



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

19th meeting of the FiTI International Board

5 December 2022, Conference Call

Meeting Minutes

ID: BM-19_2022_MM

Provided by: FiTI International Secretariat

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Date	5 December 2022
Time	1.00 – 4.50 p.m. (Greenwich Mean Time)
Venue	Global Conference Call (Zoom)
Supporting document(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information package for the determination of <i>Seychelles' compliance status</i> (date: 24 November 2022) ▪ Information package for the <i>candidate application of Madagascar</i> (date: 19 November 2022) ▪ Information package for the <i>candidate application of Ecuador</i> (date: 24 November 2022) ▪ <i>Extension request from Seychelles</i> regarding submission of its 3rd FiTI Report (date: 17 November 2022)

Outcomes of meeting

1. Welcome and administration

The Chair of the FiTI International Board, Valeria MERINO, opened the 19th International Board meeting by welcoming all participating Members and Observers.

Apologies were noted prior to the meeting from Board Members Gaoussou GUEYE and Francisco LEOTTE (both stakeholder group: Business Sector) as well as Observers Marcio CASTRO DE SOUZA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Theophilous CHIVIRU, Open Government Partnership (OGP).

Gaoussou delegated his voting power to Nedwa NECH; Francisco delegated his voting power to Philippe MICHAUD, as shown in Appendix I.

The Chair also informed the participants that Alexander BIRYUKOV resigned from the FiTI International Board with immediate effect due to new working commitments. The resulting vacancy will be considered during the 2022 membership election for the FiTI association (see further below). She thanked Alexander for his dedication to the FiTI International Board throughout the last years.

After all eligible participants joined, Mr Sven BIERMANN, Executive Director of the FiTI International Secretariat, determined that a quorum for this meeting was reached¹:

Pro-rated attendance of Board Members ² :	At least two Board Members per stakeholder group?	Attendance of Observers:
16.5 out of 18 votes	Yes	1 out of 4

¹ In accordance with article 14 (7) of the constitution of the association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of 13 May 2021): *'No binding decision shall be made in an FiTI International Board meeting unless a quorum is present at the time of making the decision. Half of the total number of members (including proxies), with at least two members from each stakeholder group, forms a quorum.'*

² In accordance with article 14 (13) of the constitution of the association of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (as of 13 May 2021). *'Every member has one vote, unless the current total number of members is not equally distributed among the stakeholder groups stated in Article 8. In such a case, voting power shall be determined on a pro-rated system, ensuring that all stakeholder groups have equal voting power.'*

As not all 18 seats have been filled for this Board meeting, the pro-rated voting powers for the 18th FiTI International Board meeting were determined as follows:

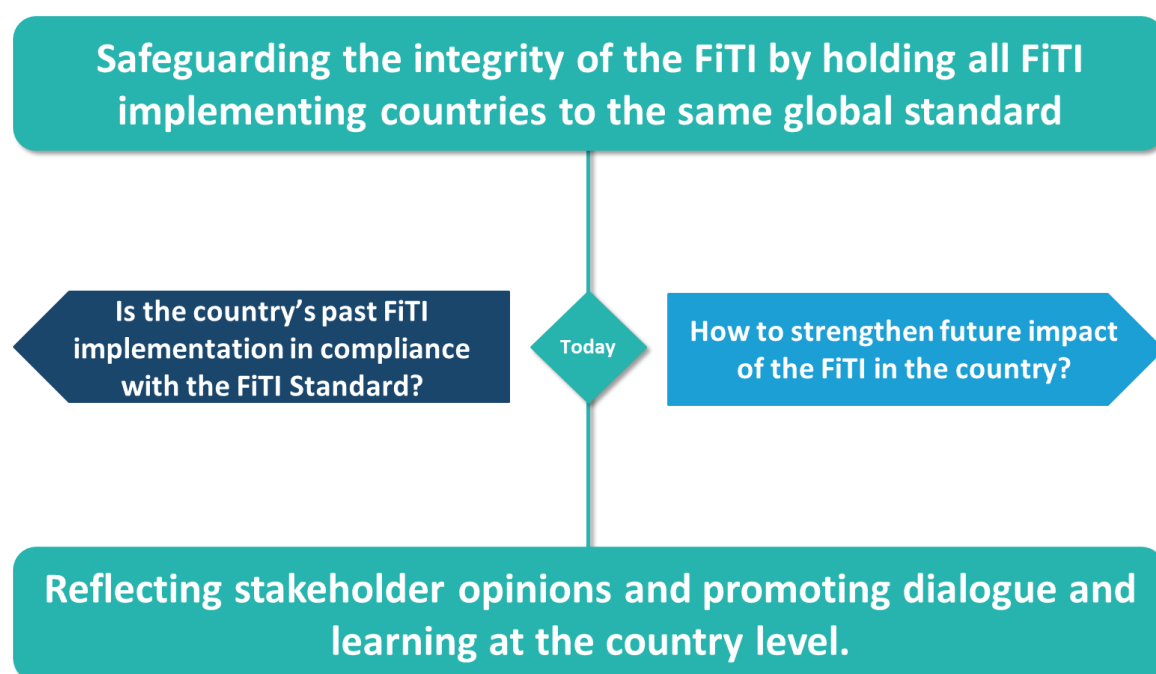
- *Government sector*: Currently four Board Members → each Board Member carries 1.5 votes
- *Business sector*: Currently five Board Members → each Board Member carries 1.2 votes
- *Social sector*: Currently five Board Members → each Board Member carries 1.2 votes

