



# Fisheries Governance Tool: *Guidance Document*

April 2020

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## ABOUT MRAG

[MRAG Americas, Inc.](#) is a U.S.-based independent private consulting and auditing company specializing in the conservation of marine and freshwater ecosystems through responsible, rational and sustainable use of fish and other aquatic living resources. Our staff of scientists and specialists have expertise in the assessment, management, and monitoring of aquatic ecosystems; evaluation and benchmarking of governance and management systems; fisheries, aquaculture and seafood supply-chain certification; fisheries observer and electronic monitoring programs; and international conservation and management agreements.

MRAG Americas led the development of this work and engaged in a peer review workshop and subsequent user review of the tool to ensure sound theory, approach and application.

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This work was made possible with support from the Walton Family Foundation.

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### ***Is the Fisheries Governance Tool right for you?***

The FGT can help fishery stakeholders in many ways, including to:

- Conduct a comprehensive—and reproducible—self-assessment of a nation’s fisheries governance structure and capacity;
- Evaluate the performance of a nation’s fisheries management system as a whole, at a point in time, and track progress towards targets;
- Assess and track progress among individual fisheries in a single country over time;
- Assess and track progress across several countries;
- Identify gaps in a nation’s fisheries management structure, function, or resources; and
- Track emerging trends, issues, or topics of concern related to a nation’s fisheries.

## THE FISHERIES GOVERNANCE TOOL: WHAT IS IT FOR?

**Understanding Needs.** Nations around the world recognize the environmental, economic and social benefits they can gain when they move toward sustainably-managed fisheries. As a result, many countries are considering changes to the policies and laws that govern their fisheries and shape the way they are managed. To make informed decisions about what changes are needed—and possible—it is first critical to have a comprehensive and reliable understanding of how a country's fisheries management system is performing. However, gaining this level of insight has proven to be a challenge.

**Define Own Goals.** Since the 1990s, assessments have focused on individual fisheries, or specific parts of a fisheries management system, rather than the system as a whole. When measuring performance, they often do so in relation to external standards rather than a country's own goals. This may help a fishery or a country to achieve a specific, recognized certification or rating, but it provides only a partial understanding of the system's performance and can lead to inconsistent results over time. This makes it harder for stakeholders to advance—or even advocate for—more comprehensive changes and structural improvements needed to support a transition toward sustainably-managed fisheries.

**Comprehensive Analysis.** The Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) changes this dynamic. It is designed upon the premise that the most comprehensive and revealing measure of performance can be found at the intersection of three components: 1) the laws and policies governing fisheries, 2) the capacity to implement those policies, and 3) the function and performance of the fisheries themselves. The FGT builds upon many of the credible and widely accepted assessment tools that are currently available, such as those used for certification to inform markets and indices that measure fishery performance.

**Use at Any Scale.** Users enter data into the tool, where its diagnostic framework analyzes how a fisheries management system is performing, evaluating governance at national, regional, local, and fishery levels. Repeated use of the FGT provides an evaluation of progress, from policy through implementation and outcomes, with each measure scored as Basic, Adequate, Good, or Better. This allows for an objective and repeatable evidence-based evaluation, with scientific rigor throughout.

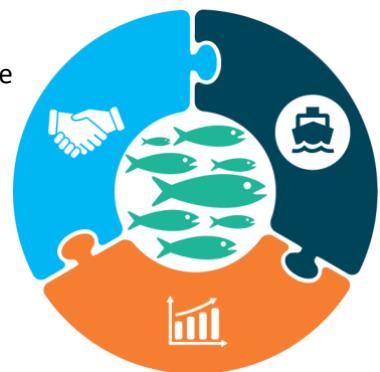
**Stakeholder Driven.** The FGT puts power in the hands of managing agencies, environmental organizations, funders/investors, and other key stakeholders. With the tool, multiple users can track progress against clear measures over time and identify gaps and other challenges that impede continued improvement. Importantly, the FGT allows stakeholders to identify the objectives set in their country's own policy and management plans and track progress in relation to those, rather than against an external standard that may not be relevant or that their country may never be able to meet.

