



PUBLIC SUMMARY OF A MEETING OF THE MSC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

15-17 March 2021, Virtual Meeting

Attendance (alphabetical order)

Co-Chairs: Ms Stefanie Moreland, Ms Amanda Nickson

Members in attendance: Dr Johann Augustyn, Ms Heather Brayford, Mr Rory Crawford, Ms Yumie Kawashima (part), Mr Tor Larsen, Dr Ghislaine Llewellyn, Mr Ivan Lopez, Mr Marco Quesada, Ms Carmen Revenga, Ms María José Espinosa Romero

Apologies: Ms Agathe Grossmith, Ms Christine Penney

MSC Governance: Dr Werner Kiene (Chair of MSC Board of Trustees)

Observers: None

MSC Staff: Dr Rohan Currey (Chief Science and Standards Officer), Mr Nicolas Guichoux (Chief Program Officer), Mr Rupert Howes (Chief Executive), Mr Jay Lugar (Head of Fisheries Outreach), Dr Ernesto Jardim (Fisheries Standard Director), Ms Ishbel Matheson (Chief Communications Officer), Dr Emily McGregor (Senior Fisheries Program Review Manager), Ms Tanya van Niekerk (Governance Secretary), Dr Alene Wilton (Chief Operating Officer), Ms Nikki Wood (Head of Stakeholder Engagement)

The Council was also joined by a number of relevant MSC staff on a project-by-project basis.

This summary contributes to the transparency of MSC's governance. Readers should note that recommendations made by the MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council are reviewed by the MSC Board of Trustees and only those recommendations that are formally endorsed by the MSC Board of Trustees will result in changes to the program or MSC's work. The Board may not always immediately consider the Council's recommendations, especially in instances where more research or consultation is required. Project pages on [msc.org](https://www.msc.org) will be updated to reflect final decisions, including rationales.

A. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Co-Chairs, Ms Stefanie Moreland and Ms Amanda Nickson, welcomed Council members, the Chairman of the MSC, and MSC staff to the meeting.

In view of the ongoing challenges and widespread travel restrictions in place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Council meeting was again being held as a virtual meeting, focusing on time-critical topics where the Council's engagement and input to MSC's policy development and provision of advice to the MSC Board was required. The format of the meeting provided some limitations to discussion of the topics, with the Council's advice to the Board provided in that context.

B. STAC Working Group Updates

The Council held broad discussions on MSC work undertaken since the Council's last meeting in May 2020, including intersessional Council activities and forward planning of Council activities.

C. Fisheries Standard Review Overview

The Council was provided with **an overview of, and progress update for, the Fisheries Standard Review (FSR)** including the issues under review and the policy proposals identified to address these issues.

The FSR started in September 2018 and incorporated 16 topics (projects). Collectively these projects were expected to deliver revisions to the Standard to resolve issues and meet the objectives of the FSR. To provide more time for research and help to manage the burden on advisory bodies and on FSR project leads, the MSC Executive brought some projects to the Council meeting in late 2020 and options were approved by the MSC Board of Trustees in January 2021.

The Council's advice was now sought on the **proposed policy options for four FSR projects**, including where possible, which policy options to take forward for each project. The FSR was now at the 'policy options phase', when the MSC Executive proposed a set of potential policy options to resolve the issues identified for each project. Public consultation on several topics for discussion at this Council meeting and MSC's Technical Advisory Board meeting were completed in 2020, and each policy option had been through an impact assessment process. Further consultation and impact assessment would be completed in 2021 and 2022.

The Council welcomed the opportunity to provide advice to the MSC Board on the MSC Executive's policy options and discuss stakeholder perspectives, and to provide advice on how the Council would like to engage in planning the consultation and communication activities for all FSR topics in 2021.

D. Clarifying best practice for reducing impacts on endangered, threatened and protected species

The Council explored the proposed policy options to **address concerns associated with endangered, threatened and protected species (ETP) in the Fisheries Standard**. The topics addressed issues associated with the designation of ETP species in an assessment and the scoring and definitions in the ETP component. The Council welcomed the opportunity to discuss the policy options and recognised the level of work undertaken to progress this far. The Council discussed the importance of a comprehensive and well understood package of recommendations for ETP.

E. Reviewing Principle 1 with a focus on harvest strategies

The Council had provided its views and advice on the proposed policy options that addressed six topics for improving consistency and reducing redundancy within Principle 1 of the Fisheries Standard at its December 2020 meeting. Due to the complexity of the scope of this project, it was split into two components. The first component aimed to clarify existing requirements for the assessment of harvest strategies under Principle 1 to ensure all fisheries are scored consistently. The policy options for this component were approved by the MSC Board in January 2021. The second component was introduced in May 2020 and was framed around the **adoption of stock-wide harvest strategies and harvest control rules for shared and highly migratory stocks**. Following the late 2020 Council meeting and Technical Advisory Board meeting, and discussion by the MSC Board in January 2021, the MSC Board required the MSC Executive to **clarify the harvest strategies problem statement further**.

The Council welcomed the opportunity to provide its views and advice to the MSC Board on the proposed problem statement. The MSC Executive would continue its development work on the potential solution(s) for the adoption of stock-wide harvest strategies and harvest control rules) for shared and highly migratory stocks within the framework of Principle 1 FSR project.

F. Principle 3 Evidence Requirements

The Council provided its views and advice on a **proposed design for an evidence requirements framework that would guide assessors' judgement of information adequacy**. The framework involved three steps: risk assessment, evaluation of information quality and information thresholds. Its introduction to the assessment process was expected to incentivise better data collection and provision for fishery assessments and promote transparent and consistent scoring. A methodology for setting information thresholds was presented.

The Council welcomed this presentation and body of work and was supportive of the work done to date to address this issue. The Council noted the interaction of the P3 Evidence Requirements project with several FSR projects and would be kept abreast of this work as it developed.

G. Fisheries Certification Process and Harmonisation

The Council welcomed the **update on the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP)**, which included an **update on the conditions review** (the nature, intent and roles of conditions) and an update on FCP review projects, including the **harmonisation project** (the process by which consistent outcomes are achieved across assessments of overlapping Units of Assessment).

The Council welcomed the update, and in particular the opportunity to consider the policy options for improving harmonisation activities.

H. Making the MSC Fisheries Standard more efficient (standard efficiency)

The Council welcomed the opportunity to provide its advice and views on proposed policy options to address issues associated with three topics in the **standard efficiency project, which was focused on making the standard more streamlined, increasing efficiency and reducing complexity**: clarifying language and reducing duplication; more tightly defining measures, partial strategy and strategy; and simplifying grouping of P2 elements; and noted that impact testing was underway in each of the three topic areas.

I. Meeting Close

The Council would present its range of views on the FSR and FCP topics it had considered to the MSC Board in March 2021 to inform the latter's decision making.

At the MSC's Council and Technical Advisory Board meetings to be held in December 2021, the MSC Executive will present the proposed draft Standard prior to Final Review consultation in 2022. The Technical Advisory Board will be asked to endorse the draft Standard for consultation in December 2021, as per MSC Standard Setting Procedure clause 7.2, and the Council will be asked to provide recommendation to the MSC Board on the suitability of the draft Standard for consultation.

Closing remarks were shared.

ENDS