Development and evaluation of long-term adaptation strategies for the Belgian sea fisheries sector

Vanderperren Els[1,2], De Sutter Renaat[2] , Polet Hans[1], Allaert Georges [2]

[1] Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research,
Animal Sciences, Fisheries, Section Fishering Gear Technology
Ankerstraat 1, B-8400 Oostende, Belgium

[2] Ghent University, Faculty of Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering
Vrijdagsmarkt 10/301, B-9000 Gent, Belgium

Fishing port Ostend
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Belgian sea fisheries in peril

The Belgian fishing fleet operates in a complex, changing and uncertain environment. The strong specialization of the Belgian fisheries (beam trawl, flatfish) makes the sector rather vulnerable to the continuously changing circumstances and threaten the livability of the sector. Recently the sector has been faced with yet another factor which contributes to the growing uncertainty: climate change.

Objective

This PhD aims at the development and evaluation of long-term adaptation strategies as support to the fisheries sector and policy makers and hopes to contribute to the development of the Belgian fisheries into an innovative, flexible and sustainable activity, able to cope with changing circumstances, including climate changes.

Belgian beam trawler
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Fisheries today:

Target species: Sole (*solea solea*)
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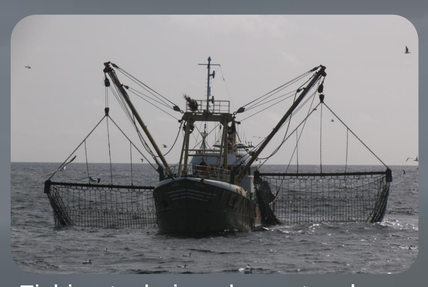

Fishing technique:beam trawl
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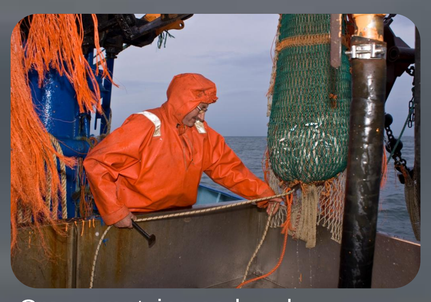
ICES areas where the Belgian fleet is active



