

Voluntary Seafood Sustainability Claims

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Voluntary Sustainability Claims on Seafood Products – Online Workshop Programme (13-15 July 2020)



Three key questions from last meeting

1. What is the problem being addressed around voluntary standards? Is it provenance or sustainability?
2. What role can the EU play in ensuring credible market claims and effective voluntary standards?
3. What role can EU market play in 'greening' the global seafood market?

Six propositions for the EU moving ahead with voluntary seafood codes and standards

Proposition 1

No single sustainability claim will ever satisfy producers, traders and consumers

- Sustainability is imperfectly measurable and interpreted based on multiple interests
- Possible to prescribe process attributes of a standard, but not the content
- Informed buyers are needed for markets to effectively employ voluntary standards



Proposition 2

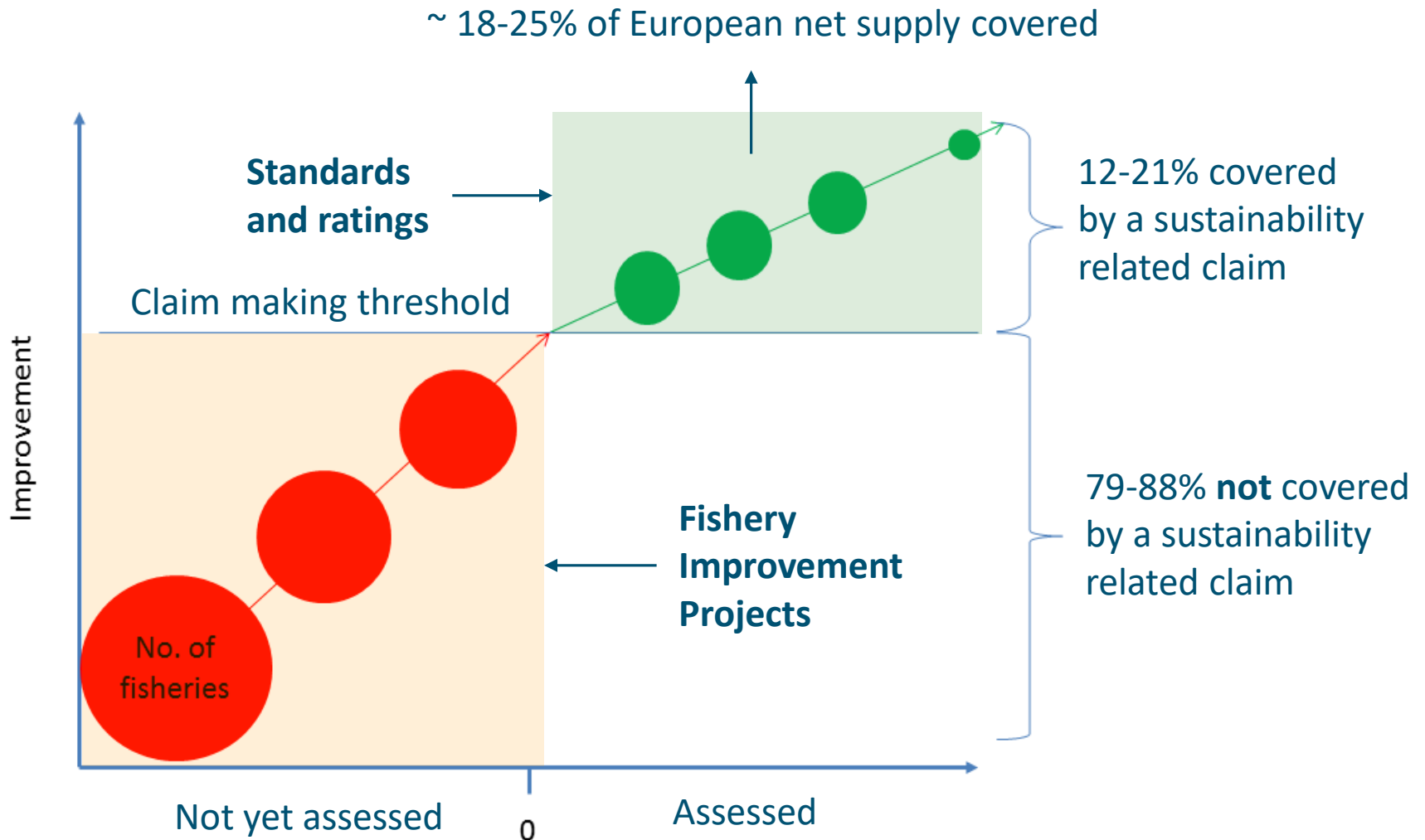
Recognising top performers (including in the EU) will not lead to largest sustainability gains

- 'Gold standard' fisheries are low risk and low reward
- 'Bronze standard' (not yet certifiable fisheries) are high risk and high reward



**Risk attitude
of buyers is key**

Breaking down improvement



Proposition 3

A portfolio of voluntary codes and standards is the only way to reach global sustainability outcomes

- Shift from addressing proliferation of standards and initiatives to addressing coordination for improvement pathways
- Requires new actors to coordinate (and 'brand') high and low risk seafood improvement portfolios



New roles for existing organisations?

