



PUBLIC SUMMARY OF A MEETING OF THE MSC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

18-20 May 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), Ms Agathe Grossmith (part) Mr Tor Larsen, Dr Ghislaine Llewellyn, Mr Ivan Lopez, Ms Christine Penney (part), Mr Marco Quesada (part), Ms Carmen Revenga, Ms María José Espinosa Romero

Apologies: Ms Christine Penney (Day 1), Ms Agathe Grossmith (Day 1), Mr Marco Quesada (Day 1)

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

Observers: None

MSC Staff: Dr Rohan Currey (Chief Science and Standards Officer), Mr Rupert Howes (Chief Executive), Mr Jay Lugar (Head of Fisheries Outreach), Dr Ernesto Jardim (Fisheries Standard Director), 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 will be updated to reflect final decisions, including rationales.

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 important topics where the Council's engagement and input to MSC's policy development and provision of advice to the MSC Board was required.

Technical Advisory Board Climate Change Working Group

The Council considered the **proposed establishment of a MSC Technical Advisory Board (TAB) Climate Change Working Group**. Climate change was a high-profile issue with broad implications for the MSC and its partners. It was a new area of interest for MSC and a complex matter that was still actively researched and for which solutions and mitigation options were still unclear. MSC required expert technical advice in setting up an effective research strategy. Accordingly, the MSC Executive

proposed the TAB establish a Climate Change Working Group to advise the MSC Board and the MSC Executive on climate change research and its application for standard development.

The Council welcomed the formation of this Working Group and supported Council member(s) serving on Group.

Fisheries Standard Review Working Groups Update

The Council held broad discussions on MSC work undertaken since the Council's last meeting in March 2021, including intersessional Council activities and forward planning of Council activities.

The work of the Council's **Consultation and Engagement Working Group** had included reviewing consultation materials for Fisheries Standard Review (FSR) projects on Harvest Strategies, Ghost Gear and Preventing Shark Finning in the MSC program. The Group would also review consultation materials for the Endangered Threatened & Protected (ETP) species project, the Habitats Project, and the Evidence Requirements Project.

The Council's **Principle 2 Working Group** had participated in an intensive period of intersessional work in April 2021 to agree the ETP designation options for consultation, exploring options against a selection of three impact types: effectiveness, feasibility, and accessibility and retention.

The Council received an update on the TAB **Harvest Strategies Working Group**, which had considered the Harvest Strategies conditions pathway proposal and consultation plan.

Assurance

The Council received a progress update on the **MSC Assurance Review**, which was endorsed by the TAB in 2018. The Assurance Review had included both fishery assessment-specific topics and ones relating to the wider assurance system. Activities already completed included research, public consultation, targeted workshops, revision of website content and release of improvements in the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v2.2.

The Council welcomed the update and noted the progress made on the priority work areas through 2019-2020; and how the Assurance Review had contributed to the strategy on assurance over the past two years, including accreditation and relevant policy development by the MSC Fisheries and Supply Chain teams. The Council noted the **closure of the "review" phase of the MSC's assurance work** and the **planned continuing work on assurance**, with a focus on the **MSC Dispute Process revision**, as endorsed by the MSC Board at its meeting in January 2021.

The MSC had worked closely with the Council's Assurance Working Group over the past year to review the disputes processes in place for the assessment process of fisheries. This had culminated in a recommendation to revise the **MSC Dispute Process**, which included the MSC Objection Procedure.

The Council discussed the proposed plan and timeline for the potential revision to the current Disputes Process and supported the draft Disputes Process moving to a testing phase, with **targeted consultation** to be undertaken with parties previously involved in disputes to understand fully the impacts and potential improvement to their experience.

Both the MSC Board and the Council agreed that reducing ambiguity in the Standard was fundamental to reducing the number of disputes and therefore any changes to the Disputes Process should be undertaken alongside equivalent **efforts to reduce ambiguity in the Standard and**

associated guidance.

MSC Labour Policy

With continued concern about **labour abuses in the seafood sector** and a growing move within the sustainable seafood community to **include worker welfare explicitly within the definition of sustainable seafood**, MSC was reviewing and exploring the next direction for the MSC on labour issues within the MSC program. At the same time there was a recognition of the complexities, cost and capability constraints associated with providing assurance for labour issues, including a complexity that was compounded by the differences between issues of a social nature and those of a fishery sustainability or a traceability nature. Navigating these contending factors would require innovative solutions, which in turn required a dedicated review process that was specific to labour.

The Council undertook a broad discussion about the proposed framework for **MSC's future work on labour policy**, providing its views and advice on the elements proposed for framing MSC's next steps on labour specifically with respect to: MSC labour policy development; MSC position on labour; and mechanisms to support MSC position on labour; and make recommendations to the MSC Board on MSC's future work on labour.

As part of its deliberations the Council discussed the need for **clear public communication** from MSC around timelines and the scope of work on labour, particularly for retail stakeholders who were receiving many requests to respond on these topics.

The Council's Labour Working Group would continue to support this important area of work going forward.

I. Meeting Close

The Council welcomed the presentation of important non-FSR policy topics.

Closing remarks were shared.

ENDS