Crew emptying cod-end
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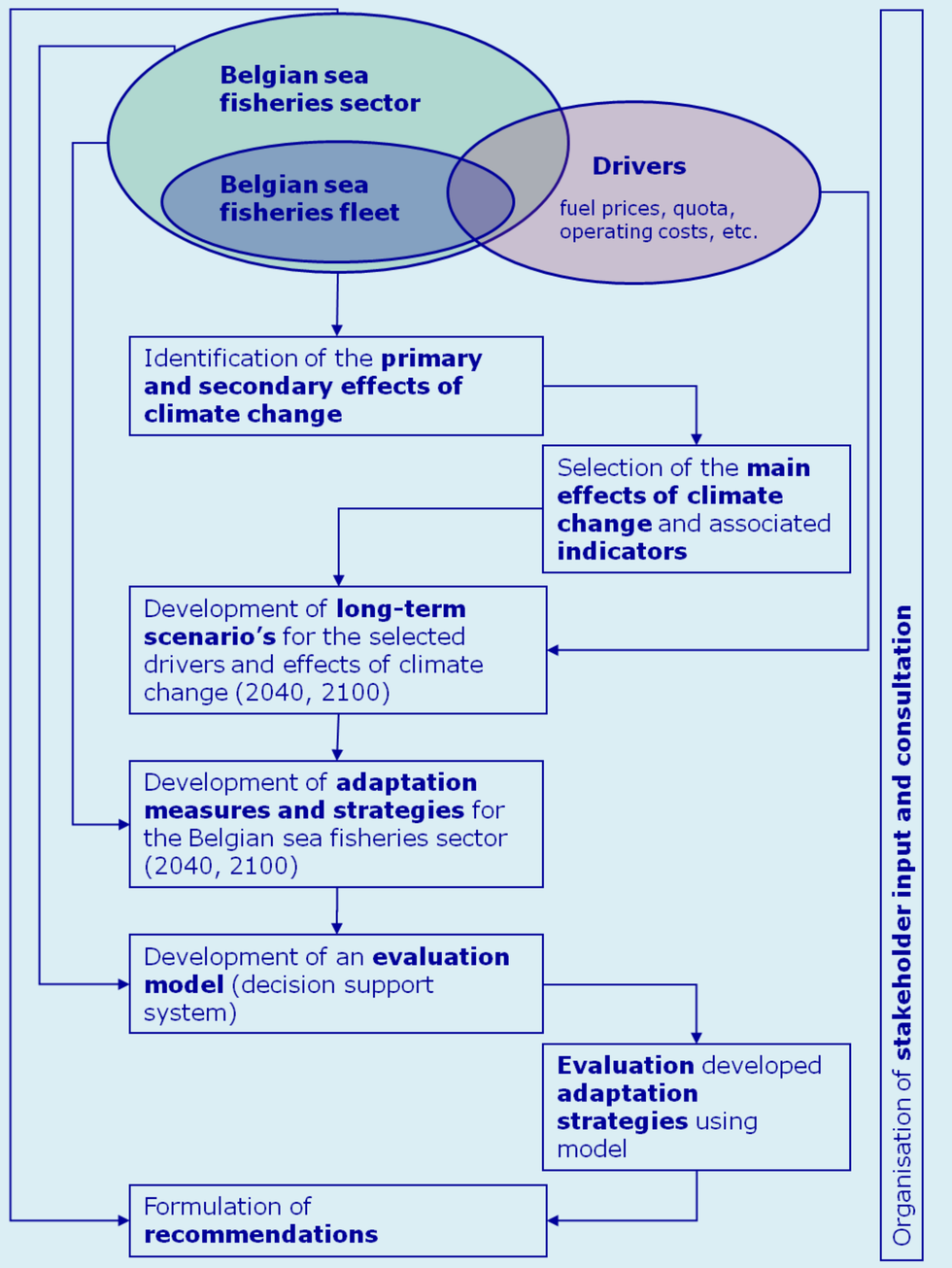
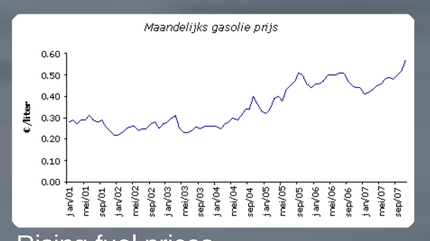
Objectives

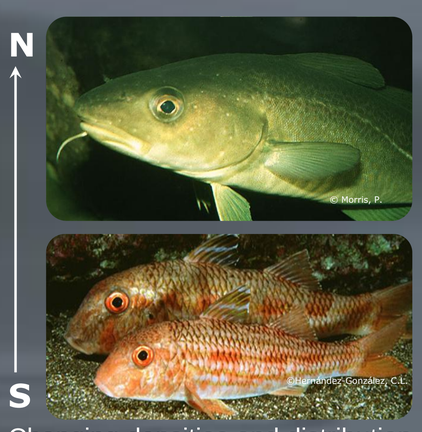
1. **Detailed description of Belgian sea fisheries sector/fleet/drivers**
2. **Scope impact of climate change on Belgian sea fisheries sector/fleet**
3. **Develop long-term scenario's for selected drivers and effects of climate change**
4. **Develop adaptation strategies for the Belgian sea fisheries sector**
5. **Develop model and evaluate adaptation strategies (decision support system)**
6. **Organise stakeholder input/consultation and formulate recommendations**



Future challenges:



Rising fuel prices



Changing densities and distribution of fish stocks

Necessary reconversion of fleet
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Involve all stakeholders
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☎ +32(0)59/569840 els.vanderperren@ilvo.vlaanderen.be