- Coordination of oversight and conditionality for multiple codes and standards
- Move to tailor made sustainability claims for buyers based on their sustainability 'risk profiles'
- Risk profiles balance out high- risk-high-reward claims and low-risk-low-reward claims

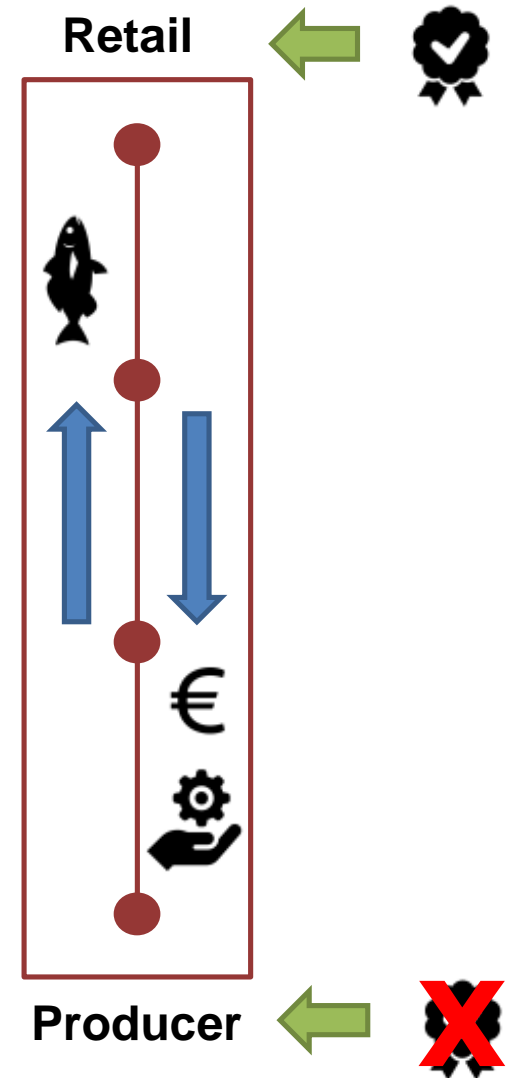


Roheim et al. 2018,
Nature Sustainability

Proposition 4

Transformative change through voluntary standards only possible if fishers (and farmers) can comply

- Focus on both high and low risk fishers means supporting capabilities for improvement
- Shift from assessing fisher performance to performance of buyers in supporting improvement



Proposition 5

Europe's transformational market power is not a given into the future

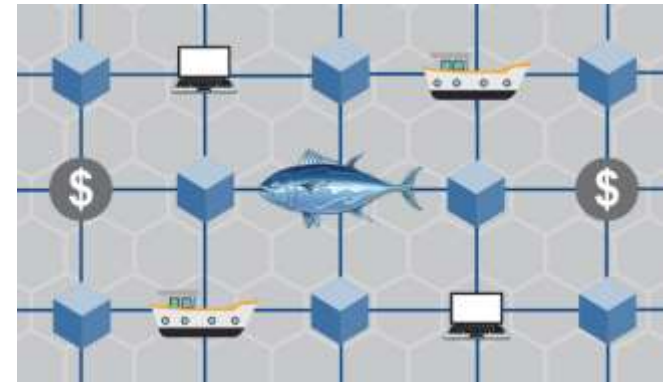
- Market competition for seafood will only increase
- EU seafood industry likely to play a role in promoting (global) food security and seafood sustainability
- Steering performance and enabling of these firms in and outside the EU key to ongoing role



Proposition 6

Governing sustainability is governing information

- Voluntary standards in other sectors shifting from codes and standards to transparency
- Block-chain but one attempt ...
- Public legitimacy of the state can reinforce role of voluntary transparency efforts



To recap ...



1. No single sustainability claim will ever satisfy
2. Recognising top performers will not lead to largest sustainability gains
3. Portfolio of voluntary codes and standards only way forward
4. Transformative change only possible if seafood industry is capable
5. Europe's transformational market power is not a given into the future
6. Governing sustainability is governing information