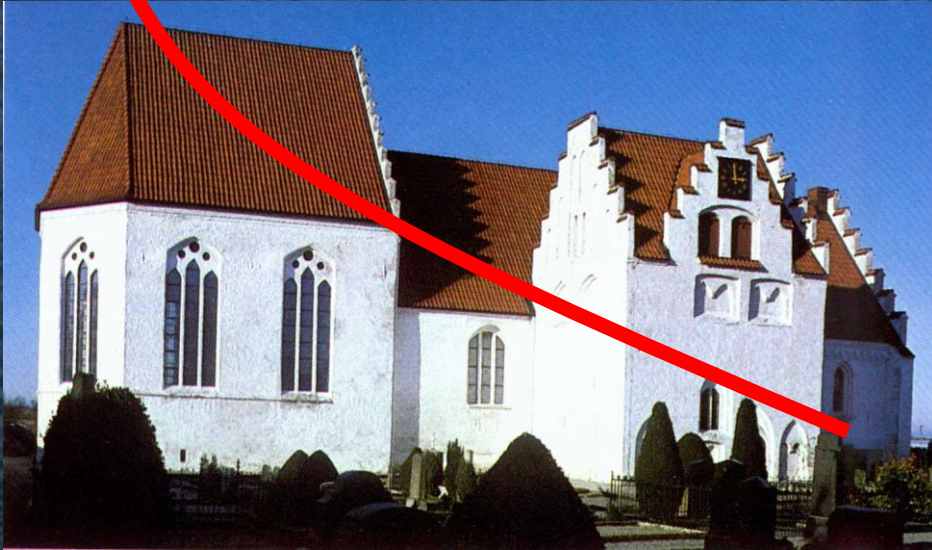




The Common Fisheries Policy reform and the ecosystem approach

**Sea change: Securing a future for Europe's seas
London, 8-9 December 2009**

**Poul Degnol
DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
European Commission**

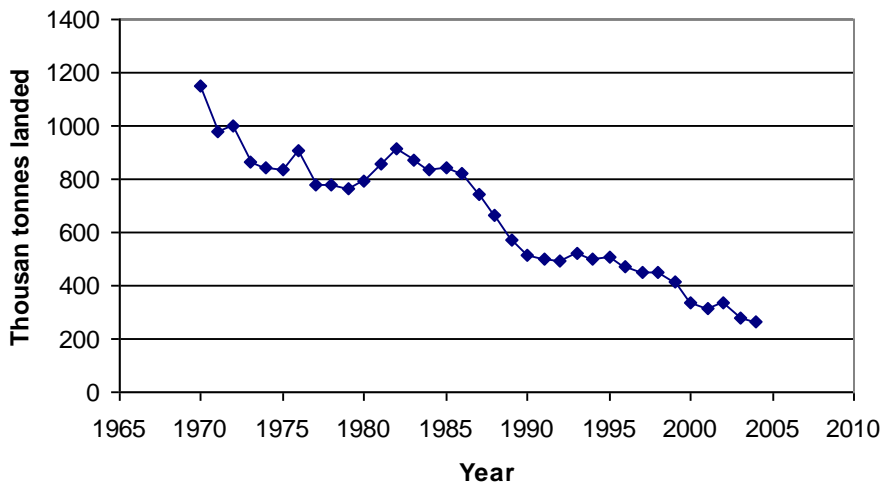


Healthy marine ecosystems is the basis for healthy fisheries

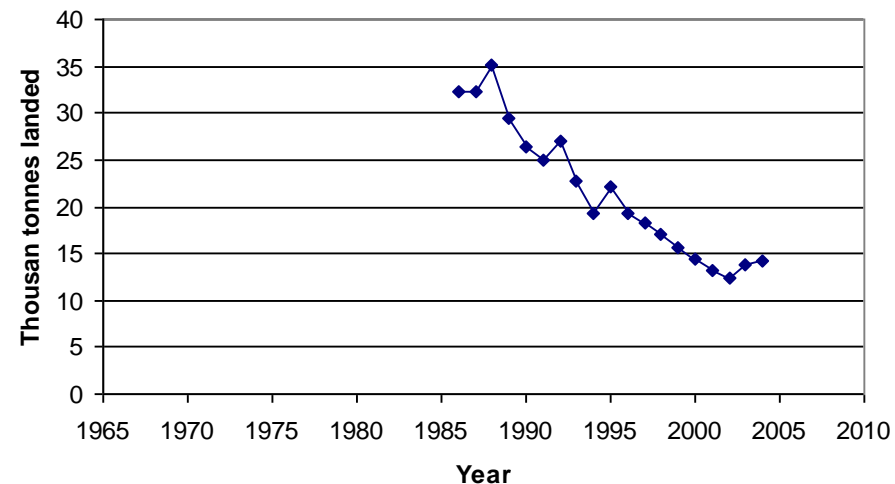


Today in Europe...

Estimated landings of demersal species from the North Sea (1970-2004)



Estimated landings of hake, megrims and Nephrops from the Iberian Atlantic Area



North Sea demersal stocks

Iberian demersal stocks



The CFP has not delivered

- **Healthy marine ecosystems?**
 - **Most fish stocks are overfished**
- **Economically viable fisheries?**
 - **Overcapacity**
 - **Poor economy in many fleet segments**
 - **Heavily subsidised sector**
- **Food supply to Europeans?**
 - **2/3 EU fseafood supply is imports**



Change of framework to support a long term perspective



Structural shortcomings that have prevented us from delivering sustainable fisheries

Decision-making system that encourages a short-term focus

Imprecise policy objectives resulting in insufficient guidance for decisions and implementation

