Evaluating The Transparency Of Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

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RFMOs and Transparency

- The Problem:
  - Fish stocks are declining
  - 58% of the ocean is high seas
- The "Solution":
  - RFMOs to manage high seas fisheries
  - But, RFMOs are "Failing the High Seas"
  - Greater transparency → improve RFMOs

Figure credit: Gjerde et al, 2012

Photo credit: NOAA

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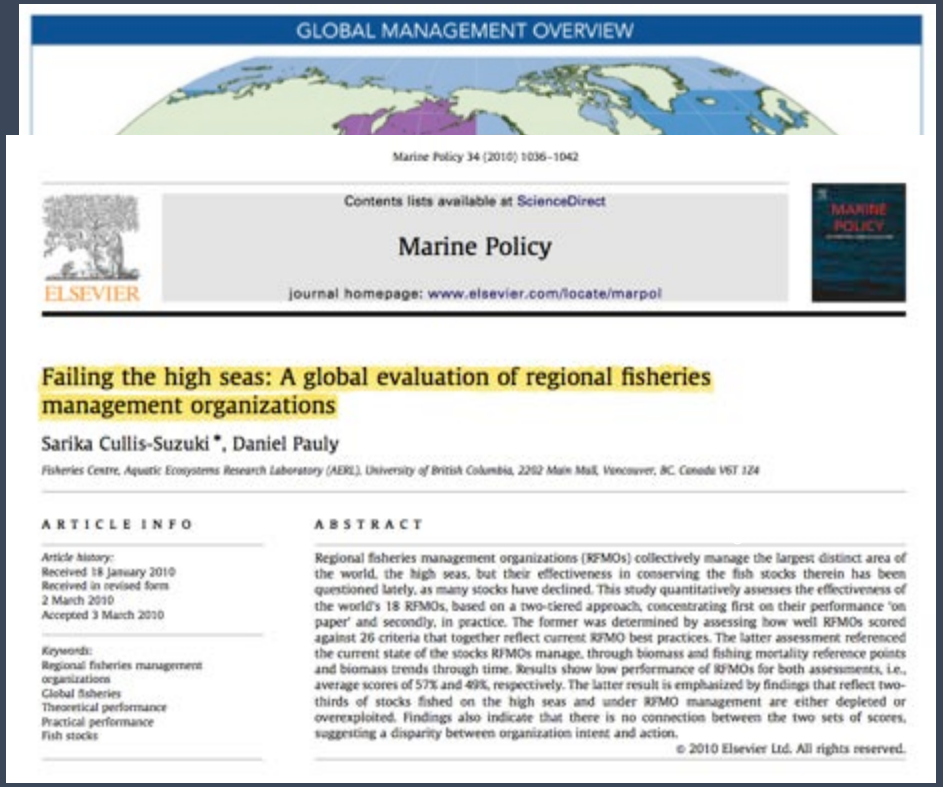
GLOBAL MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

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Failing the high seas: A global evaluation of regional fisheries management organizations

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ABSTRACT

Regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) collectively manage the largest distinct area of the world, the high seas, but their effectiveness in conserving the fish stocks therein has been questioned lately, as many stocks have declined. This study quantitatively assesses the effectiveness of the world's 18 RFMOs, based on a two-tiered approach, concentrating first on their performance 'on paper' and secondly, in practice. The former was determined by assessing how well RFMOs scored against 26 criteria that together reflect current RFMO best practices. The latter assessment referenced the current state of the stocks RFMOs manage, through biomass and fishing mortality reference points and biomass trends through time. Results show low performance of RFMOs for both assessments, i.e., average scores of 57% and 49%, respectively. The latter result is emphasized by findings that reflect two-thirds of stocks fished on the high seas and under RFMO management are either depleted or overexploited. Findings also indicate that there is no connection between the two sets of scores, suggesting a disparity between organization intent and action.

