



European Court of Auditors

Fisheries sustainability

Why, so far, the CFP has not been able to guarantee the sustainability of the fisheries

Lessons learnt from the Special reports 7/2007 and 12/2011

Eurosai-WGEA Seminar

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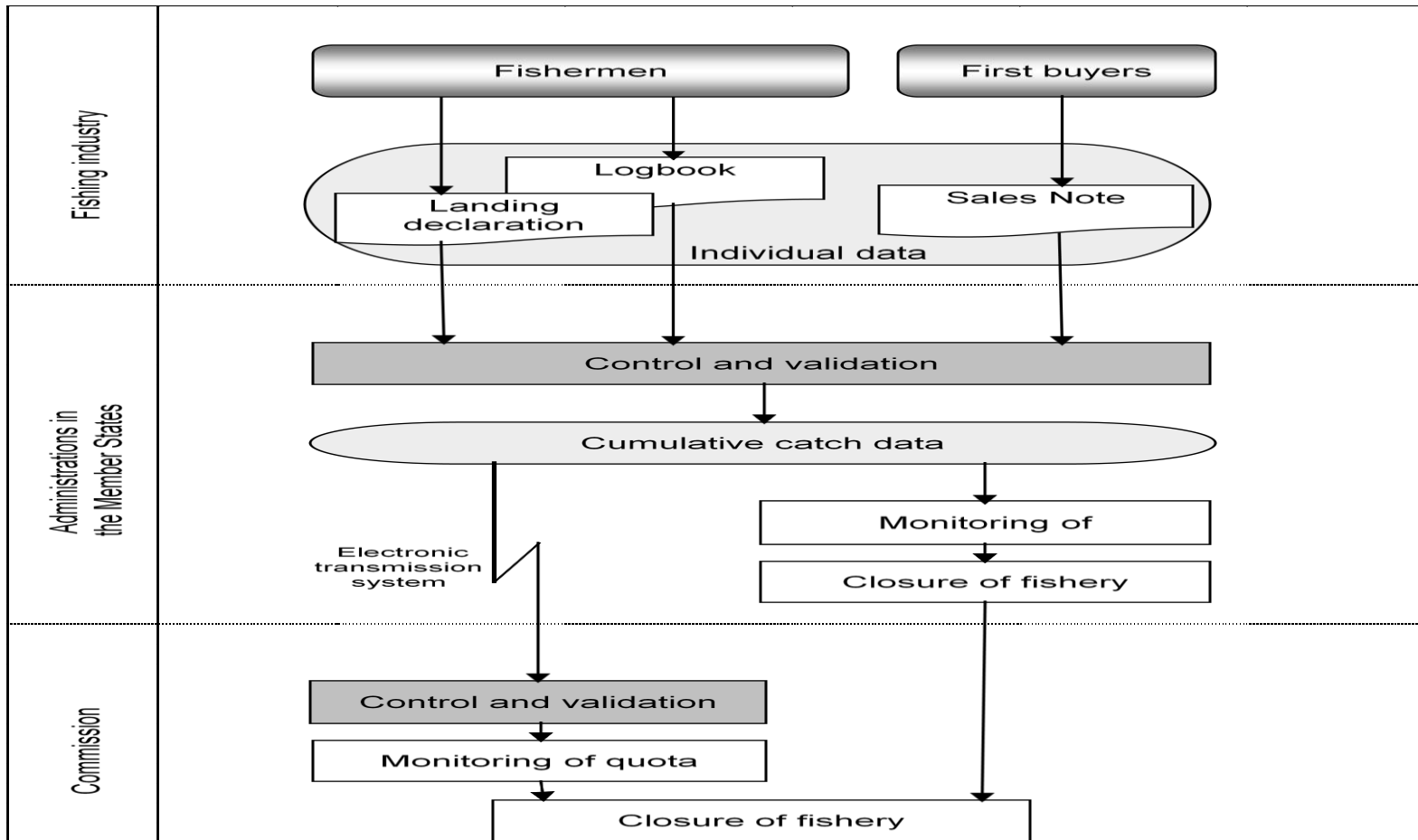
Introduction

- Global objective of the CFP: The Community fisheries resources are part of our common heritage and as such has to be protected taking into consideration the environmental aspect, keeping the stocks in safe biological limits and at the same time ensuring fair standard of living for the people working in the sector.
- Common fisheries Policy (CFP) was instituted in 1983 to guarantee the sustainability
- In the recent years the European Court of auditors (ECA) published two special reports and the global conclusion of these two reports is that the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has failed to guarantee the sustainability of fisheries activities.
- Situation of the resources: Fish catches have declined by 2 million tonnes from 1995 to 2008, from over 7millions tonnes in 1995 to 5,1millios tonnes in 2009
- In 2007, 81% of the stocks of the species under quota were outside safe biological limit. According the green paper of the Commission, the situation was worse in 2009 as 88% of the stocks were outside the safe biological limit
- Social impact: The number of jobs depending of the fisheries sector is declining from 2002 to 2007 by:
 - 31% In the catching segment; 2007:141000 Jobs
 - 16% in aquaculture;
 - 6,5% in processing industries (126 000 jobs)
- Economic importance: In EU represented in turnover in 2007:
 - Around 7 Billions € for the catch sector and
 - 23 Billions €for the processing industries

Setting up the first basic idea of the CFP: Limiting the captures.

Lessons learnt from the SR 7/2007

- Presentation of the TAC and quota approach





Lessons learnt from the SR 7/2007

Audit key issues

- Catch data are neither complete nor reliable
- The Inspection systems do not provide assurance
- Sanctions are not dissuasive

Conclusion

The control, inspection and sanction mechanisms in place are not capable of ensuring that the rules on managing the fisheries resources, and the TAC and quota system in particular, are effectively applied.