2. Determination of compliance status of Seychelles

The FiTI Chair emphasised that validation is an essential part of the FiTI implementation process. In accordance with the FiTI Standard, a FiTI Candidate country may choose to undergo the first validation prior to publishing their first FiTI Report but must undergo the first validation before publishing their second FiTI Report.³ Afterwards, a FiTI implementing country must undergo regular validations at least every three years to determine if the country is compliant with the FiTI Standard.

The FiTI validation process offers a unique opportunity to conduct an objective and standardised verification of a country's past performances against the FiTI Standard (namely its transparency and procedural requirements, as well as the country's enabling environment for multi-stakeholder participation and oversight). It also helps 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.

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



³ It was noted that during its 16th meeting (February 2022), the FiTI International Board approved that the country validations for Seychelles and Mauritania must be completed prior to the publications of the countries' third FiTI Report (instead of the second FiTI Report, as outlined in section D.4 of the FiTI Standard).

The FiTI Chair reminded the participations that the **FiTI International Board** holds the overall responsibility for the validation process. The provisions that must be applied when conducting validations are outlined in section D of the FiTI Standard⁴ (as well as the corresponding Guidance Note #3 on ‘Validating countries’).

The **primary outcome of the validation process** is the decision regarding the country’s level of overall compliance in accordance with the designation categories stated in section D.1.1 of the FiTI Standard, as 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.
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>

The FiTI Chair highlighted that to determine a country’s overall level of compliance, several core validation principles need to be considered, as documented in the Guidance Note #3, such as:

- The validation process should **not be mistaken as 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


⁴ <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard>

country's performance against the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard (as set forth in its sections B.1 – B.3 of the Standard) with the overall perception of the country's performance against the spirit of the initiative – as documented in the FiTI Principles.

- Each validation needs to consider a **country's current economic, cultural, and political context**. This is in particular relevant when considering a country's endeavours around the principle of 'progressive improvement', and, ultimately, its overall level of compliance, as outlined in section D.1.2 of the FiTI Standard.
- Greater **flexibility during a country's first regular validation processes** should be applied, where suitable.

The FiTI Chair recalled that for the **Republic of Seychelles** (short Seychelles), the FiTI International Board launched the country's first validation process in accordance with the FiTI Standard (section D.1) in September 2021, setting the validation timeframe from April 2020 until December 2021. Consequently, Seychelles first FiTI Report (calendar year 2019) and its second FiTI Report (calendar year 2020) fall within the validation timeframe.⁵

The assessment of Seychelles' compliance with the FiTI Standard was implemented in three stages or phases – 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
Status for Seychelles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (31 March 2022)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (24 November 2022)	Open

The FiTI Chair gave a brief overview of these subsequent phases regarding responsibilities, activities, and major deliverables.

⁵ Countries can request an extension to the FiTI International Board in accordance with section C.1.2 of the FiTI Standard. Seychelles did not request such extension and the validation started as planned.

In the **first phase**, the FiTI International Secretariat prepared a Baseline Assessment Report, which provides the Secretariat's initial evaluation of progress against the requirements of the FiTI Standard.⁶ Primarily through desk-based research, the International Secretariat:

- Determined the level of compliance for each of the *21 individual validation requirements*:⁷
 - Transparency (comprised of 12 individual requirements),
 - Procedural related to the FiTI Report (comprised of 4 individual requirements),
 - National Implementation Framework (comprised of 5 individual requirements);
- Documented efforts that went beyond FiTI requirements;
- Provided recommendations to strengthen the FiTI implementation process further; and
- Identified additional aspects for the consideration of the Independent Validator.

The Baseline Assessment Report was shared with the FiTI International Board in March 2022 to receive comments and finalised on 31 March 2022. The report was provided to the Independent Validator, after his appointment.

In the **second phase**, Mr Jose Peiro Crespo was appointed by the FiTI International Board as the country's Independent Validator.⁸ Primarily through stakeholder consultations⁹ (and complementary research) the Independent Validator:

- Reviewed the Secretariat's baseline assessment of each individual requirement as well as the country's progress 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

⁶ During its 15th meeting (November 2021), the FiTI International Board approved that the first process step of the validation process for Seychelles, tasked to be conducted by the FiTI International Secretariat, involves only a detailed desk review of the countries' compliance with the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard. Consequently, the responsibility of conducting stakeholder interviews to provide an objective verification of the assessment of each individual requirement (as conducted by the FiTI International Secretariat), as well as to determine lessons learned and a recommendation for the overall compliance designation, was given to 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 [BM-15_2021_D-03].