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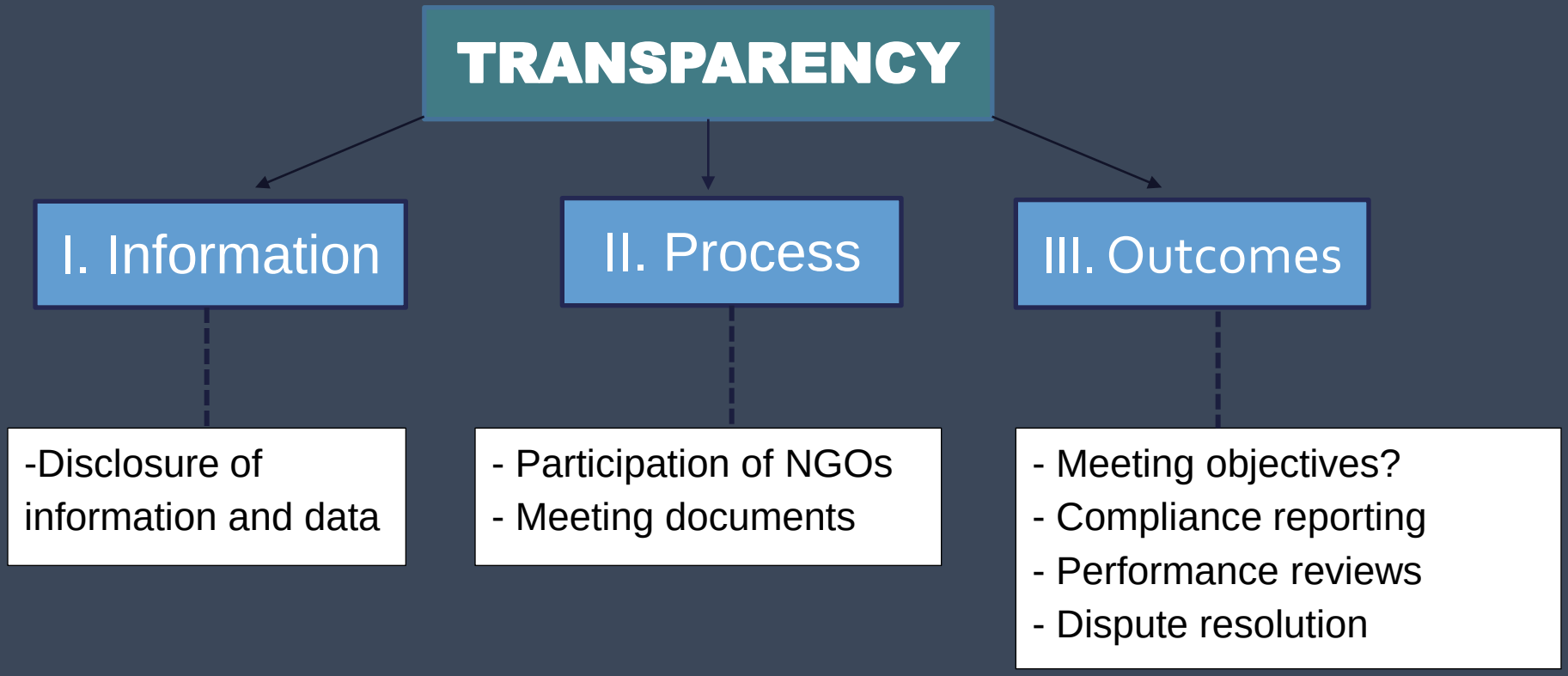
