



IUU Risk Intelligence

Putting Compliance First

POLICING THE OPEN SEAS: GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF FISHERIES MONITORING CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE – ASSESSING RISK- BASED SOLUTIONS: A baseline analysis of maritime enforcement in 84 countries

BENIN – COUNTRY REPORT

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IUU RISK INTELLIGENCE

Policy Report - Volume 1 Number 1

SUMMARY

*This evaluation of Fisheries Monitoring Control and Surveillance report for **Benin** is one of 84 such country evaluations that covers nations landing 92% of world's fish catch. Using a wide range of interviews and in-country consultations with both military and civilian agencies, the report exemplifies the best attempt by the author(s) at evaluation of MCS compliance using 12 questions derived from international fisheries laws. The twelve questions are divided into two evaluation fields, (MCS Infrastructure and Inspections). Complete details of the methods and results of this global evaluation would be published shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website.*

Over a five-year period, this global assessment has been subjected to several cross-checks from both regional and global MCS experts familiar with compliance aspects in the country concerned. Uncertainty in assigning each score is depicted explicitly through score range. However, the author(s) are aware that gaps may remain for some aspects. The lead author remains open at any time to comments, and revisions will be made upon submission of evidence where necessary. Throughout the report, extreme precaution has been taken to maintain confidentiality of individuals who were willing to share information but expressed an inclination to remain anonymous out of concern for their job security, and information from such sources was cited as 'anonymous' throughout the report.

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BENIN – COUNTRY REPORT



FAO landings (2022): 76,105 tonnes

Fisheries contribution to GDP (2012): 2.2%

Law of the Sea (Ratification/accession): 16th October 1997

Coastline: 121 km

RFMO Membership: None

Patrolling agencies: Benin Navy; Directorate of Fisheries

Listed as Least Developed Country (LDC) by United Nations (2024): Yes

IUU Fishing Penalties score (2012): Low Penalties (Risk Rating: Red – High Risk)

Corruption Perception Index score (2023): 43 (Risk Rating: Red – High Risk)

Flag state compliance score (2021): Excellent (Low Risk)

Fisheries-MCS Index score (2023): Risk Rating – High Risk (0.296)

Species targeted by illegal fishing vessels: Finfishes nei, Tuna



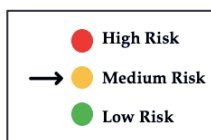
Rank	Priority for maritime security tasks
1.	Piracy
2.	Armed robberies
3.	Illegal fishing

SECTION 1: MCS INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Does the country have adequate surveillance infrastructure (patrol aircraft, sea based patrol vessels and coastal patrols) to effectively patrol fisheries resources within its EEZ?

Score: 5

Score Range: 3-5



Benin navy has six patrol boats (*two Matelot Brice Kpomasse (ex-PRC); three fast patrol boats FPB 98; one 27m patrol boat (PRC)*). Capabilities have improved with the acquisition of three new 31.8 m long coastal patrol boats (*Alibori, Zou and Oueme - FBP98 Mk1-class P110*) from France (Jane 2011; Anon 2012; ISS 2015; Anon 2016; Very and Blaine 2020; Military Balance 2023). There are two 25 metre Defender class patrol boats for monitoring the Cotonou port. In addition, navy has two coastal radar centers in Cotonou and Grand-Popo with a radius of 80 km primarily for anti-piracy reconnaissance. In 2022, the Norwegian technology firm Vissim was awarded a contract by the Benin government to provide a sophisticated coastal monitoring system that would cover the entire coast and up to 25 nm offshore. The new monitoring system delivers a real-time overview of marine activity and incorporates data from CCTV cameras, AIS, weather stations, VHF radio traffic, and drones (VISSIM 2022).

Benin's fishery resources have been pillaged due to lack of presence on the high seas. Préfet marine is the national authority in charge of supervising maritime activity. In recent years, it has boarded multiple vessels guilty of a variety of offences, including fishing in prohibited areas, capturing prohibited species, operating in unhealthy conditions, and fishing without authorisation or even a licence (Anon 2023).