**Road Map for Progress.** Countries can make immense strides toward achieving environmental, economic and social sustainability when all those working to advance progress have access to the right tools. Whether you are tracking performance, investigating obstacles that may be undermining progress, contemplating policy changes, applying for a certification, or targeting new investments—using the FGT can create consistency in assessing progress over time—and set out a clear road map for progress. This Guidance Document can assist users as they begin to work with and navigate the tool.

## DIAGNOSTIC FRAMEWORK OF THE FISHERIES GOVERNANCE TOOL

### THREE PIECES CREATING A WHOLE PICTURE

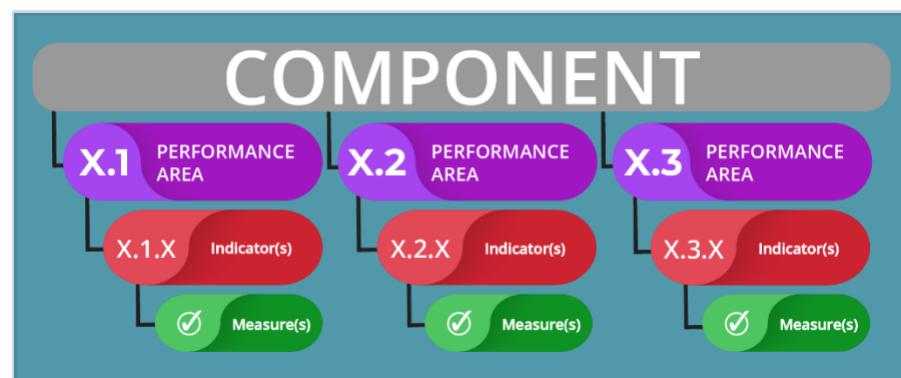
The FGT is different from other evaluation frameworks because it looks at three interconnected Components—1) **Policy**, 2) **Capacity** (to implement the policy), and 3) **Performance** (of the fisheries)—that provide a layered approach to evaluating the fishery management system that can be applied to both state and non-state (e.g. sovereign states and international organizations) governance.



Individually, each piece can show stakeholders important information about a fisheries management system. Yet, on their own, they can also be misleading. For example, many small and middle-income countries have adopted globalized international policies and have copied institutional structures. Yet, the mere existence of these policies and institutions does not mean policies are being implemented. A country may take important steps to support a full transition to sustainably-managed fisheries, but if it does not have access to the best available science, consistent and secure budget allocations, and/or infrastructure to implement them, real and sustainable progress will be difficult to achieve, take much more time and be much less effective. This is why the FGT looks at the intersection of these pieces—to provide an understanding of performance as a whole.

Within each high-level Component, Indicators are grouped within Performance Areas. More than 200 measures in total are evaluated to provide a picture of performance across the Indicators and Performance Areas. The measures are designed to track progress toward targets defined by the users—assessing performance without prescribing a desired state for a governance system or fishery.

Each measure is assigned a score: Basic, Adequate, Good, or Better. Measures of Basic and Adequate are essential for establishing sound and durable fisheries management, while Good and Better measures will promote more sustainable management.



The FGT evaluates policy, capacity and fisheries performance, because all three together are required for effective fisheries management.



## COMPONENT 1: POLICY

*Key Question: Does the fisheries policy provide the basis for rational and effective governance and management of the nation's domestic fisheries, and its orderly and legitimate participation in international fisheries?*

At a fundamental level, there must be a well understood policy that guides fisheries management at the national, regional, and local levels to enable evaluation. There must also be evidence that fishers and other stakeholders recognize the authority of the state to develop and implement the policy. While a written fisheries policy and related documents such as laws, regulations, decrees, orders, or guidance are preferable, customary and traditional practice that are well-understood and widely followed are also evidence of recognized policy.

The Performance Areas of the Policy Component include Policy Content and Policy Process. Their nested Indicators contain 62 measures total. The content of the policy considers the principal elements captured within the policy documents, including the identification and general applicability of the policy, the logical framework and coherence of long-term goals, use of the best scientific evidence available, and the precautionary approach.



