Market Advisory Council

Sustainability indicators for fisheries products marketed in the EU: insights from STECF Expert Working Groups

Market Advisory Council - WG1

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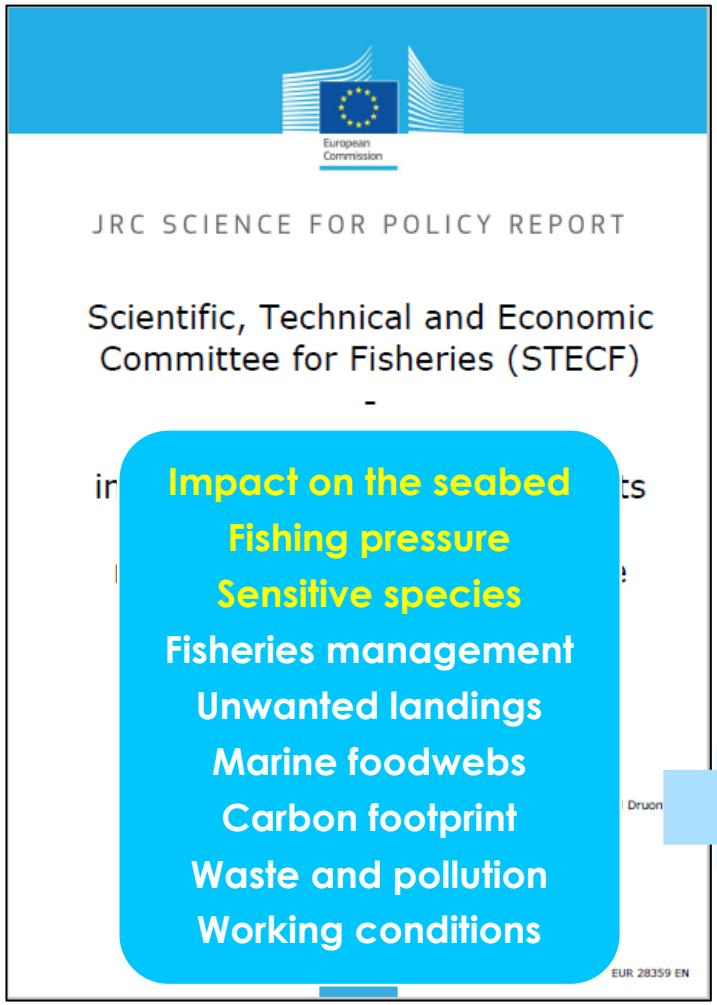
Chair of the STECF EWGs 22-12 and 23-18

Background

- In the context of food sustainability labelling and consumer information, the Commission is developing **indicators and grading methods** for a number of key fisheries-specific sustainability aspects with a view to determine fisheries product gradings.
- As a guiding principle, the indicators and grading methods should cover **both EU products and imports**.

Background

- 3 meetings on this topic (+ 4 *ad hoc* contracts)
- 3 indicators selected and developed



STECF EWG 20-05

- Suggested to develop a scoring system based on **5 levels**

Very low	1
Low	2
Medium	3
High	4
Very high	5

- Proposed two levels of accuracy in scoring: **System 1** and **System 2**

CMO mandatory information

- Scientific name
- Catch area
- Gear category

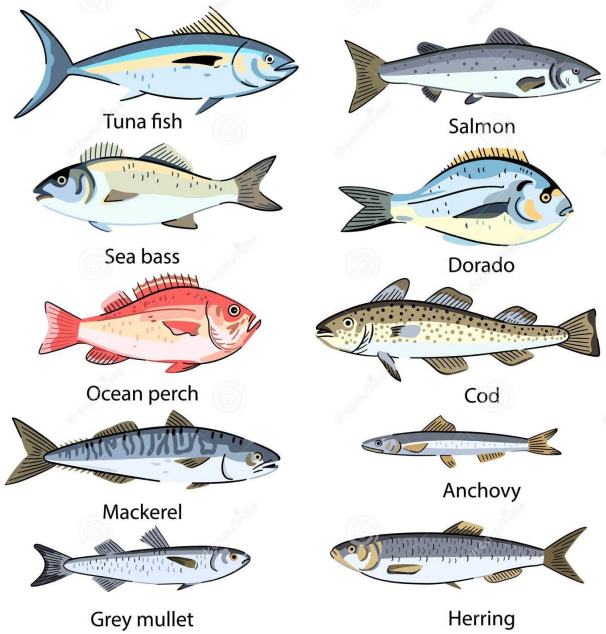
Additional information

- Precise catch area
- Precise gear

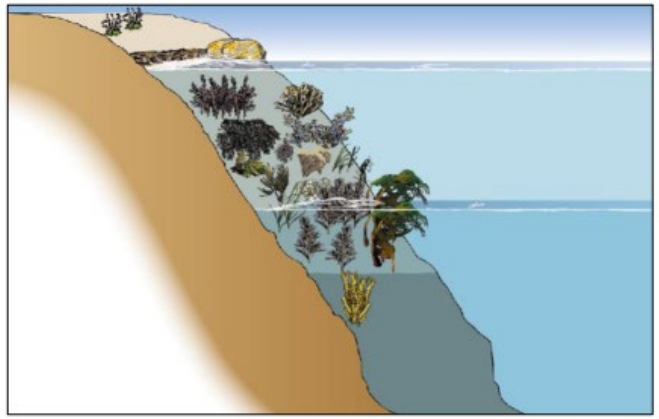
Provide transparent, comparable and reliable communication to the consumers, retailers, and producers

