

Fish Fund Project Grant Application Form – Category II

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Fish Fund.

The Fish Fund was established at the WTO in cooperation with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the World Bank, to assist developing and least-developed country (LDC) Members implement the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS).

The Fish Fund offers two categories of grants. This form is dedicated to applications for Category 2 grants.

Category 2 grants provide support of up to **USD 300,000**. Only WTO developing and LDC Members that have ratified the AFS are eligible for support. The primary objective of Fish Fund projects is to implement the AFS. To achieve this, project activities should be designed to enhance work in areas such as fisheries management systems, data collection, institutional support, and updates to domestic legislative frameworks.

Before preparing your application, we strongly recommend reviewing the Fish Fund Factsheet as well as relevant M&E Resources on the Fish Fund website, including the Fish Fund Theory of Change and Logical Framework: <https://www.wtofishfund.org/en/resources>

Please ensure that the information provided is complete, up to date, and accurate. Your application will undergo a thorough evaluation by the Fish Fund Secretariat. Shortlisted applications will be reviewed by FAO, IFAD, WTO and the World Bank, as well as the Fish Fund Steering Committee.

The deadline to submit applications is **24 April 2026**. For any questions, please contact the Fish Fund Secretariat: fishfund@wto.org.

1. Title of the grant application:

The title should clearly indicate the main objective of this application in a short and concise manner, for example:

- *Analysis, reports and sector studies for the implementation of Article X of the AFS in Member*
- *Update of legislative frameworks and institutional support for the implementation of Article X of the AFS in Member*
- *Capacity building and technical assistance for the implementation of Article X of the AFS in Member*
- *Data collection for the implementation of Article X of the AFS in Member*
- *Improvements or setup of fisheries management system for the implementation of Article X of the AFS in Member*

ANCHOR: Advancing Notification, Compliance and Stock Rebuilding for the Implementation of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in Albania

2. WTO Member or Members submitting this application:

Please enter the name of the Member submitting this application in the space below. If more than one Member is submitting this application, please list the names in alphabetical order and separated by commas.

Please note that only governments from developing and least-developed WTO Members that have deposited their instruments of acceptance of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies with the WTO Director-General are eligible to apply for funding. A full list of WTO Members that have deposited their instruments can be found [here](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_acceptances_e.htm):

https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_acceptances_e.htm

Albania

3. Government agency or organization responsible for the implementation of this grant and its reporting to the Fish Fund:

Requests must be submitted by national governments (ministries, agencies or public entities) responsible for implementing the project grants.

*Please enter the name of the **organization responsible for the implementation of this grant and its reporting to the Fish Fund** in the space below. For multiple Members, please add the agency per Member.*

Applicant: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Albania, Fisheries Department

Implementing agency: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). FAO through the Albania Country Office will execute the project on behalf of MARD, managing procurement, technical deliverables, and financial reporting. MARD, as the beneficiary government, will provide institutional coordination, in-kind contributions, and political oversight to ensure the adoption of project outputs into national legislation and administrative practice.

4. Was this grant application developed through a Category I Fish Fund grant?

Please note that Category 2 projects should be based on prior assessments of national needs for implementing the AFS disciplines in order to address the identified gaps.

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.
- ☒ No, another needs assessment was conducted.

If yes, provide further details on the needs assessment that was conducted.

Briefly explain the findings of the assessment including the main priorities and relevance for implementation of the AFS, national consultations held, engagement with Fish Fund core partners (FAO, IFAD, WBG, WTO) during the needs assessment/project preparation phase, engagement with other donors and technical agencies willing to collaborate on/co-finance the Category 2 project.

If No, please provide evidence of studies or analyses demonstrating that this application is based on a prior assessment of the Member's needs regarding the implementation of the AFS.