⁷ Additional background information was provided to all participants, as outlined in Annex II.

⁸ As per FiTI Board Circular No. 8 (Decision ID: BC-08_2022_D-01).

⁹ During a site visit to the Seychelles between May 30 and June 12, 2022.

- Provided a recommendation for the overall 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 regarding his preliminary findings (obtained during a feedback process in the first weeks of November).

The Independent Validator submitted his final Validation Report for Seychelles to the FiTI Chair on 24 November 2022.

In the **third and final phase**, the FiTI International Board reviews the assessments and recommendations documented in the Independent Validator's Validation Report and makes a final determination considering the following:

- whether the individual requirements of the FiTI Standard have been met or not;
- whether any breach of the principles or the spirit of the FiTI – in accordance with section E.2.2 of the FiTI Standard – has occurred;
- the country's overall compliance designation in accordance with section D.1.2 of the FiTI Standard (see below); and
- regarding corrective actions (if applicable).

In order to facilitate the decision-making process, the FiTI Chair informed the participants that she had compiled an ad-hoc Working Group – consisting of herself, Hugh GOVAN, Nedwa NECH and Julien MILLION – to review the Independent Validator's Validation Report in detail (and, if necessary, consult the Secretariat's Baseline Assessment Report). She emphasised that this group did not conduct additional research or stakeholder interviews.

The Independent Validator, Mr CRESPO, was then invited to participate in the meeting. He gave a brief overview of his main findings:

- No breaches of principle and spirit of the FiTI were identified during the stakeholder consultation phase. For example, all the Validator's requests were attended, including access to private agreements, FiTI workplans, etc. and clear explanations were given in cases where information was not published, e.g. by acknowledging administrative constraints, lack of data, etc.
- Broadly speaking, the initiative seems to be widely supported by the stakeholders consulted, including the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy, the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and other stakeholders. The Ministry and SFA are making efforts to address the recommendation given by the National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) in the FiTI Reports and it is broadly considered that the initiative has helped to make fisheries-related information more available to the general public, in line with the FiTI objectives.

- However, Mr CRESPO also mentioned several weak points he perceived, in particular regarding an 'Enabling environment for stakeholder participation', such as:
 - the level of interest and commitment of the members of the National MSG in the initiative and during the meetings;
 - the dissemination of the information contained in the FiTI reports is reaching key national stakeholders, but reactions to that information seem to be limited to specific individuals already engaged in the fishing industry or interested in marine conservation issues. Few public debates have been organised as a result of those publications (the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was noted);
 - the weak media/civil society landscape in the country – although it was stated that it is unclear whether the lack of involvement in the FiTI 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. lack of resources, expertise, time, etc.);
 - the lack of operational support to the National MSG, in the form of a dedicated FiTI National Secretariat. While he noted that there is a person within the Ministry assigned as the operational focal point to the initiative, stakeholders often expressed their concerns, stating that the 'structure of the initiative in the country was fragile' and that they perceived that the 'initiative was not considered a top priority' within the government;
 - diverging expectations from stakeholders regarding the benefits of the FiTI for Seychelles' marine fisheries, with several stakeholders expressing disappointment because increased transparency had not immediately resulted in better fishing management.

In summary, Mr CRESPO stated that while he perceives the 12 transparency requirements should be seen (on average) as 'meaningful progress' and the four procedural requirements (on average) as 'compliant', the overall average scoring for the requirements of the National Implementation Framework must be seen as 'inadequate progress'. Therefore, he recommended to the FiTI International Board that the Seychelles overall compliance designation should be 'inadequate progress'. A brief overview of suggested corrective actions to strengthen Seychelles' compliance with the FiTI Standard were then given.

The FiTI Chair thanked Mr CRESPO for his efforts and dedication, in particular taken into account that this was the first-ever country validation for the FiTI.

The meeting continued without Mr CRESPO's attendance by the FiTI Chair emphasising that after the Working Group's review, **disagreements were identified regarding the scores of six individual requirements** between the Independent Validator's and the Working Group's

own assessment. For this, an overview table was presented with the individual scores of the International Secretariat (as part of their Baseline Assessment Report), the individual scores of the Independent Validator (as part of his Validation Report) and the recommended individual scores of the Working Group for the FiTI International Board:

