

ARGENTINA PATAGONIAN TOOTHFISH FIP ACTION PLAN

updated by CeDePesca on 29 August 2025

Introduction

The Argentina Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) FIP has been formally launched by ESTREMAR, NUEVA PESCANOVA (ARGENOVA S.A.), PESANTAR and CeDePesca, in April 2021. This document includes a second update to the original FIP Action Plan.

Action Plan Overview

Action plan Version and Date	Version 2.1 - 29 August 2025
Start date (actual)	End date (anticipated month/year)
1 April 2021	31 March 2027
FIP Lead (organization/individual responsible for Action Plan)	Improvements recommended by (meeting/group that supported the development)
CeDePesca	CeDePesca
FIP Coordinator (organization/individual responsible for reporting on FisheryProgress)	Action plan developed by (consultant or person)
CeDePesca	Angel Díaz Lugo and Ernesto Godelman, CeDePesca

Acronyms

CFP	Consejo Federal Pesquero / Fisheries Federal Council
INIDEP	Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo Pesquero / National Institute of Fisheries Research and Development
SSPyA	Sub-Secretaría de Pesca y Acuicultura / Undersecretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture

FIP Unit

Target species	Patagonian toothfish (<i>Dissostichus eleginoides</i>)
Other common names	Toothfish, Chilean seabass, merluza negra, bacalao de profundidad
Stock distribution	Argentine waters, south of parallel 52°S
Fishing method or gear type	Bottom-trawl
Fishing fleet	Freezing vessels based in Puerto Ushuaia, and owned by Estremar, Grupo Nueva Pescanova, Pesantar and San Arawa.

FIP Objectives

The ultimate objective of this FIP is to achieve the fishery's certifiable status against the MSC standard by the end of March 2027. To this purpose, the FIP has set the following specific objectives:

1. To achieve the review of alternative hypothesis regarding the stock's identity. If the stock identity changes, then achieve the review of the current harvest strategy.
2. To make sure that the appropriateness of the current target reference point is reviewed.
3. To achieve the adoption of explicit harvest control rules.
4. To collect additional data on the impacts of the fishery on the ecosystem.
5. To conduct risk analyses for those ecosystem components that cannot be quantitatively assessed.
6. To ensure the periodic evaluation of the performance of the fishery management system against its objectives.
7. To gather information on the operation and performance of the sanctions system.

ACTION PLAN

The three FIP Actions are currently active. All Actions are described in detail in the FIP profile at FisheryProgress.org: <https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/argentina-patagonian-toothfish-bottom-trawl>

FIP ACTION PLAN 2021-2027

Action Number and Name	Action 1. Improve the stock assessment and the harvest strategy.
Action Goal	To achieve the review of alternative hypothesis on stock identity and of the stock's target reference point, and to achieve improvements to the decision making process, the harvest strategy and the harvest control rule.
Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)	At the time the MSC PA was completed in May 2021, the stock assessment carried out by INIDEP in 2020 showed that the stock's spawning biomass (SB) is slightly above its current target reference point (TRP) of 30%SB ₀ . However, the target reference point has not been clearly substantiated, and similar fisheries are using higher TRPs. On the other hand, there are two hypotheses in the field regarding the identity of the Patagonian toothfish population in Argentine waters: the first hypothesis says that there is a single stock, while the second says that there are two stocks. The current harvest strategy and the stock assessment are based on the single-stock hypothesis. In order to ensure that the harvest strategy is adequate to maintain the stock at or above its TRP, and to ensure that the framework for cooperation with other parties as well as the decision-making process is enough to deliver management outcomes consistent with MSC Principle 1, the stock identity must be clarified by INIDEP researchers. This Action intends to achieve a full review of the alternative hypotheses on stock identity by INIDEP, to support INIDEP in securing a peer review of the appropriateness of the current TRP, and to work with the CFP to achieve the improvement of the harvest strategy -including the adoption of an explicit harvest control rule-, and/or the decision-making processes, in light of the results of the aforementioned reviews.
Expected Completion Date	March 2027
Priority (as gauged in August 2023)	High
Responsible Parties	CeDePesca, FIP partners
Other stakeholders	CFP, INIDEP
MSC PI(s) Addressed by the Action	1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.4, 3.1.1, 3.2.2.

