

*******ADVISORY*******

Independent Evaluation of US Pollock Fisheries in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska

Stakeholder Consultation Requested

A project is underway to independently evaluate U.S. Alaska Pollock fisheries to determine if they are eligible for certification as sustainable fisheries under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Standard. As part of the certification process, the MSC requires that the certification organization, Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), contact stakeholders (any interested or affected party) for comment during the evaluation process to ensure the broadest possible range of views on issues pertaining to the sustainable management of the fisheries.

SCS has determined that stakeholder comments will be solicited at several points during the evaluation process to ensure an open, transparent, and thorough process:

- Selection of an independent team of experts (completed)
- Draft Performance Indicators and Scoring Guidelines
- Evaluation of data/information regarding compliance with MSC standards.

SCS is now seeking comments from all interested parties as to the validity, rigor, and robustness of the draft set of "Performance Indicators" and "Scoring Guidelines" which are being proposed for use in the evaluation of the US Pollock fisheries.

"Performance Indicators"

The MSC Principles and Criteria constitute a broad set of objectives produced through consultation with an international group of fisheries experts, conservation organizations, fishers, and fishery managers. While the MSC Principles and Criteria represent broad objectives, to evaluate a fishery it is necessary to determine what specific steps have been taken to meet these broad objectives as well as how well fisheries have performed in meeting these steps. The "Performance Indicators" (PIs) drafted by the evaluation team are meant to serve as the description of the specific points that need to be taken into account by fisheries attempting to meet the MSC's broad objectives. Given the PIs will be the focus of the examinations by the evaluation team, the PIs also serve as a template by which the applicant fisheries will be asked to organize information for submission to the evaluation team showing the fisheries are in compliance with the MSC standard.

"Scoring Guidelines"

Once finalized, the PIs will be used to measure performance of the fishery management system(s). Under the MSC initiative, the evaluation team will measure performance for each

performance indicator. These values will then be used to determine the overall performance of the fishery management system under each MSC Principle. Each MSC Principle is evaluated independently, with the fishery having to pass each principle to qualify for certification.

The evaluation team will examine all information provided by the applicant fishery or fisheries, as well as all the information provided by stakeholders. After careful consideration of the information, the evaluation team through a team consensus will determine performance for each individual performance indicator using a set of "Scoring Guidelines". The "Scoring Guidelines" provided with the "Performance Indicators" give two reference points from which performance can be measured. A 100% guideline indicates what the evaluation team would consider the upper limit of performance. The 80% guideline indicates what the evaluation team would consider as adequate performance to qualify for certification.

SCS seeks comment on both the "Performance Indicators" and "Scoring Guidelines" at this time. The comment period for all submissions to the Evaluation Team will be four (4) weeks with a closing date of 15 November 2001.

It is the intent of SCS and the Evaluation Team that drafting these specific measures, as well as requesting comments on their content, will help increase the transparency of the process by providing all interested parties with the ability to understand and participate in the derivation of the specific measures that will be used in this evaluation process.

For those interested in providing comments, please contact Chet Chaffee at Scientific Certification Systems, Inc. by email, fax, or mail.

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Comments on the structure of the proposed "Performance Indicators".

Performance Indicators for Principles 1 and 2

The PIs developed for MSC Principles 1 and 2 are structured such that all the Subcriteria and Performance Indicators are directly associated with a single MSC Criteria within a Principle. There is no duplication of Performance Indicators among MSC Criteria or MSC Principles.

In instances where a single Performance Indicator could be used for more than one MSC Criteria or MSC Principle, the Evaluation Team chose to utilize the PI only once. For example, there was opportunity for substantial overlap and therefore duplication in Performance Indicators under the MSC Criteria for MSC Principle 1. The Evaluation Team noted this and built the Performance Indicators for MSC Criteria 1 first using a logical hierarchy based on the intent and structure of the MSC Criteria. In the development of Performance Indicators for MSC Criteria 2 and 3, the Evaluation Team only listed additional Performance Indicators that were of a distinct nature, avoiding the duplication of measures used under MSC Criteria 1.

Performance Indicators for Principle 3

The structure of the Subcriteria and Performance Indicators developed under MSC Principle 3 is somewhat different. Under MSC Principle 3, the Evaluation Team noted significant difficulty in developing a logical hierarchy of measures that remained unique to each MSC Criteria but also maintained a logical connection between indicators. Much of the difficulty stemmed from the fact that the 17 MSC Criteria under MSC Principle 3 vary in nature from general objectives to specific measures, but are not presented in a hierarchical framework from the very broad to the specific. Instead, the 17 MSC Criteria under MSC Principle 3 form a hodgepodge of factors with significant redundancy. As a result, the Evaluation Team felt it would be better to construct a logical hierarchy that incorporates all the requirements spelled out by the 17 MSC Criteria and note the relationship of each Performance Indicator to the various MSC Criteria, as many of the Performance Indicators proposed can be linked to a more than one MSC Criteria.

We note this difference for the reader due to the fact that the hierarchical structure of Performance Indicators under any given Principle can have a significant effect on the outcome of the scoring process. As a result, the Evaluation Team will be restructuring the hierarchy such that each MSC Criteria under Principle 3 has a set of Performance Indicators. In establishing this structure, the Evaluation Team will strive to avoid duplication to the extent possible.

Although the logical hierarchy developed by the Evaluation Team will not be the hierarchy used in the final scoring, it was developed for the "Draft Performance Indicators" to help the reader follow the thought processes of the Evaluation Team and therefore make it easier for stakeholders to comment on the thoroughness of the proposed measures. Once all comments are in and modification made, the Evaluation Team will also develop the final hierarchical structure of the PIs under each of the 17 MSC Criteria. This information will then be made available to stakeholders for further comment.

The information referred to above is in a Microsoft Excel file with the Draft Performance Indicators and Scoring Guidelines on Sheet 1. On Sheet 2 there is a table showing the correlations between the MSC Criteria for Principle 3 and the Evaluation Team's Performance Indicators. This has been included to aid the reader in understanding the link between the two.