		Phase 1 Scoring by International Secretariat <small>Date: 31 March 2022</small>	Phase 2 Scoring by Independent Validator <small>Date: 24 November 2022</small>	Phase 3 Recommended scoring of Working Group
B.1. ASSESSMENT OF 'TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS'				
B.1.1	PUBLIC REGISTRY OF NATIONAL FISHERIES LAWS, REGULATIONS AND OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.1.2	FISHERIES TENURE ARRANGEMENTS	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.1.3	FOREIGN FISHING ACCESS AGREEMENTS	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.4	THE STATE OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCES	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.1.5	LARGE-SCALE FISHERIES	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Compliant
B.1.6	SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.7	POST-HARVEST SECTOR AND FISH TRADE	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.8	FISHERIES LAW ENFORCEMENT	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.9	LABOUR STANDARDS	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.10	FISHERIES SUBSIDIES	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	Inadequate progress
B.1.11	OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	Meaningful progress
B.1.12	BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Compliant
B.2. 'ASSESSMENT' 'PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FiTI REPORTS'				
B.2.1	REPORTING REQUIREMENTS	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.2.2	REPORTING DEADLINES AND PERIODS	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.2.3	REPORTING PROCESS	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
B.2.4	REPORT DISSEMINATION AND PUBLIC DEBATE	Meaningful progress	Inadequate progress	Meaningful progress
B.3. ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR 'NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK'				
B.3.1	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION	Compliant	Meaningful progress	Compliant
B.3.2	GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT	Compliant	Inadequate progress	Meaningful progress
B.3.3	MULTI-STAKEHOLDER OVERSIGHT	Compliant	Inadequate progress	Inadequate progress
B.3.4	ANNUAL WORKPLAN	Inadequate progress	Inadequate progress	Inadequate progress
B.3.5	IMPACT REPORT	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

The members of the Working Group explained the following with regards to the deviating individual requirements (shaded in yellow in the above-shown table):

- For *B.1.5 [Large-scale fisheries]* the final designation should be 'compliant', as the lack of information on beneficial ownership for vessel owners is not a requirement under the FiTI Standard (even though the high interest among Seychellois stakeholders in this topic suggests that such a requirement could be considered for future FiTI Standard revisions) and that the lack of catch and landing information for certain fleets has been clearly acknowledged and explained in both FiTI Reports (e.g. data is not available at all, or delayed from industrial longliners). Therefore, both FiTI Reports follow the core principle of 'progressive improvement', whereas a government must publish the information that they have, and where gaps exist, improvement must be demonstrated over time. Therefore, the partial lack of catch and landing data within the FiTI reporting timeframe must be reviewed during the second validation process.

- For *B.1.11 [Official Development Assistance]*, the final designation should be ‘meaningful progress’ as only partial information is provided in the FiTI Reports (i.e., fisheries-related development projects). However, the Working Group perceived that the National MSG gave a credible operational reason in the FiTI Reports why no comprehensive overview of conservation-related public sector development projects has been compiled as part of the FiTI reporting process.¹⁰ Furthermore, both reports provided descriptive information about several such projects, and several public agencies implementing conservation-related public sector projects in Seychelles are listed.
- For *B.1.12 [Beneficial Ownership]*, the final designation should be ‘compliant’, as even if the Independent Validator’s scoring of the five validation indicators for this transparency requirement would be accepted, it would still lead to an overall score of ‘compliant’ following the scoring guidelines for individual requirements of the FiTI described in Guidance Note #3.
- For *B.2.4 [Report Dissemination and Public Debates]*, the final designation should be ‘meaningful progress’, as the Working Group perceived that while further improvements are needed to ensure that the FiTI Reports lead to better decision-making, oversight, and public debate in Seychelles (in particular with stakeholders not directly involved in fisheries), the National MSG demonstrated efforts to widely distribute the first FiTI Reports, including an official launch ceremony with the President of Seychelles and other key stakeholders. Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an initiative based on multi-stakeholder collaboration was taken into account for this overall score.
- For *B.2.1 [Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation]*, the final designation should be ‘compliant’, as there is no evidence that the Government of Seychelles has done anything to impede an enabling environment for stakeholder participation. While the Working Group acknowledged that stakeholder participation (within and outside of the country’s FiTI National MSG) needs significant improvement, the government is not impeding or even restricting these efforts; instead, it is generally acknowledged that the civil society sector in Seychelles is not strong as the population of the country is very small and resources are limited. As a consequence there are few groups with the institutional capacity to perform effective oversight functions, raise issues of national interest in the public sphere or hold decision-makers accountable, especially concerning the fisheries sector, which requires a high

¹⁰ As part of both FiTI Reporting processes, the National MSG compiled a list of fisheries-related public sector development projects.

degree of knowledge and expertise. However, future validations should examine this aspect further, including the role of the National MSG in setting positive examples.

- For *B.3.2. [Governance and Support]*, the final designation should be ‘meaningful progress’, as the government – despite maintaining a FiTI Lead Ministry and a FiTI National Lead – has not addressed one of the core needs of the FiTI process in Seychelles: having adequate and proactive operational support through a dedicated FiTI National Secretariat. While this has not delayed any major activities within the country, and critical outputs have been produced (such as the FiTI Reports), it has also not strengthened the process and potentially weakened the level of engagement of National MSG members. A recommendation to the Seychelles’ government to staff and fund the Secretariat adequately should be included in the International Board’s overall Compliance Statement.