This application was prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) with technical inputs received from FAO, on the basis of national assessments and policy priorities:

- 1. EU accession screening (Chapter 13, Fisheries):** The screening process highlighted the advanced progress achieved by Albania in terms of alignment with the EU acquis and the implementation of management and technical measures, including discard plans, fleet management, as well as inspection and control systems. The majority of these management and technical measures require a reduction of current fishing activities in order to ensure the sustainability of the sector and to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) objectives. The implementation of such measures, and the consequent reduction in fishing activities in Albania,

necessitates the establishment of a biological rest scheme aimed at supporting fishery sector increasing sustainability and compliance with the management and technical measures in force

2. **GFCM recommendations and country reviews:** The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean has issued recommendations on seasonal closures, spatial measures, stock rebuilding and fishing activity reduction that Albania is expected to implement as a Contracting Party. The implementation of such measures, and the consequent reduction in fishing activities in Albania, necessitates the establishment of a biological rest scheme aimed balance ecological objective while protecting livelihoods, including measures supporting fishers affected by the application of the management measures/restrictions.
3. **FAO technical assessments:** FAO's country-level advisory work has assessed the state of Albania's MCS systems, data infrastructure, and institutional capacity for fisheries management. FAO's direct involvement in preparing this application ensures that the project design reflects an accurate understanding of existing gaps and institutional absorptive capacity.

These assessments collectively establish that Albania lacks: (a) a structured, evidence-based rebuilding measure (annual biological rest) for the marine fleet, creating a gap vis-à-vis Article 4 disciplines on overfished stocks; (b) standardized notification templates, data workflows, and trained personnel for AFS transparency obligations under Article 8; and (c) sufficient socio-economic data on the ≥ 12 m fleet segment to design management measures on an evidence basis.

5. Briefly describe the national context including challenges for implementing the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in your country/territory or region.

Please make direct reference to the disciplines contained in the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, where possible.

*A full text of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies can be accessed at:
https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_e.htm*

Albania ratified the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in October 2023 and is committed to its full implementation. The country's marine fisheries sector is composed predominantly of small-scale and semi-industrial vessels operating in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. The ≥ 12 m fleet segment, which is the focus of this application, accounts for a significant share of total marine catch and is under increasing pressure from declining fish stocks.

The main challenges for AFS implementation are the following:

Article 4: Subsidies regarding overfished stocks: The fisheries sector in Albania is characterized by a predominantly small-scale fleet and fluctuating but overall declining catch trends over the past decade. Total marine landings decreased from 7,126 tonnes in 2012 to 4,410.9 tonnes in 2024, with a peak of 7,424 tonnes in 2013, followed by a gradual decline, a temporary recovery in 2021 (6,289 tonnes), and a renewed downward trend thereafter, indicating increasing pressure on resources and variability in fishing conditions. The national fleet consists of approximately 856 vessels, largely dominated by small-scale fisheries (SSF), with limited industrial capacity. The Albanian fishing fleet operates primarily in GFCM Geographical Sub-Areas (GSAs) 17 and 18 in the Adriatic Sea, targeting mainly demersal resources alongside small pelagic species. According to GFCM's State of Mediterranean Fisheries (SoMFi) assessments, key demersal stocks in these sub-areas, including European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), deep-water rose shrimp (*Parapenaeus longirostris*), and Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*)—remain subject to fishing pressure above biologically sustainable levels. Similarly, small pelagic species such as European anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*) and European pilchard (*Sardina pilchardus*) are also assessed as overexploited. Despite these findings, Albania does not currently have national stock-specific rebuilding measures in place for these resources.

While fragmented spatial-temporal closures exist, they have not been systematically designed on the basis of stock assessments or socio-economic evidence, and they do not constitute a comprehensive rebuilding measure as envisaged under Article 4. Without such a measure in place, any subsidies provided to the fishing sector risk being inconsistent with Article 4 disciplines, which prohibit subsidies regarding overfished

stocks unless the Member implements management measures aimed at rebuilding the stock to a biologically sustainable level. The evidence base needed to design such a measure, including socio-economic data on fleet income, employment, and seasonal dynamics — is currently insufficient for the ≥ 12 m segment.

Article 8: Notification and transparency: Albania has limited institutional capacity to fulfil the notification and transparency obligations established under Article 8. There are currently no standardized notification templates, no defined inter-agency data workflow, and no dedicated staff training on AFS reporting procedures within MARD or the Fisheries Inspectorate. This creates a compliance gap that this project will directly address.

Albania's EU accession process creates additional and reinforcing demand for the same reforms — sustainable stock management, data-driven decision-making, and transparent subsidy practices, which means that investments in AFS implementation will simultaneously advance the country's broader fisheries governance agenda.

