



FARNET TRANSNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FLAGS
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FLAGS and local resource management

M.S.C. certification for the western Asturias

Octopus traps fishery

Navia-Porcía FLAG

CONTEXT

The octopus fishery in the Navia-Porcía region has had a high impact on the local economy. Besides, it was a sustainable fishery as it has had a management plan which includes measures to control overfishing. However, it had some problems:

- **Sustainability was not taken advantage commercially**, which didn't mean extra income for fishermen.
- Commercialization was **very little diversified** (90% was sold to an only agent).
- **Prices were unstable** (daily variation) and under control by demand
- **There wasn't differentiation** with other non-sustainable octopus fisheries
- Fishermen **didn't take part in decision making** about management and therefore they **didn't collaborate** in scientific campaigns

On the other hand, the **eco-label MSC** was known as:

- **It guaranteed** the sustainable character of fisheries
- It was **well recognized** among consumers of Central Europe and the USA
- **There wasn't certified octopus fishery** around world

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

This project comes from the fishery itself **to solve the problems of the fishery by taking advantage of the benefits of the MSC** certification.

It was expected:

- **Standing out the sustainable character** of the fishery, creating appealing product to the consumers, increasing the income for the fishermen.
- **Opening new markets**, mainly in those countries where the eco-label is established
- Being **the first octopus fishery in the world** to obtain the M.S.C. certification. It has a commercial and media repercussion.
- Encourage the sector **to take part in the management and research** of the fishery.

PARTNERS

MAIN ACTORS

- **The fishing Sector:** At the beginning, 27 fishing boats and 4 fishermen's guilds (“cofradías”): inshore fishing fleet (1 to 3 crew and 10-12 meters of length) based in the ports of the Navia-Porcía Region (Puerto de Vega, Ortiguera, Viavélez and Tapia de Casariego). All of them were incorporated in the fishery management plan of the Principality of Asturias. Currently, boats from other fishermen’s guilds of Asturias have been added .
- **Managers of the fishery:** The Public Administration of the Principality of Asturias. This has implemented a management plan for the fishery since 2001. The plan affects the whole region (8 Fishermen's Associations) and it contains measures to control its exploitation (minimum sizes, and periods to close fishing, etc.)
- **Researchers:** The “Centro de Experimentación Pesquera” of the Principality of Asturias (CEP). This is in charge of carrying out scientific campaigns.

SECONDARY ACTORS

- **CEDER Navia-Porcía (FLAG):** which promotes, coordinates and finances the actions of the project and facilitates co-operation between interested parties
- **Marine Stewardship Council:** this organization manages the eco-label for fishing products. It has the greatest international recognition.
- **Bureau Veritas:** this certification company was hired to carry out the certification process

METODOLOGY

PREPARATORY PHASE (2010-2013):

This is a pre-assessment of the fishery. A first analysis has been done to evaluate if it is possible to certificate MSC standard or not and its potential economic profitability. The actions developed were:

- **Fishermen as well as managers and researchers became part of the project** through meetings and technical conferences
- **Pre-assessment of the fishery according the M.S.C standards:** This evaluation had the aim of detecting possible weak points. These weaknesses were corrected before starting the certification process.
- **Market research of the octopus in Central Europe:** Italy, France and the Benelux. The study analyzed the possibilities of accessing to the international market.

CERTIFICATION PHASE (2014-2016):

The evaluation of the fishery is carried out and medium-term improvement actions for sustainability are planned:

- External auditors assessment of the compliance about 3 principles an **MSC certification of the fishery**. d 28 indicators of sustainability M.S.C. After more than a year of evaluation, on February 10th, 2016, Navia-Porcía fishing fleet obtains the first M.S.C. for the octopus fishery worldwide.

METODOLOGY

MONITORING AND COMMERCIALIZATION PHASE (2017-Present):

Improvement plan : An action plan is designed to improve the 4 sustainability indicators with a lower score. This plan includes actions for the period 2017-2021.

Marketing support: A commercial plan for the certified octopus is elaborated. MSC chain of custody certified traders are contacted. Commercialization tests are carried out. A sale system is established, which consists of a future auction (auction of the captures to be made in the next fifteen days). The first total campaign with certified octopus is 2016-2017.