Industry is not given responsibility or incentives to deliver outcomes





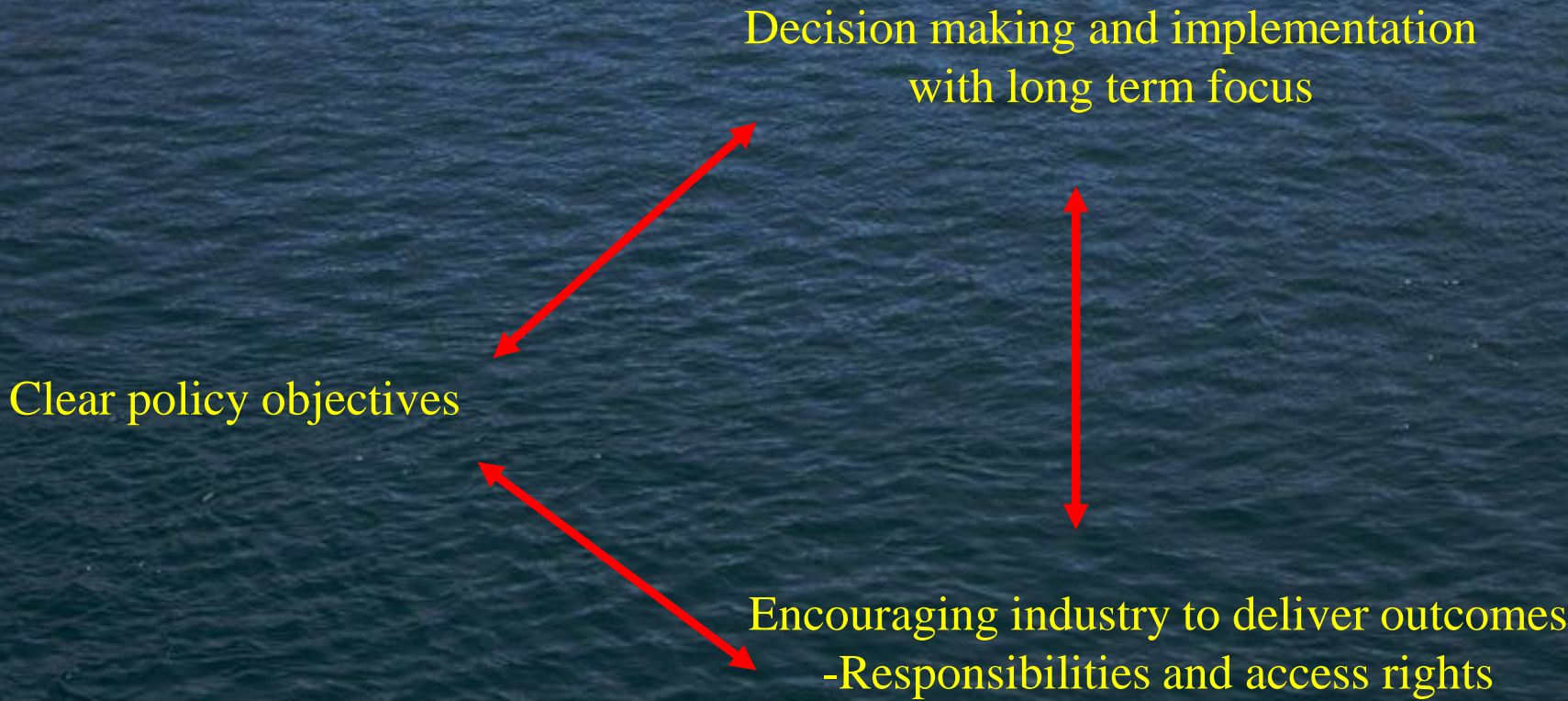
Towards sustainable fisheries





Focusing the objectives

- implementing the ecosystem approach





Objectives give poor guidance

- **The CFP objectives are not focused and prioritised**
- **No guidance for decision making and no accountability**
- **Long history of CFP has demonstrated that compromising the ecological sustainability in order to cushion short term economic and social effects of reductions have undermined the economic and social sustainability of European fisheries**

Focusing the policy objectives

- **Compromises to cushion immediate economic and social impact must be compatible with long term sustainability**
- **Long term ecological sustainability is basic premise for the economic and social future of European fisheries**
- **Objectives must be associated with standards and indicators to enable adaptation and accountability**
- **Fully implement an ecosystem approach**



Ecosystem approach : Not EAF but EAMM

- **An ecosystem approach cannot be implemented through one sector policy**
- **Different sector policies must all contribute to a cross-sectoral ecosystem approach to marine management**
- **The issue is therefore not an ecosystem approach to fisheries (EAF) but the contribution of the fisheries policy to an ecosystem approach to marine management (EAMM)**
- **Benefits to fisheries as EAMM addresses the interaction both ways:**
