It was stated that both FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022) were approved by the NMSG during their meetings. Unlike the first validation period, these approvals are now formally documented in the NMSG meeting minutes published on the NMSG website⁷⁶.
- ➔ **[B.2.3_10]** Not applicable.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, several notable improvements can be recognised. In particular, the appointment of the Report Compiler was properly endorsed and documented. Collaborative efforts between the NMSG and the Report Compilers ensured a transparent and inclusive reporting process, with comprehensive consultations documented. Also, the meeting minutes – now published on the NSMSG website – formally document the approval of the FiTI Reports. Therefore, a positive direction of progress can be observed.

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>

⁷⁶ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/reunions/>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
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.	Meaningful progress [2]
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. ⁷⁷	Inadequate progress [1]
B.2.4_4	FiTI Reports must be published online under an open license.	No progress [0]
B.2.4_5	The National MSG must make users aware that information can be reused without prior consent.	Complaint [3]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.8]

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.

To facilitate the reading of the reports, 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).
- ➡ **[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 *press release*⁷⁸, and Mauritania's media outlets featured the publication of both reports, including newspaper articles. The FiTI National Lead, the FiTI National Secretariat as well as members of the NMSG conducted several activities to enhance the

⁷⁷ The FiTI Standard encourages NMSGs 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.

⁷⁸ The lack of resources but especially the will of the Authorities to respect the deadlines for the publication of the reports pushed the NMSG to prefer the press release to the official launch ceremony of the reports which requires preparation time and a lot of resources.

distribution of Mauritania's FiTI Reports to key national and international stakeholders, e.g.:

- A national TV debate was organized in 2022 with the participation of the FiTI National Secretary;
- Information and awareness-raising meetings on the FiTI were conducted in Nouadhibou and Mamghar in 2023 by the artisanal sub-section of the FNP;
- Workshops on transparency were held in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott in February 2024 as part of awareness-raising activities organised by the non-governmental organisation PRCM;
- Copies of the 2021 FiTI Report (summary section) were distributed to several stakeholders, including those in the Government.

While these 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 dissemination 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 still not widely known, or stakeholders are not even aware of the existence of the FiTI in the country. The same applies to international stakeholders.

- ➡ **[B.2.4_3]** There remains no formalised approach to how the main findings of the FiTI Reports contribute to public debates on how the fisheries sector is managed, nor how this information can feed into public policy making, despite the fact that this was mentioned as a corrective action by the FiTI International Board as part of its first validation of Mauritania⁷⁹.

While anecdotal evidence shows that these efforts have been applauded by several non-governmental organisations as well as individuals engaged in the industry, additional initiatives by the NMSG and the FiTI Lead Ministry are needed still needed to ensure that future FiTI Reports promote discussions among the wider public and are used in public decision-making. A meeting was held in July 2024 in collaboration with the FiTI National Secretariat to discuss how Mauritania's fishers' organisations could support the NMSG in making FiTI more visible and impactful in Mauritania.

⁷⁹ "The NMG should formalize an approach to ensure that information published as part of the FiTI implementation process contributes to sustainable policymaking, effective oversight, accountability, and public debates."

Therefore, the *corrective action* issued in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement – relating to report dissemination and public debate – has not been fully met.

- ➡ **[B.2.4_4]** Both FiTI Reports (2021 & 2022) have been published online on the website of the MPIMP as well as the NMSG 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. Given that the FiTI Reports and the NMSG website are currently used to display a significant amount of information which is not available on other government websites, such licences should be published and linked to open data to ensure users can easily find and understand the conditions of data access and reuse.
- ➡ **[B.2.4_5]** The NMSG included a clear statement on its own website that the information on this site is freely accessible and can be downloaded and re-used, free of charge and without conditions or restrictions.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, overall there is no notable change in the direction of progress, even though the NMSG's efforts regarding report dissemination and public debates could be seen as a slight improvement.

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.	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➔ **[B.3.1_1]** Mauritania is seen as a country providing an environment that allows stakeholders – in principle – to engage openly in public debates and express their opinions, even though evidence – in particular from international sources (as shown below) – suggests that the environment is increasingly stressed. Freedom of expression is guaranteed under Mauritania’s Constitution.⁸⁰ 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 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.⁸¹

⁸⁰ <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/sc/sc001en.pdf>

⁸¹ <https://rsf.org/fr/pays/mauritanie>

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:

- According to the 2023 report by the international non-governmental organization Freedom House, *press freedom* in Mauritania is classified as 'partly free,' with a score of 36 out of 100. This represents an improvement from the country's previous score of 'not free'.⁸²
- Mauritania ranked number 41st (vs. 40th in 2022) in '*Overall Governance*' in the *Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)* – out of 54. The low score of 32.5 (a loss of -2.6 points compared to the previous period) out of 100 for the category 'Participation, rights and inclusion' is something that needs to be closely monitored by the FiTI over the next years regarding its impact on an enabling environment for stakeholder participation (in particular in the fisheries sector).⁸³

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. 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).⁸⁴ An email was even sent to the FiTI International Secretariat to this effect by a small-scale fishing organisation in Mauritania. The government, for its part, reiterated its approach to work only with the umbrella organisation of the fisheries sector, in this case the FNP, and that all

⁸² <https://freedomhouse.org/country/mauritania/freedom-world/2023>

⁸³ <https://iiag.online/data.html?meas=GOVERNANCE&loc=MR&view=overview>

⁸⁴ For more information, please refer to [B.3.3_2].

organisations wishing to cooperate with the government must join the umbrella organisation, to reduce the multitude of organisations in the fisheries sector that refuse to work together. For organisations that are not members of the FNP (most of which are dissidents of the FNP), this is considered favouritism because they do not want to join the FNP and prefer to carry out their own activities. Some of these organisations do not even have their own legal status. Currently, organisations not affiliated with the FNP have been offered the opportunity to attend NMSG meetings as non-voting observers. Given the complexity and sensitivity of this issue, it is recommended that the Independent Validator follows up on this matter more closely.

- ➔ 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.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there has been no change in the implementation of this requirement, meaning that Mauritania maintained its enabling environment for stakeholder participation in fisheries transparency.

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>Compliant [3]</i>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.2_2	Changes to the FiTI Lead Ministry or the FiTI National Lead must be made public, if applicable.	Compliant [3]
B.3.2_3	The National MSG must maintain a properly authorised and resourced FiTI National Secretariat as specified in requirement A.5.	Inadequate progress [1]
		<u>Meaningful progress</u> [Avg. 2.3]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.3.2_1\]](#) During this validation period, Mauritania finally changed its FiTI Lead Ministry and, consequently, its FiTI National Lead. Joint Decree No. 0734 of July 29, 2022 designated the MPIMP as the new lead ministry for the FiTI. Mr. Sidi Ali Sidi Boubacar was appointed the new FiTI National Lead by Decree No. 1096/MPEM of November 22, 2022.

It is the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that this change in the FiTI Lead Ministry and the FiTI National Lead adequately fulfils the relevant corrective action issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania. While it is crucial to emphasise the importance of concluding this transfer, it also needs to be recognised that this transfer process took a very long time (approx. 15 months), resulting in negative impact on the FiTI process. During the transfer period the former FiTI Lead Ministry (and its appointed FiTI National Lead) was already inactive while the newly designated FiTI Lead Ministry one could not yet officially assume its new responsibilities before the finalization of the transfer process was finalised by signing the interministerial decree. Thus, the two leading bodies were increasingly absent from the operational process of FiTI implementation.

Furthermore, the process of appointing the new FiTI National Lead from within the MPIMP took another four months. Given that the FiTI National Lead also acts as the Chair of the NMSG, the NMSG was without leadership for over two years, and the FiTI implementation lacked the mobilisation of political and financial support. The few activities carried out by the NMSG were initiated and supervised by the FiTI National Secretary.

- ➡ [\[B.3.2_2\]](#) As mentioned above, Joint decree No. 0734 of 9 July 29 2022 designated the MPIMP as the new FiTI Lead Ministry of Mauritania, while Decree No. 1096/MPEM from 22 November 2022 appointed Mr. Sidi Boubacar as the new FiTI National Lead by. These two acts are published online on the NMSG website.

- ➡ **[B.3.2_3]** The FiTI National Secretariat continues to be led by Mr Lamine Camara, Director of Resource Planning and Studies (DARE) within the MPIMP⁸⁵. While Mr Camara has been very active, in particular, in the preparations of the two FiTI Reports, the FiTI National Secretariat lacks 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. The NMSG put forward the idea of recruiting a full-time assistant to support Mr Camara.

This understaffing of the National Secretariat – as well as the lack of any kind of financial support from the MPIMP – has been a reoccurring problem. Over the recent years, cost coverages by external partners (e.g. for NMSG meetings, travel) appear to happen solely on an ad-hoc basis, without a long-term strategy to obtain the necessary funds (e.g. through an annual budget plan for the NMSG). It is noted that in discussions between the International Secretariat and international donor organisations in Mauritania, the possibility of financial support is often raised. However, it seems that neither the FiTI National Lead nor the FiTI National Secretariat have started to explore such funding opportunities.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the new Minister of MPIMP has already agreed in principle to support the operation of Mauritania's National Secretariat and NMSG on the basis of an annual costed Action Plan. This commitment must be followed up to ensure that it is put into practice.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there has been positive improvements with regards to the governance and support of the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania. In particular the transfer of the FiTI Lead Ministry and the appointment of a new, more active FiTI National Lead are important steps. At the same time, resource restrictions for the functioning of the National Secretariat and the NMSG continue to negatively impact the process and need to be addressed swiftly.

⁸⁵ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/designation_secretaire.pdf

⁸⁶ It is noted that discussions took place within the NMSG for the internal mobilization of funds (e.g. the idea of allocating a share of fish exports to the NMSG to support its operations was raised; this idea did not materialise).

Furthermore, the NMSG tried to approach external partners, but their grant and disbursement procedures did not allow the support of all NMSG members, according to the National Secretariat.

Multi-Stakeholder Oversight

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.3_1	The government must maintain a National MSG as specified in requirement A.4.	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]
B.3.3_3	Representatives from organised civil society must be operationally, and in policy terms, independent from government and/or business.	Compliant [3]
B.3.3_4	Changes to the National MSG or to its Terms of Reference must be made public, if applicable.	Compliant [3]
		<u>Compliant</u> [Avg. 2.75]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ [\[B.3.3_1\]](#) The FiTI NMSG continues to comprise 15 representatives, equally distributed among representatives from 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. Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has two new members following the renewal of 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. Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has one new member following the renewal of the NMSG.

