



Algarve octopus pot & trap fishery Summary of Action Plan



March 2021



Introduction

The Action Plan proposed for the Algarve octopus pot & trap fishery is based on the pre-assessment carried out through the CephS and ChefS (www.cephsandchefs.com/) project funded through the Interreg Atlantic Area Program by the European Regional Development Fund, which aims to develop new markets and products based on cephalopods (squid, octopus, cuttlefish), increase the profitability of the value chain, and help to make fishers more competitive in the Atlantic Area.

The objective of this Action Plan is to improve the weaknesses found in the Algarve octopus pot & trap fishery identified in the pre-assessment against the Fishing Standard 2.01 of the MSC. The fishery weaknesses are those portrayed by the indicators that did not reach the level of good practices required by the MSC Standard (≥ 80), that is, indicators with scores < 60 and between 60-79, and that inevitably will need improvement actions to achieve a score ≥ 80 .

The Unit of Assessment is all fishing boats using pot & trap fishing for common octopus in the Algarve region, south of Portugal. The fishery is carried out with plastic pots and traps, conducted by around 500 small active vessels mostly less than 9 meters within 6 nautical miles from coast.

Specifically, and accordingly to the pre-assessment, the fishery has automatically failed 6 PI ($< SG60$) in Principle 1, 2 and 3. There are additional 8 PIs that scored between SG60-79 and would therefore require conditions to improve. The PIs that require improvement are related to a general failure by the fishery to comply with management measures, related to the maximum number of pots & traps allowed and the high number of pots, traps and lines lost that can cause ghost fishing, the existence of considerable landings of individuals below minimum size, associated with illegal landings, and the absence of a formal stock assessment.

Table 1 – Summary of Performance Indicator level scores

Principle of the Fisheries Standard	Number of PIs with draft scoring ranges < 60	Number of PIs with draft scoring ranges between 60-79
Principle 1 – Stock status	2	2
Principle 2 – Minimising environmental impacts	1	5
Principle 3 – Effective management	3	1

The proposed improvement actions and measures to address the weaknesses described above are grouped into the following six major actions:

- Action 1 - Fisheries monitoring
- Action 2 - Stock assessment
- Action 3 - Co-management
- Action 4 - Management plan
- Action 5 - Follow-up, control and surveillance
- Action 6 - Awareness

Action 1 - Fisheries monitoring improvement

This action aims to obtain regular monitoring of catches from the fishery with pots & traps, both of the target catches and by-catches. It also aims to obtain the actual number of pots & traps used, as well as the total areas of operation of the fishery. These data are essential for a possible quantitative assessment of stock status, the impact of fisheries on endangered, threatened and protected species (ETP), the establishment of management measures, the prevention of illegal fishing and the removal of illegal sets, as well as for an environmental impact assessment of the fishery.

Conclusion date: October 2023

Action 2 - Stock assessment

Based on data collected in action 1, time series of Catches per Unit of Effort (CPUE) will be estimated using the official landings data for octopus and the actual estimated fishing effort. At the same time, a study of the possible models to assess the state of the octopus stock at the level of the Algarve region will be carried out, taking into account the particularities of the octopus' biological cycle and assessments carried out in other populations. Finally, all the information collected so far will be combined with the biological data and the status of the Algarve's octopus stock will be estimated.

Conclusion date: May 2024

Action 3 - Co-management implementation

Co-management is currently enshrined in Portuguese law (Decree-Law no. 73/2020), which establishes the procedure for creating and operating co-management committees. Co-management in the Algarve octopus fishery started with the project "Tertúlias do Polvo", which organized between 2014-2016 monthly meetings involving all stakeholders (fishing industry, government, environmental NGOs, scientists), and where management measures were discussed and decided by all stakeholders. This action will be carried out through the ParticiPESCA project, which is currently underway (October 2020 - December 2022). The project aims to implement co-management in this fishery, promoting the direct involvement of local communities in decision-making to achieve the sustainability of the fishery.

Conclusion date: December 2022

Action 4 - Management plan development

In Decree-Law no. 73/2020 Article 17 establishes the management plans to be developed and approved by the co-management committees. In this sense, the co-management committee established in action 3 would in this action develop the management plan, which should have specific objectives, catch control rules and tools that respond to stock status, as well as measures to reduce the environmental impact of the fishery, namely to decrease interactions with ETP species and prevent the loss of pots and rumps in the sea (ghost fishing).

Conclusion date: December 2024

Action 5 - Monitoring, control and surveillance

There is evidence that the fishery repeatedly violates several fisheries laws necessary for the sustainability of the fishery, namely the minimum size and the maximum number of pots and traps permitted by law. Based on the geolocation and catch data from the fishing activity collected in

action 1, the control and enforcement of the management measures changed and/or agreed in the co-management committee (action 4) can be improved, namely with the collection of illegal sets.

Conclusion date: December 2026

Action 6 – Awareness of Chain of Custody

This action aims to reinforce the implementation of the management measures agreed by the co-management committee, and at the same time to reinforce fisheries control and enforcement. It is developed through a chain of custody awareness campaign, namely of restaurants and buyers as to not buy octopus below the minimum size. This campaign should complement and be carried out in conjunction with the campaigns planned within the ParticiPESCA project, which aim at raising awareness among the general public, but extending after the completion of this project.

Conclusion date: December 2024