Impact on the seabed

Commercial species



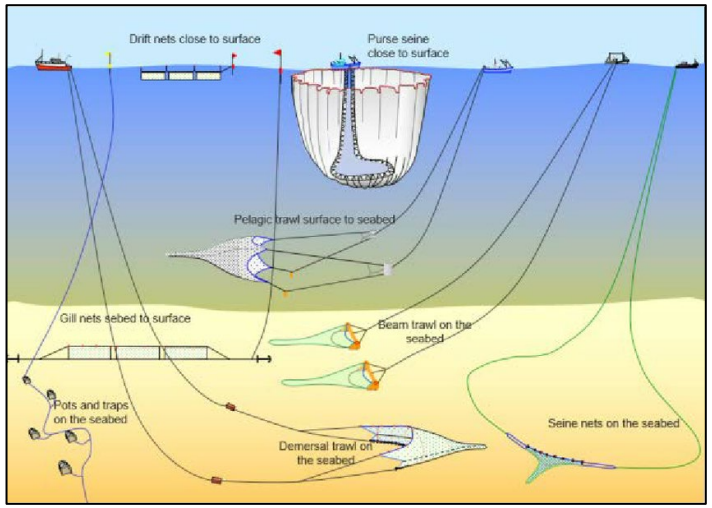
Associated habitat



Habitat
Littoral (shallow water)
Infralittoral (<50 m)
Circalittoral (50-200 m)
Offshore circalittoral (200-1000 m)
Upper bathyal (1000-2500 m)
Lower bathyal (2500-4000 m)
Abyssal (>4000 m)

Seabed nature
Rock
Biogenic habitat
Coarse sediment
Mixed sediments
Sand
Mud
Pelagic

Impact of fishing gears

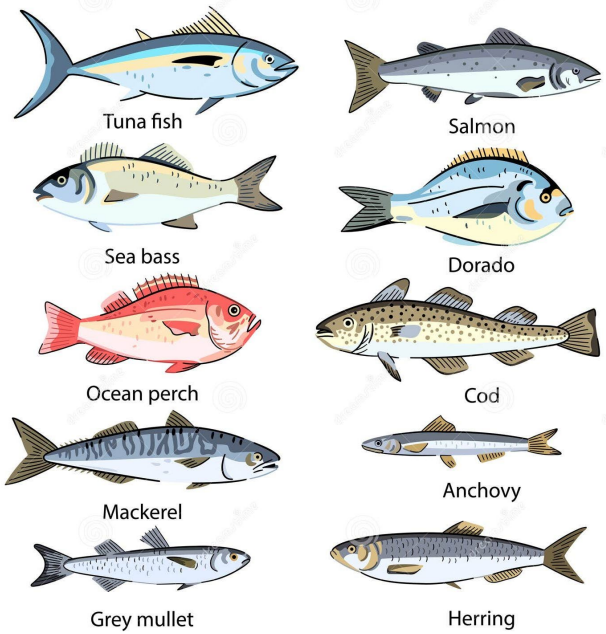


Fishing gears
CMO mandatory – 7 categories
CMO voluntary – 28 gears
FAO – 88 gears

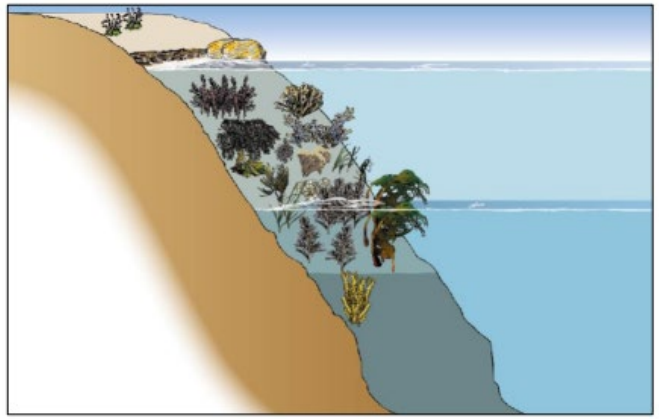
- 1,850 species associated with their habitat (42 combinations habitat/seabed nature, + pelagic fish) *vs* fishing gears

Impact on the seabed

Commercial species



Associated habitat

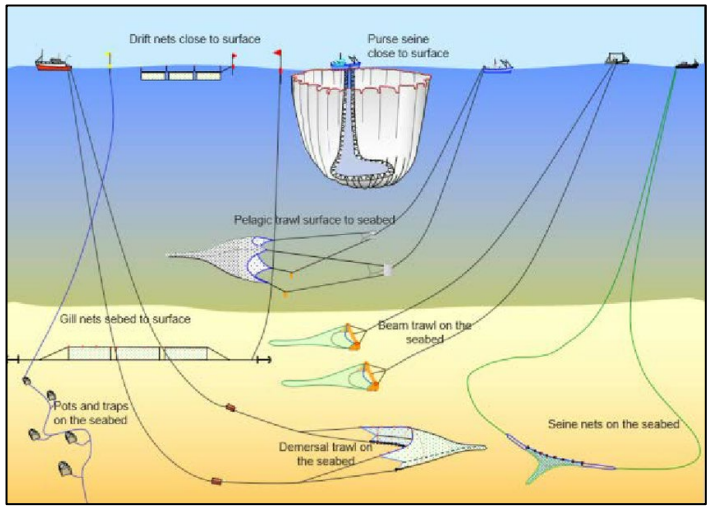


Seabed nature	Score
Rock	3
Biogenic habitat	3
Coarse sediment	1
Mixed sediments	1
Sand	1
Mud	2
Pelagic	0