6. Category II grants provide resources to support the effective implementation of the disciplines set out in the articles of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Select the article or articles of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies that this project grant will support.

Please review the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies before answering this question:
https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news22_e/wtmin22w22.pdf

- ☐ Article 3 - Removal of Subsidies Contributing to IUU Fishing.
- ☒ Article 4 - Removal of Subsidies Regarding Overfished Stocks.
- ☐ Article 5 - Removal of Other Subsidies.
- ☒ Article 8 - Notification and Transparency.
- ☐ Other (please specify).

7. Select the option or options that best describe the main objective of the grant application and its alignment with the Fish Fund Category II window.

The Fish Fund's Theory of Change provides three possible outcomes for Category 2 applications. While the proposal may touch on or address other outcomes, please select the outcome that will be the main focus of this application.

Please review the Fish Fund Theory of Change before answering this question:
<https://www.wtofishfund.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/EN%20-%20Logical%20Framework.pdf>

- ☒ Revision of the national legislation, regulation, or procedures to align with the AFS disciplines.
- ☐ Stakeholders actively applying skills in activities contributing to the implementation of the AFS disciplines.
- ☐ Data collection and mgmt. systems are in place to help grant recipients monitor and report in alignment with the AFS disciplines.
- ☐ Other (please specify).

The primary outcome is the revision and adoption of national legislation and procedures: specifically, a new regulatory framework for an annual biological rest (rebuilding measure under Article 4) and notification/transparency procedures aligned with Article 8. The project will also contribute to the other two outcomes, trained staff actively applying AFS-relevant skills, and data collection systems for monitoring and reporting, but these are instrumental to the central legislative and regulatory objective. FAO's role as implementing agency ensures that the legal and regulatory outputs meet international standards and are consistent with AFS requirements.

8. Select the option(s) that best describe the main outputs of the grant application and how they will contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

The Fish Fund's Theory of Change provides five main outputs for Category 2 applications.

Please review the Fish Fund Theory of Change before answering this question:

<https://www.wtofishfund.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/EN%20-%20Logical%20Framework.pdf>

- ☒ Development of analyses, reports and sector study to support the formulation of legislative documents in alignment with the AFS disciplines.
- ☒ Drafted revisions for national fisheries legislation, regulations and procedures to align with AFS disciplines.
- ☒ Training and workshops conducted on data collection, vessel monitoring systems, inspection, notification processes, and areas related to AFS disciplines.
- ☐ Research conducted, with templates and tools developed for data collection to assess marine stocks.
- ☒ Improvement in fisheries management systems, electronic reporting systems, or other monitoring tools.
- ☐ Other (please specify).

Output 1: Evidence base and sector analysis for AFS-aligned biological rest design (Articles 4 & 8):

- Map existing spatial-temporal closures, management measures, and subsidy programmes applicable to the ≥ 12 m fleet in GSAs 17 and 18 to identify gaps against AFS Article 4 requirements and compile legal and operational baseline;
- Conduct a rapid socio-economic assessment of the ≥ 12 m fleet, combining analysis of existing secondary data (catch/effort, landings, prices, fuel costs, licence records) with targeted key-informant interviews of vessel owners, masters, and crew in major ports. This replaces a full census-style field survey to keep the assessment proportionate to the available budget while still generating the evidence needed for scheme design.
- Produce an indicative cost model for the biological rest, covering administrative costs and fiscal impact under alternative closure scenarios (season, duration).
- Assess how to incorporate the new measure (biological rest) in the existing regulatory framework so to ensure a coherent management system.
- Deliverables: integrated evidence pack (rapid assessment report, secondary data compilation, cost model) endorsed by MARD.

Output 2: Draft legislation, notification procedures and MCS operating procedures aligned with AFS disciplines:

- Develop closure scenarios integrating ecological evidence, socio-economic data, and existing management measures.
- Draft regulation for the annual biological rest (closure dates and areas, gear and vessel exemptions if any, enforcement provisions, rebuilding targets linked to stock status indicators, and an adaptive review clause).