 - **The impacts OF fisheries on marine ecosystems**
 - **The impact ON fisheries from other sectors – pollution, mineral extraction etc**



Ecosystem approach to marine management in the EU

- **Maritime policy: cross sectoral policy for marine-related human activities**
- **Marine Strategy: the cross sectoral policy for managing the health of marine ecosystems – the core EAMM**
- **Habitats directive: network of representative habitats – important contributory tool for EAMM**
- **Sector policies (such as CFP) to provide the necessary instruments to achieve objectives of EAMM under the Marine Strategy and the Habitats directive**



Cross sector ecosystem approach -Marine Strategy

Transport EA

Fisheries EA

Energy EA

Agriculture EA

Etc EA

Cross sector integration and within-sector contributions are needed



Future CFP must be setup to provide maximum opportunity for synergy with MSFD and HD

- **Ecological sustainability at core**
- **Governance enabling synergy**
 - **Strengthened decision power on regional level?**
 - **Regional governance framework which can address both CFP and MSFD issues?**
 - **Making the industry accountable to acceptable impacts?**
 - **Facilitating integration of fisheries in marine spatial planning?**



Supplementary measures within the CFP for an EA

- Reduce overall fishing pressure on marine ecosystems**
- Protect sensitive habitats**
- Protect sensitive species**
- Measures to alleviate known impacts of fisheries on ecosystem integrity (food web etc)**



