



39th Meeting of the Marine Stewardship Council's Technical Advisory Board

Public Summary

Meeting Date: 16-18 May 2023

London

This summary contributes to the transparency of MSC's governance. Readers should note that recommendations made by the MSC Technical Advisory Board (TAB) are reviewed by the MSC Executive and only those recommendations that are formally endorsed by the MSC Board of Trustees and Executive will result in changes to the program. The MSC Executive may not always immediately consider the TAB'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.

The TAB meeting was attended by [members of the TAB](#). Apologies were received from TAB Members: Mr Adam Swan (day 3).

Dr Werner Kiene (MSC Chair) attended on behalf of the MSC Board of Trustees.

Overview of MSC's Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030

The TAB received an **update on MSC's Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030**.

The MSC has a vital role to play in safeguarding seafood resources through its certification and ecolabelling program for sustainable seafood. The Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030 comes at a crossroads in MSC's 25-year organisational history. According to the 2020 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assessment, over a third of global commercial fish stocks are now fished beyond their limit and are considered overexploited, and the issue of overfishing continues to worsen. MSC has a critical contribution to make in addressing overfishing, and the Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030 sets out MSC's ambitions and goals to achieve its vision of seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

The TAB will continue to work in close collaboration with the MSC Executive to provide advice to the MSC Board on important projects and areas of work aligned with the MSC's Strategic Plan.

Fisheries Standard v3.0 Roll Out

The TAB received a **general overview and update** on the **roll out of the new MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0**.

The TAB noted the briefing and engagement activities being undertaken to roll out the new Standard, some of which had been completed, and some still forthcoming. Training on the new Standard and other associated scheme documents was being undertaken and had been well-received externally as it provided a plain English description of the Standard.

The TAB **welcomed the update** on the roll out of the Fisheries Standard v3.0 and the activities underway and planned to communicate the new Standard.

The TAB also **welcomed the update** on the work MSC was doing proactively to **train and expand the pool of fisheries auditors** available to Conformity Assessment Bodies by creating more

opportunities for early career scientists or consultants to be trained and become qualified for MSC assessments.

In-Transition to the MSC Program

The TAB received a **general overview and update** on the MSC's In-Transition to the MSC Program (ITM). The ITM program is an important step for fisheries that are improving and still need time to reach a level of ecological performance that would allow them to enter into formal assessment, ensuring both their continued engagement with MSC and that verified progress is made towards the certification. Critically, ITM fisheries are more likely to drive credible and time bound improvements in the water and hence contribute to the delivery of MSC's vision of healthy and productive oceans.

The ITM program therefore provides a way of independently verifying the progress of fisheries on their journey towards sustainability and possible MSC certification, through the involvement of CABs at different stages of verification during the Program. At the same time, MSC maintains the integrity and the relevance of its certification program, by not allowing products coming from ITM fisheries to carry the MSC ecolabel.

The MSC has already **increased the accessibility of ITM**, with all fisheries welcome, regardless of size or location, with the only criteria being that the fishery seeks to achieve MSC certification within five years. The MSC has also worked to smooth the process towards **certification for ITM fisheries**, by improving the templates and processes.

The TAB noted that the ITM program was in a pilot phase until the end of 2024, and the MSC may announce further changes and improvements as the work progressed.

The TAB **welcomed the update** on the MSC's In-Transition to the MSC Program.

MSC's Research Strategy

The TAB received a general overview and update on the MSC's research strategy work.

The MSC's Research team, a part of the Science and Standards department, addresses a wide range of research questions and applies diverse analytic methods better to understand the **MSC's impact on fish stocks, fisheries, and stakeholders**. The Research team's overarching goal is to produce publications, analyses, and tools that can strengthen MSC's credibility and impact.

Research and science are fundamental to the work of the MSC, and our **science and research collaborations** help to ensure our Standard development reflects the latest scientific understanding.

The TAB **welcomed the update** on the MSC's research strategy, including current and proposed activities over the next three years.

Meeting Close

The TAB thanked the MSC Executive for its informative updates on the aforementioned topics.