- Prepare AFS notification templates and design an inter-agency workflow and annual submission calendar for WTO notifications under Article 8.
- Develop MCS standard operating procedures for monitoring during the closure period, including a risk-based patrol plan and integration with existing logbook and port inspection forms.
- Conduct 2 stakeholder consultations with the ≥ 12 m fleet, coastal communities, and relevant institutions on the draft regulation and closure scenarios.
- Deliverables: draft ministerial decision or regulation ready for adoption; notification templates and workflow approved by MARD and the WTO focal point; MCS SOPs finalized and endorsed.

Output 3: Institutional capacity building and operational readiness:

- Train MARD Fisheries Department and Inspectorate staff on AFS notification procedures, the notification workflow, and the annual submission calendar.
- Train fisheries inspectors on MCS SOPs for the biological rest period, including port and at-sea verification procedures.
- Hold a combined simulation and validation final workshop with ≥ 12 m fleet associations, processors, port authorities, and coastal municipalities to present the finalized regulation, SOPs, and notification system before submission for formal adoption.
- Deliverables: $\geq 60\%$ of inspectors trained; simulation exercise completed; validation workshop report; all outputs formally handed over to MARD for adoption and implementation.

Note: The project delivers the biological rest regulation, MCS SOPs, and notification system in a state ready for formal adoption and operational use by MARD. The actual launch of the first annual biological rest cycle will take place after project closure, under MARD's authority and using the tools, procedures, and trained staff developed through the ANCHOR project. This sequencing ensures the project stays within the available budget while producing all the institutional and legal prerequisites for implementation.

For each output identified, please provide a list of activities relevant to each output, for example:

- *Collect data for assessing marine stocks (staff trained on research and data collection, data collected on fish stocks, subsidies contributing to the depletion of overfished stocks removed, notifications submitted to the WTO, etc)*
- *Build capacity (number of persons trained on monitoring and reporting, tools introduced to enhance monitoring and coordinate reporting, number of notifications submitted, etc.)*
- *Conduct sectoral studies (increase in the number of inspections, improvements to vessel monitoring systems, etc.)*

Please review the Fish Find Theory of Change before answering this question:

<https://www.wtofishfund.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/EN%20-%20Logical%20Framework.pdf>

9. Indicate the expected duration for implementation and completion of the grant:

- ☐ 12-18 months.
- ☒ 18-24 months.
- ☐ 24-36 months.
- ☐ Other (please specify).

The project is designed for a 24-month implementation period. This duration reflects the sequential nature of the work: the evidence base and rapid assessment (Output 1) must be completed before closure scenarios and legal drafting (Output 2) can proceed, and the regulatory and procedural outputs must be finalized before training and capacity building (Output 3) can be delivered. A shorter timeframe would risk compressing the stakeholder consultation process, which is essential for the political viability of the biological rest regulation.

- 10. Upload a workplan in Excel format indicating outputs, activities, milestone indicators, and risk mitigating measures, with the corresponding timeline for implementation. A workplan template can be downloaded via the link below:**

https://www.wtofishfund.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/EN_Implementation%20Plan_Cat%20II.xlsx

Months 1–8 (Output 1 – Evidence base): Map existing closures and management measures; compile legal/operational baseline; design rapid assessment methodology; conduct key-informant interviews in major ports; analyze secondary data (catch/effort, landings, prices, fuel, labour); produce cost model with closure scenarios. Milestone: evidence pack and cost model endorsed by MARD.

Months 6–18 (Output 2 – Legislation, notifications and MCS procedures): Develop closure scenarios integrating evidence from Output 1; draft regulation for the biological rest; prepare AFS notification templates and inter-agency workflow; develop MCS SOPs for closure monitoring; integrate with existing logbook and port inspection forms; stakeholder consultations on draft regulation. Milestone: draft regulation, notification system, and MCS SOPs finalized and validated.

Months 16–24 (Output 3 – Capacity building and handover): Train MARD and Inspectorate staff on notification procedures; train inspectors on MCS SOPs; conduct tabletop simulation exercise; hold final validation workshop with fleet associations and stakeholders; formal handover of all outputs to MARD for adoption. Milestone: training completed, simulation exercise report, handover documentation.

- 11. Does this grant application support activities that have been directly linked to an approved national strategy or plan? If yes, please name the document and indicate whether there is an explicit reference to the implementation of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.**

- ☒ Yes.
- ☐ No.
- ☐ Maybe.