## COMPONENT 2: CAPACITY

*Key Question: Does the nation have the capacity to reliably and consistently implement the national fisheries policy in successful pursuit of the goals articulated therein?*

While the fisheries policy states the purpose, goals, and principles that fishery management wants to achieve, it is critical that the management entity has the capacity—the resources, tools, expertise, and authority—to carry out the fisheries management mission. The capacity of a governance system to carry out its management mission relies on having a recognized authority, expertise, and a structure in place to direct action at national, regional, district, and local levels. The organization must be able to make decisions within a clear, transparent, and participatory or inclusive process that is based on science. There must also be a system for enforcement that will monitor and oversee compliance to ensure accountability to the resource and the economies and communities that rely on it.

# POLICY

## 1.1 POLICY CONTENT

- 1.1.1 Principal Elements
- 1.1.2 Ecological Sustainability
- 1.1.3 Economic Sustainability
- 1.1.4 Social/Community Sustainability

## 1.2 POLICY PROCESS

- 1.2.1 Policy Legality
- 1.2.2 Transparency
- 1.2.3 Compliance
- 1.2.4 International Fisheries
- 1.2.5 Applicability to All Types of Fisheries

# CAPACITY

## 2.1 MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- 2.1.1 Fisheries Governance Structure
- 2.1.2 Fishery Management Organization
- 2.1.3 Decision Making
- 2.1.4 Science Delivery

## 2.2 MONITORING, CONTROL & SURVEILLANCE

- 2.2.1 Fisheries Monitoring
- 2.2.2 Fisheries Control
- 2.2.3 Compliance

Two critical Performance Areas capture aspects of capacity necessary for implementation of the policy: Management System and Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance. In total, there are 58 measures to be evaluated within the Capacity Component.

## COMPONENT 3: PERFORMANCE



***Key Question:** Does fisheries management function in a way that effectively and efficiently implements the fisheries policy?*

Evaluation of performance against the key question begins with the fishery-specific management system, requiring that the documentary evidence and guidance from the Policy Component are translated, at the fishery level, into management plans, harvest strategies, fishery-specific goals and objectives, and economic and community objectives. As policies and resulting management actions work their way through the system to the fishing grounds, the link among enabling Indicators from Components 1 and 2 produces results that can be assessed in the four Performance Areas of Component 3. The evaluation at the fishery performance level uses 155 measures.

Principle Elements of the management system incorporate not only the national goals and objectives, but procedural protections, consistency with relevant law, and decision processes. Expertise, science, data, and fiscal and human resources contribute. Indicators of Ecological Sustainability provide the demonstrable results that the fishery management system is functioning to produce the desired outcomes for target and non-target stocks, protection of habitats and species, and consideration of associated environmental issues. Indicators of Economic Sustainability consider the performance of the fishery in providing benefits to the nation, the fleet, and fishers while producing good quality,

# PERFORMANCE



wholesome seafood. Indicators of Social and Community Sustainability reveal whether the management approach has demonstrated benefits to community well-being.

## HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOU NEED?

Because of the comprehensive nature of the FGT—including the more than 200 measures used to track progress—the tool itself may feel overwhelming at first glance. A natural question that someone may ask as they consider using the FGT for their work: “Just how much time does it take to complete?” The answer will depend on the number of jurisdictions and fisheries you are evaluating.

As an example, let’s assume you decide to assess five fisheries within one country. In this scenario, you may find yourself going through the following process (with potential timelines for active work, independent of planning):

**First, decide who will do the assessment.** As a first critical step, you will need to identify who will conduct the assessment, or whether aspects of the assessment will be conducted by multiple individuals. Someone in your organization? A consultant? Objectivity in the evaluation will strengthen its use and prevent misleading results. The assessor(s) that undertake the work need to have some familiarity with fisheries management and science and the cultural environment of the focal jurisdiction(s). Correct interpretation of laws, data, management plans, performance reports, etc. is critical for scoring the nuances between ‘yes’ and ‘in-part’, and therefore the expert should have experience with fisheries management and science issues in the country and speak the native language fluently.