It should be noted that all these representatives of this group are still only affiliated with the *National Federation of Fisheries (FNP)*. The concern from certain stakeholders about the government's approach to work primarily with the FNP has already been raised above.

- 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). Compared with the first validation period, this group currently has two new members following the renewal of the NMSG.

However, evidence persists that that several members are still 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 only meets during the review of the Report Compilers' Terms of Reference as well as the reviews and approvals of the FiTI Reports. The minutes of these meetings are published online on the FiTI-Mauritania website.

Given the important of multi-stakeholder oversight for the FiTI implementation process – and to address a corrective action from the country's first validation process – several aspects have been addressed by the FiTI National Lead, the National Secretariat and the NMSG during this validation timeframe:

- *Adjust the composition of the NMSG following the analysis of the Stakeholders*: An analysis to identify organisations or entities relevant to sustainable maritime fisheries in Mauritania but which are currently absent from the NMSG was carried out by the National Secretariat. Based on this, new organisations were admitted to the NMSG of Mauritania while respecting the provisions of Joint Decree No. 0734 of July 29, 2022, which describes the general composition of the NMSG.
- *Procedures for the appointment and replacement of NMSG members*: Given the multitude of civil society organizations and professionals in the sector, the NMSG has opted for representation through the national federations affiliated to the Mauritanian Employer's Association. In order to invite new members, written correspondence was sent to these federations, requesting the designation of representative to the FiTI NMSG. This resulted in five new NMSG members, while other member organisations reappointed their representative. These correspondences are published online on the NMSG website⁸⁷.
- *Possibility of a rotation of the position of NMSG president*: Article 4 of the Joint Decree No. 0734 of July 29, 2022, as well as Article 7 of the NMSG ToR have

⁸⁷ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2eme-gmn/>

already determined that the FiTI National Lead is the Chair of the NMSG. Thus, the NMSG considered that the rotation of the President was not easily possible from a regulatory perspective. Furthermore, the NMSG stated that – from a procedural perspective – an NMSG Chair who is not a member of the public administration group would encounter difficulties in convening representatives of other governmental agencies. However, in accordance with Article 7 of the NMSG ToR⁸⁸, a Vice-Chair (i.e. Mr. Cheikhany) belonging to the Civil Society Group was appointed by consensus during a recent NMSG meeting. This has been made public on the NMSG website⁸⁹.

- *[Invitation of observers]* The NMSG acknowledged that the total number of permanent observers has been set to five (in accordance with article 3 of the NMSG decree⁹⁰ However, at the moment only four permanent observers are participating in the NMSG. While the NMSG has already approved the possibility of inviting international development organizations and partners to the NMSG meetings for their expertise depending on the issues addressed, it needs to be seen whether this will be put into practice.
- ➡ **[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. The first validation had highlighted that this should be corrected in the future. But no action in this regard has been noted from the NMSG.
- ➡ **[B.3.3_4]** The NMSG was renewed during the current validation period, but its size (15 members) and its Terms of Reference have not changed. The composition of the new NMSG has been published online on the NMSG website.

While recognising these positive changes, it must also be noted that civil society and business involvement in Mauritania's FiTI implementation process is currently limited to the members of the NMSG. 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, there appears to be very little communication or

⁸⁸ https://www.peches.gov.mr/IMG/pdf/tdrs_gnm_fiti.pdf

⁸⁹ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2eme-gmn/>

⁹⁰ https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FiTI_MRT_Arrete-2e-GMN-20230427.pdf

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).

However, the increasing awareness of artisanal fisheries professionals of the need to get involved in the FiTI process (even if they are not members of the NMSG) has been recognised during a recent NMSG meeting in June 2024. A meeting with the FiTI National Lead and the National Secretary was initiated by artisanal fisheries organisations to discuss how they could contribute to the promotion and visibility of the FiTI in Mauritania. This was very well received by the national authorities. The artisanal fisheries organisations plan to create a leaflet on the FiTI in Mauritania and carry out awareness-raising activities with the financial support of WADAF.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, there has been notable improvements with regards to the multi-stakeholder oversight, in particular due to new (and more active) members in the NMSG as well as the addition of a Vice-Chair belonging to the Civil Society Group. At the same time, it is perceived that the NMSG is unable to fulfil its full mandate and even its potential due to a lack of operational and administrative support from the National Secretariat (as already outlined above).

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 assessment of the level of progress in achieving the objectives set out in the previous Workplan(s).	<i>Not applicable</i>

ID	Validation indicator	Scoring
B.3.4_3	Each Workplan must outline objectives, constraints, activities and outputs in accordance with requirement A.6. ⁹¹	<i>Not applicable</i>
B.3.4_4	Each Workplan must be approved by the National MSG two months prior to the upcoming reporting period.	<i>Not applicable</i>
		<u>Inadequate progress</u> [Avg. 1.0]

Detailed remarks:

- ➡ **[B.3.4_1]** Since the initial workplan for 2018-19, the NMSG has failed to provide any updated workplans, e.g. no workplans for 2020, 2021 or 2022 were determined. This failure was also documented in the fifth correction action from the FiTI International Board, issued in Mauritania's first compliance statement.⁹²

It is noted that the NMSG has already developed in June 2024 a three-year work plan (2024-2026); published online.

Direction of progress:

Compared to the first validation timeframe, no progress has been made with regards to the provision of annual workplans. The NMSG is currently not using this tool efficiently to plan its activities during the validation timeframe. However, NMSG has recently a positive attitude by developing and publishing a three-year work plan (2024-2026).

Impact Report

In accordance with Section B.3.5 of the FiTI Standard, a NMSG is required to publish an Impact Report every three years, ideally timed to coincide with upcoming validations. Mauritania was due to release its first Impact Report within this validation timeframe, but this requirement has not been met.

⁹¹ 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.

⁹² "To ensure the long-term sustainability of the FiTI implementation process in Mauritania, the FiTI Lead Ministry (through the FiTI National Lead) and the NMSG must determine a long-term resource mobilization and information dissemination strategy."

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.⁹³

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.

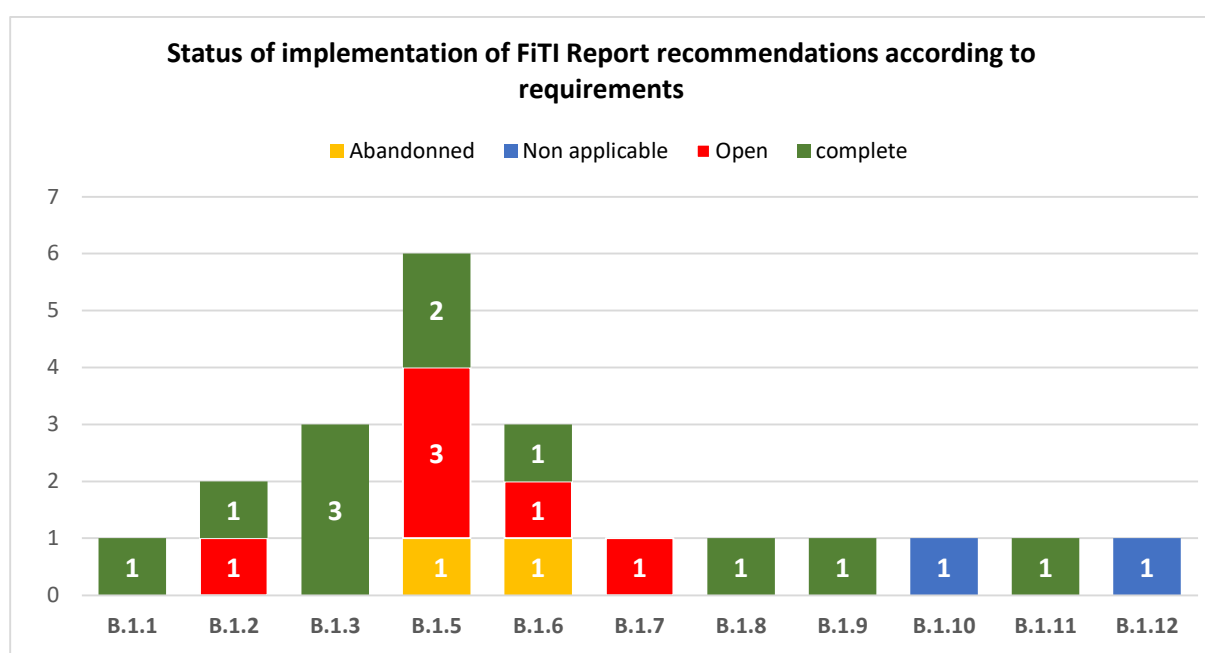
As part of Mauritania's first two FiTI Reports, the NMSG made a total of 31 recommendations to the government of Mauritania to improve transparency in its fisheries management. Unfortunately, this total number includes unfulfilled recommendations for the first FiTI Report that the NMSG unfortunately renewed in the second report. If only unique recommendations are considered, the NMSG made 21 recommendations in total.

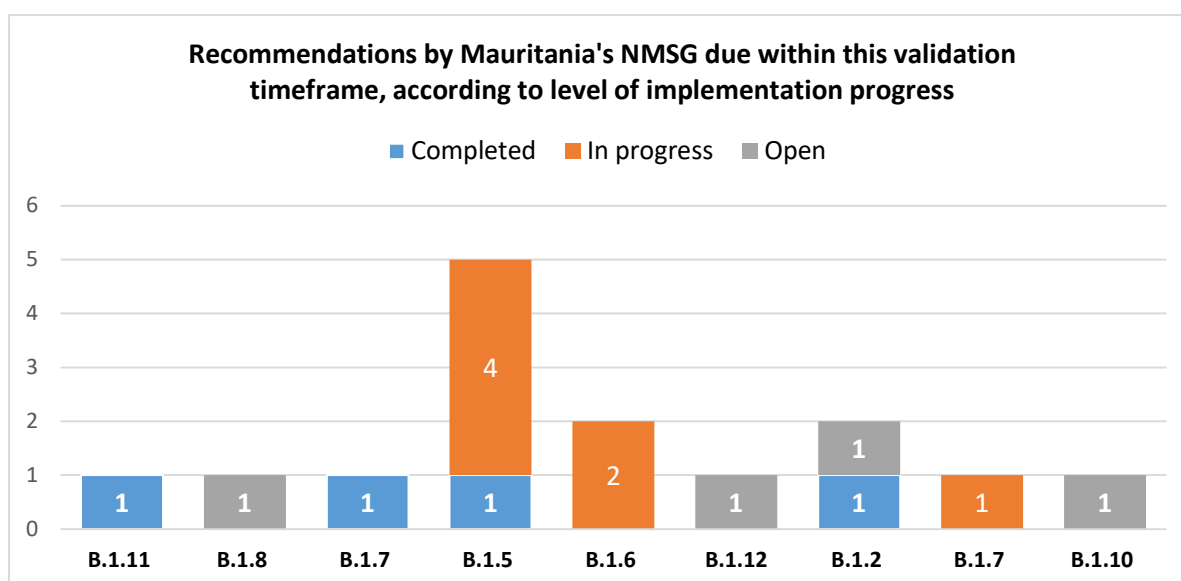
The 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports did not formulate new recommendations; on the contrary, these reports renewed the previous unimplemented recommendations by setting new deadlines.