Habitat and Gear combinations
From 1-3 scale to 1-5 scale

Very low	≤2
Low	3
Medium	4
High	5
Very high	6

Impact of fishing gears



Gear	Score
Dredges	3
Gillnets and similar	1
Hooks and lines	1
Pots and traps	1
Seines	2
Surrounding nets	1
Trawls	3

Impact on the seabed

Based on CMO fishing gears classification

Reset

3ACODE	Species (scientific name)	English name	Species score
HKE	*Merluccius merluccius*	European hake	1

CMO Code	Gear (CMO terminology)	Gear category (CMO)	Gear score
OTB	Bottom otter trawls	Trawls	3

Result	Medium	4

Based on FAO fishing gears classification

Reset

3ACODE	Species (scientific name)	English name	Species score
HKE	*Merluccius merluccius*	European hake	1

CMO Code	Gear (FAO terminology)	Gear category (FAO)	Gear score
OTT	Twin bottom otter trawls	Bottom trawls	3

Result	Medium	4

Based on CMO gear categories classification

Reset

3ACODE	Species (scientific name)	English name	Species score
HKE	*Merluccius merluccius*	European hake	1

CMO Code	Gear category (CMO)	Gear category (FAO)	Gear score
TX	Trawls	Generic trawls	3

Result	Medium	4

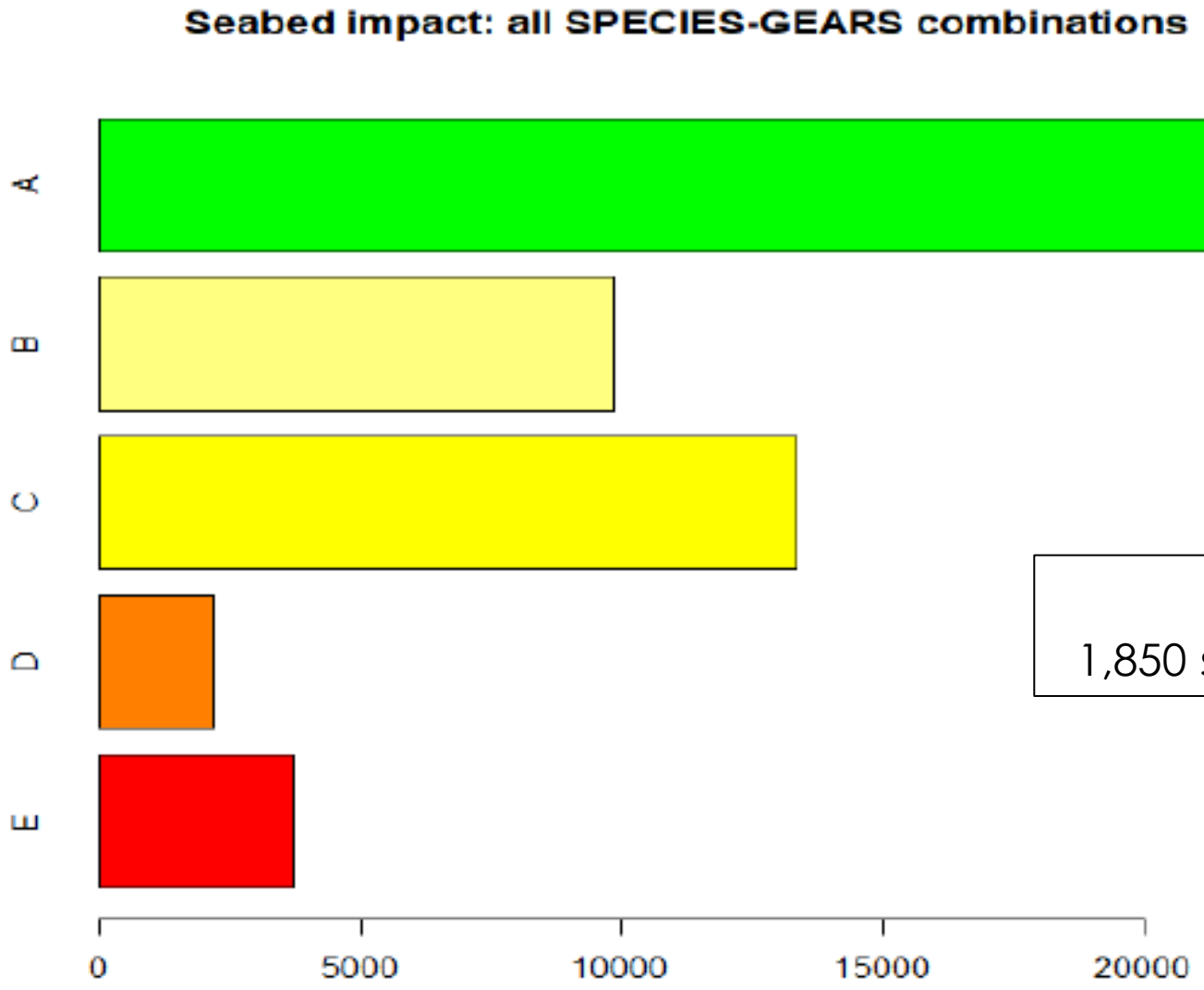
System 2

- Based on the detailed gear (voluntary information foreseen by the CMO Reg.) – 28 gears
- Based on the FAO gear classification – 88 gears