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Description:

Action	Tasks/ Milestones	Responsible (lead)	Other relevant stakeholders	Starting date	Expected completion date	Evidence of completion / results
Action 1. Improve the stock assessment and the harvest strategy.	Task 1.1. [MODIFIED] Promote the review of the identity of the Patagonian toothfish stock.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	April 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 1.2. [COMPLETED] Ensure the review of the target reference point, and its adjustment, if needed.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	April 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	The INIDEP assessment report (Technical Report No. 035/24. 39) has formally adopted the Target Biological Reference Points (PBRO) approximating the Maximum Sustainable Yield for Southwestern Atlantic Patagonian toothfish. PBROs associated with the MSY proxy: PBRO 0.30BR _v , PBRORMS,h=0.60: 0.41BR _v , and PBRORMS,h=0.75: 0.36BR _v (Pages 16, 17). This advance represents a significant improvement in the performance of this component, since previously the assessment approach was based on a value that was not consistent with Maximum Sustainable Yield.
	Task 1.3. [MODIFIED] Propose and secure changes in the harvest strategy and/or the decision-making process, in correspondence with the stock identity.	CeDePesca	CFP, FIP Partners	New starting date: March 2026	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 1.4. [MODIFIED] Ensure that the Fisheries Federal Council adopts recommendations made by INIDEP, considering the stock identity used in the assessment model.	CeDePesca	CFP, INIDEP, FIP Partners	New starting date: March 2026	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 1.5. [MODIFIED] Promote the definition and adoption of an	CeDePesca	CFP, INIDEP,	New starting date:	New expected completion	

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	explicit harvest control rule to ensure that the exploitation rate is reduced as the stock approaches the point where recruitment could be impaired.		FIP Partners,	March 2026	date: March 2027	
	Task 1.6. [MODIFIED] Support to INIDEP in the study of the population structure and trophic	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	July 2023	New expected completion date: March 2027	

	ecology of the Patagonian toothfish in the waters of the American South, based on the analysis of stable isotopes.					
	<p>Task 1.7. [COMPLETED] Support INIDEP in the implementation of the fisheries modeling course using CASAL to apply to fisheries assessments.</p>	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	July 2023	March 2025	<p>In 2023, the CASAL2 advanced course was completed with funding from the companies that make up the FIP through CeDePesca. CASAL2 is an integrated assessment platform for modeling the population dynamics of marine species and fish stocks. The course focused on the Patagonian toothfish (<i>Dissostichus eleginoides</i>) fishery, and was divided into three work sections that were carried out on the following dates: first session 08 - 12 May 2023, second session 09 - 14 June 2023 and third session 14 - 18 August 2023, with a total duration of 13 days, allowing the transfer of knowledge on the following topics: i) programming structure, ii) conceptual models, iii) data organization, iv) types of results and v) determination of population status. A total of 18 INIDEP researchers actively participated. At the end of the course, a partial model of Patagonian toothfish was developed in CASAL2 and it was recommended to continue with the construction of the Patagonian</p>

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						toothfish model in CASAL2, with special emphasis on fishing processes. [EVIDENCE] Final report of the CASAL2_January_2024 course.
	Task 1.8. [MODIFIED] Support INIDEP to carry out a study of the reproductive physiology of the Patagonian toothfish and its relationship with the environment to determine the spatio-temporal variations in their reproductive events.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	July 2023	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 1.9. [New] Promote research campaigns in non-traditional areas and Marine Protected Areas to determine whether there are areas with higher abundance rates than those currently being exploited.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP Partners	August 2025	March 2027	
	Task 1.10. [New] Promote the signing of the management plan for marine protected areas	CeDePesca	FIP Partners	August 2025	March 2027	

Action Number and Name	Action 2. Improve the understanding of fishery impacts on other ecosystem components and ensure these are adequately managed.
Action Goal	To ensure the collection of data in quality and quantity enough to evaluate the impact of the fishery on secondary species, ETP species, habitats, and the ecosystem as a whole.
Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)	The INIDEP observer program registers bycatch in the fishery, but at the time the MSC PA was completed in 2021, there was not enough information to discriminate grenadiers at the species level. Given that grenadiers as a group would be classified as main secondary species, it is necessary to properly identify the species impacted by the fishery and determine whether they face acceptable risks. In a similar fashion, while anecdotic information was provided by skippers, the information was not enough to produce a list of the ETP species that interact with the fishery, nor to understand the fishery's impact on such species. On the other hand, it is noted that this fishery operates at depths beyond 800m, posing a difficulty to collect data regarding interaction with habitats. All of the above limits the evaluation of fishery impacts on the ecosystem as a whole, and limits the ability of the fishery to understand whether additional measures should be taken to minimize negative impacts on the ecosystem components. This Action seeks to ensure that data is collected onboard in line with the requirements of the MSC standard, and in a level of detail enough to assess the impact of the fishery on secondary species, ETP species, habitats and the ecosystem as a whole, and to propose and adopt measures aimed at minimizing the impacts, if necessary.
Expected Completion Date	March 2027
Priority (as gauged in August 2023)	Medium
Responsible Parties	CeDePesca, FIP Partners
Other stakeholders	INIDEP, CFP
MSC PI(s) Addressed by the Action	2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.4.1, 2.4.2, 2.4.3, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.5.3