⁹³ A government is not obliged to implement the recommendations of the country's NMSG. In case the government decides not to follow a recommendation, or to address it at a later point in time then proposed by the NMSG, the reasons for this need to be clearly stated.

Thus, so far *the 4 FiTI Reports of Mauritania formulated 21 recommendations* (if only unique recommendations are considered), and their the status of implementation is as follows:

- 11 recommendations (52%) have been fully implemented;
- 6 recommendations (29%) remain open since the deadline has not yet passed (only one recommendation is due in December 2024);
- 2 recommendations (9.5%) were rejected by Mauritania's government. It was noted that some recommendations lacked sufficient clarity, presenting challenges to implement, particularly those that required the intervention of another ministry or have significant financial implications.
- 2 recommendations (9.5%) were withdrawn by the NMSG, given that it was decided that these recommendations currently do not make sense in for Mauritania's context (for example, one recommendation calls for the collection of information on subsidies when the government has stopped subsidizing fishing).





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;⁹⁴
- ➡ 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;
- ➡ Detailed information on *payments for large-scale fishing vessels* operating in Mauritania is published online and publicly available;
- ➡ A list of *small-scale fishing vessels holding a fishing license*.

The reasons why some recommendations that were to be implemented by the end of July 2024 have not yet been implemented by the National Authorities in Mauritania have not been indicated in the assessment of recommendations (Appendix D of the 2022 report). This assessment found no indication that such a lack of implementation constitutes a breach of the principles of this initiative.

⁹⁴ <http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/2018-2/>

7) Additional considerations

2024 Presidential Election

The FiTI International Secretariat conducted a country mission to Mauritania to support the country in supporting Mauritania with the FiTI implementation process. To this end, the NMSG identified priority activities to be implemented before validation. This was made difficult by the fact that most stakeholders were engaged in the election campaign.

Despite this, the NMSG was able to carry out several actions in terms of publication of data for the urgent implementation of certain recommendations of the FiTI Reports and corrective actions of the first validation of the country.



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Annex II

Validation Report of the
Independent Validator
(April 2022 – July 2024)

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT VALIDATOR

Regular country validation:
FiTI Mauritania (April 2022 - July
2024)

Stefaan Depypere
28/02/2025

Abbreviations

BAR	Baseline Assessment Report
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
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
FiTI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
FNP	National Federation of Fisheries
GCM	Mauritanian Coast Guard
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
IMROP	Mauritanian Institute of Oceanographic Research and Fisheries
ILO	International Labour Organization
JSC	Joint Scientific Committee
MPIMP	Ministry of Fisheries, Maritime Infrastructures and Ports (MPIMP)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
(N)MSG	(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
WADAF	West African Association for the Development of Artisanal Fishing

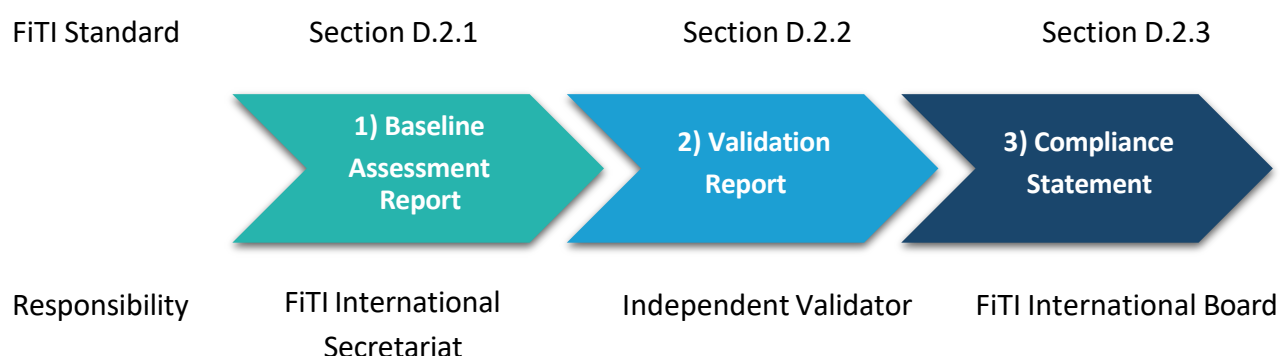
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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:



For the *Islamic Republic of Mauritania* (short Mauritania), the FiTI International Board initiated the country's **first regular validation process** in line with the FiTI Standard (section D.1) in September 2021, covering the period December 2018 – March 2022. The FiTI International Board recognised Mauritania's efforts to implement the FiTI Standard with a score of 'meaningful progress' and issued five corrective actions for Mauritania to undertake which, if properly addressed, could see the country progress to the status of a FiTI Compliant Country. Since then, Mauritania has remained a FiTI Candidate Country.

In accordance with section D.4 of the FiTI Standard, the FiTI International Board has tasked the FiTI International Secretariat to launch the **second regular validation process** for Mauritania (Decision BM-25_2024_D-01). The timeframe for this validation was set from April 2022 until July 2024, covering Mauritania's third FiTI Report (calendar year 2021) as well as its fourth FiTI Report (calendar year 2022).

¹ <https://fiti.global/fiti-standard>

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 a "Baseline Assessment Report" (further: BAR). This assessment was primarily carried out via desk research, without the involvement of national or international stakeholders.

A second step in the validation process was carried out by an independent validator from November to December 2024. The independent validator conducted a site visit to Mauritania between 09 and 16 December 2024 to collect the stakeholder's viewpoints. This was complemented by further virtual meetings and by follow-up questions. 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 conclusions of the FiTI report and the baseline assessment and, on the other hand with the transparency issues in general. Hence, the validation report reflects the perceptions and views expressed by relevant stakeholders. The general idea is to test the various assertions by asking parties concerned about their views. In this Socratic process each assertion is primarily tested with the party that might take a different view. Hence a positive comment (e.g. "there is full transparency") is offered to a party that may wish to challenge this (e.g. civil society or operators) and a negative comment (e.g. "there is a lack of transparency") is offered to the authorities or the operators who should provide transparency, giving them a chance to explain the perceived lack of compliance. Moreover, parties are given a chance to make further suggestions about the desired level of transparency and further progress. This is done through interviews, preferably in situ, but also by conducting virtual meetings and by email exchanges. The validation process does not aim at replicating the work of the report compiler or the basic assessment report.

Around 30 stakeholders expressed opinions:

- 75 % of whom Mauritanian interests, 25% international;
- 42 % representing some form of Government or Institution, 22 % Economic operators, 36 % Civil society or Press.

Generally speaking, the claims of the FiTI report as evaluated by the assessment in the baseline assessment were acknowledged. The Government services and FiTI received acclaim from a variety of stakeholders. There is a general desire for the Government to continue its efforts and an expression of hope that the Transparency might be further enhanced and that the previous recommendations might be followed up regularly.

It transpires that -in comparison to the previous assessment- the country has maintained the existing level of transparency and that, even if certain features have improved, more work remains to be done.

The Multi-Stakeholder Group, whose meetings had become irregular if not inexistent, at the end of the previous reporting period, started meeting again towards the end of the present reporting period. During the reporting period itself, the activity of the MSG and hence its oversight was correspondingly low. The governance structure of the MSG was improved, in accordance with the FiTI recommendations. A new National lead² was appointed and new members³ were recruited. The secretariat continued to function but, as before, without enough resources and support to act efficiently. We will formulate a recommendation on how to remedy this

² At the end of the previous period, there was confusion about various roles and the appointed national lead had become inactive.

³ Even if some designated members seemed to ignore that they feature on the MSG list.

deficiency.

A FiTI report -of high-quality- was produced. It contains information corresponding to many of the FiTI Standard transparency requirements. This was also the case previously and at this level, a high standard of reporting was maintained. Both the previous and the present report were produced by well-informed report compilers.

The report is highly appreciated by all actors. The information is made available through FiTI, on a dedicated FiTI website. The website of the Government (*casu quo* the MPIMP) explicitly refers to the FiTI website.

It would be better though, if all the information was available on a regular basis endogenously on the MPIMP website⁴ itself. It now looks as though FiTI is reporting rather than the Government is reporting directly itself. This may appear like a somewhat trivial point -one might say that information is available, independent on the format and process- but one might also argue that it does matter that the transparency process is internalised by the Government services rather than executed by an external actor like FiTI. In this view, one could argue that FiTI ought to be evaluating the transparency process within the Government, rather than producing the data for the Government. Admittedly, this is a matter for discussion. We will give some ideas on how this might be achieved.

A second further avenue of improvement would be to aim at quicker availability of information. The Transparency should not only be achieved “statically”, at the time of producing the FiTI report, but also dynamically, as and when the data become available. If the Government takes full responsibility, as described above, to produce the data directly itself, it can work towards more dynamic Transparency.

Finally, two further avenues of evolution would be recommendable.