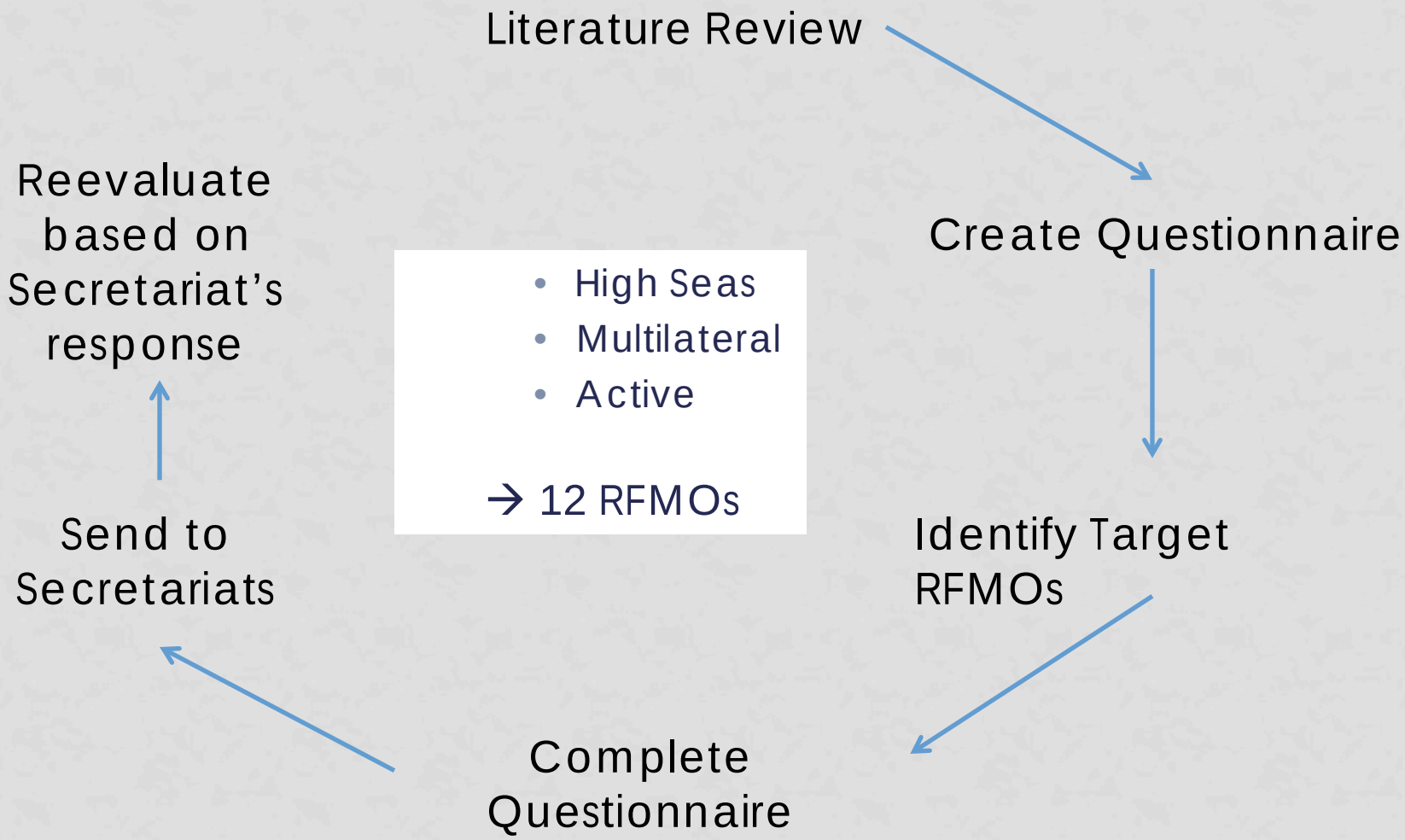
What is Transparency?