Reduce overall fishing pressure

- **The fishing pressure on most European fish stocks is excessive**
 - **A large part of European stocks are overfished relative to MSY**
 - **Many are outside safe biological limits**
- **Reducing fishing pressure to MSY for all fisheries will simultaneously**
 - **Reduce impacts on bottom habitats**
 - **Reduce incidental bycatches of non-target species including sensitive species**
 - **Thereby reduce the overall impacts of fisheries on marine ecosystem health**
- **Doing what we already are striving to do from a traditional fisheries management perspective will be the single most important contribution to an ecosystem approach**

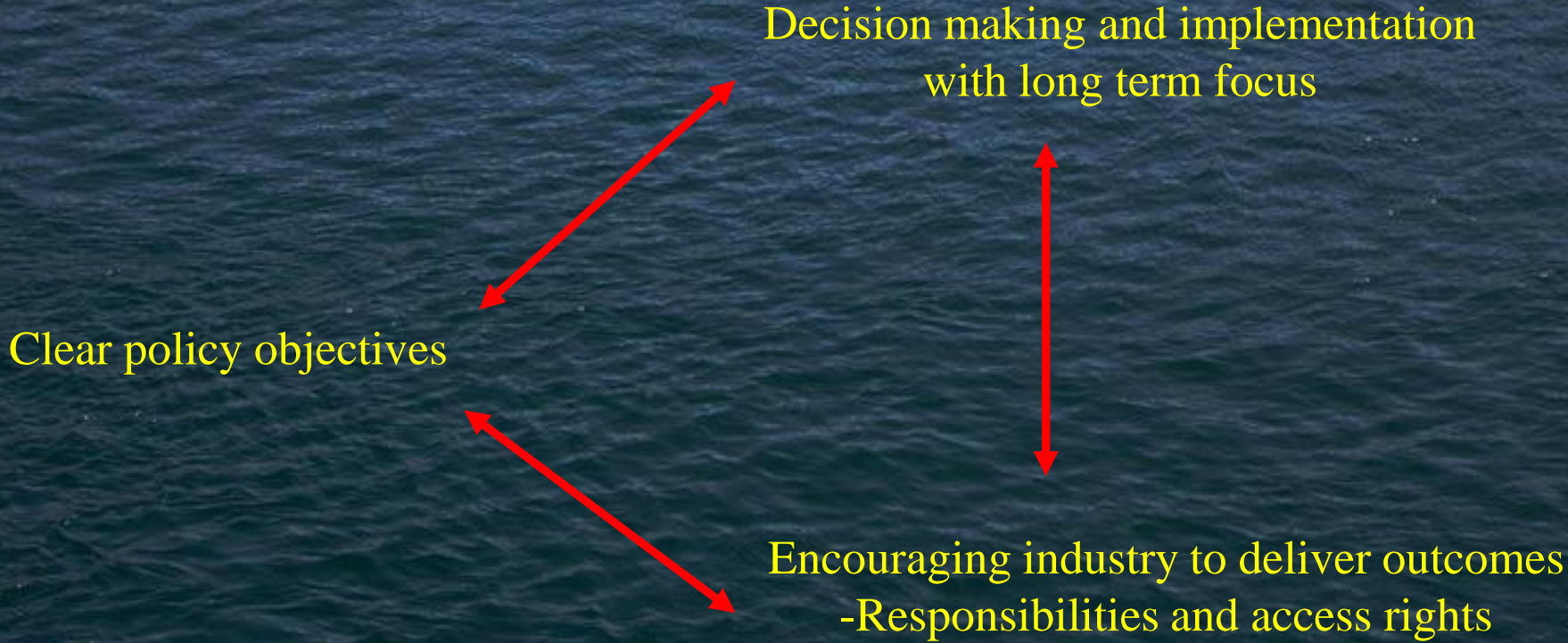


Top priority: reduce fishing pressure

- **Main instrument for EA is long term management plans to reduce and maintain fishing pressure at or below MSY – linked to capacity reduction**
- **Management plans to be adaptive to enable incorporation of new knowledge on ecosystem interactions**
- **Supplement management plans, as knowledge becomes available and we approach MSY, with**
 - **Protection of sensitive habitats**
 - **Protection of sensitive species**
 - **Alleviation of food web effects**
 - **By specific measures, low impact fishing gear and tactics**



