

43rd Meeting of the Marine Stewardship Council's Technical Advisory Board

Public Summary

Meeting Date: 21 – 22 May 2025

London

The TAB meeting was attended by [members of the TAB](#). Apologies were received from TAB Members Ms Celeste Leroux, Ms Michèle Stark and Mr Adam Swan

Mr Giles Bolton (MSC Board Chair) attended on behalf of the MSC Board of Trustees

Ms Heather Brayford (Stakeholder Advisory Council Chair) observed day 1 of the meeting

Dr Stephanie Good (ASI Program Technical Manager), and Mr Tristan Southall (Consultant), observed parts of day 1 of the meeting

The following MSC staff attended - Mr Nicolas Guichoux (Chief Program Officer) (part), Mr Rupert Howes (Chief Executive Officer) (part), Mr Jay Lugar (Head of Fisheries Outreach), Ms Ishbel Matheson (Chief Communications Officer) (part), Ms Amanda Stern-Pirlot (Chief Standards Officer), Ms Tanya van Niekerk (Governance Secretary), Dr Alene Wilton (Chief Operating Officer)

The TAB 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 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.

Fisheries Standard v3.0 Implementation

The TAB was updated on the MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 Implementation project, with a focus on progress of the review of the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).

The [Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#) is a normative document containing tools that support the application of the Fisheries Standard. Included in these tools are the Evidence Requirements Framework (ERF), a tool that supports consideration of information quality, and the Risk Based Framework (RBF), a tool that allows assessments of data-limited fisheries.

Changes to the Toolbox have been considered in two distinct phases: i) amending the MSC's requirements in Version 3 of the Fisheries Standard to clarify technical issues, and ii) a wider review, including the MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox Version 1.1. which reconsiders both the ERF and the RBF.

The TAB, which has a member on the external Expert Review Panel addressing the Toolbox, welcomed the update on the review of the Fisheries Standard Toolbox and the opportunity to provide technical feedback and advice on the proposed revisions to the Toolbox.

The TAB supported the proposed revisions to the Toolbox, and was pleased to hear that there had been good engagement with some stakeholders and Conformity Assessment Bodies about the proposed revisions to the ERF.

The TAB supported the next phase of the work, which would be to go to public consultation in July 2025 to seek wider external stakeholder views.

MSC Chain of Custody Standard Review

The TAB was updated on the **progress of the MSC Chain of Custody Standard Review**, with a focus on the component of the Review looking at the restructure the Chain of Custody Standard, which involved developing a proposal to merge the three certificate holder variants – Default, Group and Consumer-Facing Organisation – into a single document and restructuring its five principles, with the aim of enhancing the Standard's accessibility and clarity by reducing repetition and eliminating inconsistencies across shared requirements. The relevant information that is specific to each variant of the certificate would remain in the document.

The TAB also received an update on the related Fraud Protection Project, which involved research to identify options that would enable the MSC, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council, and Chain of Custody certificate holders to protect themselves from food fraud.

The TAB welcomed the update on the progress of the Chain of Custody Standard Review and the opportunity to provide technical feedback on the proposed restructured and redesigned Chain of Custody Standard.

The TAB supported the proposed revisions to the Standard, highlighting the importance of ensuring clear language within the Chain of Custody Standard and streamlining the corresponding guidance.

MSC Traceability Enhancement Program

The TAB received a general update on the MSC's **Traceability Enhancement Program (TEP)**, which sought to strengthen traceability requirements and digitise data collection throughout the MSC Program and to use this enhanced traceability to further reinforce the integrity of the MSC ecolabel.

The TAB welcomed the update on the progress of this work and noted that the next phase of the project, from January 2025 to January 2026, would see MSC engaging with a wider external audience, including MSC certificate holders, their (technology) solution providers, and Conformity Assessment Bodies to further refine the TEP digital verification tool, define the associated policy requirements and answer questions around auditability.

Climate Change

The TAB received a general overview and update on research that MSC had carried out to identify fisheries and regions where predicted climate impacts threaten their ability to meet MSC benchmarks for sustainable management.

To achieve this, the MSC carried out the **Assessment of Risks posed by Climate Change project (the ARC project)** study which evaluated vulnerability to climate change in fisheries currently certified to the MSC Fisheries Standard, fisheries working towards certification and those that had been

suspended from the MSC program. This included over 500 fisheries, representing approximately 19% of global wild catch.

The TAB welcomed the opportunity to consider and discuss the findings of the ARC project study, the results of which will be published in early 2026, and some of the challenges and opportunities of supporting fishery and supply chain partners in facing the effects of climate change.

Meeting Close

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