# Introduction to the MSC Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template

Many fisheries are making the improvements necessary to move towards sustainability with the goal of achieving MSC Certification. These efforts, often termed Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), use different approaches to identify actions that need to be taken to improve the fishery. One of the most common ways of documenting and reporting the progress that is being made over time against such actions is by developing ‘Work Plans’ or ‘Improvement Action Plans’. Most of FIPs involve multiple stakeholders and therefore a consistent method of documenting actions and progress is vital to ensure that the Action Plan delivers a level of performance consistent with meeting the MSC Fisheries Standard. The Improvement Action Plan should capture and report all necessary information in a practical way that is easily understood by all those involved or interested in the FIP.

The **purpose of this template** is to ensure quality and consistency in developing improvement action plans for fisheries working towards meeting the MSC Fisheries Standard and achieving MSC Certification. It can help to provide the information needed to use the [MSC’s Benchmarking and Tracking Tool (BMT).](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/fishery-improvement-tools/msc-benchmarking-and-tracking-tool-(bmt)-v3-0.xlsx?)

The template is designed to be used by any fisheries engaged in a credible fisheries improvement project, but in particular fisheries in the [In-Transition to MSC (ITM) Program](https://www.msc.org/for-business/fisheries/developing-world-and-small-scale-fisheries/fips)and in partial fulfilment of the [ITM Program Requirements and Guidance - Pilot](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/fishery-improvement-tools/itm_program_requirements_and_guidance_pilot.pdf?). It should be used together with the [ITM Progress Verification Reporting Template](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/chain-of-custody-supporting-documents/msc-itm-progress-verification-reporting-template-v1-1.docx?sfvrsn=f2963519_6) and the BMT. The Action Plan should be developed after the fishery has undergone an MSC pre-assessment using the current version of the [MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/chain-of-custody-supporting-documents/msc-pre-assessment-reporting-template-v3-2.docx?sfvrsn=6ca42362_4). The pre-assessment should be ideally conducted by an accredited Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) for it to meet the ITM eligibility requirements.

For any queries relating to this template or its use please visit msc.org or contact us at: [globalaccessibility@msc.org](mailto:globalaccessibility@msc.org)

* The Improvement Action Plan report should document all actions at least at a Performance Indicator (PI) level for all PIs that have a draft scoring range <80.
* Please rename the document to something meaningful so that the file name includes the fishery name and any other relevant information e.g., improvement-action-plan-report-Country-Species-Gear-Draft/Final-Date.

# Improvement Action Plan overview

## Table 1a. Action Plan Overview

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fishery name (or Unit/s of Assessment): |  | Fishery location: |  |
| Fishing method/gear: |  | Fishery in ITM program? (Applicant/Yes/No): |  |
| Start date (expected): | | End date (anticipated month/year of entering Full Assessment): | |
|  | |  | |
| **Project leaders** (organisation/individual responsible for Action Plan)**:** | | **Action plan and improvements recommended by** (stakeholder groups, organisations, or meetings that supported the development)**:** | |
|  | |  | |
| FIP Coordinator/ ITM Project Manager (name, affiliation, and position if applicable): | | Action Plan developed by (entity, consultant, or person): | |
|  | |  | |
| Date when this Action Plan was created: | | Date/s of updated versions of this Action Plan: | |
|  | |  | |
| Summary of the Action Plan (Add/delete as appropriate): | | | |
| Principle 1  Principle 2  Principle 3  Chain of Custody/Traceability | | | |
| References (document/s on which the Action Plan was based): | | | |
| Pre-Assessment Report – add, as necessary.  BMT  Document 1  Document 2 | | | |

## Table 1b. Action Plan Overview by Performance Indicator

| Performance Indicator (PI) | Action ID and Name | Timescale |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1.1 Stock status | A1 - Name  A2 - Name  A3 - Name | 1 year  6 months  1 year |
| 1.1.2 Stock rebuilding |  |  |
| 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy |  |  |
| 1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools |  |  |
| 1.2.3 Information and monitoring |  |  |
| 1.2.4 Assessment of stock status |  |  |
| 2.1.1 Primary species outcome |  |  |
| 2.1.2 Primary species management |  |  |
| 2.1.3 Primary species Information & monitoring |  |  |
| 2.2.1 Secondary species outcome |  |  |
| 2.2.2 Secondary species management |  |  |
| 2.2.3. Secondary species Information & monitoring |  |  |
| 2.3.1 ETP species Outcome |  |  |
| 2.3.2 ETP species management |  |  |
| 2.3.3 ETP Species Information & monitoring |  |  |
| 2.4.1 Habitats Outcome |  |  |
| 2.4.2 Habitat management strategy |  |  |
| 2.4.3 Habitat information |  |  |
| 2.5.1 Ecosystem outcome |  |  |
| 2.5.2 Ecosystem management strategy |  |  |
| 2.5.3 Ecosystem information |  |  |
| 3.1.1 Legal and/or customary framework |  |  |
| 3.1.2 Consultation, roles & responsibilities |  |  |
| 3.1.3 Long-term objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.1 Fishery-specific objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.2 Decision-making processes |  |  |
| 3.2.3 Compliance & enforcement |  |  |
| 3.2.4 Monitoring and management performance evaluation |  |  |