Study Goals

- How transparent are high seas RFMOs?
  - Meet transparency standards?
  - Particularly transparent or non-transparent RFMOs?
- How can RFMOs improve transparency practices?
  - Areas of improvement
  - Methods of improving

Methods


Literature Review
Create Questionnaire
Identify Target RFMOs
Complete Questionnaire
Send to Secretariats
Reevaluate based on Secretariat's response
• High Seas
• Multilateral
• Active
→ 12 RFMOs

QUESTIONNAIRE

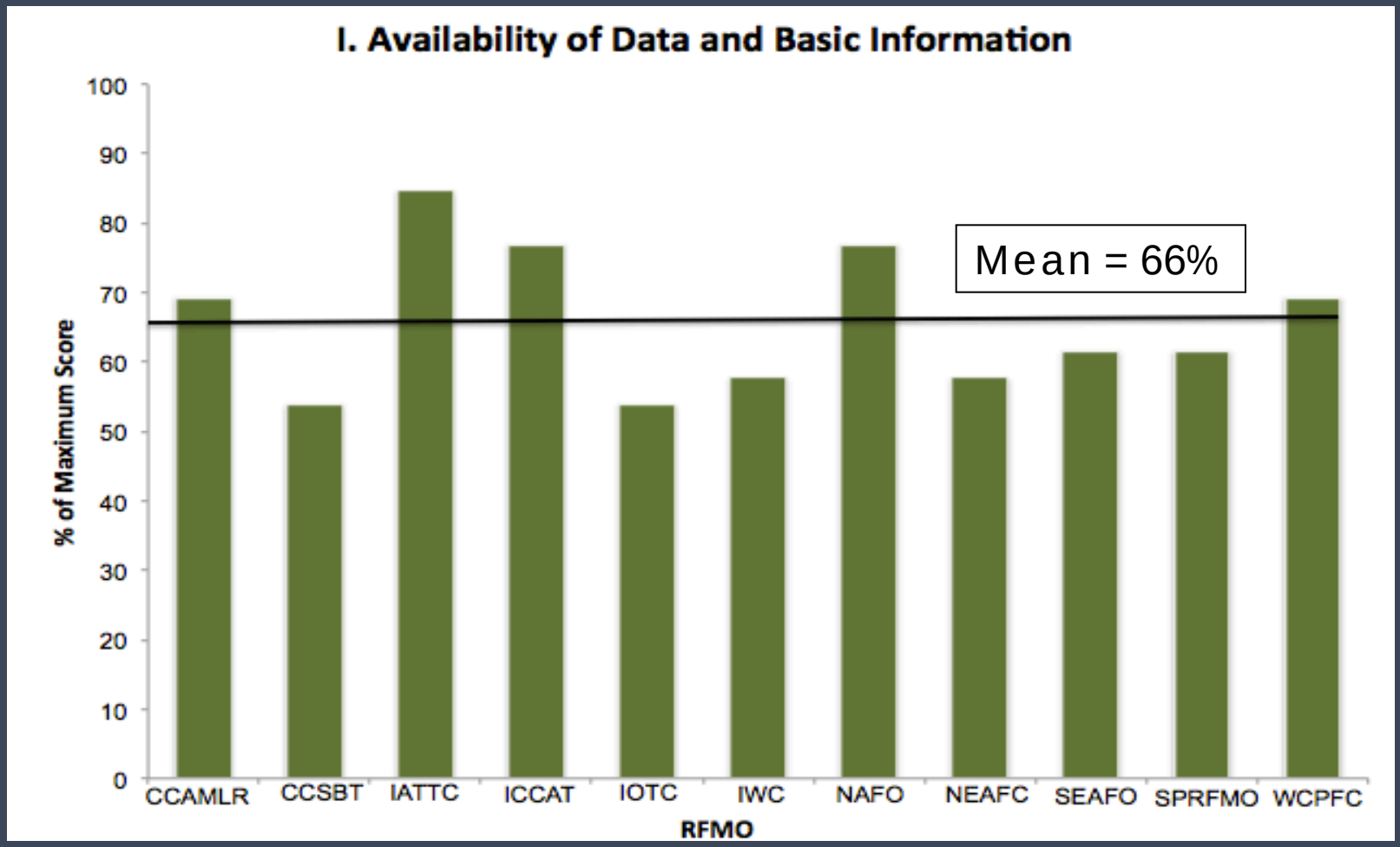
- 3 Sections
  - Data/Information
  - Participation
    - 2 sub-sections
  - Outcomes
    - 4 sub-sections
- 34 Questions
- 50 Points Max

"2.1.6. How can NGO observers participate?
Presentations/comments= +0.5,
Allowed to author/co-author meeting documents= +0.5,
Can serve on sub-committees, working groups, panels etc.= +1"

"3.1.1. Does the organization publically identify its objectives?
Yes= 1"