System 1

- Based on the categories of fishing gears (mandatory information from the CMO Reg.) – 7 categories

Impact on the seabed



STECF EWG 22-12

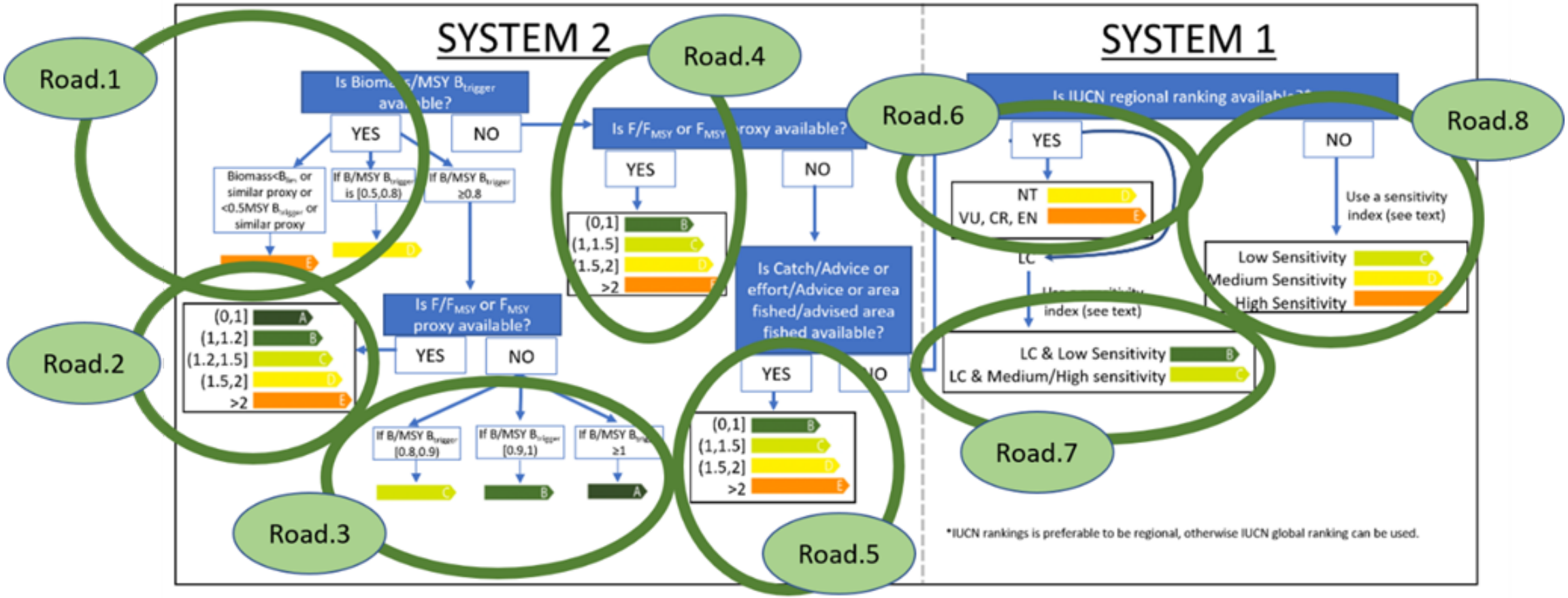
1,850 species x 28 CMO gears

Figure 19. Distribution of scores (from A to E) for all combinations of gear-species, including those that could be irrelevant.