Governance which hardwires responsibility – Hierarchy in public decision making and implementation





Focusing decision-making on long-term principles

- **All decisions – down to minute details – are taken at highest political level – Result: short term concerns take priority**

- **Hardwire long term responsibility: Distinguish principles from microregulation so that decisions on microregulation are bound by principles**

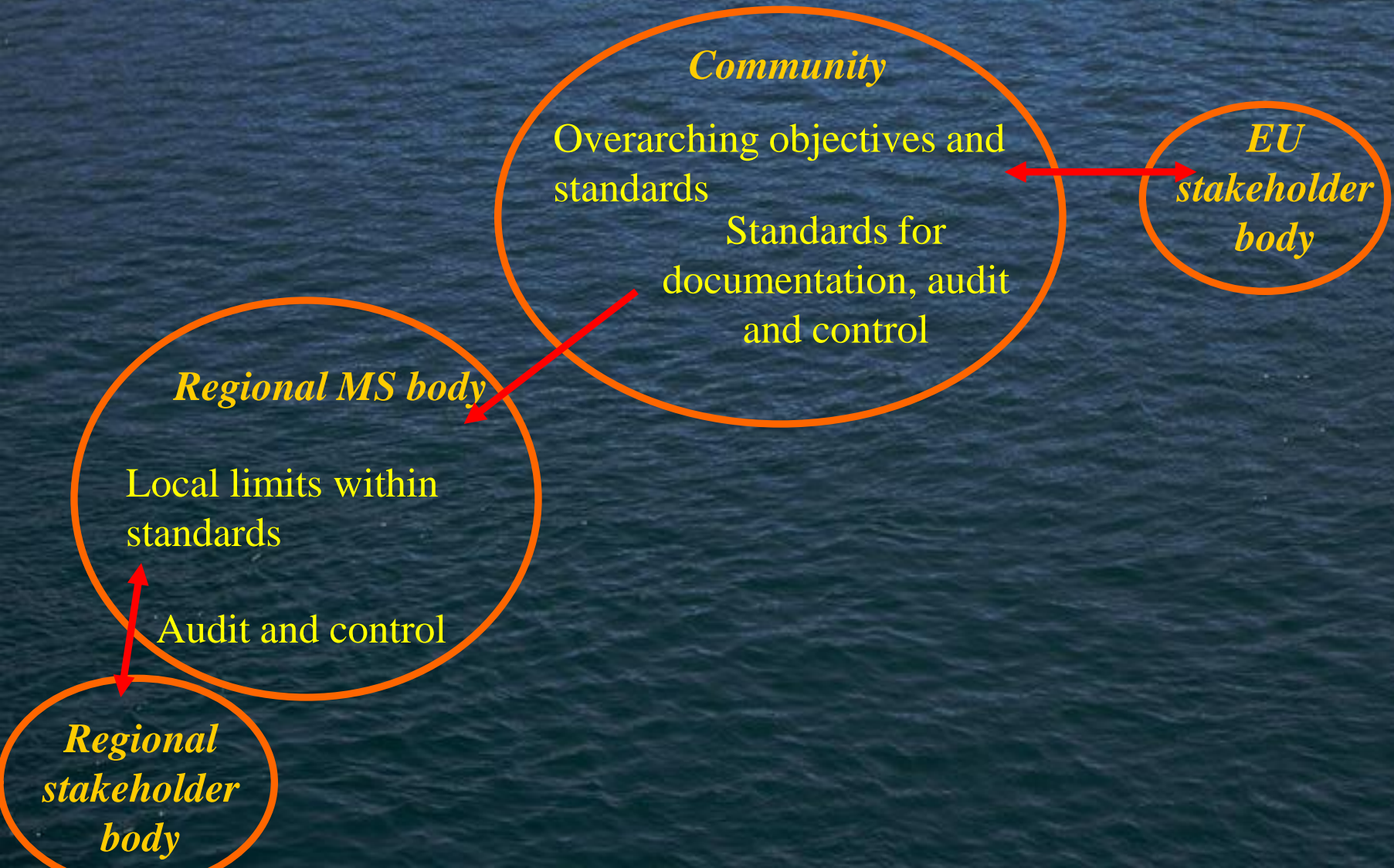
- **Put politics in its proper place: a hierarchy of decision making from principles to technical implementation**
 - **Decisions on principles and strategy on Council/Parliament level**