# Actions at Performance Indicator and/or Scoring Issue level

## Table 2. Performance Indicator Action Plan table for Action xx [Replace with Action ID no]

[Complete a separate copy of Table 2 for each Action]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action ID no | [Insert action ID no. e.g. A1] | | | | | |
| Action name | [Insert action name] | | | | | |
| Action summary | [This should be a summary of the overall goal of achieving this Action and the Tasks that are listed below] | | | | | |
| Performance Indicator(s) and/or Scoring Issue(s) | [Insert relevant PI and SI number(s) and text that action is aiming to improve e.g., PI 1.1.1(a) Stock status relative to recruitment impairment ] | | | | | |
| Date of completion | [Insert date that the final task that makes up an action will be completed] | | | | | |
| Task/s No. | Responsible – Action lead | Responsible – Action partners | Resources – Cost | Resources - Time | Date of completion | Evidence of completion |
| [Insert a list of tasks that need to be undertaken to complete an action in order of priority. Add more rows as necessary]  e.g.  A1-1 | [Insert stakeholder(s) that are responsible for undertaking the specific task] |  | [Insert resources that are required to complete task, including total budget and items with cost breakdown and currency. This may be budget or resources in terms of people days – see next column] | [Time: XX days of staff time where applicable] | [Insert the date that the task will be completed] | [Insert the means of evidence or metrics used to determine whether or not Task has been completed] |
| A1-2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A1-3  Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Action timescales and progress report

## Table 3. Evaluation against Action Plan Timescale Year X

[Complete a separate table for each year after Year 1]

| Action ID and Name | Date of completion expected | Progress / outcome this year | Revised date of completion (if required) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Table 4a. Action plan score change table for Principle 1 Performance Indicators

[This should correspond with the Benchmarking and Tracking Tool]

| Performance Indicator | Draft Scoring Range  [Pre-Assessment]  Year 0 | Action(s) IDs  [If improvement is needed] | Expected PI draft scoring range changes  [The timeframes can be altered depending on the reporting needs of the FIP. The decision on what draft scoring range will be achieved in each year should be made based on the timeframes of the actions and the tasks in Tables 2 and 3. If there is more than one action that needs to be completed to reach the next draft scoring range, the date when the final action is due for completion should be entered here. This date can then be used to fill in the expected and actual draft scoring ranges in the MSC Benchmarking and Tracking Tool]. | | | | | Delete if not required | Delete if not required | Delete if not required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 |
| 1.1.1 Stock Status | [This should be the likely draft scoring range of the pre-assessment] | [These should link to the Actions in Table 2. An action may be linked to more than one PI] | **<**60 | 60-79 | >80 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.1.2 Stock rebuilding |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2.3 Information and monitoring |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2.4 Assessment of stock status |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Table 4b. Action plan score change table for Principle 2 Performance Indicators

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance Indicator | **Draft Scoring Range**  Year 0 | Action(s) IDs | Expected PI draft scoring range changes | | | | | Delete if not required | Delete if not required | Delete if not required |
| Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 | Year 7 | Year 8 |
| 2.1.1 Primary species outcome |  |  | **<**60 | 60-79 | >80 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.1.2 Primary species management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.1.3 Primary species Information & monitoring |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2.1 Secondary species outcome |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2.2 Secondary species management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2.3. Secondary species Information & monitoring |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3.1 ETP species Outcome |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3.2 ETP species management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3.3 ETP Species Information & monitoring |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4.1 Habitats Outcome |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4.2 Habitat management strategy |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4.3 Habitat information |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5.1 Ecosystem outcome |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5.2 Ecosystem management strategy |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5.3 Ecosystem information |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Table 4c. Action plan score change table for Principle 3 Performance Indicators

| **Performance Indicator** | **Draft Scoring Range**  **Year 0** | **Action(s) IDs** | Expected PI draft scoring range changes | | | | | Delete if not required | Delete if not required | Delete if not required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year 1** | **Year 2** | **Year 3** | **Year 4** | **Year 5** | **Year 6** | **Year 7** | **Year 8** |
| 3.1.1 Legal and/or customary framework |  |  | **<**60 | 60-79 | >80 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.1.2 Consultation, roles & responsibilities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.1.3 Long-term objectives |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2.1 Fishery-specific objectives |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2.2 Decision-making processes |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2.3 Compliance & enforcement |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2.4 Monitoring and management performance evaluation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Stakeholder Action Plans

|  |
| --- |
| * The use of Stakeholder Action Plans section is **Optional.** * The Improvement Action Plan report could include an individual action plan for each stakeholder that is responsible for delivery actions. The report may also include signed agreements from the stakeholders that have been assigned a responsibility for a particular action. |