Firstly, the data sets can be used to make more analysis on the value of the fishery activity for the Mauritanian society and on ways to increase the value creation inside the country. Secondly, further efforts can be made to transform data into understandable information and to reach out to various groups in the society. To be fair, we should mention that very commendable initiatives in this sense have already been made by civil society and were supported by the Government. Two workshops, in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott, ought to be mentioned. This should be further encouraged. We will refer to it further in this report. It is worth mentioning in particular two groups of stakeholders who subscribe to the support and appreciation for the results achieved, even if they also add some qualifiers to their view. Civil society is generally happy, especially when referring to the past. They have a good basic data set to work with and they appreciate it. The same goes to a certain extent for international stakeholders. Most are basically happy that data have become available but at the same time they also face certain shortcomings as they expect the data sets to be produced on a reliable basis, and -which is more- in real time. This would allow them to integrate the data into their own analysis and reporting systems. This is an area where further progress is possible and where it should also be pursued. We will suggest some ideas on how this could be done.

It would be unfair however to ignore the comments by stakeholders that the country compares favourably in its ambition and its efforts made over the past decade⁵. It is acknowledged by various international stakeholders that serious efforts have been made

⁴ The MPIMP website itself is below standard, featuring certain items that are completely outdated and being very irregularly accessible.

⁵ The country has been improving steadily over the past decade, be it starting from a very modest basis. There is also an impression that the rhythm of progress has slowed down. A new impetus would be useful.

and that good results have been obtained. At the same time suggestions have been offered on the way forward. A recurring comment is that the execution of well-defined strategies is regularly falling behind.

Finally, it is good practice to formulate a theory of change when advocating policies or projects. The underlying theory of change with regard to Transparency is that better Transparency will lead to better informed stakeholders, better interaction between stakeholders and policy makers and ultimately to better Governance and better economic and social performance. During my conversations as validator with the high-ranking officials and with the Minister, I met with an ambition to further work in this direction. This is also very much awaited by a variety of stakeholders from the private sector, international bodies and NGOs'. As all elements are there, this bodes well for the future on the "long and winding road" to Good Governance. Obviously, managing the fishery activity in Mauritania is quite a challenge. There is a wide variety of parties operating, ranging from thousands of artisanal fishers -many of whom are not really Mauritanian- over foreign operators that have associated with national interests, and thus operating as national fleets, to long distance foreign fishing fleets. There is a thriving post-harvest activity that could be further developed leading to more value creation in the country.

Conclusion:

The comments made in the BAR on the standard FiTI criteria have been confirmed during my conversations with the stakeholders as is shown in the detailed assessments.

Referring to the Compliance statement which contained 5 main corrective actions (with detailed sub-actions), we found that 2 main categories have been complied with⁶ but three other categories remain unattended⁷. We suggest that these corrective actions be repeated and be associated with precise roadmaps containing milestones and target dates.

What this boils down to is that the Transparency has certainly reached a good level but that the results are no longer improving substantially. It would be timely for the Government to start a new trajectory towards a next level of quality and reliability.

Even if the present technical solution may be very convenient, the Government might decide to steer away from providing Transparency via a proxy (*casu quo* FiTI). Its own services are capable of providing dynamic Transparency. Furthermore, the Government can continue to rely on the MSG for further input but it should endow this group with sufficient material support.

The roadmap towards this result should include the following main elements:

1. Finally endowing the FiTI national secretariat of the MSG with the resources to allow it to operate and to arrange regular, well prepared and more frequent meetings⁸;
2. Beefing up the resource basis of the statistical service, allowing it to validate and publish the various statistics on a regular basis;
3. Improving the quality and reliability of the website of the MPIMP. This may require the MPIMP to obtain operational IT independence from other Government departments.
4. Building up the communications toolbox towards the various stakeholders.
5. As a final touch, fostering the environment for analysis, evaluation and societal debate.

⁶ Appointing a lead Ministry and setting up an MSG.

⁷ Good administrative support for the MSG, using the information to foster sustainable policy making and public debate, defining a long-term resource mobilization and information distribution strategy.

⁸ Our conversations with various international stakeholders showed a willingness on their behalf to support this

We realise that these various points reflect an increasing level of complexity. The first point should be relatively easy. Point 2 and 3 would require a serious Organisation Development and, if achieved, would reflect a major progress bringing Mauritania to a state-of-the-art level. As mentioned, this would be challenging but it would certainly be possible to achieve. Finally, if 4 and 5 can be achieved, this would generate a major improvement of economic performance and allow the country to extract more value from its natural factor endowments.

2 - VERIFICATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS

Detailed analysis of the compliance criteria under FiTI

Key findings

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

The BAR mentions that Mauritania has maintained (or even enhanced) its levels of online transparency of fisheries management information notably (as documented in the country's first Compliance Statement). It acknowledges that a significant amount of information on Mauritania's fisheries sector has already been collected and made publicly accessible by the national authorities through the MPIMP and its attached bodies. For some data the government has improved data accuracy, completeness and publication in line with the FiTI Standard, such as information on the flag of large-scale fishing vessels operating under the EU-RIM Fisheries Agreement, payments from small-scale fishing and subsidies.

During this validation period, the information held by the Mauritanian national authorities was mainly published on the MPIMP website (<https://www.peches.gov.mr>) and on the NMSG website dedicated to the FiTI (<https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr>). The NMSG website remains endorsed by the MPIMP, demonstrated, inter alia, through a direct link from the MPIMP website to the NMSG website. The BAR also mentions that the NMSG has decided to continue with the practice of providing a dedicated website to display information in accordance with the FiTI Standard, given that the MPIMP website still does not allow the visual display and organisation of this data as easily, and has also proven to be cumbersome to update.

As validator I confirm these comments, even if I would consider that "cumbersome to update" is a euphemism for saying that the site is outdated. Admittedly, there are "subsites" where more updated information can be found but, all in all, this not up to standard.

The BAR also mentions that during this second validation timeframe, the NMSG made improvements to its website. Yet, it also mentions that, despite these notable efforts of the NMSG, it is acknowledged that access to the NMSG website is regularly disrupted (due to several technical difficulties), requiring the intervention of the webmaster to restore the situation. It argues that, given the importance of this website for the provision of fisheries information for Mauritania, this represents a constraint on access to information for national and international stakeholders.

As validator, I can confirm these remarks and I would add that the website of the MPIMP itself is even more unavailable than the NMSG site. Moreover, as mentioned, it is very outdated. Apparently, this is related to the fact that the MPIMP is dependent on other ministerial services to manage the site. I would suggest that the MPIMP needs to move to a next level which might require that it revamps its website and gains operational independence if the central Government information service is unable to provide a stable technical environment.

One positive point, mentioned in the BAR, is that the advancements in online transparency stem from the efforts of Mauritania's government to implement the *recommendations made by the country's NMSG*. Since the beginning of the FiTI reporting process, the NMSG determined 21 recommendations, of which 15 recommendations were made as part of the country's 1st FiTI Report and 6 recommendations in the country's 2nd FiTI Report. The NMSG did not add any new recommendations to the 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports; instead, these reports renewed the remaining recommendations by setting new deadlines.

While no recommendation from previous FiTI Reports is currently overdue, it is acknowledged that this is mainly due to the NMSG adjusting past deadlines. One is led to believe that this adjustment was made so as not to face unmet deadlines.

Nevertheless, *continuing quotes from the BAR*, several *important categories of information are still not publicly available* (either online on a government website, the NMSG website, or published through FiTI Reports), *even though 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 during this validation period). Even if the vessel registry published online has improved considerably during the second validation period, two important attributes are still missing:
 - i. the type of vessel, according to fishing gear or fishing method, following the definition set in the country's legislation, and
 - ii. the quantity and names of target species, permissible by-catch and discards that the vessel is authorised to fish, if specified in the vessel's fishing authorisation.
- ➡ Comprehensive information on the *application of labour laws* in the fisheries.
- ➡ The *record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector*.

The FiTI International Secretariat considers that the government of Mauritania has shown its commitment to the FiTI principles and there are *no signs of wilfully withholding information required by the FiTI Standard*. It accepts that information being 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.

During my conversations as validator, I obtained confirmation for these operational challenges. This being said, it could be added to the workplan to progressively remove such operational challenges. The missing pieces of information are important for analysis.

Finally, the FiTI international secretariat highlights that both FiTI Reports that fall into this validation timeframe (i.e., 2021 and 2022) made transparent the *remaining information gaps* as well as obstacles hindering the full online accessibility of government information⁹. Information that is not yet available to the Mauritanian government at all – as it has not been compiled or even collected yet – covers essentially the same categories of information as highlighted by the first validation.

It seems -mentions the BAR- that these challenges are based on operational hurdles that national authorities face in their efforts to improve access to sector-specific information, particularly in fisheries. Nevertheless, 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.

As validator, I confirm these comments and I can add that relatively little seems to have moved since the fourth FiTI report. This may be due to the fact that the NMSG activity was scaled back for a long period. Now that the NMSG started up its activity again, we may expect new evolutions.

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

In general, Mauritania has closely followed the procedural requirements set out in section B.2.1 of the FiTI Standard while producing its last two FiTI Reports.

The *reporting requirements of the FiTI Standard* (section B.2.1), requiring Mauritania's NMSG to produce a FiTI Report annually, have been met through two FiTI Reports (for calendar year 2021 and 2022). Each of these two FiTI Reports included 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 includes references to where it can be found in the public domain. As mentioned above, the

⁹ 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 -as is more likely- simply do not have the technical, financial or human resources needed to produce such information.

NMSG has not issued any new recommendations on how the government of Mauritania can continue strengthening the public availability of accessible, complete and up-to-date fisheries management information¹⁰. Instead, recommendations from previous FiTI Reports (2018 and 2019-2020 reports) that had not been implemented were renewed with new deadlines. One consequence is that none of the recommendations are overdue, based on the new deadlines set by the NMSG.

It is noted that Mauritania struggled again to meet the *reporting deadlines* of the FiTI Standard (section B.2.2) for the FiTI Reports that fall within this validation timeframe:

- ➡ Mauritania's 2021 FiTI Report was approved by the NMSG in March 2023 and published in April 2024. While this shows a deviation from the deadline stipulated in the FiTI Standard (the 2021 FiTI Report was due by end of 2022), Mauritania's NMSG did request an extension from the FiTI International Board. The request to publish the 2021 FiTI Report by April 2023 was approved by the FiTI International Board during its 19th meeting [BM-19_2022_D-04]¹¹.
- ➡ Mauritania's 2022 FiTI Report (*Detailed section*) was approved and published by the NMSG on-time (end of December 2023), but the Summary section – prepared with the support of the FiTI international Secretariat – was only published in March 2024.