 - **Leave detailed management to:**
 - **Commission in cooperation with member states?**
 - **Member States / regional MS bodies?**
 - **The industry?**

- **Delegation within Community principles and standards, subject to Community control and sanctions**

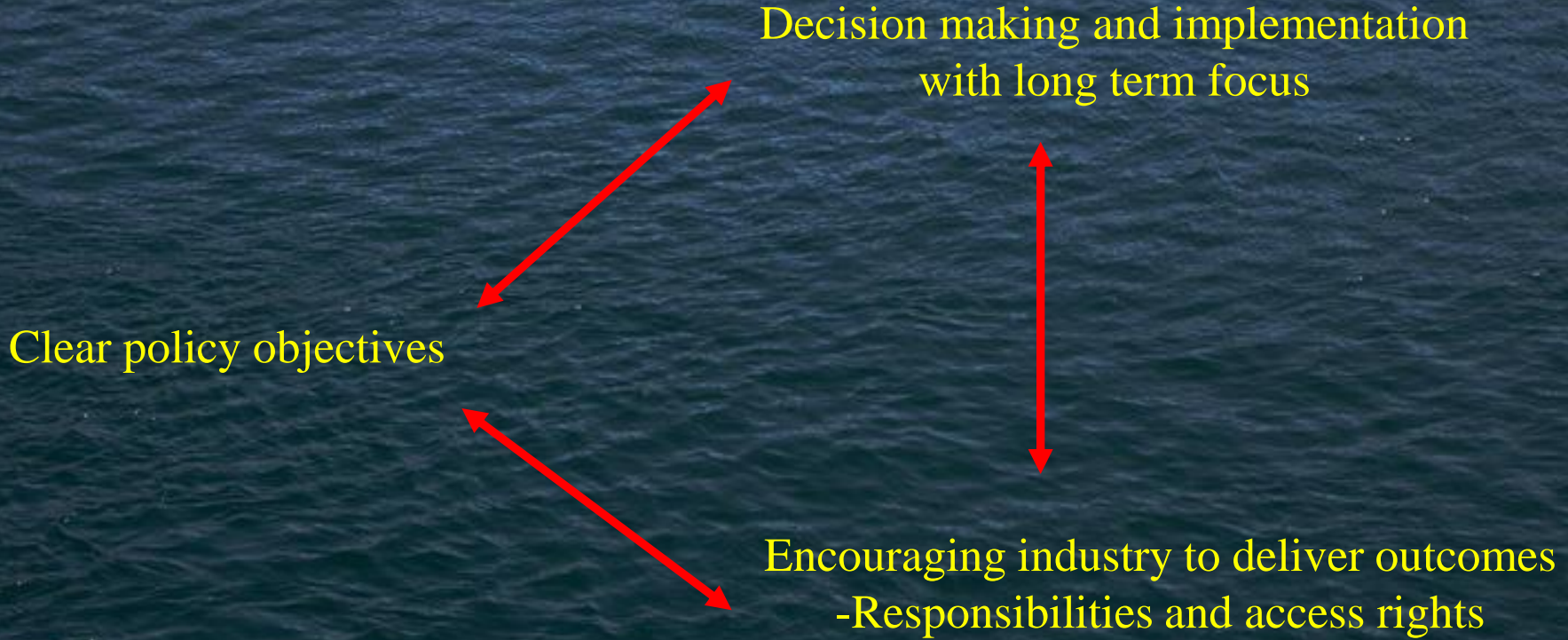


Regionalised management





Governance which hardwires responsibility – Industry taking responsibility



The CFP is a paternalistic policy

- **The present CFP manages details of European fisheries from a centralised process**
- **Top-down paternalistic approach**
- **Result:**
 - **Low legitimacy**
 - **Poor compliance**
 - **Ineffective and uneconomic technical solutions**
 - **Objectives are not met**
 - **Poor economic performance of sector**



What is done elsewhere?