Fishing pressure

Validated stock assessments

IUCN status or Sensitivity

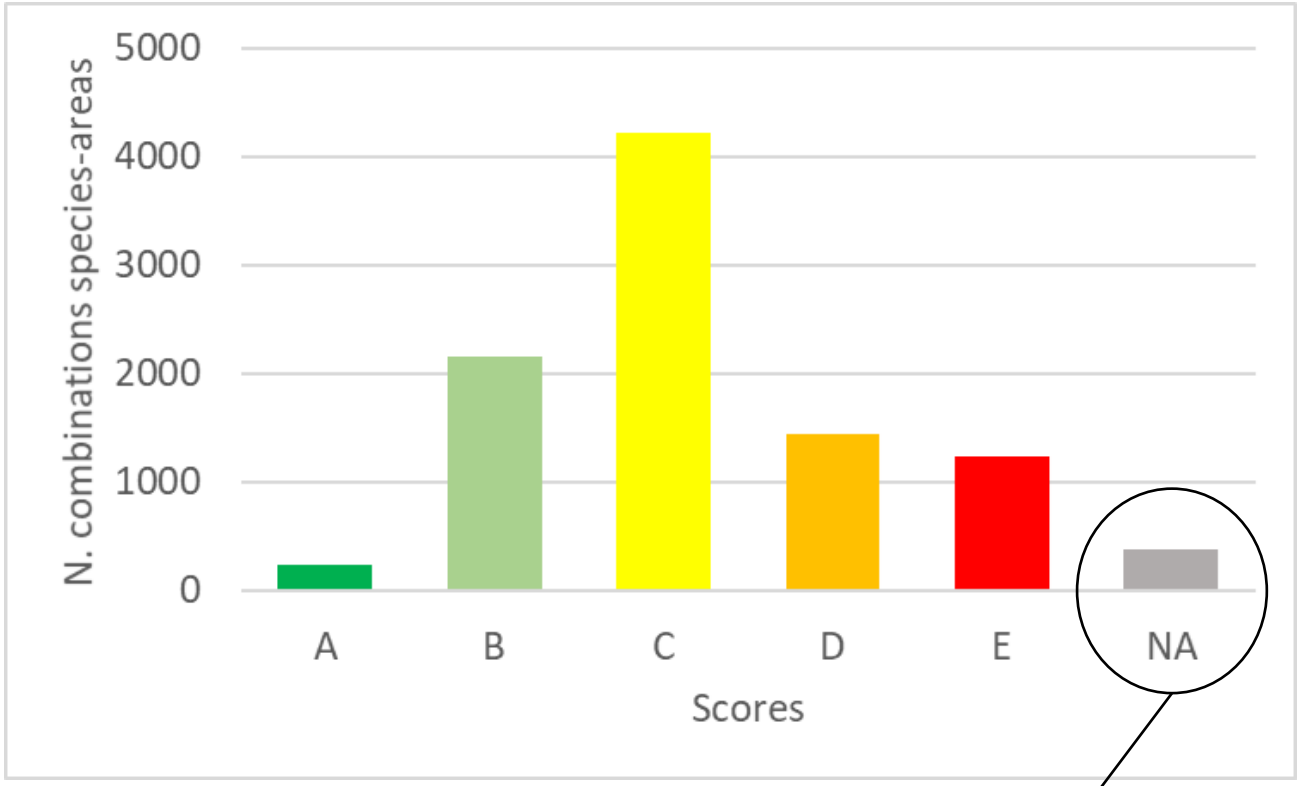


Blim = limit reference point for SSB
MSY Btrigger = biomass reference point
Fmsy = fishing mortality for achieving MSY

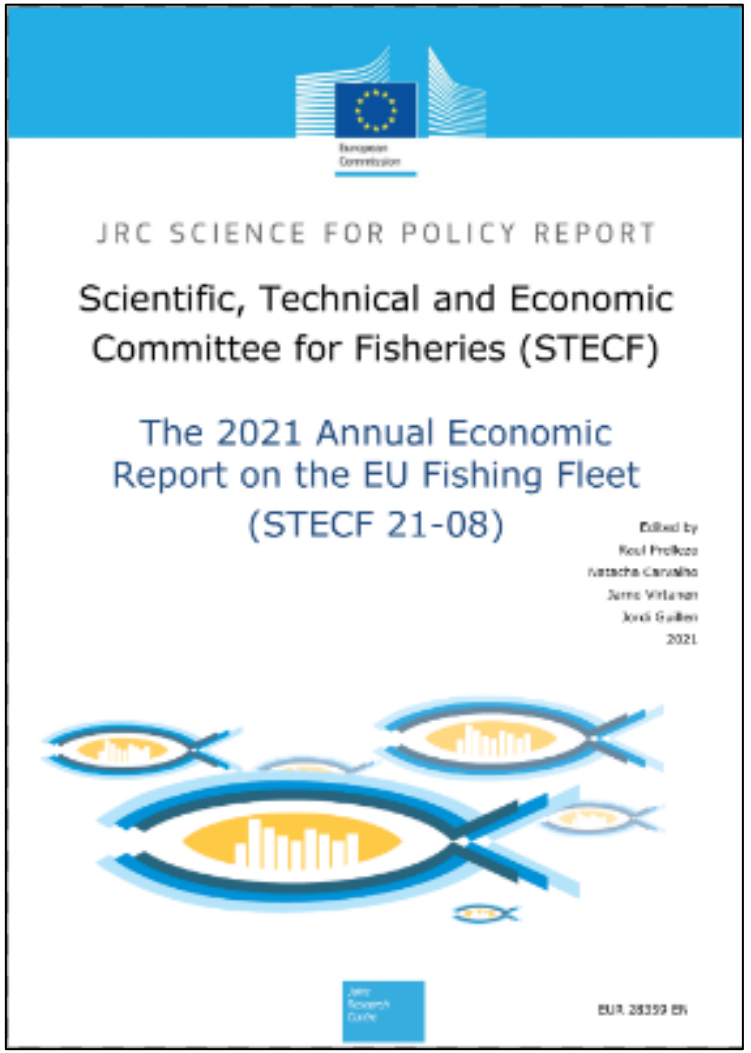
IUCN Red list status
Sensitivity/Vulnerability to fisheries

Fishing pressure

Annual Economic Report
EU fleets landings
(9,652 combinations species-areas)