Both FiTI Reports (2021 and 2022) comply with the scope of transparency requirements set forth in the FiTI Standard. The 2021 FiTI Report contained information on transparency requirements 1 to 6, whereas the 2022 FiTI Report contained information on all 12 transparency requirements.

Mauritania's next FiTI Report (covering calendar year 2023) is due by the end of 2024.

Additionally, Mauritania's 2021 and 2022 FiTI Reports adhered to the *reporting process* outlined by the FiTI Standard. Both reports were compiled by an external Report Compiler (i.e. Dr Moustapha Kébé, in collaboration with M. Abderrahmane Boujoumaa, whose appointment was approved by the NMSG. Throughout the reporting processes, the Report Compiler engaged in numerous discussions with relevant stakeholders and was granted extensive access to fisheries information and data held by government entities. He collaborated closely with the NMSG to draft the reports, submitting initial drafts for the group's review and feedback. The NMSG reviewed and formally approved both reports before they were published.

Finally, it was noted during the first validation 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. This was also noted in one of the five *corrective*

¹⁰ For more information, please refer to section 'Appraisal of progressive improvements' of this document.

¹¹ <https://fiti.global/fiti-international-board>

actions issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania¹².

To address this correction action, the FiTI National Lead, the FiTI National Secretariat as well as members of the NMSG conducted several activities to enhance the *distribution of Mauritania's FiTI Reports* to key national and international stakeholders, e.g.:

- ➡ A TV debate was organized in 2022 with the participation of the FiTI National Secretary;
- ➡ Information and awareness-raising meetings on the FiTI were conducted in Nouadhibou and Mamghar in 2023 by the artisanal sub-section of the FNP;
- ➡ Workshops on transparency were held in Nouadhibou and Nouakchott in February 2024 as part of activities from the non-governmental organisation PRCM.

Most of these activities were financed by the FNP and the PRCM. An overview activity report regarding such NMSG endeavours is published on the NMSG website¹³. While these efforts are still not regular or systematically conducted (due to a lack of human and financial resources, effective support and training for its members) it could nevertheless be seen as progress of the NMSG's commitment, in particular compared to the first validation period.

It is also important to highlight that several organisations not part of the NMSG have benefited from WADAF's support to make the FiTI better known in Mauritania. Based on this example, a meeting was held in July 2024 with the FiTI National Secretariat to discuss how other fisher's organisations could support the NMSG in making the FiTI more visible in Mauritania.

While anecdotal evidence shows that these efforts 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 still needed to ensure that future FiTI Reports promote discussions among the wider public and are used in public decision-making.

Therefore, it is acknowledged that the above-mentioned *corrective action* issued in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement – relating to the report dissemination and public debate – has only been partially met.

As validator, I have checked and tested these observations made by the FiTI International Secretariat in the BAR and I can confirm that they are correct. I did find that a good nucleus of societal reach-out is taking place. Moreover, it needs to be underlined that these information actions -such as the one by CIPCPM¹⁴ - are actively supported through technical input by the MPIMP and its DARE directorate¹⁵. The information actions consist of visual material, a short

¹² Corrective action #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."

¹³ <https://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/activites-de-sensibilisations-communication/>

¹⁴ Financed by ADEPA/WADAF and Manos Unidas.

¹⁵ And of course, by FiTI.

video that can be viewed on smartphones¹⁶, as well as simple printed material (leaflets). An interesting feature to be mentioned is the organisation of so-called information “caravans”, reaching out to local communities.

Other similar efforts to be mentioned are those of the ONG Zakia.

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

The FiTI International Secretariat found that the government of Mauritania continues to provide and maintain an *enabling environment* for business and civil society participation. This is supported by relevant laws, regulations, administrative rules as well as actual practice.

The Mauritanian government changed its *FiTI Lead Ministry* during the course of this validation timeframe from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors to the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy (MPIMP)¹⁷. Consequently, a new *FiTI National Lead* (from the MPIMP) was formally appointed: Mr. Sidi Ali Sidi Boubacar¹⁸ has been Mauritania’s FiTI National Lead since July 2022, providing stability to the oversight of the country’s FiTI implementation. The FiTI International Secretariat’s argues that this change in the FiTI Lead Ministry and the FiTI National Lead adequately fulfils the relevant *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania¹⁹. It does recognise though that this transfer process took a very long time (approx. 15 months), resulting in negative impact on the FiTI process. During the transfer period the former FiTI Lead Ministry (and its appointed FiTI National Lead) was already inactive while the newly designated FiTI Lead Ministry could not yet officially assume its responsibilities before the transfer process was finalised by signing the inter-ministerial decree. Furthermore, the process of appointing the new FiTI National Lead from within the MPIMP took another four months. Given that the FiTI National Lead also acts as the Chair of the NMSG, the NMSG was without leadership for over two years, and the FiTI implementation lacked the mobilisation of political and financial support. The few activities carried out by the NMSG were initiated and supervised by the FiTI National Secretary.

Another positive development relates to the NMSG itself. As a result of addressing a *corrective*

¹⁶ This may sound sophisticated but the smartphone being omnipresent in the society, it allows to reach out to a wide audience, including artisans and post-harvest workers.

¹⁷ http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/FiTI_MRT_Arrete-2e-GMN-20230427.pdf

¹⁸ http://www.fiti-mauritanie.mr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/MRT_Arrete-Responsable-national_20231122.pdf

¹⁹ Correction action #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).”

action issued in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement the NMSG seems more engaged now, despite evidence that few members are still not fully engaged in the MSG's activities. This is mainly due to the recruitment of five new members of the NMSG as well as the appointment of an NMSG Vice-Chair from the members of the civil society stakeholder group. In addition, the NMSG has already approved the possibility of inviting international development organizations and partners to the NMSG meetings for their expertise depending on the issues addressed

However, FiTI International Secretariat is also aware that some professional fishing organisations feel excluded from the NMSG, as they were not asked to participate when the NMSG was renewed. Mauritania's public authorities justified this approach by the government's desire to cooperate solely with sectoral umbrella organizations that are members of the Mauritanian employers' association²⁰. For the fishing industry, the umbrella organization is the FNP, which is the State's sole interlocutor in matters of fisheries governance. The government's decision is intended to encourage all organizations to join the umbrella organization and avoid the creation of several competing federations with often conflicting relations. The government has shown its firm commitment to uphold this approach which has also been adopted for all other sectors. However, organisations not affiliated to the FNP have been offered the opportunity to attend NMSG meetings as non-voting observers.

It is therefore the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that the *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania – related to the NMSG – has been mostly fulfilled, but additional aspects, such as adding more observers and strengthening the group's administration and governance procedures (i.e. Terms of Reference) are still outstanding.

Finally, the insufficient role of the *FiTI National Secretariat* in Mauritania's FiTI implementation process has been noted in the FiTI International Board's first Compliance Statement, resulting in a dedicated corrective action²¹. Overall, says the International Secretariat, the situation regarding the National Secretariat has not significantly improved compared to the first validation timeframe. It is positively noted that the Secretariat filled the void that was left in the lengthy transfer process between the FiTI Lead Ministries. It must be assumed that without this engagement, the FiTI implementation process would have been even further negatively impacted. At the same time, it is perceived that the Secretariat is not giving enough priority to support the NMSG in its operations and outreach activities. The International Secretariat does not see this as a lack of commitment. Instead, it seems to be mainly due to sufficient staff and financial resources. For example, while NMSG meetings are in general not a costly endeavour, certain financial resources are needed for in-person meetings, including travel support for non-governmental actors located in Nouadhibou. These financial resources are not provided by the FiTI Lead Ministry and are currently covered by other non-

²⁰ An umbrella organisation has been set up for each sector, seeking to bring together all organisations of that sector.

²¹ Correction action #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."

governmental partners. However, these cost coverages appear to happen primarily on an ad-hoc basis, without a long-term strategy to obtain the necessary funds (e.g., through an annual budget plan for the NMSG). In their latest NMSG meetings, different funding strategies were discussed. The assessed options include funding from donor organisations²², retaining 1% of fish exports for the NMSG's activities, or the inclusion of a FiTI line item in the MPIMP budget. The NMSG also emphasised that the FiTI International Secretariat does not support the financing of the NMSG activities. The NMSG also tried to approach external partners, but their grant and disbursement procedures did not allow the support of all NMSG members (only for those who could not afford travel costs), according to the National Secretariat. This is why the NMSG prefer the option of financing through the MPIMP budget.

Furthermore, the Minister of MPIMP has already agreed in principle to support the operation of Mauritania's National Secretariat and NMSG on the basis of an annual costed Action Plan. This commitment must be followed up to ensure that it is put into practice.

It is therefore the FiTI International Secretariat's opinion that the *corrective action* issued by the FiTI International Board in its first Compliance Statement for Mauritania – related to the FiTI National Secretariat – has only partially been fulfilled.

As independent validator, I checked all the assertions by the International Secretariat and I found them to be correct. The entire process was stalled for almost two years. A new MSG is established but it has met infrequently (two meetings with minutes over a period of two years) and the degree of participation is variable.²³ One very committed member argued that the documentation is transmitted very late (in fact, only during the meeting itself) allowing very scant analysis and verification by the MSG members. This implies that the members are almost rubberstamping the documentation and very little time is left for in-depth discussion and recommendations. In these circumstances one should be doubtful that there was effective oversight by the MSG, during the reporting period. This ought to improve when the MSG starts meeting more regularly. I would also have a comment regarding the practice of designating certain organisations as member of the MSG. These organisations then send a designate to the meeting. It is my view that such designates are less committed than when they are personally designated as a member of the MSG. Some of the members of the MSG were hardly aware of their membership and some had already moved inside of their own organisation and had not been replaced yet. It is my view that the MSG should meet regularly -at least once per quarter - with individually designated committed members following a well- prepared agenda. The MSG should become a centre of excellence for the Government in its journey towards Transparency and good Governance. All this can only happen if the National Secretariat is

²² It is the FiTI International Secretariat's perception that, based on discussions with international donor organisations in Mauritania, financial support for the FiTI process could be obtained. However, neither the FiTI National Lead nor the FiTI National Secretariat have started to explore such funding opportunities.