Recommendations

■ Catch data

□ Member States

- Exhaustive data collection and quick recording
- Systematic and automatic check of consistency (logbook, landing declaration, sales notes, VMS)
- Interoperability of the recording systems
- Certification of the annual data

□ Commission

- Electronic logbook implementation rules
- New format of reporting
- More use of its right of access to national IT data files
- Consistency Eurostat/DG Fish data
- Harmonisation of conversion factors

Recommendations

■ Inspections

□ Member States

- Definition of minimum characteristics of inspections
- Access by inspectors to all useful information
- Control strategy based on a risk analysis
- Evaluation of the inspection activity with relevant objectives
- Supervising inspections
- Centralised inspection databases
- Exchange of information between MSs

□ Commission

- Insertion of above recommendations in the EU regulation
- Request MSs' action plans in respect of major weaknesses identified by its services

Recommendations

- Follow-up and sanctions
 - Member States
 - Adequate consideration of the economic advantage and of the seriousness of the damage caused to resource
 - Council
 - Encouragement the MSs to compare and harmonise the penalties
 - Community legislator
 - Higher consideration of the verifiability of the management measures
 - Strengthening the powers of the Commission inspectors
 - Enlargement of the mandate of the Vigo agency
 - Introduction of more responsive instruments of sanctions against MSs



A balance between Fisheries capacities and Fisheries Opportunities

Lessons learnt from SR 12/2011

- The second one (SR12/2011) scrutinised the EU measures to know whether they have contributed to adapting the capacity of the fishing fleets to available fishing opportunities.
- Overcapacity of the fishing fleet has been widely identified as one of the main reasons for overfishing and the decline in fish catches. For many years the CFP has attempted to reduce overcapacity of the fleets through various methods, including publicly funded vessel scrapping schemes, and fleet capacity restrictions imposed on the Member States.
- But the measures taken so far have not worked. This is recognised in the Commission's Green Paper on its current reform proposal.

Lessons learnt from the SR 12/2011

Audit key issues

A. Weaknesses in the framework:

- the existing definitions of fishing capacity did not adequately reflect the ability of vessels to catch fish;
- fleet capacity ceilings had little real effect on adapting fishing capacity of the fleet to fishing opportunities;
- fishing overcapacity had not been defined or measured;
- the ability to transfer fishing rights had not been sufficiently considered.

Lessons learnt from the SR 12/2011

Audit key issues

B. Weaknesses in the design and implementation of measures to reduce fishing overcapacity:

- there were delays in implementation of projects and in setting up management and control systems;
- the sound design and correct implementation of Member States' Fishing Effort Adjustment Plans was not assured;
- there was insufficient justification for objectives for reducing fishing capacity. This increased the risk that fishing fleet overcapacity was not adequately targeted for reduction;
- investments on board fishing vessels funded by the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) could increase the ability of vessels to catch fish;

Lessons learnt from the SR 12/2011

Audit key issues

B. Weaknesses in the design and implementation of measures to reduce fishing overcapacity:

- the EU fishing fleet register was not correctly updated with details of fishing vessels scrapped with public aid;
- the selection criteria for fishing vessel decommissioning schemes were not always well targeted and resulted in scrapping fishing vessels which had little impact on the targeted fish stocks;
- the public aid rates applied for decommissioning fishing vessels often did not take into account cost effectiveness on the basis of sufficient objective criteria;
- some Member States that applied the “Fuel Crisis Regulation” did not obtain the required fishing fleet capacity reductions;
- reporting of efforts to reduce fishing overcapacity was inadequate.

Conclusion

Overcapacity of the fishing fleet continues to be one of the main reasons for the failure of the CFP in assuring a sustainable fishing activity. Although the reduction of fishing overcapacity has been a recurrent theme in previous reforms of the CFP, current measures have failed. This indicates that either a new approach to tackling the problem needs to be adopted, and / or existing measures have to be better enforced.

Recommendation 1

The Commission should take the necessary initiatives, including considering whether amendments to the basic Regulations are necessary, in order to:

- (a) better define fishing capacity and overcapacity and consider more relevant robust measures to facilitate actions to balance fishing capacity with fishing opportunities;
- (b) set effective limits for fishing fleet capacity;
- (c) ensure that the design and implementation of FEAPs effectively target required reductions in fishing effort;
- (d) clarify how fishing rights should be treated when decommissioning fishing vessels with public aid;
- (e) clarify whether fishing right transfer schemes have a role in reducing fishing overcapacity;
- (f) establish whether the scheme of public aid for on board investments needs to be reconsidered in light of the difficulties in avoiding investments which increase fishing ability, and if the scheme is to continue, clarify which investments on board are eligible for public aid and which are not;
- (g) place unambiguous obligations on Member States to ensure that the fleet register is correctly updated, and that reports on their efforts to balance fishing capacity with fishing opportunities provide the required information and are of suitable quality.

Recommendation 2

When implementing CFP measures related to adapting the fishing capacity of their fishing fleets to available fishing resources, Member States should:

- (a) take corrective action to eliminate delays in implementation of the EFF;
- (b) ensure that any measures to aid investments on board are strictly applied and do not increase fishing ability;
- (c) ensure that the fishing fleet register is kept up to date;
- (d) ensure that selection criteria for fishing vessel decommissioning schemes are designed to have a positive impact on the sustainability of the targeted fish stocks and avoid providing public aid for decommissioning inactive fishing vessels;
- (e) ensure that public aid rates for decommissioned fishing vessels take into account their cost effectiveness on the basis of sufficient objective criteria;
- (f) use the Commission's guidelines when producing annual reports on their efforts to achieve a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities and give reasoned conclusions on the state of that balance.



Thank you for your attention