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Action	Tasks/ Milestones	Responsible (lead)	Other relevant stakeholders	Starting date	Expected completion date	Evidence of completion / results
Action 2. Improve the understanding of fishery impacts on other ecosystem components and ensure these are adequately managed.	Task 2.1. [MODIFIED] Ensure that the data collection protocols used by INIDEP's and PTF's Observer Programs are aligned with the MSC requirements.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	April 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.2. [MODIFIED] Conduct a workshop with INIDEP's researchers and onboard observers to explain the MSC information requirements.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	April 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.3. [MODIFIED] Conduct training workshops for crew members on data collection and the identification of ETP species interacting with the fishery.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	April 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.4. [MODIFIED] Conduct a workshop with crew members and INIDEP observers regarding protocols for the rescue and release of ETP species.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	July 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.5. [MODIFIED] Collect data on primary and secondary species interacting with the fishery.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	March 2024	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.6. [MODIFIED] Collect data on ETP species interacting with the fishery.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	October 2021	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.7. [MODIFIED] Collect data on interactions with habitats.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	October 2021	New expected completion	

					date: March 2027	
	Task 2.8. [MODIFIED] Procure (or draft) a technical report regarding the interaction of the fishery with other ecosystem components, using data collected by INIDEP observers and/or crew members.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	March 2024	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.9. [MODIFIED] In those cases where it is not possible to collect sufficient quantitative information, conduct risk analyses for the different components of Principle 2.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	March 2024	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.10. [MODIFIED] If necessary, ensure the adoption of measures to manage or mitigate fishery impacts on other ecosystem components, as well as changes in onboard practices.	CeDePesca	FIP partners	New starting date: March 2026	New expected completion date: March 2027	
	Task 2.11. [COMPLETED] Conduct a workshop on the Consequence-Spatial Analysis methodology for INIDEP researchers.	CeDePesca	INIDEP, FIP partners	July 2023	March 2024	On September 22, 2023, CeDePesca organized a workshop on Introduction to Risk Analysis for Habitats, where the Spatial and Consequence Analysis (CSA) methodology was taught. The workshop was aimed at members of INIDEP working groups, fisheries involved in Improvement Programs (PROME, such as Patagonian toothfish) or with Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification. [EVIDENCE] Article press_INIDEP26 sep 2023

Action Number and Name	Action 3. Improve the performance of the fishery management system.
Action Goal	To ensure that the performance of the fishery management system –including the sanctions system-- is evaluated against its objectives, and that it is further improved, if necessary.
Action Description (Brief summary of the steps involved in the action and importance of the action in achieving the FIP objectives)	The fishery management decision-making processes are clearly outlined in the Fisheries Federal Law N° 24922, Federal Decrees N° 748/99 and N° 156/10, and Administrative Decision N° 175/10, among other legal documents. In addition, the fishery has clear and specific objectives, and a set of management measures have been adopted by the Fisheries Federal Council and are regularly improved as a result of the decision-making processes. However, at the time the MSC PA was completed in May 2021, the performance of the fishery management system has not been externally reviewed against its objectives and there is not a formal mechanism establishing how such reviews should be done. On the other hand, although the sanctions system is known to be applied, there is no information to gauge whether sanctions have a dissuasive effect. This Action aims at working closely with the CFP to ensure that clear mechanisms are set for periodic internal and external reviews of the performance of the fishery management system against its objectives, and to make sure that the SSPyA shows that sanctions for non-compliance with fishery regulations are applied consistently and provide effective deterrence.
Expected Completion Date	March 2027
Priority (as gauged in August 2023)	Medium
Responsible Parties	CeDePesca
Other stakeholders	CFP, SSPyA, FIP Partners
MSC PI(s) Addressed by the Action	3.2.3, 3.2.4

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Action	Tasks/ Milestones	Responsible (lead)	Other relevant stakeholders	Starting date	Expected completion date	Evidence of completion / results
Action 3. Improve the performance of the fishery management system.	Task 3.1. [COMPLETED] Gather information on the operation and performance of the sanctions system.	CeDePesca	SSPyA, FIP Partners	April 2021	September 2023	As shown in the report provided by the National Directorate of Fishing Control and Surveillance, there are sanctions to deal with infractions of the Law, and they are being applied. Regarding the summary proceedings initiated in response to alleged infractions to fishing rules related to the preservation Patagonian toothfish, a total of eleven (11) proceedings were instructed in the period between 2016 and 2021. 72.72% of the proceedings arose because of differences between what was declared and what was found. Considering the low number of proceedings, it is considered that sanctions are disuasory. Therefore, this aspect to be rated would meet the requirements of SG80 (b). [EVIDENCE] Report of sanctions V1.2 in PDF pages 13-18
	Task 3.2. [MODIFIED] Achieve the formalization of periodic internal and external reviews of the performance of the fishery management system against its objectives.	CeDePesca	CFP, FIP Partners	October 2021	New Expected completion date: March 2027	

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	<p>Task 3.3. [MODIFIED] Gather information on the operation and performance of the sanctions system in the period 2023-2024.</p>	<p>CeDePesca</p>	<p>CFP, FIP Partners</p>	<p>January 2025</p>	<p>New Expected completion date: March 2027</p>	
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