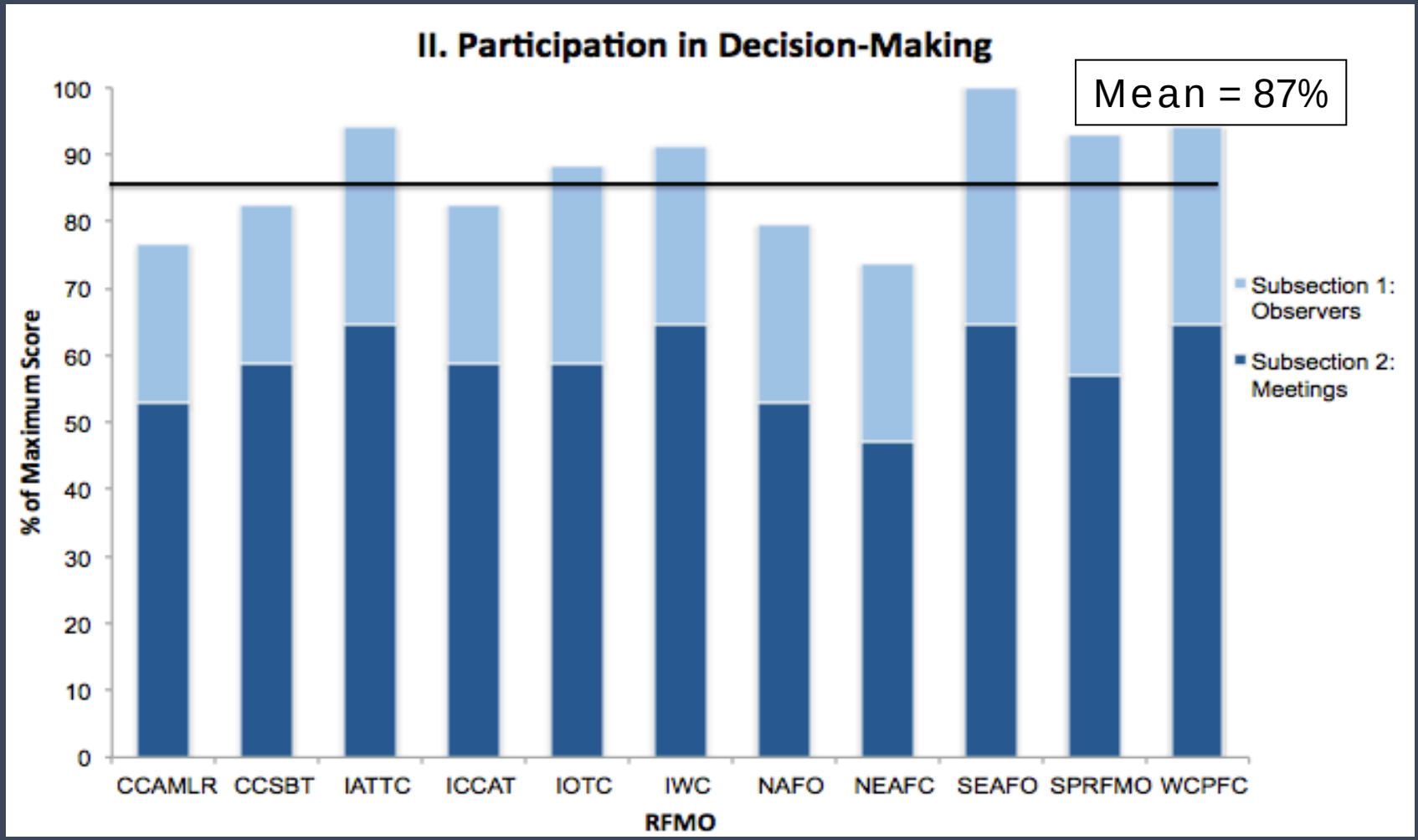
RESULTS: PART I PART II PART III

LOWEST SCORE



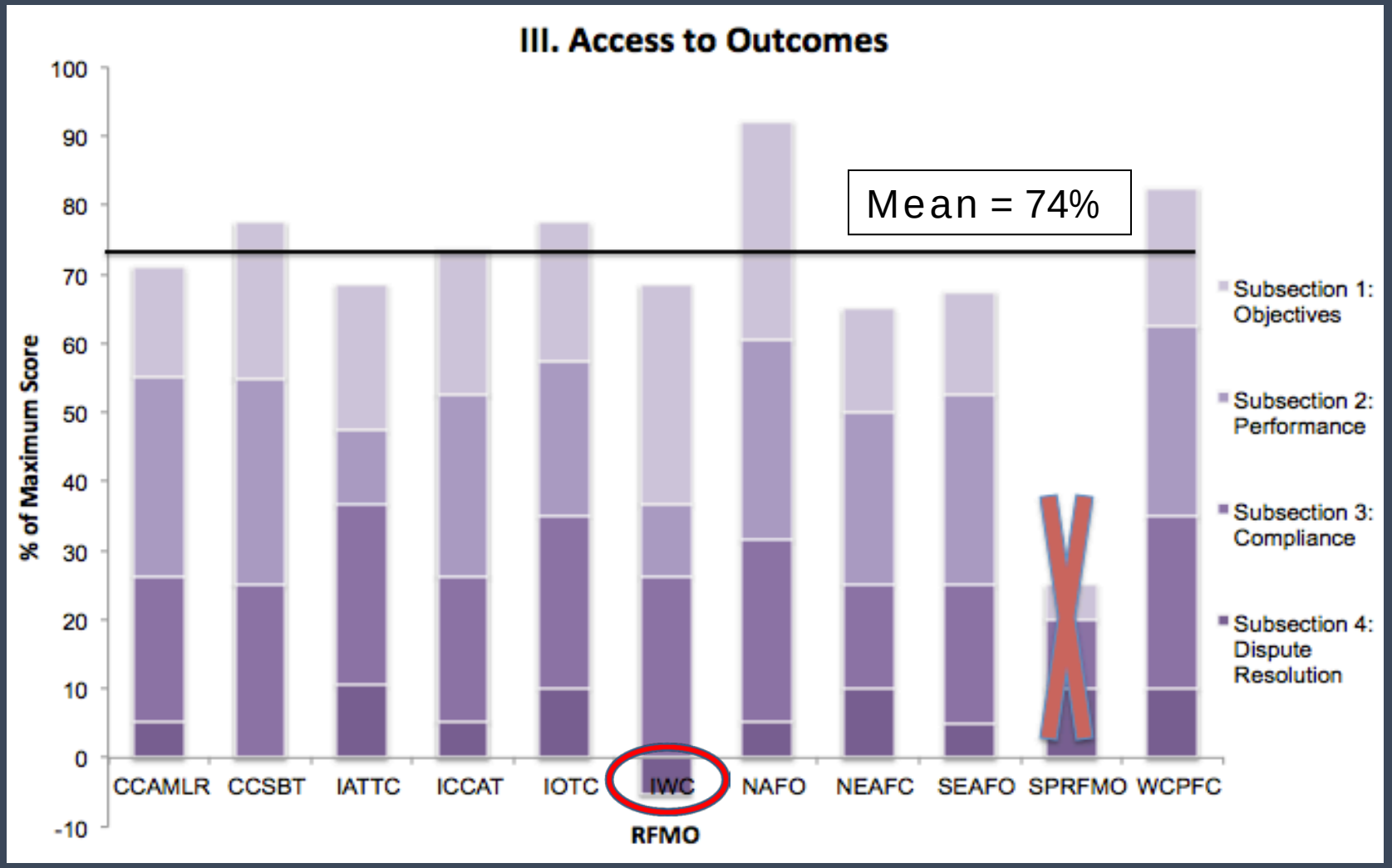
RESULTS: PART I PART II PART III

HIGHEST SCORE