The project supports activities directly linked to the following approved national and regional frameworks:

1. National Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy 2021–2027: The Strategy prioritizes the sustainable exploitation of marine resources based on scientific assessments, the improvement of monitoring, control and surveillance systems, and the reinforcement of inspection capacities. While it does not contain an explicit reference to the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by name, its priorities — sustainable stock management, combating IUU fishing, strengthening governance and transparency of public support to the sector — are substantively aligned with AFS disciplines under Articles 3, 4, and 8. The ANCHOR project directly operationalizes Strategy objectives by establishing an evidence-based stock-rebuilding measure and a transparent notification system for fisheries subsidies.

2. Albania's instrument of acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (deposited 23 October 2023): Albania's acceptance commits the country to implementing all AFS disciplines, including the prohibition of subsidies regarding overfished stocks (Article 4) and the notification and transparency requirements (Article 8). This project is a direct response to those commitments.

3. GFCM recommendations on demersal fisheries management in the Adriatic and Ionian Seas: As a GFCM Contracting Party, Albania is expected to implement regional recommendations on seasonal

closures, effort reduction, and stock-rebuilding measures for demersal fisheries in GSAs 17 and 18. The proposed national biological rest constitutes Albania's principal regulatory response to these regional obligations, establishing Albania-specific closure parameters (timing, duration, fleet coverage) that complement GFCM-mandated measures while being tailored to the operational realities of the national ≥ 12 m fleet. The project will explicitly map the national regulation to relevant GFCM recommendations to ensure consistency.

4. National Plan for European Integration / EU accession framework (Chapter 13 – Fisheries):

Albania's EU accession process requires progressive alignment with the Common Fisheries Policy, including sustainable stock management, fleet regulation, and subsidy transparency. The project outputs — the stock-rebuilding regulation, the MCS SOPs, and the notification system — directly advance Albania's Chapter 13 alignment objectives.

Albania's existing fisheries law and secondary legislation provide a legislative foundation for implementing AFS disciplines, including licensing systems, fleet regulation, and conservation measures. However, full alignment requires the specific regulatory tools that this project will produce: a structured stock-rebuilding measure, standardized notification procedures, and strengthened inter-institutional coordination between the fisheries administration and the Ministry of Finance for transparent subsidy reporting.

12. Indicate whether your government is or has been a beneficiary of support from support from Fish Fund core partners or other specialized agencies with the objective of supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and/or issues relating to IUU fishing. If yes, please provide a description of the support measure and its implementing partner, with a brief explanation on how this grant application will avoid duplicating activities and/or resources.

☒ Yes.

☐ No.

Albania has an ongoing working relationship with FAO on fisheries management. FAO has provided technical advisory support on stock assessments, MCS systems, and fisheries data collection through its country office. However, this prior support was not specifically designed to implement the AFS disciplines. The present ANCHOR project is distinct in that it focuses specifically on: (a) designing and operationalizing an annual biological rest as a rebuilding measure under AFS Article 4; (b) establishing AFS-specific notification templates and transparency workflows under Article 8; and (c) building dedicated MCS SOPs for closure implementation. FAO's role as implementing agency for the ANCHOR project builds on its existing institutional presence and knowledge of Albania's fisheries sector, ensuring continuity while avoiding duplication with past assistance.

13. Indicate if this grant application will benefit from implementation support from any of the Fish Fund partners. If support will be provided by other international organizations or WTO Members, please specify under 'Other'.

☒ Yes.

- ☒ FAO
- ☐ IFAD
- ☐ World Bank
- ☐ WTO

☐ No.

☐ Other:

FAO is the implementing agency for this project. FAO will execute the full project on behalf of MARD, including managing procurement of consultancies and technical services, delivering all technical outputs (socio-economic survey, legal drafting, notification templates, MCS SOPs, training), administering the Fish Fund grant, and reporting to the Fish Fund Secretariat on progress and results. FAO's country office in Albania and its regional fisheries expertise provide the institutional platform for project execution.

MARD, as the applicant and beneficiary government, will provide institutional coordination, in-kind contributions (staff time, data, facilities), and political sponsorship for the adoption of regulatory and administrative outputs into national law and practice.

