

# **Marine Stewardship Council's Integrated Strategic Plan: Executive Summary**

## ***1.1 MSC's Challenge***

This strategic review comes at a critical juncture for the MSC. Following a turbulent period marked by external challenges and internal restructuring; the MSC has revitalised the management team and now faces an increasingly receptive market arena. Recent high profile support from major buyers attests to the potential to utilise market forces to drive changes in fishing practices, and ultimately to contribute to reversing the decline in global fish stocks. We have a unique window of opportunity to ride a gathering wave of support, and to firmly establish the MSC's standard amongst fisheries, buyers, and consumers around the world.

Yet growing interest and market momentum present a double-edged sword. The MSC could find itself drawn into an expanding number of initiatives in ever more countries, and in support of fisheries and commercial partners of all sizes. There is a risk of fragmenting limited resources across an overwhelming number of initiatives that might result in a proliferation of activity, but a shortfall in terms of market impact.

Establishing a clear and shared set of priorities – anchored in a sequence of stretching, but achievable milestones – will greatly mitigate this risk, and provide a roadmap for achieving our long term aspirations. This level of planning and commitment will help galvanise support from fisheries, commercial partners, consumers and the funding community.

## ***1.2 The Roadmap Forward***

The MSC's Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP) commits the MSC to key visionary milestones while capturing a number of short-term action strategies essential for propelling us forward:

- Achieving “critical mass” – defined as 30-40% market penetration of certified product – in the UK and Germany, securing a strong position with at least 5 of the top 10 US retailers by the end of this decade, or early into the next, and actively developing our Asia-Pacific programme with a focus on the Japanese market.
- Building on these initial success stories, secure critical mass in most major developed markets by the end of the next decade – thereby further cementing the MSC's appeal to export oriented fisheries around the world.
- Ultimately securing a meaningful presence in all major producing and consuming countries, beyond 2020.

Institutional, internal and policy commitments include:

- Further investigation into how the timeliness, quality and consistency of the MSC assessment process can be improved (delivered mainly through MSC's Quality and Consistency Project). Desired outcomes include the development of standard assessment trees and scoring guideposts, reduced certification timelines and the accreditation of a greater number of certifiers able to offer both chain of custody and fishery certifications.
- The completion and then roll out of MSC's assessment methodology for small scale and data deficient fisheries – principally but not exclusively aimed at encouraging more developing world fisheries into the programme
- A review of the effectiveness of MSC's Stakeholder Council structure and implementation of required reforms where necessary to improve its overall effectiveness
- A review of how external communications with key stakeholders such as fisheries clients, the conservation community and the media can be improved and made more effective. An internal communications review will also be completed.

We have developed an integrated plan to deliver these goals, which weaves together several high priority initiatives across the commercial outreach, fisheries outreach, communications and policy teams. However, sequential milestones do not imply sequential activities. Our plan envisages that near, medium, and long term opportunities will be pursued in parallel, though the balance of resourcing and effort will be weighted towards achieving our near term goals.

This plan will require a ramp-up in staff levels over the coming years, with an initial increase from 18.2 FTE in 2005/06 to perhaps, depending upon funding, 35.7 FTE in 2006/07, and further expansion to 45.5 FTE by the end of the decade. This increase in staffing comes with a commitment to achieving specific milestones, which are set out in the Monitoring and Evaluation plan, at the end of this document.

The MSC will remain dependent on grant funding into the next decade, though logo licensing revenues will grow with expanding market. However, as critical mass is achieved in Europe, North America and Japan, the MSC will increasingly benefit from the multiplicative effects of growing volumes of certified product, increased use of the logo, and the market presence to justify increasing the royalty rate. Over the long term, preliminary analysis suggests that the MSC could potentially migrate to a self-sustaining commercial model based largely on logo licensing revenue, as the MSC standard and brand become firmly entrenched in the marketplace.

### ***1.3 An Adaptive Philosophy***

Every rapidly growing and successful organisation must be able to adapt to changing circumstances and opportunities. The MSC prides itself in its demonstrated ability to do so. While it has no intent to constantly tinker with this foundation document, the MSC does very much intend to develop annual plans that will guide implementation of the ISP within the available resources available and tailored to new challenges and opportunities that are emerging - while remaining connected to the central visions presented in this long term plan. Certainly the underlying plan itself will need updating at some future point, which should be clear as our adaptive implementation approach unfolds.

### ***1.4 Join Our Mission***

The MSC relies heavily on an array of partners and stakeholders in our mission to reverse the decline of global fish stocks and secure a sustainable food supply for the future. Help us in any way you can, whether that be participating in our certification programs directly, purchasing MSC labelled products or simply providing us your ideas with how to improve the effectiveness of MSC's programme.