# THE MSC PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHING

# Guide to Principles, Criteria, Sub-criteria and Performance Indicators

# Principles and Criteria

At the centre of the MSC is a set of <u>Principles and Criteria for Sustainable</u> Fishing. These were developed by means of an extensive, international consultative process through which the views of stakeholders in fisheries were gathered.

These Principles reflect a recognition that a sustainable fishery should be based upon:

- The maintenance and re-establishment of healthy populations of targeted species;
- The maintenance of the integrity of ecosystems;
- The development and maintenance of effective fisheries management systems, taking into account all relevant biological, technological, economic, social, environmental and commercial aspects; and
- Compliance with relevant local and national local laws and standards and international understandings and agreements.

The MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing provide the overall requirements necessary for certification of a sustainably managed fishery.

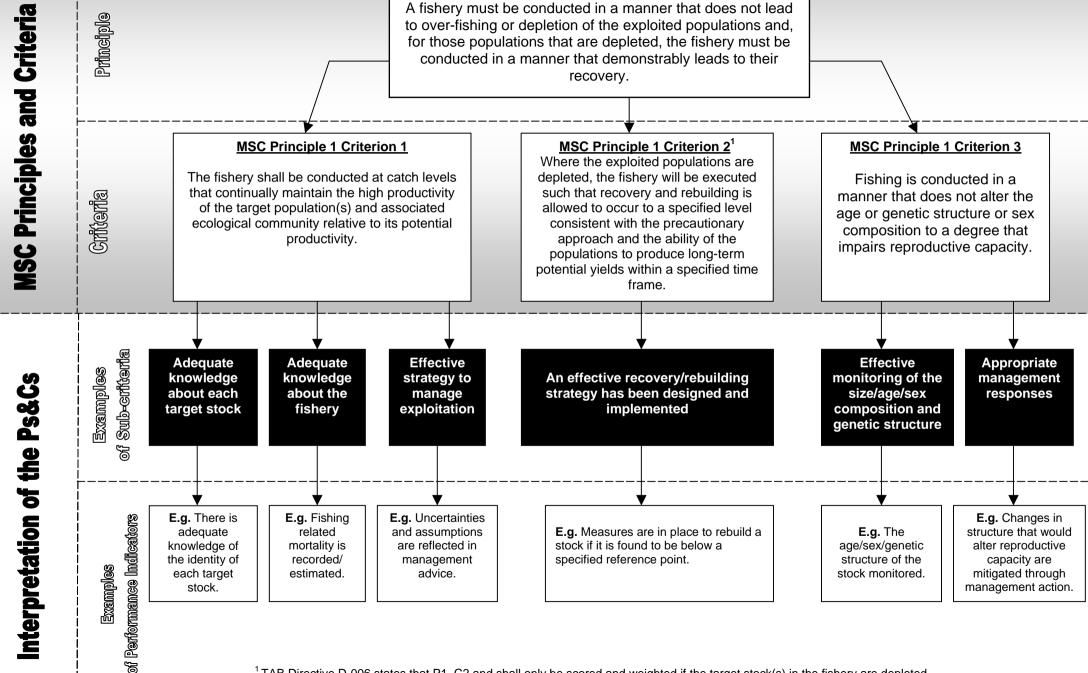
# Interpreting the Principles and Criteria

The certification methodology adopted by the MSC involves the application and interpretation of the Principles and Criteria to the specific fishery undergoing assessment. This is necessary, as the precise assessment of a fishery will vary with the nature of the species, capture method used, the ecology of the fishery, etc.

Accordingly, the Certification Body (CB) and its assessment team build a structured hierarchy of 'Sub-criteria' and 'Performance Indicators' in order to carry out the assessments. Pls represent separate areas of important information. These indicators therefore provide a detailed checklist of factors necessary to meet the MSC Criteria in the same way as the Criteria provide the factors necessary to meet each Principle.

#### The Tables

The following tables illustrate this process of building an assessment tree. Within each table the Principles and Criteria set by the MSC are provided. Under Principles 1 and 2, we have also provided illustrative examples of the 'Sub-criteria' and 'Performance Indicators' that CBs have used when assessing a fishery.



<sup>1</sup> TAB Directive D-006 states that P1, C2 and shall only be scored and weighted if the target stock(s) in the fishery are depleted.