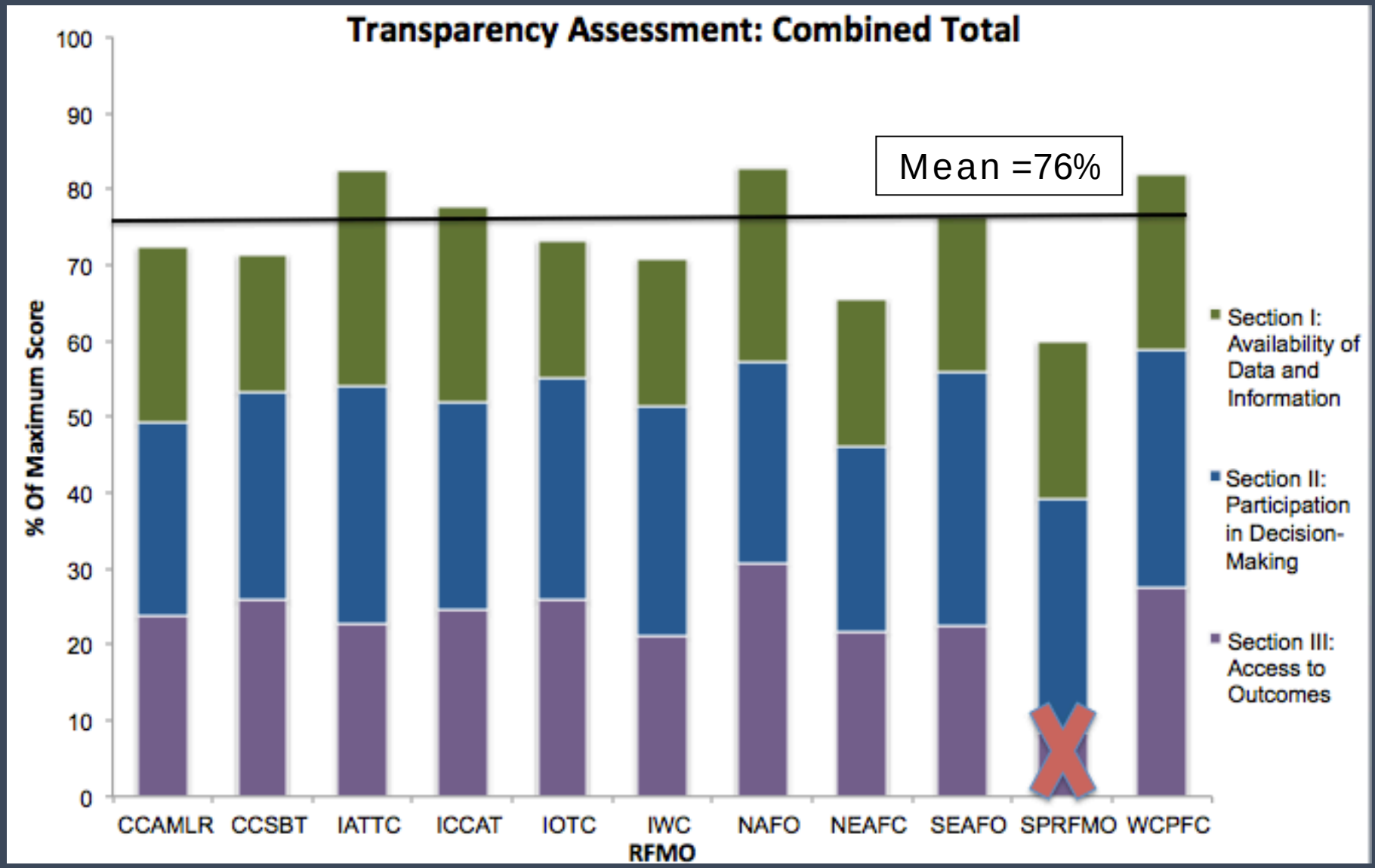


RESULTS: PART I PART II PART III

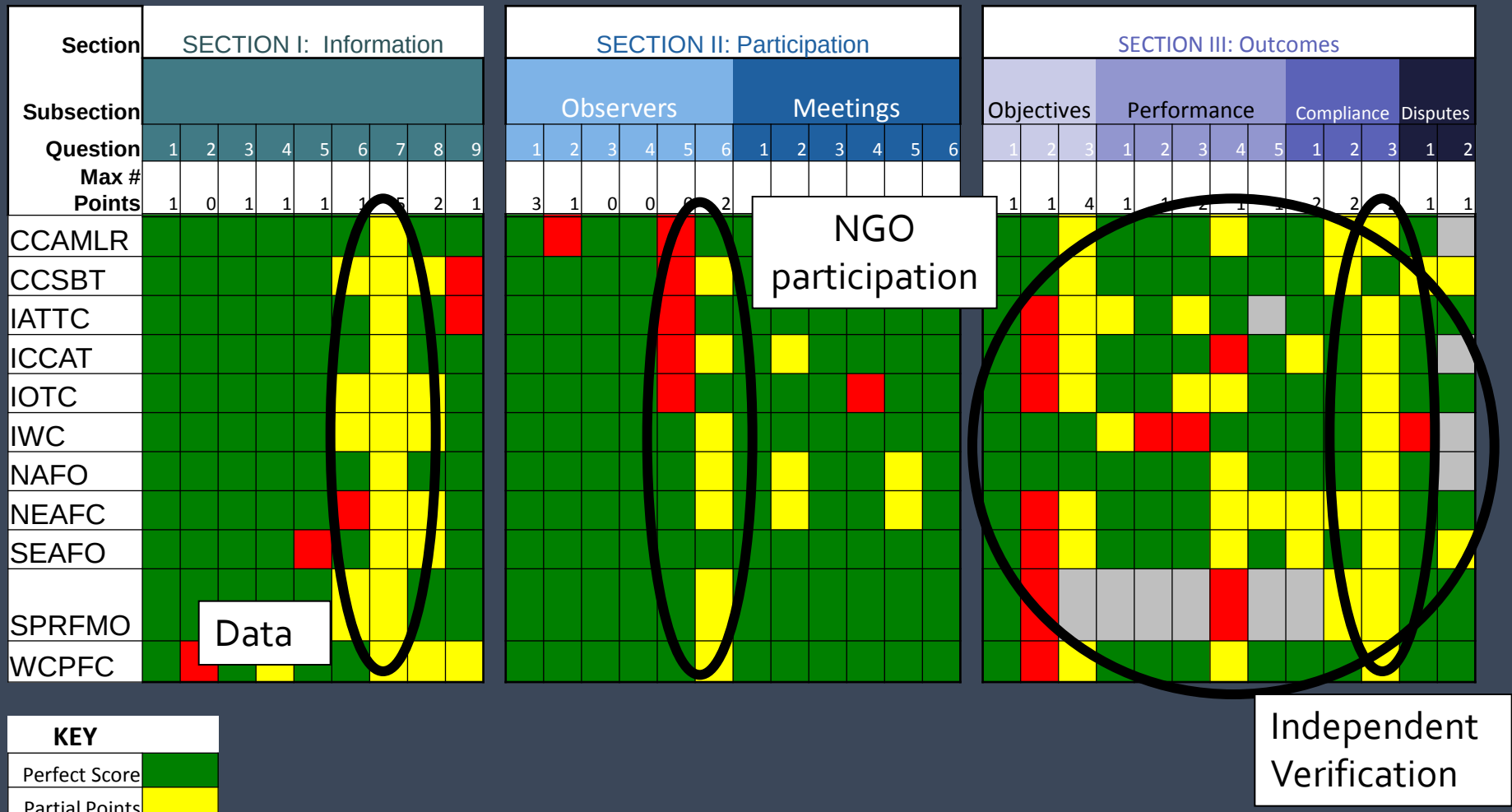
LEAST PERFECT



RESULTS: COMBINED



OBSERVED TRENDS

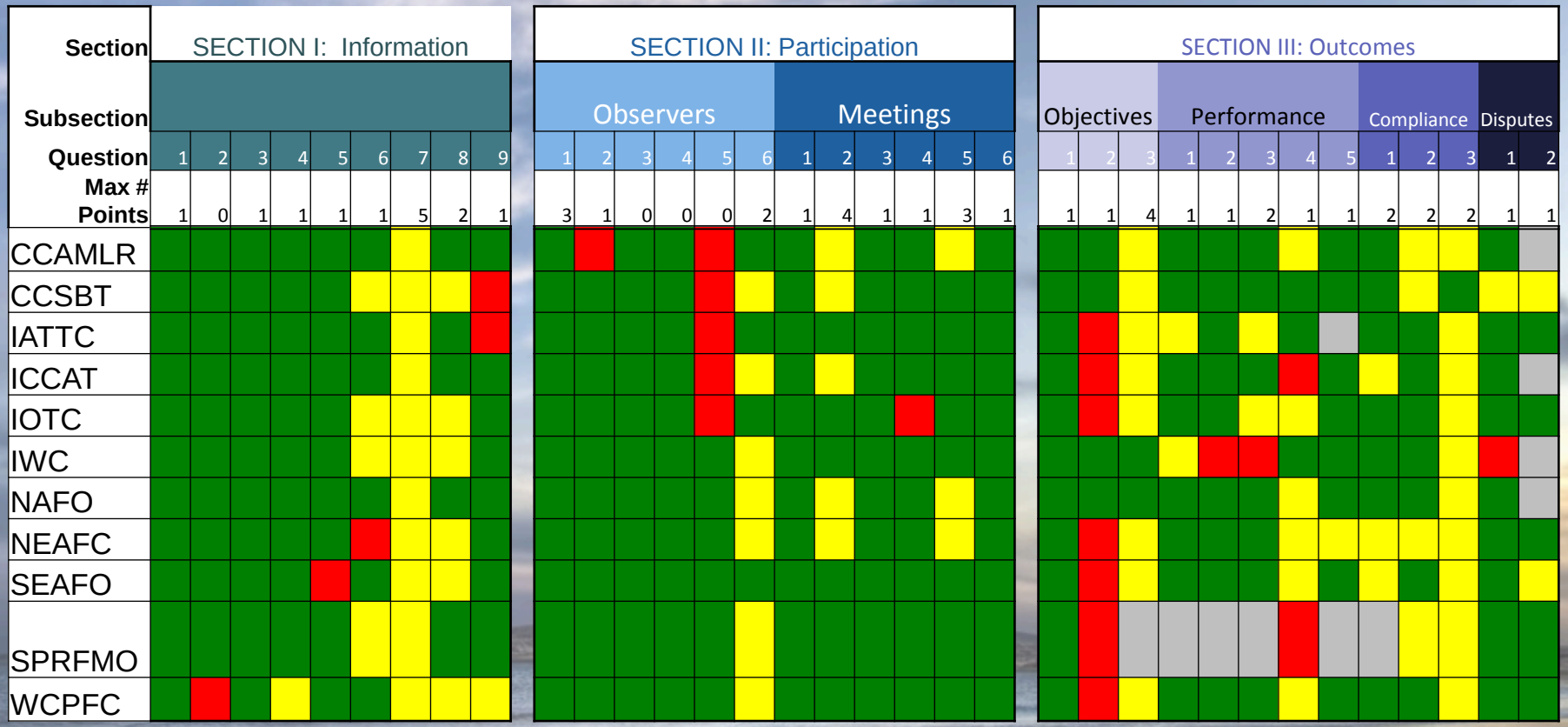


Conclusions

- How transparent are high seas RFMOs?
  - Average score 76%
  - No good guys, no bad guys

- How can RFMOs improve transparency practices?
  - Learning from each other
    - Data availability
    - NGO Participation
    - Reporting against objectives
    - Compliance

QUESTIONS?



KEY
Perfect Score
Partial Points
0/- Points
Not applicable

Thank you!