Taking these aspects into consideration, the Working Group then stated that they do **not agree with the Independent Validator’s overall compliance designation for Seychelles** of ‘inadequate progress’ because the facts and conclusions in the Validator’s report did not support such recommendation. The Working Group recommended to the FiTI International Board that the overall compliance designation for Seychelles should be ‘meaningful progress’. The Working Group noted that significant aspects of the FiTI Standard have been implemented with the support of the government, which has shown its commitment to the FiTI and that a score of ‘meaningful progress’ would balance the considerable advancements in fisheries transparency, while acknowledging that improvements in stakeholder’s participation are needed.¹¹

The Working Group also stated that it agreed with the Independent Validator’s assessment of ‘Multi-Stakeholder Oversight’ (B.3.3) as being inadequate, and therefore, in accordance with section D.3 of the FiTI Standard, Seychelles cannot obtain an overall designation of ‘compliant’.¹² Furthermore, the Working Group also found no indications of any breaches of principle or spirit of the FiTI.

After a discussion, the participating Board Members reached the following decisions by consensus:¹³

¹¹ It was also briefly noted that the combined average score of all 21 individual requirements suggests an overall score for ‘meaningful progress’. While the overall compliance designation should not be justified based on such a mathematical exercise, it nevertheless can be used as guidance to determine the final compliance designation.

¹² The same is true for the transparency requirements, which in accordance with section D.3 of the FiTI Standard all need to be at least ‘meaningful progress’ designations; however, the Seychelles’ assessment shows one transparency requirement (on fisheries subsidies) being assessed as ‘inadequate progress’.

¹³ There was one apparent conflict of interest for this Board decision: Mr Philippe MICHAUD is the Chair of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group in Seychelles. Consequently, Philippe was excluded from this particular decision-making procedure. The number of voting members in the stakeholder group ‘Government sector’ have therefore been reduced from 4 to 3 members, and the remaining voting rights were adjusted accordingly.

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-01]:

The International Board approved the individual scores and the overall compliance designation of 'meaningful progress' for Seychelles, as recommended by the Working Group.

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-02]:

The International Board appointed the current Working Group – comprised of Valeria MERINO, Hugh GOVAN Nedwa NECH and Julien MILLION – as the official Validation Committee for Seychelles and tasked the Committee with drafting and approving the International Board's Compliance Statement, which will be made publicly available afterward.

Sven stated that as Seychelles' first overall validation outcome is less than 'complaint' – but no breaches of the FiTI Principles and the spirit of the initiative were found – the FiTI International Board must apply the following consequences of non-compliance to Seychelles, in accordance with section E.2.3 of the FiTI Standard:

[Outcome of first validation is] *Meaningful progress: The country will remain a FiTI Candidate country and be requested to undertake corrective actions until the second validation within the timeframe set forth by the International Board.*

If the country achieves:

- *Compliant progress in the assessment of overall compliance in the second validation, the country will become a 'FiTI Compliant country'.*
- *Meaningful progress in the assessment of overall compliance in the second validation, the country will be suspended and requested to undertake corrective actions until the third validation within the timeframe set forth by the FiTI International Board (E.1.1). When the overall outcome of the country's third validation is less than 'compliant', the country will be delisted.*
- *Inadequate progress or no progress in the assessment of overall compliance in the second validation, the country will be delisted.*

The FiTI International Board requested also that the FiTI International Secretariat and Seychelles' National MSG will actively disseminate the outcomes of the validation process to the public, so that the findings and recommendations of the validation process can contribute to public debates. Furthermore, the FiTI International Secretariat and/or FiTI

Chair was tasked to schedule a meeting with Seychelles' National MSG to discuss the Board's Compliance Statement and future steps.

3. Approval of extension requests from Seychelles and Mauritania

On 17 November 2022, the Chair of the Seychelles' FiTI National MSG – Mr Philippe Michaud – submitted a request to the FiTI Chair for an extension of the deadline to submit the country's 3rd FiTI Report (for calendar year 2021).

In accordance with the FiTI Standard, this FiTI Report is due by 31 December 2022, but due to delays in the procurement of a new Report Compiler, the FiTI National MSG is asking to submit their report by end of February 2023.

The participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:¹⁴

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-03]:

The International Board approved the request by Seychelles (dated: 17 November 2022) to change the due date of the country's 3rd FiTI Report from end of December 2022 to end of February 2023.

Similar, on 2 December 2022, the FiTI Chair received an official request from Minister Mohamed Abidine MAYIF to extend the deadline for the publication of Mauritania's third FiTI Report (comprising information for the calendar year 2021).