## Table 5. Stakeholder responsibilities

[Complete a separate stakeholder responsibilities table for each stakeholder group]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stakeholder | [Insert stakeholder name and contact information here] |
| Actions for which responsible | [Insert the Action IDs for which the stakeholder is responsible] |
| Tasks | [Insert tasks for which the stakeholder is responsible] |
| Date of completion | [Insert date that the tasks should be completed by] |

## Appendix. Stakeholder agreement or commitment to undertake improvement actions

[Include any supporting documents such as signed agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in support of commitments made]

# Traceability Improvement Actions

|  |
| --- |
| * The use of the Traceability Improvements Action section is **Optional**. * During full assessment of a fishery, it is required to consider the tracking, tracing, and segregation systems within the fishery and how these systems will allow any products sold as MSC certified to be traced back to the Unit of Certification (UoC) once the fishery is certified. This includes a description of the factors that may lead to risks of non-certified seafood being mixed with certified seafood prior to entering Chain of Custody as set out in [Section 7.5.7](https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/fisheries-program-documents/msc-fisheries-certification-process-v2-2.pdf?#page=18) of the MSC Fisheries Certification Requirements. * Although there is no UoC defined during a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) it might still be useful to consider the presence of potential traceability risks within the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and what implications it might have for those fishers that are interested in becoming certified. * For each risk factor, it should be determined whether / to what degree the risk factor is relevant for the fishery and, if so, provide a description of the relevant actions that could be taken to mitigate the risks identified. Some risk factors may link to actions identified against specific parts of the Fisheries Standard (e.g., P3 – Effective Management). |

## Table 6. Traceability risks and improvements within the fishery

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Risk factor | Description | Improvement actions to mitigate the risk |
| **Do the vessels/fishery use gears that are not part of the UoA or intended UoC?** | Please state whether this occurs within the fishery (e.g., regularly, rarely, never).   * If it occurs, please describe whether this is on the same trip, on the same vessels, or during the same season. | Please describe what actions can be implemented to mitigate or address this potential traceability risk, including responsible parties, resource requirements, and timelines.   * If this is covered by relevant regulatory frameworks, you may link to the relevant Principle, Component or Performance Indicator in MSC Fisheries Standard. |
| **Will vessels in the UoA also fish outside the geographic area that is being assessed?** | Please state whether this occurs within the fishery (e.g., regularly, seasonally, never).   * If it occurs, please describe if this may occur on the same trip. |  |
| **Will the vessels/fishery ever handle catch or products derived from species that are not part of the UoA or will not form part of the intended UoC at the completion of the FIP. This can refer to activities that occur both at sea and on land, e.g.:**  **- Transport**  **- Storage**  **- Processing**  **- Landing**  **- Auction** |  |  |
| **Does transhipment occur within the fishery?** | Please state whether this occurs within the fishery (e.g., regularly, rarely, never).  If it occurs, please describe:   * If transhipment takes place at-sea, in port, or both. * If the transhipment vessel may handle product from outside the UoA. |  |
| **Are there any other risks of mixing or substitution between the catch made by the fishery or vessels within the UoA and other vessels outside of the UoA?** | Please state whether this occurs within the fishery. |  |

# Template information and copyright

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Template version control

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Template version control | | | |
| Version | Date of publication | Document name | Description of amendment |
| 1.0 | 07/10/2009 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-template.xlsx | * N/A – new document |
| 1.0 | 2013 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-overview-template.docx | * N/A – new document |
| 1.0 | 22/11/2013 | Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * N/A – new document |
| 2.0 | 30/09/2019 | ITM Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * Combination of v1.0 overview and reporting templates in single document, specifically for ITM |
| 2.1 | 23/07/2020 | MSC Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * Template updated to be applicable to all FIPs not just ITM. * Contact email changed from [standards@msc.org](mailto:standards@msc.org) to [globalaccessibilty@msc.org](mailto:globalaccessibilty@msc.org) * BMT hyperlink updated. * Introduction and Overview updated * Version tracker added. * Added additional scheme document table. |
| 2.2 | 25/02/2021 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-template-v2.2-2021.docx | * Some edits to Introduction and modified guidance below. * Added fields for Date of Action Plan creation and updates. * Moved version tracker and scheme document table to end of document. * Edit to note in Table 2 relating to PI 1.1.1(a) * Added example draft scoring ranges with coloured fill to tables 4a, b, c. * Other minor edits to stakeholder action plan section * Added Traceability action plan section. |

|  |
| --- |
| MSC Scheme and supporting documents applicable to, or referenced, in this template |
| MSC Benchmarking and Tracking Tool (BMT) v3.0 - (31 July 2019)  In-Transition to MSC (ITM) Program Requirements and Guidance – Pilot v1.0 (30 September 2019)  MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template v2.1 (9 October 2017)  MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting template v3.1 (29 March 2019)  MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting template v3.2 (25 March 2020)  MSC Guidance for using the Benchmarking and Tracking Tool (BMT) v2.0 (2014)  MSC Fisheries Certification Process v2.2 (25 March 2020) |