Then, once you have identified the assessor(s):

1. **Orientation.** (*Approximately an hour*) Acquaint yourself with the Microsoft Excel workbook and how to score and enter data.
2. **Assess policy level.** (*1 – 4 days*) There are 62 measures. Does the management system you are reviewing provide online access to governance documents? If so, give yourself 1 -2 days to complete this and to provide the reference information. If the assessor has to find documentation from sources not online, add 1 -2 more days.
3. **Assess capacity level.** (*1 – 4 days*) For the 58 measures of capacity, plan for 1-2 days to complete. If the assessor has to find documentation from sources not online, add 1 -2 more days. Assessment of Capacity is likely to require information across scales (e.g. national and regional) to understand not only if the national capacity exists, but that it is provided to the scales at which management occurs.
4. **Assess fisheries.** (*7 days*) This Component requires scoring of 155 measures. Depending on the number of fisheries you are evaluating, the availability of fishery level information, and the familiarity of the user with the fisheries and management authority personnel, allow at least a week to complete the research (for all fisheries), data entry, scoring, documentation, and narratives.  
Note: While this Component is fishery-specific, there are a number of measures that are likely to score commonly across the fisheries, which will add efficiencies.
5. **Summarize results and set targets.** (*1-3 days*) You may want to convene stakeholders to look at the results, determine priorities and jointly set targets. You will have the most informed estimate of the

time needed to convene members of your stakeholder community. Whether you set targets or not, the diagnostic process is robust and more likely to be widely accepted if stakeholders have a role in the review and discussion of scores and findings to ensure that the interpretation of information is accurate.

6. **Assess progress toward targets.** (*0.5 – 3 days*) The initial assessment is the most time-consuming because you are assembling documentation, learning the system, and making decisions about targets to set for future evaluation (if you chose to set targets). Re-assessing the three components in future years should take much less time. Policy, for example, is not likely to change on an annual or biennial basis, while at the Performance level, fisheries may undergo annual changes to harvest limits or experience other factors, such as climate shifts, that affect outcomes.

**Remember!** This is a diagnostic tool, not a competition. Repeated assessments over time are intended to assist in identifying needs, setting priorities, measuring progress toward goals, and informing decision-makers. The FGT is meant to give you the means to focus where and what you require to move fishery performance toward sustainability.

## WHAT DATA DO YOU NEED?

The evaluation process is conducted largely as a desk-top study but requires knowledge of the system in question and the ability to confirm information with relevant offices and contacts. For many countries, detailed information may not be readily available online, in which case the assessor or user of the tool will need to acquire evidence and documentation through available sources, such as agency publications. Evaluations may rely (in part) on available credible sources that already compile information on fishery performance (such as MSC certifications, Seafood Watch reports, FishSource profiles, and related), but application of compiled reports should be reviewed prior to their use in this context, particularly with respect to the scale of assessment.

Component 1: POLICY		
SCORE	EVIDENCE	EXAMPLES
Yes	Documentation from within the last two years that a policy exists, published or unamended, by the relevant authority. Details related to a given measure are explicit or implicit, as appropriate in the policy.	Constitution, statute, decree, policy, regulation, annual report, government testimony, government websites for fisheries administrations. Credible summary report and publications can also provide evidence of policy with appropriate citations. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact that country does meet the measure.
In part	Documentation that a policy is under consideration, an existing policy meets the measure part way, or that an existing policy was amended in a way that makes it less effective to meet the measure.  Documentation that a policy exists, such as a news report or public announcement, but has not been published by the decision-making authority.	The evidence required for 'yes' or 'in part' apply at both scoring levels with the understanding of whether a measure is completely met or requires additional capacity to meet.  Policy documents, peer reviewed literature, court cases, foundation reports, expert interviews, government websites, official speeches, media articles that mention or report information related to the measure. The assessor should be able to verify that the measure is partially met, but there is a gap with respect to completely meeting the measure.
No	No policy document or legal instrument states a requirement for, or existence of, the measure. The policy or related document may provide evidence for both meeting and not meeting measures, such as defining objectives.	The measure is not addressed in published information; revised statute or regulation no longer contains the measure; relevant authority states the measure is not required. In scoring a 'No', there is definitive evidence that the country does not support the measure. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact the country doesn't meet the measure.
Not Evaluated	The measure cannot be evaluated because data are unavailable.	Unpublished, inaccessible, not collected. In scoring 'not evaluated', no information was found in support or lack of support for the measure. Searches or communications with experts revealed that there is no information available on this measure. Of course, this can be the most challenging to score, as knowing when to end a search for information and definitively score not evaluated is challenging.

