

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL - TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

TAB DIRECTIVE SERIES

TAB Directive Number	Title	Date of issue
TAB D-028 v1	Fishery Assessment Timelines	23 February 2010
Decision date: 4 December 2009 Effective date for all clients and certification bodies: 1 May 2010		

Documents Supplemented or Modified by this Directive

MSC Scheme Document	Status Change
Fishery Certification Methodology (FCM v6)	Modifications to sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2.1.1• 2.1.1.1

Background

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has set an institutional objective to reduce the duration of the fishery assessment process to less than 12 months while maintaining the overall high standards of assessment. This directive is one in a series of measures to assist this goal.

Intent

This Directive's intention is to:

- ensure all stakeholders are kept up-to-date on the timelines of the assessment process;
- ensure assessments are announced at a point in the process where the certification body is properly prepared to undertake the initial assessment steps;
- limit the duration of the assessment between data gathering and drafting the Public Comment Draft Report in order to maintain the currency of information used in the assessment;
- recognise that there will be exceptional circumstances in atypical assessments that need to be accounted for.

Directive

1. For all fisheries that subsequently enter assessment¹ against the MSC standard, the requirements specified in this TAB Directive shall come into immediate effect on the 1st of May, 2010.
2. For fisheries already in assessment as of the 1st of May, 2010, those requirements established in paragraph 5 shall apply.
3. Paragraph 2.1.1 of the Fisheries Certification Methodology (FCM v6) is amended as follows:

After a contract for full assessment has been signed, or the client has formally confirmed its intention to proceed, the certification body shall ~~within 5 days~~:

Announcing the Assessment

4. At the same time as submission of the Notification Report to the MSC pursuant to paragraph 2.1.1.1 of the FCM v6 and Policy Advisory 9, the certification body shall also notify the MSC and stakeholders of the proposed assessment team and team leader. The MSC shall publish

¹ Having signed a contract with a certification body for a full assessment.

the supplied names and CVs of the proposed assessment team on the MSC website.

Assessment Timeline

5. The certification body's indicative timetable submitted in accordance with 2.1.1.1 of the FCM v6 shall form the basis for clearly tracking the assessment process by stakeholders. Deviation from this timetable by more than 30 days shall require, within 5 days of the 30 day delay occurring, an updated timetable and notification clearly defining the reason for the delay to be submitted to MSC for publication to the MSC website.

Duration of Assessments

6. The period from the last on-site assessment visit to the receipt of the Public Comment Draft Report by the MSC shall not exceed 18 months. If this period is exceeded, the Certification Body shall withdraw the fishery from the MSC assessment process.

Currency of Information

7. If the period from the last on-site assessment visit to the receipt of the Public Comment Draft Report by the MSC exceeds 9 months the certification body shall:
 - 7.1. Within 5 days notify the MSC and the client in writing of the intention to review new information available since the initial assessment visits, information collection and scoring of the fishery.
 - 7.2. If, after a further 30 days following the notice of intent to review the fishery, the Public Comment Draft Report has not been posted on the MSC website, the certification body shall provide the MSC with a statement for publication on the MSC website requesting, for a period of 30 days, stakeholder submission of any new information relating to the fishery that the assessment team should consider in the assessment of the fishery. The certification body shall also directly notify stakeholders participating in the fishery assessment of the opportunity to submit new information relating to the fishery that the assessment team should consider in the assessment of the fishery.
 - 7.3. Following the 30 day period within which stakeholders have the opportunity to submit new information relevant to the assessment of the fishery, the assessment team shall review new information provided and review the outcomes of any scoring of the fishery previously undertaken. The review shall involve the full assessment team reviewing all new information submitted and assessing this information in accordance with all steps in Section 3.2 through to, and including, 3.7 of the FCM v6. The review and assessment may be limited to the re-scoring of those performance indicators previously scored for which there is new information.

Variations

8. Variations to the requirements defined in paragraph 6 of this TAB Directive will be permitted only in 'exceptional circumstances' and on a case-by-case basis only after the certification body has demonstrated to the MSC that the exception meets the intent of the scheme requirements in some equivalent way and that the requirements of the *MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing* are not undermined in any way. In requesting a variation from the MSC the certification body shall support their request with:
 - 8.1. The details of the "exceptional circumstances" preventing conformity with these requirements. "*Exceptional circumstances*" refers to situations in which even with perfect implementation, achieving the timescales may take longer than that mandated. For example, unexpected illness, prolonged consultation due to high levels of stakeholder engagement, extremely complex data analysis, *force majeure* etc.
 - 8.2. Specific details of how, in terms of time bound measurable outcomes, the fishery assessment will be completed, and if interim milestones are specified, the outcome that

shall be achieved at each milestone.

- 8.3. Granting of variations will be based on the criteria of; unavailability of the circumstances that lead to the delay, the severity of the delay and expedience of remedial action. Any approved variations to this methodology must be documented and retained by the certification body.

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