3.9%
376 combinations
(223 species)
to be investigated
for sensitivity values



Fishing pressure

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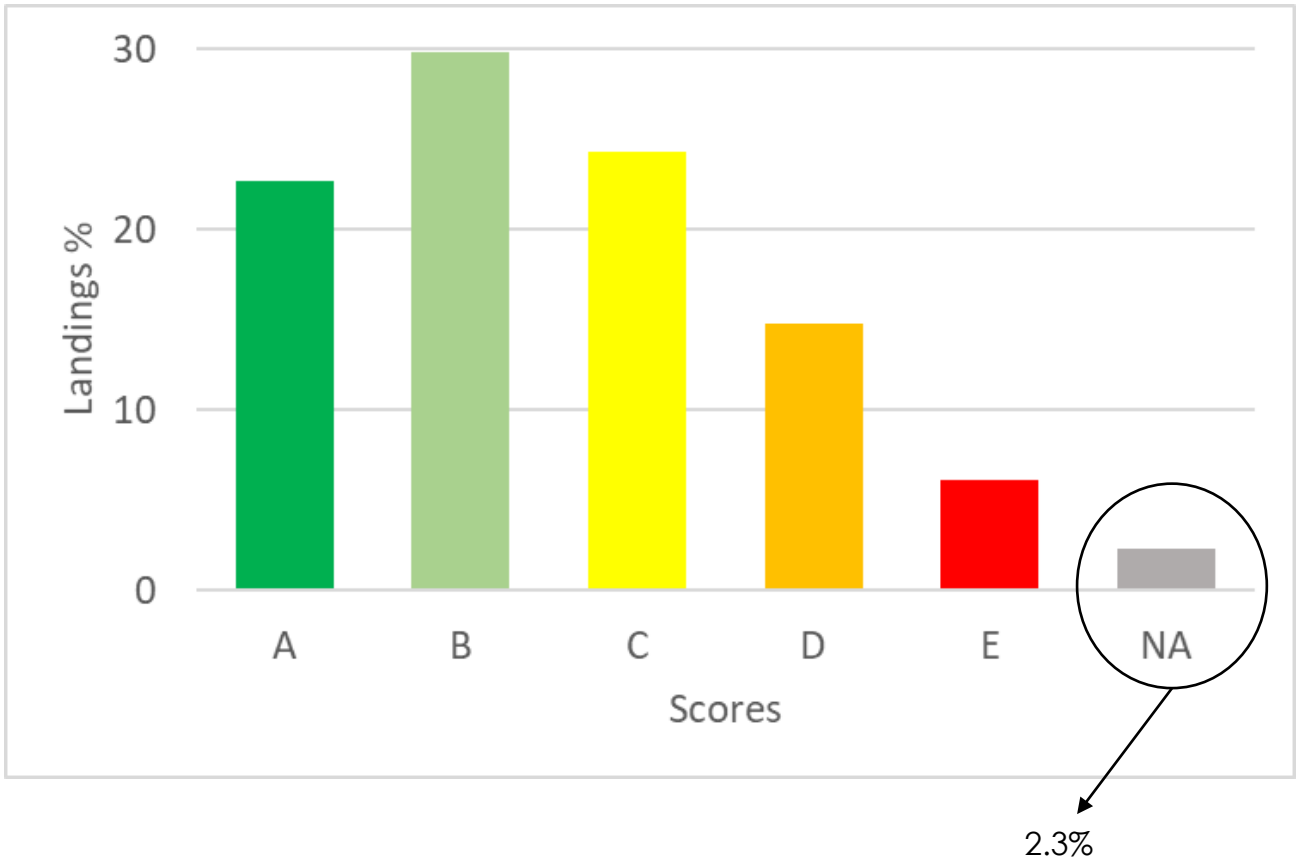
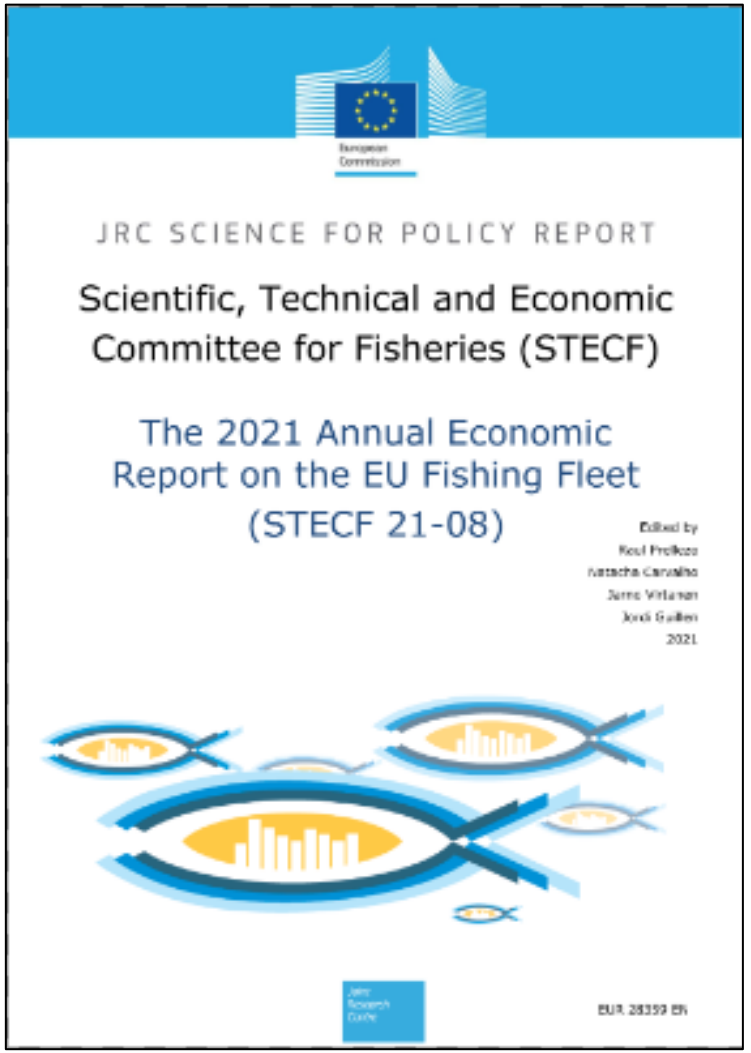
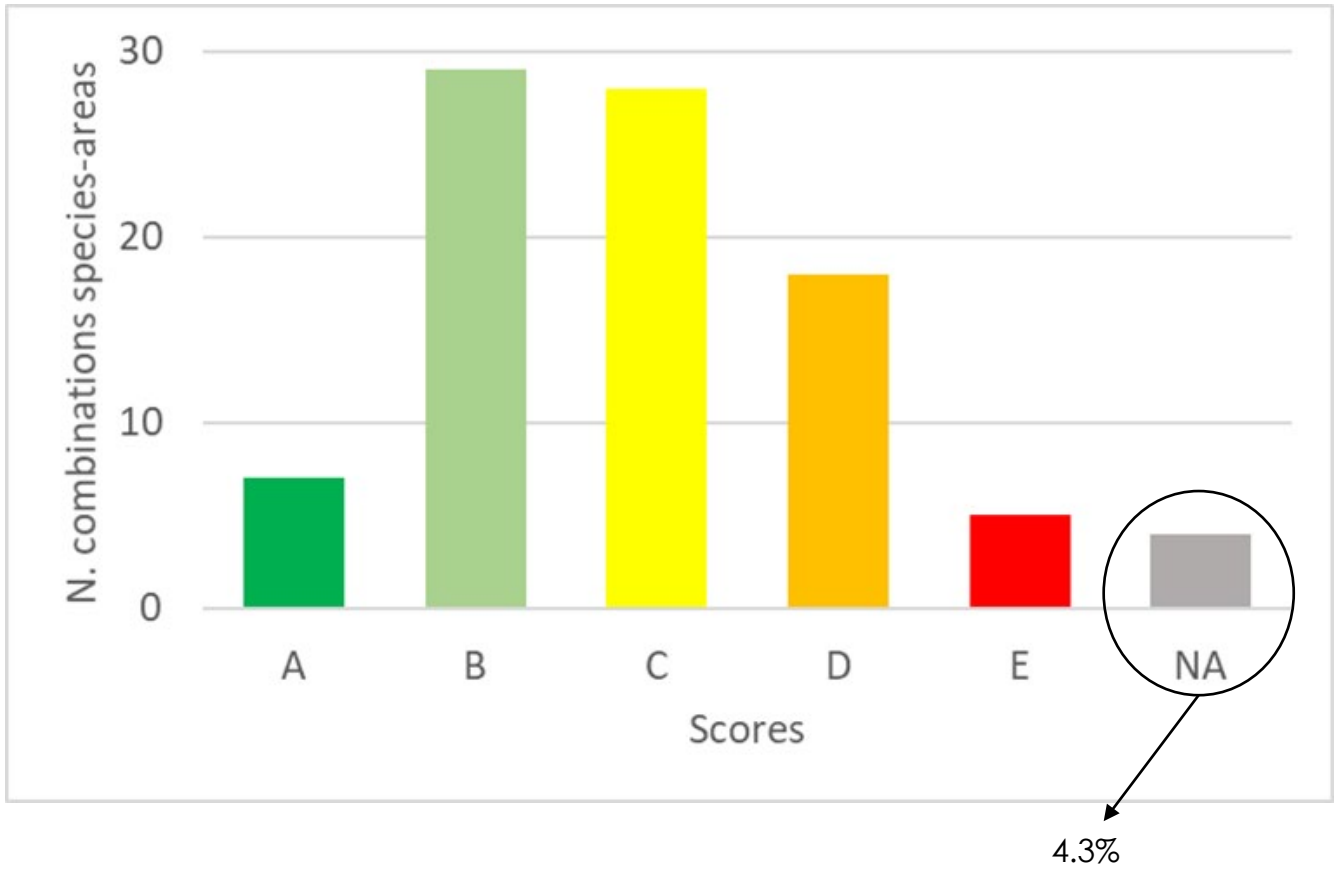