Component 2: CAPACITY		
SCORE	EVIDENCE	EXAMPLES
Yes	Capacity and resources are present in budget allocations, human resources, and competency in science, Monitoring/Compliance/ Surveillance, and infrastructure.	To meet these measures, there should be evidence of annual budget allocations; strategic plans, organizational diagrams, dedicated offices and divisions, and demonstration through annual reports, scientific publications, stock assessments, monitoring and compliance reports, audits, investigative reports by third parties or government oversight bodies. These may be demonstrated on government websites, in summary papers, publications and related credible references. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact that country does meet the measure.
In part	Documentation that the fishery management authority has resources but may be insufficient to achieve policy goals and objectives, unreliable or inconsistent year to year; documentation that additional resources are required to meet management obligations.	The evidence required for 'yes' or 'in part' apply at both scoring levels with the understanding of whether a measure is completely met or requires additional capacity to meet.  Peer reviewed literature, organization charts, budget request justifications, expert interviews, government websites, official speeches, media articles that mention or report shortfalls or problems. The assessor should be able to verify that the measure is partially met, but there is a gap with respect to completely meeting the measure.
No	The absence of budget or planning document, or administrative policy document that states a requirement for or existence of the capacity measures.	The measure is not addressed in published information (as far as can be concluded); revised budget or agency organization chart no longer contains the measure; relevant authority states the measure is not required. There may be reference in reports that capacity is needed in certain areas, but not provided. In scoring a 'No', there is definitive evidence that the country does not support the measure. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact the country doesn't meet the measure.
Not Evaluated	The measure cannot be evaluated because data are unavailable.	Unpublished, inaccessible, not collected. In scoring 'not evaluated', no information was found in support or lack of support for the measure. Searches or communications with experts revealed that there is no information available on this measure. Of course, this can be the most challenging to score, as knowing when to end a search for information and definitively score not evaluated is challenging.

Component 3: FISHERIES PERFORMANCE		
SCORE	EVIDENCE	EXAMPLES
Yes	The fishery-specific management system has demonstrated the existence of the measure (e.g. where requiring specific management tools or data collections) and fishery performance outcomes at the relevant scale (where evidence to support demonstration of outcomes does not exist, but the requirement for the measure is present, score the fishery 'in-part' for the given measure).	Law or regulation, fishery management plans, annual or biennial stock assessments and status reports, plan amendments, rebuilding plans, scientific and technical committees, science agencies, published research, external credible reports from ratings and certifications organizations, Vessel Monitoring System or similar Monitoring/Compliance/Surveillance requirements. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact that country does meet the measure.
In part	Fisheries management plan, strategy, detailed regulations, or other management document describes the measure, but does not require it—or does not enforce it; or the measure is an objective, but attainment of the objective cannot be documented.	The evidence required for 'yes' or 'in part' apply at both scoring levels with the understanding of whether a measure is completely met or requires additional capacity to meet.  Credible summary reports and meeting outputs, rebuilding plans, stock assessments, discard data, compliance reviews, scientific reviews, scientific and technical committee reports that mention or report shortfalls or problems. The assessor should be able to verify that the measure is partially met, but there is a gap with respect to completely meeting the measure.
No	There is no documentation that the fishery management actions include a conservation and management measure.	The measure is not addressed in published information; revised plan, strategy or regulation no longer contains the measure; relevant authority states the measure is not required. In scoring a 'No', there is definitive evidence that the country does not support the measure. The assessor should be able to verify that in fact the country doesn't meet the measure.
Not Evaluated	The measure cannot be evaluated because data are unavailable, or the assessor does not know the answer and could not identify supporting evidence.	Unpublished, inaccessible, not collected. A measure related, for example, to shared stocks, transboundary stocks, or distant water fleets may not be applicable at the fishery level. In scoring 'not evaluated', no information was found in support or lack of support for the measure. Searches or communications with experts revealed that there is no information available on this measure. Of course, this can be the most challenging to score, as knowing when to end a search for information and definitively score not evaluated is challenging.
Not Applicable (NA)*	This measure is applicable to Component 3.	This may happen where certain measures do not apply to the characteristics of a fishery being assessed. For example, if the fishery is not a transboundary stock, there would not be need for fishery-specific management to participate in international agreements, and therefore the measure would not be scored, and the reason would not be for lack of information. However, for example, a nation scored under Components 1 and 2 would still be required to adhere to international agreements on transboundary stock management.