**MSC PRINCIPLE 1** 

#### **MSC PRINCIPLE 2** Principle Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the fishery depends. **MSC Principle 2 Criterion 1 MSC Principle 2 Criterion 2 MSC Principle 2 Criterion 3** Where exploited populations are The fishery is conducted in a way that The fishery is conducted in a manner depleted, the fishery will be executed Gritteria maintains natural functional relationships that does not threaten biological such that recovery and rebuilding is among species and should not lead to trophic diversity at the genetic, species or allowed to occur to a specified level population levels and avoids or cascades or ecosystem state changes. within specified time frames, consistent minimises mortality of, or injuries to with the precautionary approach and endangered, threatened or protected considering the ability of the population species (ETP spp.). to produce long-term potential yields. of Sub-eritteria Adequate Strategies within Strategies have Adequate **Appropriate Examples** knowledge knowledge the fishery's Adequate **Adequate** been developed management management knowledge knowledge about the about the to avoid or measures to allow recovery of affected ecosystem system to about ETP fishery about the minimise impacts on ETP relevant to impacts address these risks to ETP spp. spp. ETP spp. fishing impacts spp. of Performance Indicators E.g. Effects of E.a. Management **E.a.** There is E.g. E.a. Management E.g. There is sufficient E.g. information on Information fishing objectives are set Interactions strategies are in place information to assess to avoid or minimise available on operations in terms of impact the presence/ do not pose whether trends showing unacceptable non-target and gear on identification and abundance and impacts within decreasing non-target Examples habitat and avoidance/ temporal risks to ETP acceptable minimum spp abundance are due species directly structure are reduction distribution of levels primarily to the fishery spp. effected by known ETP spp. and not natural variability the fishery

Gritteria

# **MSC PRINCIPLE 3**

The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.

#### A. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CRITERIA

# **Criterion A1**

The fishery shall not be conducted under a controversial unilateral exemption to an international agreement.

# **Criterion A2**

The fishery demonstrate clear long-term objectives consistent with MSC Principles and Criteria and contain a consultative process that is transparent and involves all interested and affected parties so as to consider all relevant information, including local knowledge. The impact of fishery management decisions on all those who depend on the fishery for their livelihoods, including, but not confined to subsistence, artisanal, and fishing-dependent communities shall be addressed as part of this process;

#### **Criterion A3**

Management System shall be appropriate to the cultural context, scale and intensity of the fishery – reflecting specific objectives, incorporating operational criteria, containing procedures for implementation and a process for monitoring and evaluating performance and acting on findings

### **Criterion A4**

Management System shall observe the legal and customary rights and long term interests of people dependent on fishing for food and livelihood, in a manner consistent with ecological sustainability

### **Criterion A5**

Incorporates an appropriate mechanism for the resolution of disputes arising within the system

### **Criterion A6**

Provide economic and social incentives that contribute to sustainable fishing and shall not operate with subsidies that contribute to unsustainable fishing

### **Criterion A7**

Act in a timely and adaptive fashion on the basis of the best available information using a precautionary approach particularly when dealing with scientific uncertainty

#### **Criterion A8**

Incorporate a research plan – appropriate to the scale and intensity of the fishery – that addresses the information needs of management and provides for the dissemination of research results to all interested parties in a timely fashion

#### **Criterion A9**

Require that assessments of the biological status of the resource and impacts of the fishery have been and are periodically conducted

# **Criterion A10**

Specify measures and strategies that demonstrably control the degree of exploitation of the resource, including, but not limited to:

- a) setting catch levels that will maintain the target population and ecological community's high productivity relative to its potential productivity, and account for the non-target species (or size, age, sex) captured and landed in association with, or as a consequence of, fishing for target species;
- b) identifying appropriate fishing methods that minimise adverse impacts on habitat, especially in critical or sensitive zones such as spawning and nursery areas;
- c) providing for the recovery and rebuilding of depleted fish populations to specified levels within specified time frames:
- d) mechanisms in place to limit or close fisheries when designated catch limits are reached;
- e) establishing no-take zones where appropriate.

### Criterion A11

Contains appropriate procedures for effective compliance, monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement which ensure that established limits to exploitation are not exceeded and specifies corrective actions to be taken in the event that they are.

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# B. OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

# **Criterion B12**

Fishing operation shall make use of fishing gear and practices designed to avoid the capture of non-target species (and non-target size, age, and/or sex of the target species); minimise mortality of this catch where it cannot be avoided, and reduce discards of what cannot be released alive.

# **Criterion B13**

Fishing operation shall implement appropriate fishing methods designed to minimise adverse impacts on habitat, especially in critical or sensitive zones such as spawning and nursery areas.

# **Criterion B14**

Fishing operation shall not use destructive fishing practices such as fishing with poisons or explosives.

# **Criterion B16**

Fishing operation shall be conducted in compliance with the fishery management system and all legal and administrative requirements.

# **Criterion B15**

Fishing operation shall minimise operational waste such as lost fishing gear, oil spills, on-board spoilage of catch, etc

# **Criterion B17**

Fishing operation shall assist and cooperate with management authorities in the collection of catch, discard, and other information of importance to effective management of the resources and the fishery.