²³ The National Secretariat claims that there were more meetings, but no minutes were made. It also refers to the above-mentioned activities "in the field" that it classifies as MSG activity.

endowed with sufficient resources -both organisationally and financially. To be very concrete, the National Secretariat should have a predetermined annual budget and an officer to manage the documentation and organise meetings. In my meetings with International donors, it was made clear that they are willing to finance such a support for the National Secretariat. Furthermore, the National Lead also confirmed his willingness to subscribe to the relevant request. (Casu quo, the GIZ and the EU both confirmed their support for the FiTI efforts by the MPIMP and its DARE.)

It is correct also that there exists a policy choice by the MPIMP to work with umbrella organisations thus excluding certain other dedicated candidate participants. Such an approach certainly has its merits provided that the umbrella organisations play their intermediary role correctly. This is an important proviso. If the MSG meets more regularly and if its secretariat plays its role in preparing the meeting and giving enough publicity to the agenda and then later to the outcome of the meeting, the participation by umbrella organisations should be considered an acceptable practice. Again, this will only work if the National Secretariat is endowed with the required resource. Finally, it is worth mentioning that non-MSG members can be invited to participate as non-voting members. This in itself adds an important vector of Transparency.

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.

DETAILED 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]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.1_1] In July 2024, The MSG published an updated register of fishing laws and regulations on its website. One stakeholder complained to the independent validator about the timely publication of fishing stops. The fishing stops are not published in real time so that the operators are not capable of relying on the published information to remain compliant with the applicable rules. It is true that this is a deficiency. In a situation of dynamic transparency this should not occur. As validator, I suggest that this be taken on board for corrective action. If this is not remedied before the subsequent validation, then the “compliant” qualification might need to be reviewed. There is no indication that the late publication is a matter of wilful withholding of data.

[B.1.1_2] The online register includes main laws and regulations. However, it does not include the main international Treaties, policy instruments and best practices where Mauritania is a signatory.

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] The summary descriptions of the five main fisheries are all published.

[B.1.2_2] Not applicable as all tenure access or user rights are codified.

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 agreements, including their associated protocol(s).	Compliant [3]	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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.6]	Compliant [Avg. 2.6]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.3_1] Formally this criterion is respected. Certain stakeholders argue that there exist agreements with Turkish²⁴ operators that are not transparently published. The Mauritanian authorities counter the argument by saying that the Turkish operations are considered Mauritanian and fall under the national regime. Whilst formally this may be true, one would of course wish to learn more about the arrangement. This is especially true since various national and international stakeholders are very critical about these operations in terms of sustainability and lack of benefit for the Mauritanian society.

[B.1.3_2] There has been an evaluation of the EU access agreement and this is published. No

²⁴ And allegedly, Russian, though they seem to have moved to Senegal and Guinea where governance practice is more aligned to their preferences. **Credit must be given to the Mauritanian Government** for not giving in to requests for such alignment.

other access agreement has been evaluated. So, whilst all available evaluations are published one may argue that more evaluations should be undertaken, viz. of all access agreements and other agreements that are not formally access agreements but that result in giving access to foreign operators like the Turkish. One stakeholder from civil society argued that especially the Turkish mode of operation yields very little value added for the Mauritanian society. As independent validator, I cannot formulate a view on this allegation, except that such a statement pleads for engaging in an evaluation.

[B.1.3_3] Stakeholder consultations are not formally taking place but there are information flows and indirect consultation through IMROP. This is an area where further improvement is possible. The tendency is for the Government to step up such consultations.

B1.4 State of Fisheries Resources

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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.4_1] All stock assessments reports are duly published. No instances are reported where published information could or ought to be improved. However, one stakeholder argued that IMROP tends to delay the publication of stock assessments if their evolution is unfavourable. During my conversation with the top official of IMROP, I did not meet with a denial attitude regarding the fact that certain stocks of small pelagic are in relative decline. It is true that IMROP argued that the shared stock may be in a bad state but its Mauritanian part is in a better state. It left the independent validator a bit puzzled how this is possible. Various stakeholders have commented on the declining stock situation. Certain operators argue that the catch is too low to make the effort of preparing for a fishing campaign, payment of the fees, etc. The fact that the income for Mauritania from the main access agreement is declining ought to send an alert signal. So, this is a point of attention for the management of

the stocks. Nobody, however, questioned the technical and professional capacity of IMROP.

[B.1.4_2] All methods are published.

[B.1.4_3] IMROP published information on its research projects and partnerships.

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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
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 ²⁵ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

²⁵ Information on payments to port authorities must be separated from payments for fishing activities.

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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
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.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
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	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

	separately, if available.		
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 [2.2]	Meaningful progress [2.2]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.5_1] Mauritania still does not have a FiTI standard compliant fishing vessel register. As before, there is one list published by DGERH and a spreadsheet drawn up by the DMM with the list of large-scale vessels authorised to fish in Mauritanian waters. Investigations by the report compiler showed that the DMM list only provides information on foreign vessels, whereas the DGERH register includes all vessels, including those listed by DMM. However, both lists contain different attributes and two²⁶ of the 14 FiTI attributes are missing. As before, we found a lack of effort to integrate both lists into a single information system. Admittedly, and as argued by the authorities, DGERH and DMM have a different mission but that is not really convincing. It would be recommendable that the DGERH and the statistical service of the MPIMP draw up a single register. This would require, however that the MPIMP beefs up its resources and publishes all information in a unique fishery information management system. In summary, there is meaningful progress but there is further work to be done.

[B.1.5_2] Information on individual payments was prepared by the DGERH and further processed by the FiTI report compiler for publication on the MSG website. Information on payments to port authorities was not specifically complied but included in revenues of other institutions. This information was not considered a priority by the MSG. As independent validator I can accept the assessment that the country is compliant on this criterion but I still argue that it should not be the FiTI report compiler that processes the data into information. One would rather prefer the statistical service of the MPIMP to provide the service.

[B.1.5_3] Efforts to make accessible retained catch data have continued and as before they included the Poly Hong Dong operations. There is a slight divergence from the FiTI standard (disaggregation per gear type). Catch data are provided per concession (the fishery management system is built on TAC management rather than on effort).

[B.1.5_4] Data on retained catches of large scale foreign flagged vessels have continued to be published by the MSG. They are presented by species group and per flag. Catches are not disaggregated per access agreement so it is not possible to assess compliance of the vessels with the underlying access agreements. Comment as before; to move from meaningful progress to compliance, the statistical services would need to be re-enforced.

²⁶ Type of vessel and quantity and name of target species.

[B.1.5_5] Whereas catches are well detailed, information on landings and transshipments in national ports is given only as a percentage of catches. A recommendation by the MSG to provide actual information was not followed up and in fact dropped by the MSG. Providing the information would have led to FiTI compatibility. Now there is inadequate progress on this criterion.

[B.1.5_6] Same comment as for landings and transshipment in national ports.

[B.1.5_7] In its BAR, the FiTI international secretariat lists the attempts by IMROP under its scientific observation programme to estimate discards. It also mentions that the reports of these missions are published and that the MSG makes the comment that precise information on the discards is not accessible to the national authorities. The number of missions decreased from 19 in 2019 to 5 in 2020. Questioned on this point, DARE refers to the difficulty in boarding observers²⁷ The BAR then refers to a previous report of a working group (“7th working group”) that provides detailed information on the quantity of discards. The MSG found no instance of misleading information or considering alternative sources. The FiTI international secretariat confirms this assessment and gives a compliant assessment. As independent validator, I can agree, but mainly on formal grounds, with this assessment. However, I need to point out that the detailed report referred to, dates back from December **2013**. Even with all the difficulties encountered²⁸, IMROP should try to make new assessments. Especially, given the unfortunate stock situation on specific species, avoiding discards ought to be considered an important goal.

[B.1.5_8] Information on effort remains scarce and the FiTI Report Compiler considers that Mauritania does not give enough priority to monitoring effort because it manages its fisheries through the TAC per concession. The MSG found no instance of misleading information or considering alternative sources. The FiTI international secretariat confirms this assessment and gives a compliant assessment. As independent validator, I can agree with this assessment. This being said, it would be advisable to step up the information provision on effort. More information on effort leads to a more solid assessment of the credibility of reported catch. It also allows to obtain a view on the evolution of the stock situation, if the catch evolves unfavourably in proportion to deployed effort.

[B.1.5_9] This information is only partially available and information that was available has been discontinued. It is considered therefore that this information is ‘not collated’ What has been available has been published. The MSG found no instance of misleading information or considering alternative sources. The FiTI international secretariat confirms this assessment. This being said, as independent validator, I consider that it would be worthwhile to step up efforts to find and document this information, which is precious in societal debates.

All in all, the level of transparency on large scale fisheries has not progressed compared to the first validation period.

B1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
----	----------------------	-------------	------------------------

²⁷ Lack of resources and reluctance by vessel owners.

²⁸ And of course, vessel owners resent observers that come and check on unsustainable behaviour. The fact that vessel owners are reluctant to accept observers should almost be an encouragement to insist on boarding.

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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
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.2.6]	Compliant [Avg.2.6]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.6_1] List of vessels published. Considered implemented by MSG.

[B.1.6_2] List of licenses for vessels published.

[B.1.6_3] Information on small-scale fishers complied through IMROP survey reports

[B.1.6_4] List of payments published per segment, not individually. MSG apparently attaches a low priority. Given the number of individuals, this is understandable.

[B.1.6_5] Summary tables on catches per segment (artisanal, coastal) and distribution per species group (pelagic, demersal, ..) are published. Detailed information is not a priority given the reliance on TAC monitoring.

[B.1.6_6] Information on discards in this fleet is not collected. Discards are considered to be low or even zero. It is reasonable indeed that small scale fishers try to land all their catch and try to extract value from it. Another matter might be post-harvest losses.

[B.1.6_7] Assessments carried out through IMROP and published through OESP.

All in all, in this domain, transparency has been improving.

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 collated	Not collated
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]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.7_1] MSG has continued efforts to publish information on the total quantity of fish landed and marketed. Information is published per species group and not per species. This being said, the information is incomplete -because not being collected- as no information is available on fish processed in factories and by artisanal processing sites. The monitoring by national authorities is limited to exports. So, the absence of information of processing for the national market is not a case of withholding information. This being said, it would be interesting to try and increase this information, as it would increase the understanding of how much value extracted from the fishing activity. On the other hand, the country exceeds the FiTI standard by publishing the number of fish processing plants -including fish meal and fish oil. (thus, allowing them to track their rate of establishment)

[B.1.7_2] No information collected but, for obvious reasons, negligible.