In accordance with the FiTI Standard, this FiTI Report is due by 31 December 2022, but due to delays in the procurement of the previous Report Compiler (new donor), the Minister is asking to submit the country's report by end of February 2023.

As that this request was not submitted on time in accordance with section C.1.2 of the FiTI Standard, the participants agreed to nevertheless consider and discuss this request. Furthermore, Ahmed SENHOURY recommended that given the advanced timeframe for the Mauritania report and the fact that the procurement process has still not been completed yet an additional extension of 2 months (thus until April 2023) should be granted.

The participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:

¹⁴ There was one apparent conflict of interest for this Board decision: Mr Philippe MICHAUD is the Chair of the National Multi-Stakeholder Group in Seychelles. Consequently, Philippe was excluded from this particular decision-making procedure. The number of voting members in the stakeholder group 'Government sector' have therefore been reduced from 4 to 3 members, and the remaining voting rights were adjusted accordingly.

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-04]:

The International Board approved the request by Mauritania (dated: 01 December 2022) to change the due date of the country's 3rd FiTI Report from end of December 2022 to end of April 2023.

4. Approval of candidate applications

The FiTI Chair informed all participants that she received the candidate applications from the governments of Madagascar (on 19 November 2022) and Ecuador (on 24 November 2022), informing her that both countries have completed the six sign-up requirements (as stated in section A of the FiTI Standard)¹⁵, and now wish to be recognised as FiTI Candidate countries.¹⁶

The FiTI Chair requested Sven to provide a summary of activities undertaken by stakeholders in **Madagascar** to comply with the initial sign-up requirements. Sven outlined that the received application is in formal compliance with section A of the FiTI Standard and highlighted several activities undertaken by the International Secretariat, the FiTI Lead Ministry (and its National Lead) as well as other stakeholders in the country, in particular the formation of the country's National MSG.

FiTI Candidate Application: Madagascar

FiTI sign-up requirements	Status Madagascar
Public commitment	A.1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 27 September 2021, conveyed via an official letter sent by Paubert Mahatante, Madagascar's Minister for Fisheries and Blue Economy
Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation	A.2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FiTI Lead Ministry	A.3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy
FiTI National Lead	A.3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms Narindra Raharison
FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group	A.4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12 members, equally distributed among representatives from Madagascar's government, business and civil society
FiTI National Secretariat	A.5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Located within the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy Lead: Ranjilva Ramananihantamalala
Workplan	A.6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved by the National Multi-Stakeholder Group (2022-2023)

FiTI Candidate Application: Madagascar



FiTI Candidate Application: Madagascar



FiTI Candidate Application: Madagascar

- Challenging environment for good governance; strong support by current Minister (also in international fora)
- No website @ Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy
- Well operating National Secretariat
- Funding generally an issue, as expectations of no-cost activity for Madagascar's government
- Activities in workplan not yet financed, but discussions with donors ongoing

Does the FiTI International Board approve the candidate application of Madagascar and recognise it as an official FiTI Candidate country?

¹⁵ <https://www.fiti.global/sign-up-steps>

¹⁶ In accordance with Guidance Note # 1 'Implementing the sign-up steps', both countries complied with the requirement to submit their Candidate Application at least one week before an FiTI International Board meeting.

Afterwards, the participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-05]:

The International Board approved the candidate application of Madagascar (received on 19 November 2022) and recognised it as an official FiTI Candidate country.

The FiTI Chair then requested Sven to provide a similar summary of activities undertaken by stakeholders in **Ecuador** to comply with the initial sign-up requirements. Again, Sven outlined that the received application is in formal compliance with section A of the FiTI Standard and mentioned several activities undertaken by the International Secretariat, the FiTI Lead Ministry (and its National Lead) as well as other stakeholders in the country, in particular the formation of the country's National MSG and outreach activities.

FiTI Candidate Application: Ecuador

FiTI sign-up requirements	Status Madagascar
Public commitment	A.1 ✓ 23 December 2022, conveyed via an official letter sent by Julio José Prado Lucio-Paredes, Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fisheries
Enabling Environment for Stakeholder Participation	A.2 ✓
FiTI Lead Ministry	A.3 ✓ Vice-Ministry of Aquaculture and Fisheries (VAP)
FiTI National Lead	Mr José Isidro Andrade Vera
FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group	A.4 ✓ 18 members, equally distributed among representatives from Ecuador's government, business and civil society
FiTI National Secretariat	A.5 ✓ Located within the Vice-Ministry of Aquaculture and Fisheries (VAP); Lead: Jose Isidro Andrade Vera
Workplan	A.6 ✓ Approved by the National Multi-Stakeholder Group (2022-2023)

FiTI Candidate Application: Ecuador

Public sector

Undersecretary of Fishery Resources

National Directorate of Aquatic Species (DIRNESA)

Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility

Public Institute for Aquaculture and Fisheries Research (IPAF)

National Directorate of Public Records (DINAPI)

