



36th Meeting of the Marine Stewardship Council's Technical Advisory Board

Public Summary

Meeting Dates: November 29th & 30th & December 2nd, 2021

Virtual meeting

This summary contributes to the transparency of MSC's governance. Readers should note that recommendations made by the MSC Technical Advisory Board 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. The Board 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.

In view of the ongoing challenges and widespread travel restrictions in place due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the MSC's Technical Advisory Board (TAB) convened for its 36th meeting as a virtual meeting, focusing on consideration of the consolidated draft Fisheries Standard and guidance and the draft Fisheries Certification Process and guidance.

The TAB meeting was attended by [all members of the TAB](#). Mr Adam Swan gave his apologies for days 1 & 2 of the meeting, Ms Lucia Massaroth gave her apologies for day 2 of the meeting, Dr Victor Restrepo gave his apologies for day 3 of the meeting.

The following observers were present for part of meeting: Ms Gabrielle Anhalzer (SCS Global Services), Ms Wendy Banta (Aquaculture Stewardship Council), Dr Antonio Hervas (Accreditation Services International), Dr Andrew Hough (assessor/consultant), Ms Charlotte Todd (Control Union), Mr Hugh Jones (Control Union).

Ms Amanda Nickson and Ms Stephanie Moreland represented the MSC's Stakeholder Advisory Council (STAC) and Dr Werner Kiene (MSC Chair) attended on behalf of the MSC Board of Trustees. Dr Kevin Stokes (MSC Board Member) also attended for part of the meeting. External observers were not present for internal governance discussions and Executive updates and were asked to leave where potential for conflict of interest was identified.

Introductory items

During the session the TAB received an overview of intersessional TAB and TAB working group activities.

Consolidated Draft Fisheries Standard and Guidance

The TAB was provided with the **consolidated draft Fisheries Standard and Guidance**.

The [Fisheries Standard Review](#) (FSR) started in September 2018 and incorporated 16 topics (projects). Collectively these projects are expected to deliver **revisions to the Standard** to resolve issues and meet the objectives of the FSR.

The TAB reflected on the **review process** so far. The MSC Executive had followed a comprehensive policy development process over the last three years (since the FSR review began in 2018), to bring together stakeholders' and partners' expectations; incorporate new science and widely-adopted fisheries management best practices; and work on simplification and clarifications to deal with accessibility concerns. This work had led to production of the first consolidated draft of a revised

Standard and marked an **important milestone for the review**. The **FSR projects had been developed in parallel**, and MSC had analysed the cumulative impacts of the revised Standard, with the process designed so that MSC could, as much as was possible, integrate the evaluation of impact across the different projects. Some further testing and further refinement were needed, indicated by square bracketed text in the scheme documentation, which would be addressed through the remainder of the FSR and Fisheries Certification Process Review.

The TAB considered the challenges of the last 18+ months in undertaking this work during the COVID pandemic. This had brought benefits, with remote engagement having allowed MSC to reach a much broader audience - over 400 people from around the world had attended online consultations. The additional time taken to conduct the FSR had also allowed MSC to be more deliberate about its approach. However, the TAB recognised that it had been more challenging to resolve complex issues without in-person gatherings. The TAB reflected on the importance of ensuring MSC did not lose the benefits of the digital component of future consultations, adopting a **dual approach to future consultation and engagement** encompassing both online engagement and the reinstatement of more direct methods of engagement.

The TAB explored the MSC Executive's **proposed policy options to resolve the issues under review in the FSR**. The supporting documentations provided to the TAB included an overview of the FSR; an update on the respective FSR projects in the form of project summaries; impact assessment reports, consultations reports and consultancies reports; and the consolidated draft Standard and Guidance.

The TAB acknowledged the extent and quality of the work by the MSC Executive in producing the consolidated draft Fisheries Standard and welcomed the opportunity to provide advice to the MSC Board.

The TAB supported the **recommendation to the MSC Board of Trustees that the consolidated draft version of the Fisheries Standard and Guidance proceed to public review in 2022**.

Consolidate draft Fisheries Certification Process and Guidance

The TAB was provided with the consolidated draft **Fisheries Certification Process and Guidance**.

The [Fisheries Certification Process \(FCP\) Review](#) commenced in 2020 and the objective of this program of work was to clarify MSC's intent and improve understanding and implementation of existing requirements and processes. The **scope of the FCP revision** was to incorporate changes resulting from the FSR; changes resulting from the FCP harmonisation project; and changes that would clarify and improve existing requirements and processes.

The TAB welcomed the opportunity to provide advice to the MSC Board of Trustees on the suitability of the consolidated draft FCP and Guidance to proceed for public review in 2022. This public review phase would provide a further opportunity for refinement of requirements and guidance prior to these documents being finalised and tabled for final TAB and Stakeholder Advisory Council (STAC) review ahead of final MSC Board signoff being sought in mid-2022.

The TAB supported the **recommendation to the MSC Board of Trustees that the draft version of the Fisheries Certification Process and Guidance proceed to public review in 2022**.

Chain of Custody Standard Review – Terms of Reference

The Council considered **draft Terms of Reference for the Chain of Custody Standard Review**.

The Chain of Custody Standard Review was one element of a broader strategic program review being undertaken by the MSC. Interdependencies between the Chain of Custody Standard Review and existing elements of the MSC and Aquaculture Stewardship Council programs were also being considered.

The TAB supported the **recommendation to the MSC Board of Trustees that the Chain of Custody Standard Review Terms of Reference is approved.**

What happens next?

The TAB will next meet in May 2022. The TAB will review work progressed following MSC Board decisions in respect of the Fisheries Standard Review and Fisheries Certification Process.