- **Traffic legislation**
 - Drive within speed limits
 - Nobody cares how you do that technically – or whether your car can actually run 300 km/h as long as you drive within prescribed speed limits
- **Environmental regulation**
 - Industries are given maximum limits on emissions
 - Industries are required to document that emissions are within limits
 - Regulation defines outcomes
 - Regulation does not define means to achieve outcomes
 - Burden of proof to large extent with industry



'normalise' fisheries management

- **Ask the industry to take responsibility and accountability:**
 - **Results based management**
 - **Reversal of burden of proof**



Results based management

- **Change to specification of acceptable impact rather than acceptable technology**
 - **Maximum catch**
 - **Maximum acceptable by-catch of juveniles, above quota, non-target species**
 - **Maximum acceptable impact on habitat**
 - **Maximum acceptable impact on sensitive species and sensitive habitats**
- **Industry to develop solutions which meet outcome requirements – and are practical, economical**

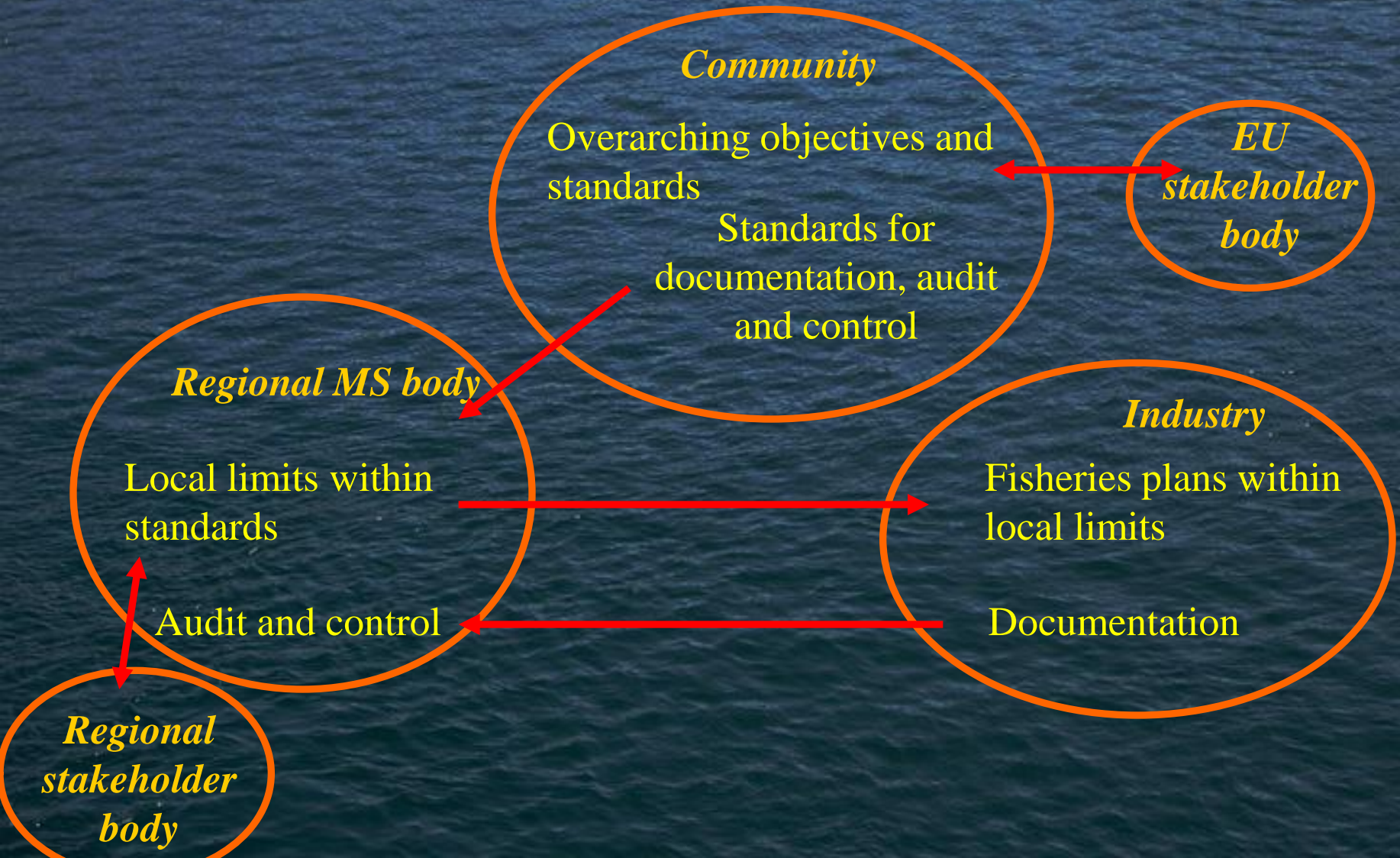


Revert burden of proof

- **Data and information is the minimum price to pay to society for being given access to common resources**
- **If society identifies maximum acceptable impact it should be left to industry to document that outcomes are within acceptable impact limits – like what is done in other sectors**



Regionalised, Results based management w reversed burden of proof





The toolbox for fisheries management



We need a diverse toolbox

- **The main task is to reduce overall fishing pressure:**
 - **Catch limitations**
 - **Effort limitations /capacity reduction**
- **Supplementary measures:**
 - **Low impact fishing methods**
 - **Closed areas to protect habitats and species**



Objectives of MPAs

- **Conservation: ‘To ensure bio-diversity through the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora’ (Habitats Directive)**
- **Sector interest fisheries:**
 - **Healthy ecosystems - Low fisheries impact on environment: Reduce fisheries impacts on sensitive habitats or species (CFP: ecosystem approach)**
 - **Productive fish stocks: Improve exploitation pattern on targeted fish stocks (CFP: sustainable fisheries)**