- 14. Indicate the total amount requested from the Fish Fund in United States Dollars (USD). Upload an indicative budget in Excel format. The budget should also include any additional financial or in-kind contributions from the government and other agencies. The budget template can be downloaded via the link below:**

https://www.wtofishfund.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/EN_Budget%20Template_Cat%20II.xlsx

Please note that Category II grant applications can benefit from a maximum of USD 300'000. Applicants will be required to submit a detailed line-item budget in Excel format demonstrating how the Fish Fund grant would be used.

The indicative budget allocation, reflecting the revised project scope (3 outputs, 24 months, FAO-executed), is as follows:

Output 1 – Evidence base and sector analysis: Rapid socio-economic assessment (secondary data analysis, key-informant interviews, port visits), baseline mapping, cost modelling. Primarily national consultancy with limited international technical backstopping. Indicative: USD 55,000–65,000

Output 2 – Legislation, notifications and MCS procedures: One national legal/policy consultant (10 months) for regulatory drafting, MCS SOPs, notification system design, and stakeholder consultations, with international technical backstopping. Indicative: USD 75,000–85,000.

Output 3 – Capacity building and handover: Training delivery by the national legal/policy consultant; combined simulation and validation event. Indicative: USD 18,000–22,000.

FAO NFI technical backstopping: Distinct budget component for technical review by the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Division (survey methodology, regulatory design, notification architecture). Indicative: USD 16,000–20,000.

FAO project management, MEL and reporting: Project coordination, monitoring, reporting to Fish Fund Secretariat, financial management, audit. Indicative: USD 50,000–60,000.

FAO project support costs: Standard FAO indirect cost recovery. Indicative: 7% of direct costs.

Total indicative range: USD 235,000–275,000.

- 15. Indicate any additional sources of funding or in-kind contributions from the beneficiary government and or other organizations.**

Applicants must provide information on in-kind, administrative, or financial contributions to be made by the beneficiary of the project grant. In-kind contributions from the beneficiary government may include staff time, meeting rooms, and other administrative or logistical costs.

Additional contributions should be provided per entity, with an explanation of how these resources would be allocated and how they would complement the resources of the Fish Fund.

The Government of Albania, through MARD, will provide the following in-kind contributions:

- **MARD (Fisheries Department):** Staff time for institutional coordination with FAO, stakeholder engagement, policy dialogue, and facilitation of data access; office space and administrative facilities for the project team.
- **Fisheries Inspectorate:** Staff time for participation in MCS SOP development, mock exercises, and training activities; access to existing inspection data and port facilities.
- **Meeting facilities:** Conference rooms in Tirana and in coastal municipalities for stakeholder consultations, workshops, and training sessions.
- **Data and documentation:** Access to existing fisheries data (catch/effort records, landing statistics, licence registers), legal texts, and management records.
- **Logistical support:** Local transport for field visits and port-based data collection during the socio-economic survey phase.

FAO may contribute additional in-kind resources from its regular programme, including technical staff time from its regional fisheries and legal teams for quality assurance and peer review of deliverables.

16. Describe the benefits of the project beyond its duration and how the achievements will be secured and used after the implementation period.

The ANCHOR project is designed to produce permanent institutional and legal assets that will sustain AFS implementation beyond the 24-month funding period. FAO's role as implementing agency includes a structured handover strategy to ensure all outputs are fully transferred to, and owned by, MARD and national institutions:

- **Adopted regulation:** The draft regulation for the annual biological rest (fermo biologico), once adopted through ministerial decision, becomes a standing management measure that operates annually without external funding. The built-in review clause ties the measure's parameters to stock monitoring results, ensuring it remains evidence-based. This directly sustains Albania's compliance with Article 4 disciplines on an ongoing basis.
- **Institutionalized notification workflow:** The AFS notification templates, inter-agency data workflow, and annual submission calendar will be embedded in MARD's standard operating procedures and staffed by trained focal points. FAO will ensure the workflow is fully documented and tested before project closure, so that Albania can continue to meet Article 8 transparency obligations independently.
- **MCS capacity:** The SOPs, inspector training, and port-based verification procedures will become part of the Fisheries Inspectorate's routine operations. FAO's training-of-trainers approach will ensure institutional memory survives staff turnover.
- **Evidence base for future policy:** The socio-economic dataset and cost model will serve as a reference for future decisions, including potential extension of the biological rest to other fleet segments. Non-sensitive statistics will be integrated into national fisheries information systems using open-data principles.