## HOW IS PERFORMANCE SCORED?

Each of the more than 200 measures in the FGT framework are evaluated and assigned a nominal score: Basic = 4 points; Adequate = 3 points; Good = 2 points; Better = 1 point. Measures of Basic and Adequate are essential for establishing sound and durable fisheries management, while Good and Better measures will promote more sustainable management. Within each Indicator, the assessor considers whether the governance system or fishery ‘meets’ measures that vary in the rigor of what is required (example from Component 1 provided in Table ). Achieving a measure in “Better” does not mean the system is “perfect.” A measure scored as Better in the absence of related elements at the Basic or Adequate level may in fact undermine the potential benefit of measures at the Good or Better level.

Performance Areas	Indicators	Measure	Score
1.1 Policy Content	1.1.1 Principal Elements	1.1.1.1 An identifiable fisheries management policy exists. It is generally applicable and is recognized internally and externally as the policy that guides fisheries management at the country, regional, and local levels.	Basic
1.1 Policy Content	1.1.1 Principal Elements	1.1.1.2 The fisheries management policy contains the principal elements of a functional policy; it is clearly thought out, with specific goals to guide management strategies that the state and legitimate interested parties have agreed will provide optimal benefits in the long term.	Adequate
1.1 Policy Content	1.1.1 Principal Elements	1.1.1.6 Clear long-term objectives that guide decision-making, consistent with the specific ecological, economic, and social goals, are explicit within management policy.	Good
1.1 Policy Content	1.1.1 Principal Elements	1.1.1.11 The policy mandates clear long-term objectives for fisheries management throughout the management system.	Better

*Table 2. Measures such as those shown above, illustrate how elements in the system can progress through Basic, Adequate, Good and Better performance within the designated Indicator and Component. Whether the system meets each successively more comprehensive measure is scored using data.*

The idea of the nominal scores is that as fisheries management becomes more complex and rigorous there is a diminishing return in outcomes (see Scoring the Quality of Supporting Evidence below). Enabling factors at the Basic and Adequate levels are most important for underpinning fisheries management. The FGT does not prescribe a standard or require that every system should meet all measures. Its function is to assess the existing governance system performance, then measure progress and change that can be accomplished within the context of where stakeholders aspire to be.

### **Does the country ‘meet’ the measure? What gets a Yes?**

Each of the measures is scored independently with a response of “Yes,” “No,” “In Part,” “Not

Evaluated,” or “Not Applicable.” (Note: “Not Applicable” is only relevant to individual fishery assessment under Component 3). If the evidence supports a “Yes” answer that the measure is met, it gets the full score possible for that measure (Basic = 4 points; Adequate = 3 points; Good = 2 points; Better = 1 point). If the evidence supports an “in-part” answer, it gets half the score. Recognizing that scoring may be done by individuals or groups with varied expertise, and that individuals bring their own

level of knowledge and perspective to the task, it is important to define as precisely and clearly as possible a standard of evidence required to get to “Yes: The country meets the measure.” In addition, assessors are encouraged to add a narrative explanation of each score given.

### **Simplified Calculation Example:**

#### **CALCULATING PERCENTAGE SCORE**

- Measure A (Basic) – YES = 4 points of 4 possible
- Measure B (Better) – In part = .5 points of 1 possible
- Measure C (Adequate) – YES = 3 points of 3 possible
- Measure D (Good) – No = 0 points of 2 possible

**Sum of Measures Scored (7.5) divided by Total Possible Score (10) = Score Achieved % (75%)**

**Sum of Measures Scored**  
(met, in-part, not met at various scoring levels)



**Total Possible Score**  
(full score for all measures at various scoring levels)



**Score Achieved %**

## **DETERMINING QUALITY OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

Accompanying the Indicator data scores is an index of information quality to provide an estimate of information uncertainty. Data quality indices have been applied elsewhere in evaluating the quality of information in analyses<sup>1</sup>.