Business sector *

Society of Producers and Marketers of Marine Ingredients of Ecuador (SIMARE)

National Chamber of Fisheries (CONP)

Galapagos Artisanal Fishing Organization Corporation (CORFAG)

Association of Fishing Production of Manta Shipowners (ASOMAM)

National Federation of Fishing Cooperatives of Ecuador (FENACOPES)

Civil society sector

Conservation International Ecuador

WWF Ecuador

Tuna Conservation Group (TUNACONG)

Citizenship and Development Foundation

Elly Affairs Lay University of Manabí (EUSAM)

College of Biologists of Manabí (COBIM)




FiTI Candidate Application: Ecuador








FiTI Candidate Application: Ecuador

FiTI Candidate Country application

Country: Ecuador

Date of application: 24.11.2022

- Inclusive MSG process (including Galapagos islands)
- Strong interest by business organisations
- FiTI National Lead currently acts as Head of National Secretariat
- Activities in workplan not yet financed, but discussions with donors planned
- Discussions ongoing to anchor FiTI commitment into National Action Plan of OGP

Does the FiTI International Board approve the candidate application of Ecuador and recognise it as an official FiTI Candidate country?

Afterwards, the participating Board Members reached the following decision by consensus:

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-06]:

The International Board approved the candidate application of Ecuador (received on 24 November 2022) and recognised it as an official FiTI Candidate country.

The FiTI Chair concluded this session by expressing her delight with these two decisions and congratulated both National MSGs for this achievement. She expressed her satisfaction

with the thoroughness of both Candidate Applications, which reflected the conscientious and hard work invested by the National MSGs during the entire FiTI sign-up process. With the completion of these sign-up steps, both countries can now embark on the next step of the FiTI process and publish their first FiTI Report in 2023 (containing information from 2022).

5. 2022 membership election for the FiTI association

The Chair recalled that the nominations period for the 2022 membership election for the FiTI association was open for several months (i.e. 15 June – 30 November 2022), during which a total of 12 applications were received:¹⁷

Stakeholder group	Membership seats to be filled	Received applications
Government sector	4 membership seats	4 applications
Business sector (LSF)	2 membership seats	1 application
Business sector (SSF)	1 membership seat	1 application
Social sector	5 membership seats	6 applications
		<u>12 applications</u>

Out of the 12 applications received and reviewed, 10 applications were approved by the International Board as shortlisted nominees¹⁸. Afterwards, the Election Committee (comprising of Ylva Mattsson, Alfred Schumm, and the FiTI Chair) conducted several interviews. During these interviews, candidates had the opportunity to speak about their track record, their commitment to our mission and vision, how they could contribute to our work, previous experience, time availability, etc. The Election Committee also responded to questions about the FiTI and International Board responsibilities.

After the interview phase was concluded, the Election Committee discussed their impressions about the candidates and decided on a list of seven candidates to propose to the FiTI International Board. Information about all these seven candidates was shared with the Board prior to this meeting.

¹⁷ The FiTI International Secretariat received and verified all documentations, which included a cover letter, a letter of nomination, a nomination form, and the nominee's resume.

¹⁸ Approved during the 18th FiTI International Board meeting [ID: BM-18_2022_D-9] on 27-28 September and via FiTI Board Circular No. 11 [ID: BC-11_2022] on 22 November 2022.

During this meeting, the members of the Election Committee presented the recommended candidates to the International Board and clarified questions and concerns from the participants.

Afterwards extensive discussions, the participating Board Members reached the following decision:

Decision [BM-19_2022_D-07]:

The International Board approved the nominations of the Election Committee for the election of the following seven new members of the FiTI association for the term 1st of January 2023 to 31st of December 2025:

- **Mr Andres ARENS, nominated by the Government of Ecuador (Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments and Fishing); stakeholder group: Government sector; first-term election.**
- **Mr Roy CLARISSE, nominated by the Government of Seychelles (Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy); stakeholder group: Government sector; first-term election.**
- **Mr Joacim JOHANNESON, nominated by the Government of Sweden (Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management); stakeholder group: Government sector; first-term election.**
- **Mr Tony LAZAZZARA, nominated by Thai Union Group; stakeholder group: Business sector (Large-scale fisheries); first-term election.**
- **Ms Maisie PIGEON, nominated by Oceana; stakeholder group: Social sector; first-term election;**
- **Mr Dawda Foday SAINE, nominated by the African Confederation of Professional Organizations of Artisanal Fisheries (CAOPA); stakeholder group: Business sector (Small-scale fisheries); first-term election.**
- **Ms Annie TOURETTE, nominated by Blue Ventures; stakeholder group: Social Sector; first-term election.**

If the feedback from the referees does not dispute a candidate's suitability, the election process will be considered complete, and the results will be publicly announced.¹⁹

¹⁹ Before formally taking office, all new Board Members will be asked to sign a Conflict of Interests Disclosure Form and be appraised on the content of FiTI's core governance documents, the FiTI Standard, and other information about the FiTI's current and future programmatic goals.