Fishing pressure

EUMOFA database
Imports
(top 20 species - 91combinations species-areas)



Clupea harengus
Gadus macrocephalus
Gadus morhua
Katsuwonus pelamis
Melanogrammus aeglefinus
Merluccius albidus
Merluccius angustimanus
Merluccius australis
Merluccius bilinearis
Merluccius capensis
Merluccius gayi
Merluccius hubbsi
Merluccius paradoxus
Merluccius productus
Micromesistius poutassou
Octopus vulgaris
Pollachius virens
Reinhardtius hippoglossoides
Theragra chalcogramma
Thunnus albacares

Sensitive species

…the risk of negative interactions of a fishing gear targeting a specific species on a group of sensitive species

- Marine mammals
- Marine turtles
- Seabirds
- Elasmobranchs (protected in EU or IUCN VU, EN or CR)

This indicator has not been fully implemented at this time

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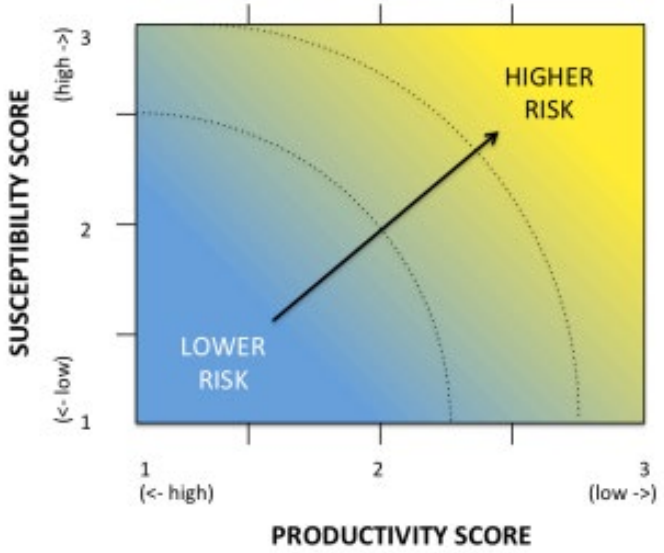
Sensitive species