Ranging from best data to no data, each measure is assigned a data quality index to provide an estimate of information uncertainty. Scoring gaps (those measures that could not be evaluated) should also be reflected in the data quality score.

Tier	Description
1	<b>Best data.</b> Referenced, agency document, peer review, published—with evidence dated within the last two years.
2	<b>Good data.</b> Grey literature, foundation reports, expert interviews, government websites, media articles (triangulation/confirmation), data within 3-10 years).
3	<b>Limited data.</b> Outdated (>10 years), anecdotal, traditional ecological knowledge (triangulation/confirmation).
4	<b>No Data.</b> Measure cannot be evaluated.

<sup>1</sup> For example, see the index employed in Productivity and Susceptibility Analysis methods of Patrick et al. (2010).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

### ***What is the Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT)?***

The Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) is a neutral, indicator-based diagnostic tool that provides stakeholders with a comprehensive and reliable understanding of how a country's fisheries management system is performing and progressing over time.

### ***Who is the FGT for?***

The Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) puts power in the hands of managing agencies, environmental non-governmental organizations, funders/investors, and other stakeholders. With the tool, users can assess status and progress against clear measures over time and identify gaps and other challenges that impede continued improvement. Importantly, the FGT offers a feature that allows stakeholders to identify the objectives set in their country's own policy and management plans and track progress in relation to those, rather than against an external standard that may not be relevant or that their country may never be able to meet.

### ***Can people in any country use the FGT?***

Yes, the Fisheries Governance Tool can be applied within any country. It was designed to evaluate and self-check progress within a country, not provide an external judgement. The environmental, political, cultural and legal contexts under which each country operates and manages their fisheries—from the approach to law making and oversight, to the capacity and availability of resources to implement changes, to the species being fished—varies dramatically. Donors or grantmakers can also use the tool to assess multiple countries at once, if desired. The tool is flexible.

### ***Why is the FGT needed?***

As nations around the world consider changes to their policies and laws to advance sustainably-managed fisheries, they need to make informed decisions about what changes are needed—and possible. To do so, it is critical to have a comprehensive and reliable understanding of how a country's fisheries management system is performing. Yet, stakeholders have not had a means to gain this level of understanding. This makes it harder for them to advance, or sometimes even advocate for, the changes needed to enable and support a transition toward sustainably-managed fisheries. The Fisheries Governance Tool provides a consistent framework for assessing a country's performance and measuring progress over time—and illuminates a road map for how more progress can be made in the future.

### ***Why was the FGT initially developed?***

The tool was initially intended as a means to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the work of the Walton Family Foundation in promoting ocean sustainability in five countries. However, as the tool was being developed, the Foundation recognized the potential benefit of sharing the tool more broadly.

***What makes this tool different or unique?***

The diagnostic framework at the core of the Fisheries Governance Tool (FGT) is unique in its comprehensiveness. It is established by three high-level pieces—Policy, Capacity (to implement the policy), and Performance (of the fisheries). This provides a layered approach to evaluating the fishery management system, which can be applied to both state and non-state governance. The FGT builds upon many of the credible and widely accepted assessment tools that are currently available, such as those used for certification to inform markets and indices that measure fishery performance outcomes.

***What is the methodology behind the Fisheries Governance Tool? How does it work?***

The Fisheries Governance Tool recognizes that the best measure of a country's performance can be found at the intersection of three components—Policy, Capacity (to implement the policy), and Performance (of the fisheries)—which provide a layered approach to evaluating the fishery management system that can be applied to state and non-state governance. Within each high-level Component, Indicators of change are grouped within Performance Areas. More than 200 measures are evaluated to provide a picture of performance across the Indicators and Performance Areas. Each measure is assigned a score: Basic, Adequate, Good, or Better. Measures of Basic and Adequate are essential for establishing sound and durable fisheries management, while Good and Better measures will promote more sustainable management.