- **Stakeholder engagement platform:** The consultative mechanism established with ≥12 m fleet representatives will provide an ongoing channel for industry input on fisheries management decisions.

17. Provide a brief description of the communication strategy that will be used to disseminate information about the grant and its intended audience.

The communication strategy will be developed and implemented by FAO in coordination with MARD, serving three purposes: (i) ensuring transparency and stakeholder buy-in for the biological rest scheme; (ii) disseminating project results to relevant government institutions and the fishing industry; and (iii) acknowledging Fish Fund support in accordance with Fish Fund visibility requirements.

Target audiences: The ≥12 m fleet operators, crew, and their associations; processors and coastal communities; MARD and Fisheries Inspectorate staff; port authorities; the WTO focal point; Fish Fund Secretariat and core partners; the EU Delegation in Albania.

Key activities: Stakeholder consultations and public meetings in major fishing ports at each project milestone; dedicated briefings for fleet associations; publication of progress updates on the MARD website, FAO country page, and social media; press releases for major milestones (survey launch, draft regulation, first biological rest); periodic progress reports to the Fish Fund Secretariat; and a final lessons-learned report for wider dissemination. All public-facing materials will display Fish Fund branding and acknowledge WTO funding, alongside FAO and MARD logos.

18. Indicate communication channels that will be used to share information about the project and from the Fish Fund?

- ☒ Government website or social media
- ☒ Local media (TV, news, etc)
- ☒ Through partner organizations websites and social media
- ☐ Other

FAO corporate communication channels (fao.org country page, FAO social media accounts, FAO Newsroom) and the MARD institutional website and social media accounts. A dedicated communication focal point within the FAO Country Office will coordinate joint FAO–MARD visibility activities, ensuring consistent use of Fish Fund branding, press releases, and timely dissemination of project milestones and results across all channels.

19. Upload a letter of endorsement from the government entity responsible for implementation.

20. Any additional comment or observation relevant to consideration of the application.

FAO as implementing agency: The project will be executed by FAO on behalf of MARD. This arrangement leverages FAO's technical expertise in fisheries management, legal frameworks, and MCS systems, while ensuring accountability through FAO's established project management, procurement, and financial reporting procedures. As a Fish Fund core partner, FAO's involvement provides additional assurance of quality and alignment with the Fund's objectives.

No recurrent compensation costs: The project explicitly excludes income-replacement or compensation payments to fishers during the biological rest period from the Fish Fund funding request. If compensation is pursued in the future, it would be financed through separate national or bilateral channels. The Fish Fund grant is used exclusively for technical assistance and capacity building.

Focused fleet scope: The project targets only the ≥ 12 m marine fleet segment, allowing for a manageable, measurable intervention. Lessons learned will inform potential future expansion to other fleet segments, but the present scope is deliberately contained to ensure delivery within 24 months and the available budget.

Reinforcing policy environment: Albania's EU accession process creates strong domestic demand for the same reforms that AFS implementation requires. This means that project outputs — the regulation, the notification system, the MCS capacity — will have strong institutional ownership and political support beyond the project period, reducing the risk of non-adoption.

21. Contact point for this application

Provide the full name, email address, and contact information of the focal point responsible for the project. For multiple Members, please enter a focal point per Member.

Please note that this person will be contacted by the Fish Fund Secretariat in case of questions or comments.

MARD focal point:

Name: Vasjar Shermadhi

Title/Position: Director of Fisheries Department

Organization: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Email: vasjar.shermadhi@bujqesia.gov.al

Phone: _____

FAO focal point:

Name: Lorena Pullumbi

Title/Position: Assistant FAO Representative

Organization: FAO Representation in Albania

Email: Lorena.pullumbi@fao.org

Phone: _____

22. Date of Submission

Only applications received by the deadline will be considered. Application deadlines are available on the Fish Fund website or by contacting the Secretariat at fishfund@wto.org.