2. Does the country have adequate trained officers to conduct MCS operations?

Score: 2.5

Score Range: 2-4

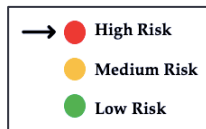


Available information suggests limited manpower availability in both Benin Navy and Ministry of Fisheries for MCS duties (EU 2011; ISS 2015; ATLAFCO 2014; Adjimehossou 2018; Sossoukpe *et al.*, 2022). No information is available on compliance or enforcement competence of these authorities in the marine fisheries sector.

3. Does the country have adequate management plans to monitor their fishing vessels on the high seas?

Score: 1

Score Range: 0-2



Existing information suggests that Benin does not have such capabilities. Further, in the past Benin had many flags of convenience vessels. See ATLAFCO (2014); Anon (2023) reports for more information.

4. What proportion of fishing vessels is equipped with vessel monitoring system (VMS) to monitor their movements on a continuous basis?

Score: 2.5

Score Range: 1-4



Since 2022, vessel monitoring system (CLS) is reported for the licenced industrial fleet. See ATLAFCO (2014); AU (2015) reports for more information.

5. What percentage of fishing vessels (>20 m OAL) is monitored through onboard observers at sea (for major commercial fish stocks)?

Score: 0

Score Range: 0-0



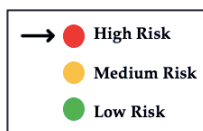
Available information suggests that there is no observer scheme in Benin's fisheries (FCWC 2010).

SECTION 2: INSPECTIONS

6. How often fishing vessels are inspected at sea (Identification by sight and boarding for inspections)?

Score: 2

Score Range: 1-4



Limited inspections of foreign fishing vessels are reported, with 38 vessels caught in the act of illegal fishing and 3 vessels apprehended for fishing in the artisanal zone during the year 2010 (Anon 2011). See Adjimehossou (2018); ISS (2015); Gouchola (2013); Vogt *et al.*, (2010) reports for more information.

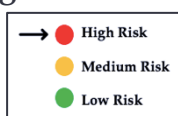
In the fight against illegal fishing between 2015 and 2022, about fifteen ships were boarded in Benin's waters. Based on the information presented, it

appears that most of the ships boarded have Chinese equipment. Operational capacities do not allow the Benin Navy to leave territorial waters beyond 22 nm or to go into the high seas. Benin recently acquired VMS (Vessel Monitoring System) stations with the support of the CPCO to monitor ships in real time. However, surveillance remains limited to licenced vessels which will be mandated to have satellite beacons onboard during fishing activities. Perpetrators of illegal fishing are not concerned and are well informed of the few control operations (Anon 2023).

7. How often fishing vessels are scrutinized through aerial patrols?

Score: 2.5

Score Range: 2-5

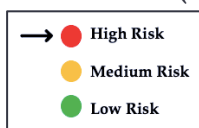


Moderate capacity since 2011 (frequency of aerial patrols is unknown). During the year 2011, Benin received two maritime surveillance aircraft (*LH Aviation LH-10 Grand Duc*) from France, which are equipped with digital cameras, GPS and advanced satellite communications (Anon 2012; ISS 2015).

8. How often are fishing vessels inspected at landing centers and docks for foreign and domestic vessels (Dockside monitoring)?

Score: 3.5

Score Range: 1-5

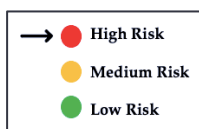


Data poor indicator. Existing information suggests very poor dockside monitoring. See Vogt *et al.*, (2010); Anon (2011); FAO (2008); El Ayoubi and Failler (2013); ATLAFCO (2014); Adjimehossou (2018) documents for more information.

9. Are there adequate plans to monitor catches in coastal areas through coastal patrols (beach patrols, small-scale fishing gear and catch inspections) on a regular basis?