- Score the **bycatch risk from 1 to 3** for each bycatch species group
- Calculate the **average of the scores** (1 to 3) over the groups of sensitive species
- **Rescale** the average from 1-3 **to 1-5** (five-level score)
- **Round** to the lowest whole number

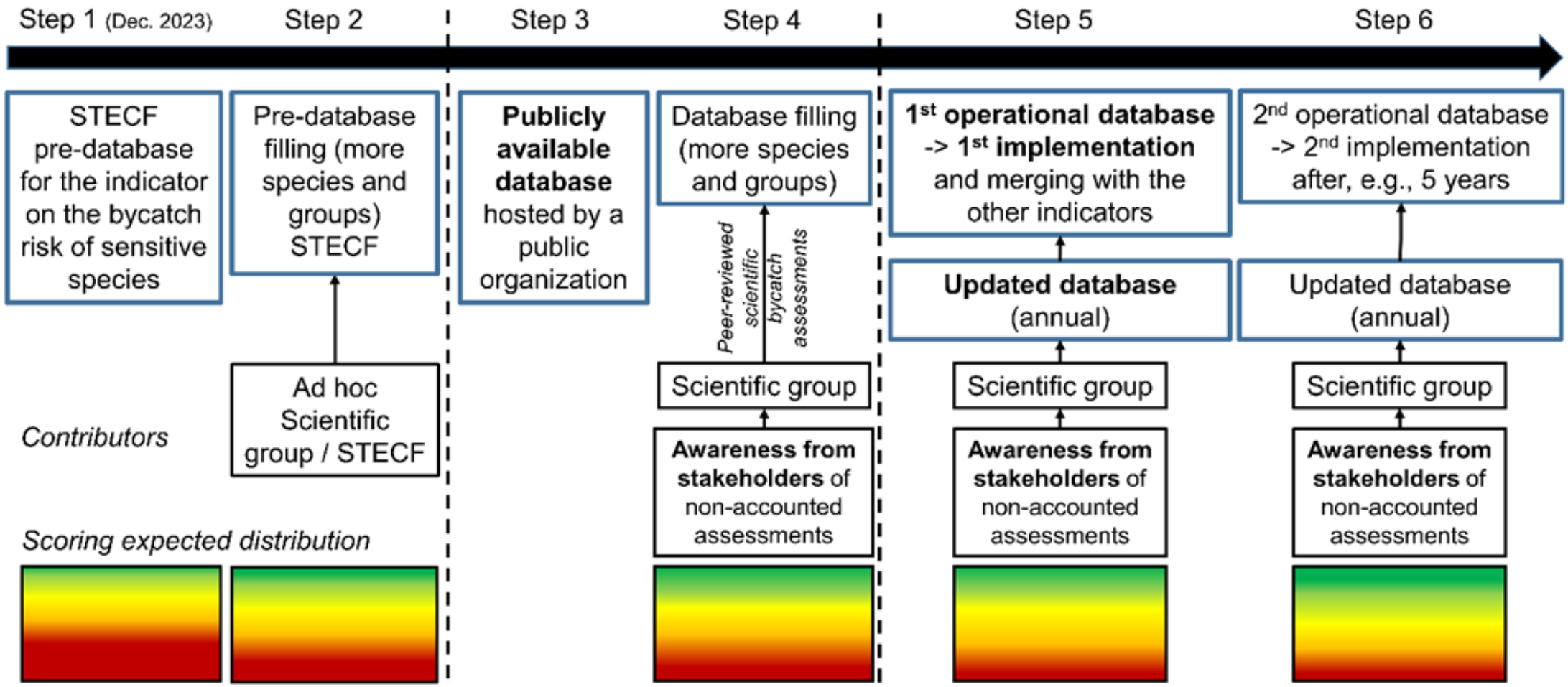
Apply a potential downgrade

- **+1** if more than one bycatch groups are scored at medium or high risk (score 2 or 3 in the 3-level scale, respectively) of interaction (i.e. a fishing activity affecting more than one sensitive group should be scored as putting overall more risk than an activity pressuring only one sensitive group)
- **+1** if the quality of the information is relatively poor following 4 criteria: 1) sensitivity species specificity; 2) sound and well documented methodology; 3) geographical coverage; 4) temporal coverage

This indicator has not been fully implemented at this time

Sensitive species

EWG 23-18 recommended an implementation of this indicator in **6 steps**:



Main conclusions:

- The indicators on the **Impact on the seabed** and the **Fishing pressure** have been **finalized** and ready to be operational
- **Further work** is required for the indicator on **Sensitive species** to become operational
- EWG 23-18 emphasized that the mandatory information outlined for producers in the **CMO regulation lacks the precision needed to develop scientifically sound sustainability indicators**. **A future revision of this regulation is recommended**, specifically calling for a more detailed definition of the production area and fishing gear

Thank you for your attention