Common Fisheries Policy closed areas

Closed areas under the Common Fisheries Policy:

- **Protect sensitive habitats or species**
 - Example – closures on cold-water coral areas
- **Reduce impact on ecosystem functioning**
 - Example – closure for sandeel fisheries within the feeding range of seabird colonies
- **improve the productivity of fish stocks**
 - Protect juveniles – example plaice box
 - Avoid catching non-target species – example Norway pout box
 - Evaluations of the effects of this kind of closed areas have not been able to demonstrate any effect



MPAs as fisheries management tool?

- **European research (PROTECT, BIOMEX) has demonstrated that:**
 - **MPAs have important positive fisheries management effects for populations with large affinity with habitat**
 - **Examples in EU : shellfish, mediterranean coastal fisheries**
 - **Positive impacts of closed areas cannot be identified for widely distributed stocks with low habitat affinity (Norway pout box, shetland box, plaice box etc)**
 - **Most EU fisheries exploit populations which migrate and have low habitat affinity**



MPAs are important to reduce fisheries impacts on habitats but cannot be the main instrument to restore productive fisheries in Europe

- **All instruments must be used in concert, in the mix which is most adequate for the situation**
- **MPAs relevant for populations with large habitat affinity – but not for others**
- **Closed areas alone lead to redistribution of effort and thus higher fishing pressure elsewhere – large scale closures must be linked to overall effort reduction**
- **MPAs must therefore be seen as a supplementary instrument for fisheries management – not THE instrument**



Summary

- **A CFP which**
 - **Puts ecological sustainability at the core**
 - **Hardwires responsibility in public decision making**
 - **Ends top-down micromanagement and gives industry responsibility and accountability**
 - **Is inclusive and moves implementation closer to those concerned**
- **Enables synergy with MSFD and HD**
- **To restore healthy marine ecosystems and a viable fishing sector in Europe**



<http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform>