Annual MSC evaluation 2017: The actions of the improvement plan have been carried out in the first year and the first external audit is done. The result is positive and the certification of the fishery is still valid.

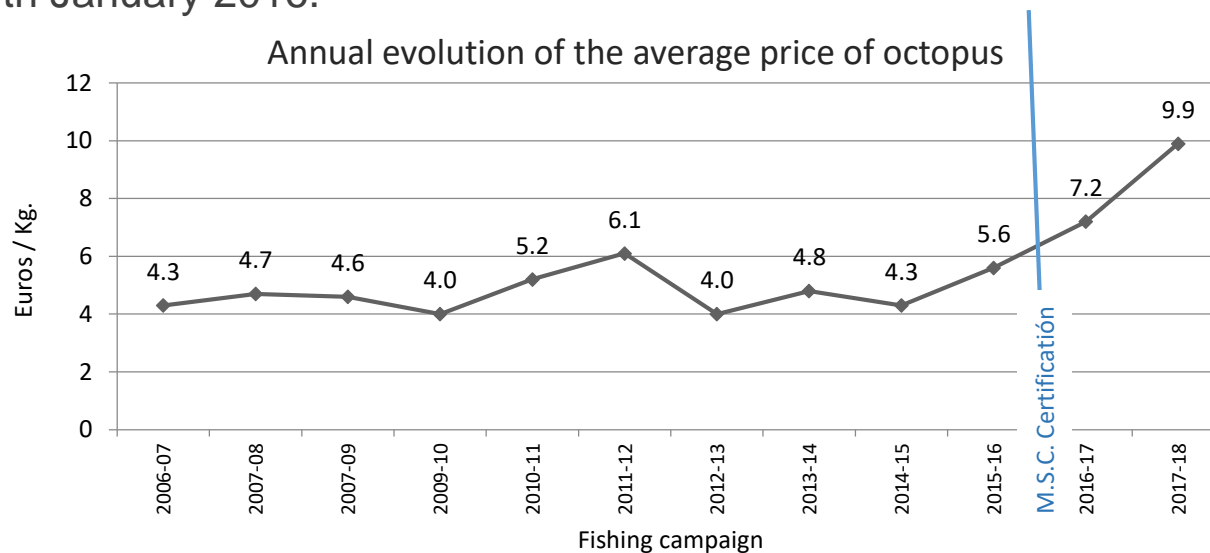
DISSEMINATION AND DISCLOSURE (2010-Present):

From the beginning, the project has a continuous **presence in the media** (press, radio, TV, social networks, web) **and national and international seminars** related to the fishery, as well. In addition, **a technical seminar on the octopus fishery is organized** in the North of Spain and the MSC certified octopus is **included in the brand "Alimentos del Paraíso"** (Food of Paradise).

RESULTS

ECONOMIC RESULTS:

- **Increase in fishermen's income.** In the first year (2017), the prices increases by 23% on average in the first sale of the certified octopus in comparison with non-certified octopus, without increment of expenses. As a result, profitability increases by 40%. In January of the second year (2018), the average price increased by 63.5% in comparison with January 2016.



- **Access to new markets.** This leads to increase and diversification of demand. Currently 90% of the catch is destined for export.
- **Stability in prices.** The certification has allowed the establishment a "future auction" system. In this procedure, the price is fixed for all the catches made in the following 15 days. The price is no longer subject to the daily supply-demand.

RESULTS

ENVIROMENTAL RESULTS:

- The fishery is under the **process of continuous improvement** of the sustainability indicators. These are reviewed annually (annual external evaluation by independent auditors).
- **New control measures of exploitation** (HCR) which are sensitive to the evolution of the stock (e.g. quota per week and crew) and **surveillance systems of fishing effort** (e.g. marking off the traps) have been introduced .
- The **scientific campaigns have been intensified** with the participation of the fishermen (GPs, data collection, etc.).
- **Fishermen get involved in the management of the fishery** through the “Comisión de Seguimiento” by taking part in decision making.

SOCIAL RESULTS:

- Members of different fishermen guilds **work together for the first time**. Create the association “ARPESOS” (Association of Shipowners of the Octopus Fisheries with a Sustainability Certificate).
- **High media impact of the project**. This allows to **identify** the only MSC-certified octopus worldwide with the Navia-Porcía region. Fishermen effort in favor of sustainability is **recognized**.