[B.1.7_3] Information per species is not available per type of processing and per type of

finished product. No recommendation by MSG so apparently not considered a priority. This being said, it should not be excessively difficult to produce this information.

[B.1.7_4] Employment information is based on estimates as far as jobs on land are concerned. This is also true for gender related statistics. This being said, it would be worthwhile to continue making best estimates. This is precious information for the authorities and the MIMP would benefit to find confirmation of its central role in the Mauritanian society.

[B.1.7_5] Not collated. Understandable, given the very high number of people involved. This being said, it would be worthwhile to start making best estimates. This is precious information for the authorities and the PMIMP would benefit to find confirmation of its central role in the Mauritanian society.

[B.1.7_6] No information is collected and no reports or studies have been published. (except a study in 2012). This being said, also here, it would be worthwhile to start making best estimates. This is precious information for the authorities and the PMIMP would benefit to find confirmation of its central role in the Mauritanian society.

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	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]

	offence and the penalty imposed.		
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.2]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.8_1] National strategies to ensure compliance are published as well as decisions on sanitary inspections but no comprehensive report. One stakeholder regretted the lack of transparency in this domain. This is an area that falls largely outside of the MPIMP competence but rather with the coast guard. Another stakeholder also suggested that certain fleet segments are specifically targeted and not so much because of a risk evaluation or bad track record.

Obviously, this is a very sensitive domain and it would be helpful to dispel all fears of an unequal implementation of control policy, if information on the compliance policy practice was published.

[B.1.8_2] This information is published partially through the annual finance laws. Information is published on financial resources allocated to the Coast Guard and human resources deployed by ONISPA (sanitary inspections). Related also to the compliance implementation, more transparency in this domain ought to be possible.

[B.1.8_3] Information on the total number of inspections of vessels at sea and in port is collected and published.

[B.1.8_4] The record of major offences is available for the coast guard but not published. Reference is made to privacy concerns for not doing so. Information is published at aggregate level. One still feels that much more relevant information could be published without revealing really private -personal- information. As mentioned, certain stakeholders allege a certain level of discrimination. By publishing more detail on the infringements and related fines one could dispel such suspicions.

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,	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]

	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.		
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] There exist two relevant regulations, only one is published. Furthermore, the summary of national labour standards applicable to domestic and foreign workers is not published.

[B.1.9_2]. The information on the responsible authority (MPIMP) is published.

[B.1.9_3] Basic documents have been published but no information regarding a strategy to enforce the laws on labour standards.

[B.1.9_4] The role and status of the relevant organisations has been published.

[B.1.9_5] Summary tables on the number of disputes and their resolution rate have been published. 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.	Not applicable	Not applicable
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.10_1] Allegedly, the government has stopped providing subsidies to the fisheries sector. There is a fuel price equalisation fund, managed by the FNP and financed by a levy on exports. The agreement to put in place this mechanism is published, though not the value of funds redistributed.

The Government considers that this is not a subsidy scheme. This qualification could be a subject for discussion. More concretely: generally speaking, such a scheme is considered to be a subsidy scheme.

[B.1.10_2] See above.

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] The MSG has published a list of public sector projects at national level but without information from the authorities in charge. The MSG is unsure if this list is complete. This is an illustration by the way, of the fact that information provided by the MSG adds to transparency but cannot necessarily be considered as an achievement by the authorities. One stakeholder commented that the list is not complete.

[B.1.11_2] The Government has not published information on assessments.

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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
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. 2.75]	Compliant [Avg. 2.75]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.1.12_1] Legal basis published. Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_2] Legal definition published. Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_3] There is no public register of BO. Qualification not questioned.

[B.1.12_4] The MSG made a recommendation to establish a public register and has extended the deadline for action until July 2025. Qualification not questioned but there does not seem to be much activity to meet the deadline.

[B.1.12_5] The MSG has published information on the status of the debate. Qualification not questioned though again the MSG acts for the Government in this instance.

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 to the FiTI Report’s reporting period (B.2.2).	Compliant [3]	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]	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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.8]	Compliant [Avg. 2.8]

Detailed comments independent validator:

The various stakeholders could not really comment on the successive sub-standards. There was one comment though, made by various stakeholders, viz. that there exists a tendency not to carry out strategies and plans and not to follow up on recommendations. The FiTI reports themselves were highly appreciated by all stakeholders whom I met.

[B.2.1_1 to 4] No comments were made.

[B.2.1_5] The MSG did not provide new recommendations, considering that formulating new recommendations when the previous ones have not been met is problematic.

As validator, I see the value in their argument but this may bring the process to a halt if previous recommendations are not followed up and moreover the MSG does not regularly meet.

B2.2. Reporting Deadlines and Periods

ID	Validation Indicator	Scoring BAR	Scoring Ind. Validator
B.2.2_1	(only for the 2018 report) The country's 1 st FiTI Report must be published within the subsequent year of becoming a FiTI Candidate country.	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.2.2_2	(only for the 2018 report) 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.	Not applicable	Not applicable
B.2.2_3	(only for the 2018 report) The country's 1 st FiTI Report must contain information from the complete calendar year when the country became a FiTI Candidate country.	Not applicable	Not applicable

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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
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. 3.0]	Compliant [Avg. 3.0]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.2.2_1 to 5] FiTI reports were published with delay. However, the delays were approved by the International Board. Stakeholders made no comments.

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 ²⁹ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

²⁹The 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.

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 information from other stakeholders, if applicable ³⁰ .	Compliant [3]	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]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_8	The National MSG must review the preliminary findings of the Report Compiler and provide comments ³¹ .	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_9	The National MSG must formally approve the FiTI Reports and publish them afterwards.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.2.3_10	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.	Not applicable	Not applicable
		Compliant [Avg. 2.9]	Compliant [Avg. 2.9]

Detailed comments independent validator:

³⁰ This also includes information that is published on government websites vs. information that is provided in a FiTI Report.

³¹ 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.

[B.2.3_1] There is general recognition by all stakeholders that the FiTI report, prepared by Dr Kebe as the lead compiler (with the support of Mr Boujoumaa), is a high-quality document, compiled by a credible, trustworthy and technically competent expert. It accurately reflects the present situation and also contains the necessary recommendations for future action. Mr Kebe is not and was not a member of the MSG, nor is Mr Boujoumaa. All stakeholders were “*unisono*” in acclaiming the work of the report compilers.

[B.2.3_2] Both FiTI reports were financed by GIZ as part of the special initiative “one world without hunger” of the German development Ministry (DMZ). The recruitment followed the procurement processes of GIZ. The various stakeholders in the know are highly appreciative of the support offered by GIZ.

[B.2.3_3] The appointments of the report compilers were allegedly endorsed during the meetings of the MSG but this is not formally documented in the minutes of the MSG meetings. No stakeholder raised a problem on this.

[B.2.3_4 to10] No stakeholder commented.

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.	Meaningful progress [2]	Meaningful progress [2]
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 ³² .	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
B.2.4_4	FiTI Reports must be published online under an open license.	No progress [0]	No progress [0]
B.2.4_5	The National MSG must make users aware that information can be reused without prior consent.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]

³² 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.

		Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.8]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 1.8]
--	--	--------------------------------	--------------------------------

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B.2.4_1] The reports are written in a clear and accessible style.

[B.2.4_2] Both FiTI reports have been widely distributed amongst key stakeholders. They have featured in newspapers and on TV and radio. This being said various stakeholders argued that the FiTI process is still not widely known. But then yet on the other hand there was a stakeholder that showed a visual document as well as flyers capable of reaching out to a very general public. So, there is progress in this area and a commitment by various stakeholders (mostly civil society) to use the results and reach out more widely. This is encouraging.

All stakeholders expressed great appreciation for the FiTI process.

[B.2.4_3] The BAR correctly mentions the absence of public debates even if, as mentioned just above, there have been various initiatives to communicate the information. Certain stakeholders explicitly mentioned their ambition to have such wider public debates. The challenge will be to bring information to the wider public in a digestible manner. Of course, this is a challenge because transforming data into information implies selecting data and interpreting them. I agree that, for now, progress is low but it could easily improve.

[B.2.4_4] Should be done. (though no stakeholder raised this as an issue)

[B.2.4_5] The MSG website clearly mentions that the information is freely accessible and can be downloaded and re-used freely. All stakeholders took this for granted.

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] Basically the Legal provisions in Mauritania (Constitution) guarantee freedom of opinion, expression and assembly. This being said, one cannot ignore the relatively modest score of the country for the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (2024). For “participation, rights and inclusion” Mauritania’s score is slowly improving (score 2023 data: 35,2, change 2014- 2023: +6,1) but continues to fall below the average of the continent.

Without ignoring this assessment, one still has the impression that the fisheries sector is relatively more transparent and inclusive. If this is the result of FiTI, then there is reason to be positively motivated to continue the effort.

As independent validator, I was invited to check the allegation that certain stakeholders were not invited to participate in the MSG, with the authorities preferring to have representative organisations.

There are various aspects in this debate:

Obviously, the MSG must somehow be limited for operational reasons. My impression was that overall, its composition is balanced. Moreover, non-members can also be invited to attend the meetings as observers. Also, being invited to comment does not imply having a right to co-decide. Some stakeholders argued that they should be allowed to co-govern. Similarly, some stakeholders wanted to be involved in the negotiation of, e.g. the Access Agreement with the EU. There again, one would suggest to distinguish between the right to be consulted and the ensuing process of actual negotiation. However, the feeling of being excluded is probably enhanced by the low frequency of meetings. If the MSG met more regularly (e.g. quarterly or even bi-monthly) then parties would probably feel that there is more inclusion. This obviously depends on the operational support the national secretariat has available. This is reflected in our final recommendations.

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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.3.2_2	Changes to the FiTI Lead Ministry or the FiTI National Lead must be made public, if applicable.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
B.3.2_3	The National MSG must maintain a properly authorised and resourced FiTI National Secretariat as specified in requirement A.5.	Inadequate progress [1]	Inadequate progress [1]
		Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.3]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.3]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.2_1] The designation of a new National Lead (Mr Ali Sidi Boubacar) and a new lead ministry (MPIMP) took a very long time. The new designations adequately reflect the corrective action under the Compliance Statement but they took so long that the process practically stalled. On the positive side, now the basic structure for a successful continuation is in place.