6. Closing

The FiTI Chair closed the meeting by wishing all participants a joyful holiday season and expressed her gratitude again to those Board Members whose second term is ending at the end of the year.

19th International Board Meeting ended

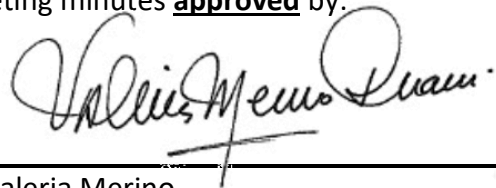
Meeting minutes **provided** by:



Mr Sven Biermann

Secretary of the meeting; Executive Director of the
FiTI International Secretariat

Meeting minutes **approved** by:



Dr Valeria Merino

Chair of the FiTI International Board.

APPENDIX I: List of Participants

Chair

Valeria MERINO

Stakeholder group: Government sector

Annika MACKENSEN	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.5 votes]
Ylva MATTSSON	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.5 votes]
Philippe MICHAUD	[Voting power for this meeting: 2.7 votes] ²⁰

Not excused:

Mohamed Salem NANY

Stakeholder group: Business sector

Keith ANDRE	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]
Alfredo SFEIR	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]
Hugh GOVAN	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]

Excused:

Gaoussou GUEYE
Francisco LEOTTE

Stakeholder group: Social sector

Nedwa NECH	[Voting power for this meeting: 2.4 votes] ²¹
Francisco MARI	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]
Eduardo ROLÓN	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]
Alfred SCHUMM	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]
Ahmed SENHOURY	[Voting power for this meeting: 1.2 votes]

²⁰ Francisco LEOTTE assigned his voting power (1.2 votes) to Philippe MICHAUD as his proxy in an email to the FiTI International Secretariat on 5 December 2022.

²¹ Gaoussou GUEYE assigned his voting power (1.2 votes) to Nedwa NECH as his proxy in an email to the FiTI Chair on 2 December 2022.

Observers

Julien MILLION, The World Bank Group

Excused:

Marcio CASTRO DE SOUZA, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Theophilous CHIVIRU, Open Government Partnership (OGP)

Not excused:

Salimata SOUMARE, African Development Bank (AfDB)

FiTI International Secretariat

Sven BIERMANN

Guests

Jose CRESPO, Independent Validator for Seychelles (only partially)

APPENDIX II: Additional clarifications for validation scoring

Given the comprehensibility of the FiTI Standard, each of the 21 validation *requirements* is further broken down into unique and assessable validation *indicators*. For example, the transparency requirement ‘Foreign Fishing Access Agreements’ includes five validation indicators, as defined in the FiTI Standard.

3) Foreign Fishing Access Agreements

The objective of this requirement is to ensure public access to all contractual arrangements that the country 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 the country’s marine jurisdictional waters, as well as national-flagged fishing vessels operating in the waters of third countries.²⁶

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). ²⁷	
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.	
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.	

The concept of ‘best available’ information, as outlined in Guidance Note #2, must be addressed for this transparency requirement, relating to assessments of the impact of these agreements.

In order to determine the level of compliance for each validation requirement, a country’s performance is assessed and scored on the level of validation *indicators*. This allows for a more granular and objective assessment. Scoring of each of the validation indicators must follow the same compliance designations as used for determining a country’s overall level of compliance, as outlined above.

In order to determine a single compliance designation for each validation *requirement*, an average score is calculated, based on the scoring of the underlying validation indicators. Compliance designations are reached through the following methodology:

Compliance designation	Calculated score range
Compliant	≥ 2.5
Meaningful progress	< 2.5 to ≥ 1.5
Inadequate progress	< 1.5 to ≥ 0.5
No progress	< 0.5
Not applicable/Not collated ¹⁸	N/A

The ultimate designation determined for each validation *requirement* is documented in a Validation Scorecard. Numerical scores are not included in the Validation Scorecard.

For assessing the **overall level of compliance**, the FiTI International Board needs to take into account provision E.2.2 ('Breach of Principles and Spirit of the Initiative'), as well as 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 fisheries sector of the country.
- 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.

Furthermore, the FiTI International Board must observe that in order to grant the **overall compliance designation of 'Compliant'** (see above), the country must have obtained:

- A 'Compliant' designation on the assessment of the individual requirements regarding an enabling environment for stakeholder participation (B.3.1.) and multi-stakeholder oversight (B.3.3), and
- At least 'Meaningful progress' designations on the assessment of all of the 12 individual transparency requirements (B.1.1 to B.1.12).²²

²² No other provisions are given in the FiTI Standard regarding a minimum compliance designation than those stated here. Therefore, the FiTI Standard is silent on the minimum scores of the other requirements (for example the four procedural requirements related to the FiTI Report).