Score: 1.5

Score Range: 1-4

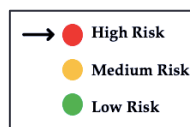


Catch monitoring appears to be effective in some jurisdictions only (FAO 2007; ATLAFCO 2014; AU 2015; El Ayoubi and Failler 2013; Adjimehossou 2018; Sossoukpe *et al.*, 2022). Illegal trawling by foreign trawlers at night is reported in the artisanal zone (Vogt *et al.*, 2010; Sossoukpe *et al.*, 2022). Illegal trawling using canoes is also practiced by small-scale fishers near estuaries and mouths of rivers to target shrimps (Adjimehossou 2018).

10. Are all the catches that are caught in this jurisdiction at sea accounted for (i.e., unreported Trans-shipments at sea)?

Score: 1

Score Range: 0-4



Benin is a signatory to the UN Fish stocks agreement, but its ability to enforce the regulation and national fisheries laws for transshipments at sea is still a challenge (WATF 2022).

Illegal fishing and misreporting of catches by foreign fishing vessels; incursions of foreign trawlers into the artisanal zone; mesh size violations; and illegal transshipments are suspected (Anon, *pers.comm.*, 2018).

11. Are vessels required to undergo inspection of equipment and fishing gear for every fishing trip?

Score: 1

Score Range: 0-4

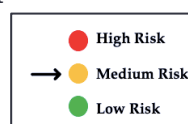


Benin is not reported to undertake such inspections on a regular basis. Mesh size violations are widespread in both small-scale and industrial fisheries (Vogt *et al.*, 2010; Anon 2011; Adjimehossou 2018; El Ayoubi and Failler 2013; Sossoukpe *et al.*, 2022).

12. Has the country taken adequate measures to revise and implement national fisheries laws to curtail illegal fishing practices; and does it comply with national and international laws signed?

Score: 4.5

Score Range: 3-5



La Loi-cadre N° 2014-19 of 7 August 2014 is the main national legislation for fisheries management in Benin waters. The country has adopted NPOA on IUU Fishing to fight and end illegal fishing. Benin has ratified both the UN Fish Stocks Agreement on 2 November 2017 and FAO Compliance Agreement on 4 January 1999. Benin ratified the UN Port State Measures Agreement on 20 August 2021.

Illegal fishing is reported within 5 nm coastal waters allocated to artisanal fishers by industrial trawlers (domestic and foreign owned; unauthorised trawling in IEZ at night; damaging fishing nets of canoe fishers; and use of illegal fishing gear are reported. Shortage of worthy patrol boats and trained officers has led to weak surveillance that is exploited by both poor

local fishers as well as illegal foreign trawlers intruding into EEZ from neighbouring countries (Adjimehossou 2018).

Approximately two billion CFA francs in losses were incurred during the years (2017-2022) by vessels engaged in IUU fishing in Benin, primarily Chinese vessels. In recent years, Benin boosted the enforcement of fishing vessels with Sea Shepherd's assistance and imposed higher penalties on arrested illegal fishing vessels. IUU fishing on the Beninese coast is characterized by overexploitation of fishery resources, the use of prohibited gear and the transshipment of fishery resources at sea by fishing vessels and the use of artisanal pair trawls (SNPSSM 2013; Benin Govt 2020).

See Vogt *et al.*, (2010); EU (2011); Kouévi *et al.*, (2013); Sjöstedt (2013); Churchill (2012); Gouchola (2013); El Ayoubi and Failler (2013); ATLAFCO (2014); Houssa and Verpoorten (2015); ISS (2015); AU (2015); Anon (2016); Adjimehossou (2018) documents for more information.

Flag of Convenience	No
Vessels on the RFMO - IUU vessel list	No

Last update: 5 Dec, 2024



Note:

Bibliography and other notes relevant to this country report including methods, results and discussion for the global evaluation of 84 countries would be released shortly through IUU Risk Intelligence website (<https://iuriskintelligence.com/>). (The author can be contacted at pramod.raju@gmail.com to provide any feedback).

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