[B. 3.2_2] Done.

[B. 3.2_3] The FiTI national secretariat is led by Mr Camara, Director of Resource Planning and Studies (DARE) within the MPIMP. Mr Camara is very active and competent but he fully lacks support to manage the operations.

In my view as validator, I think he ought to have both the financial and human resource to manage the national secretariat. He should have a committed staff member capable of acting according to his instructions and an adequate operational budget. To be clear, the budget required is not very high but it should be currently available to cover eligible expenses.

Upon checking with various donors, I encountered a willingness to support this as a project. Very concretely, both the EU through the sector cooperation part of the access agreement

and the GIZ indicated their willingness to chip in. The new National Lead in his capacity as Secretary General of the MPIMP indicated his willingness to proceed in this direction. One should hope that this be followed-up properly so that the national secretariat can start to function properly within the very near future.

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]	Meaningful progress [2]
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]	Inadequate progress [1]
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.	Compliant [3]	Compliant [3]
		Compliant [Avg. 2.75]	Meaningful progress [Avg. 2.25]

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.3_1] That is ok now, at the end of the reporting period. There are 15 representatives equally distributed among Government, Business and Civil society. Question however, regarding the very long interruption related to the transition between the old and the new MSG. I would suggest to reduce the qualification from compliant to meaningful progress.

[B. 3.3_2] Based on documentary review and from what I learned during my meetings as validator, I can confirm that the members of the MSG are properly qualified. Some of the members of the MSG came with interesting ideas and suggestions, some linked to transparency but also linked to using the information generated in the transparency process. Obviously, the MSG is an interesting group that could be used by the authorities as a source of inspiration to steer their policy. One major problem though, such as identified in the BAR and which I found confirmed during my interviews, is the very low frequency of meetings.

Also, I understood that the MSG mainly met in the context of validating the report of the report compiler and that -moreover- the MSG members received the information only during the meeting session. I also met members who did not realise they were part of the MSG and then

others who thought they were still a member whereas actually they had been replaced. This may look a bit farcical but it is understandable in a context of transition such as described above and during which the MSG went in de facto hibernation for almost two years.

Compared to the previous period, the MSG seems to be on sound footing now and provided it can operate properly and meet regularly, it can add considerably to Good Governance. Proper resourcing, referred to earlier will be a critical pre-condition. I also suggest that the group should draw up and stick to a workplan for its meetings and be self-critical in this sense that members who do not attend for lack of interest or who do not actively participate in the meetings, be replaced by other candidates. Furthermore, I suggest that more can be done with the observers group. This could be an interesting source of inspiration. The possibility, e.g. to invite international development organisations occasionally could be further explored. Basically, as mentioned in the BAR, the MSG approved this possibility.

[B. 3.3_3] During its baseline assessment, the International secretariat found no evidence of civil society members being dependent on Government or business. During my meetings as validator I found no such evidence either and not even a hint into this direction.

[B. 3.3_4] Qualification not questioned.

In summary, the MSG could be made to work. The structure is there. Now the process must be started and be maintained.

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 ³³ .	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

³³ 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.

		Inadequate progress [Avg. 1.0]	Inadequate progress [Avg. 1.0]
--	--	---	---

Detailed comments independent validator:

[B. 3.4_1] The MSG has failed to lay down and follow workplans in the past. Recently³⁴, a workplan was developed. That is a good evolution. This being said, various stakeholders -both national and international- mentioned the tendency with Mauritanian authorities to define strategies and workplans but not to follow up with a proper execution. So, it is too early to evaluate whether the MSG will actively manage and execute its plan. Until now, the national secretariat lacks the resources to support the activity. The outlook is promising if every party follows up on its intentions³⁵. One must expect that when the MSG starts meeting more often, it can add to its workplan more analysis. One stakeholder mentioned, for instance, that Mauritanian banks are reluctant to play their normal intermediation role of transforming savings into credits for companies. Hence various worthy projects may be struggling to find financial backing. Given the importance of the fishery related sector in Mauritania, improving on the risk attitude of commercial banks by giving them access to better data so that they can make a more developed risk analysis, may add considerably to fostering investment e.g. in the processing sector. This would then improve the value creation in the country.

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 and clear explanations were given.

4. KEY OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

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.
- Wide recognition that the FiTI process leads to better transparency and may lead to better policy. FiTI is mentioned as a driver and motivator for pursuing transparency.
- Broad expectation that the FiTI process should continue and hope that it should lead to policy improvement. Broad support for the MSG process and suggestion to use it dynamically. Often repeated suggestion that this should include having more meetings and a better resourced secretariat.
- Some doubt, however, that the most is made of the available information.

5. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE OVERALL COMPLIANCE DESIGNATION

The draft of the present report was transmitted to the Government.

As validator I received feedback in the form of:

- (a.) minutes of two MSG meetings within the reporting period (one on 16/3/2023, mentioned in the present validation report and one on 6/6/2024 commenting on the first validation report

³⁴ June 2024, i.e. at the very end of the present evaluation period.

³⁵ Requesting the operational budget (MPIMP), providing it (EU or GIZ), properly using it (national lead and national secretariat), actively participating (MSG members).

and the execution of the 5 corrective actions. These comments correspond to the conclusions mentioned in the present validation report);

(b.) minutes of a MSG meeting (dated 25/12/2024) after the present reporting period and the validation visit;

(c.) minutes of a restricted MSG meeting (dated 14/2/2025) asserting that a budget and a workplan have now been agreed and will be put into execution and arguing that the MSG was active which is demonstrated by the meetings mentioned hereabove (under (a.)) and the two information meetings mentioned above in this validation report.

As validator, I do not deny that these meetings took place but I do maintain the comment that, during the reporting period, the MSG activity was limited (2 meetings with minutes and 1 other meeting, apparently without minutes). One can further argue whether the information meetings ought to be considered as MSG meetings. After the validation visit, two more meetings took place, which is a good sign that the MSG activity seems to be picking up. Also, the assertion that a budget and workplan has been approved, is encouraging.

On the basis of the assessment by the International Secretariat and the interviews with the local and international stakeholders, I recommend that the country be considered as having achieved meaningful progress towards compliance with the FiTI standard.

One could foresee that the country might approach the level of compliance if the present plan of the authorities is followed in practice, to endow the MSG with a sufficient amount of resource to operate and if the number of meetings of the MSG are increased sufficiently and, I would add, the quality of the website is improved and the statistical service of the MPEM is also endowed with the required resource base.

6. EFFORTS THAT GO BEYOND FITI REQUIREMENTS

As validator, I was not made aware of special efforts going beyond the FiTI requirements, except for the information on the fish meal plants. It is worth mentioning though that this is precious information and that it allows to improve the value extraction from the available natural resource by limiting a relatively wasteful use of it. This is a very commendable form of extra transparency.

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

Given Mauritania's institutional, financial, and political situation when it joined the initiative, including the overall strength of the public entities and civil society organizations, the progress in Mauritania over the years much progress has been achieved. There is general recognition, by all stakeholders that were consulted, that Mauritania has made great efforts and an expressed hope that it should continue to do so. In this context, the country attracts favourable comments in comparison to certain other countries in west Africa.

The results achieved until now should not be taken for granted. Even if a good level of transparency has been reached it is somewhat worrying that transparency is mainly achieved purely within the FiTI process and with the support of the FiTI report compiler. Clearly, achieving transparency should not be considered a static goal to be achieved at a particular date but rather a dynamic result that must be achieved continuously, and that requires permanent and sustained effort³⁶. As validator, I consider that the key to further

³⁶ Using the language of Thermodynamics, if there were no continuous addition of energy and effort, the system would go into decay.

progress lies with the political support of the Minister and the Secretary General to endow the MSG and the services in the MPIMP with the necessary resources to carry out their mission. I offer the five points mentioned as conclusion in the executive summary as a source of inspiration for a workplan that might result in a leap forward.

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

As already mentioned, using the transparent data to make more analysis of the value creation in the fishery sector should be beneficial to steering towards better policy.

9. AREAS OF PARTICULAR ATTENTION FOR THE FITI INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Mauritania merits a special attention from the Board as the first country that wanted to become FiTI compatible. At the time this ambition was expressed, this seemed like a huge challenge because, at that time, the transparency was very low. Moreover, the fishing sector in Mauritania is very complex, given the number of fisheries, the huge number of operators, the big variety amongst operators and the number of international players that operate under various arrangements. Finally, the country is relatively poor and needs to commit its resources carefully.

In this context, the progress made until now is remarkable. The challenge is to maintain the results achieved and to make the last leap forward.

Annex

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. This is the scorecard as made by the International Secretariat in the BAR. As independent validator, I suggest to diverge from this assessment on the aspect of oversight by the MSG.(B.3.3). I find it hard to accept that there was effective oversight if the MSG met so infrequently, limited itself to approve the FiTI report and the members were given very little time to review the underlying documentation. In blue: evaluation by the FiTI international secretariat in the BAR. In light green: evaluation by the independent validator.

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (April 2022 – July 2024)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)
B.1 Transparency requirements						
B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents						Better
B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements						No change
B.1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements						Better
B.1.4 The State of the Fisheries Resources						Better
B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries						No change
B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries						Better
B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade						No change
B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement						No change
B.1.9 Labour Standards						No change
B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies						Better
B.1.11 Official Development Assistance						No change

B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership						No change
B.2 Procedural requirements for FiTI Reports						
B.2.1 Reporting Requirements						No change
B.2.2 Reporting Deadlines and Periods						No change
B.2.3 Reporting Process						Better

Mauritania: Validation Scorecard (April 2022 – July 2024)						
Requirements of the FiTI Standard (section B)	Level of compliance					Direction of progress
	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	No progress	Exceeding (if applicable)	Compared to previous validation(s): No change – worse – better (Choose one)
B.2.4 Report Dissemination and Public Debate						Better
B.3 National Implementation Framework						
B.3.1 Enabling Environment for Stakeholder participation						No change
B.3.2 Governance and Support						Better
B.3.3 Multi-Stakeholder Oversight						Worse
B.3.4 Annual Workplan						No change
B.3.5 Impact Report						No applicable
Overall compliance designation (for Independent Validators and FiTI International Board only)						Not applicable
Efforts that go beyond the scope of the FiTI Standard (optional)						
Information on the fish meal factories provides very valuable extra information.						