



The Ocean Stewardship Fund

Call for Proposals 2025

About the Marine Stewardship Council

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an international non-profit organisation. We want future generations to be able to enjoy seafood and oceans full of life, forever.

Our vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

Our mission is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.



Today, almost 20% of the wild marine fish catch –
that's 1 in 5 fish caught globally
– is engaged with the MSC Program. Engaged fisheries
are committed to continuous improvement.

About the Ocean Stewardship Fund

The MSC Ocean Stewardship Fund provides grants to support fisheries on their journey towards sustainability. MSC commits 5% of annual royalties from certified product sales to the Fund and combine these with third-party donations.

Since 2020, over
\$8.8 million
has been dedicated to almost 200 diverse
fisheries and projects worldwide.



We are launching several calls for proposals in September 2025. If you would like to participate, please note the criteria and requirements of each specific call before making your application.

Transition Assistance Fund Call for Proposals

What is the Transition Assistance Fund?

Eligible fisheries can use this Fund to support with the implementation of improvements identified in their Improvement Action Plan.

Who can apply?

This Fund is open to all fisheries that are verified as improving towards MSC certification in the MSC Improvement Program.

How much funding is available?

The maximum funding available is £50,000 over a period of up to 2 years. Funds can be used to cover a range of costs, including the services of an Improvement Program Manager, improvement actions, essential fixed assets, staff salaries and activities related to addressing traceability risks.

What are the eligibility criteria?

- Applications must be linked to a fishery or fisheries in the MSC's Improvement Program. At the time of application, fisheries must have undergone an independent verification demonstrating that they meet MSC's Improvement Program entry requirements and are in receipt of an "Adequate" progress verification if applicable.
- Fisheries are no longer eligible to apply once they enter MSC Full Assessment.
- Only one application is permitted per fishery. Fisheries targeting the same stock(s) must apply together if they have similar actions, and one organisation must have overall responsibility for managing the grant.
- Any previous Transition Assistance Fund grants must have ended by the time of application.
- Applications must support the implementation of one or more actions in the fishery Improvement Action Plan(s)
- The lead applicant must be the Improvement Program Manager for the fishery(ies) or an individual who works closely with the Improvement Program Manager.
- The lead organisation must also be the grant holder if the application is successful.

For more information on the MSC Improvement Program, please contact fisheries@msc.org

What are the assessment criteria?

All Transition Assistance Fund applications are assessed using quantitative appraisal criteria including:

- rationale for the selection of Improvement Actions for which funding is being sought
- expertise of project action leads and contributors
- risk of non-delivery
- degree of match funding, both internal (in kind) and external, already secured for implementation of the Improvement Action Plan
- project feasibility

Reviewers will consider the following as priorities for funding:

- The markets supplied by the applicant fishery
- Fisheries operating in developing economies
- Fisheries applying for their first Transition Assistance Fund grant

When is the Transition Assistance Fund open and when does it close?

Applications will open from 22 September 2025 and will close at 23:59 UTC on 1 December 2025.

How to apply:

Interested applicants must contact their local MSC representative to begin the application process.

[Find your local MSC fisheries representative](#)

For further information, please contact: OSF@msc.org

Transition Assistance Fund application timeline

1

1 December 2025 - Application deadline

Applications should be submitted through the online portal

2

Technical assessment and scoring

3

Senior Advisory Group review

Includes two expert external reviewers from MSC's Technical Advisory Board

4

Governing Committee review and approval

5

March 2026 - Successful applicants notified

To see examples of current Transition Assistance Fund projects, please click on the images below:



Science and Research Fund Calls for Proposals

What is the Science and Research Fund?

This Fund supports projects that help MSC certified fisheries develop and maintain best practice according to the MSC Fisheries Standard.

In September 2025, we are launching two separate calls for proposals under the Science and Research Fund within the following themes:

- At-Sea Monitoring
- Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules

This round is expected to be competitive. We strongly advise applicants to read the details and eligibility carefully.

Theme 1: At-Sea Monitoring

We are welcoming Expressions of Interest for proposals that support the accelerated implementation of at-sea monitoring methods and systems to fisheries in the MSC Program. In particular, we are looking for proposals involving a workshop or series of workshops that present a variety of at-sea monitoring solutions to fisheries, which will help them identify the solutions that would work best for their needs while also aligning with the MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01 and v3.1. Proposals must not promote or endorse any particular commercial proposition, product, or service provider.

Who can apply to this call?

Any organisation or organisations that have significant expertise in at-sea monitoring methods and sampling design and/or significant experience in delivering at-sea monitoring solutions within a wide variety of fisheries. Applicants must also have experience in training delivery or some form of stakeholder engagement/facilitation.

How much funding is available under Theme 1 (At-Sea Monitoring)?

The maximum funding available is £50,000 over a period of up to 12 months. Proposals for more funding may be considered if strong justification can be provided for the additional funding required.

What must Expressions of Interest include for Theme 1 (At-Sea Monitoring)?

Expressions of Interest must:

- be completed in English within the Template provided and be no more than 2 pages in length
- propose an outline of a workshop or series of workshops including:
 - proposed aims and learning objectives of the workshop(s)*
 - a proposed agenda for the workshop(s)
 - the types of fishery that would benefit (species, scales, geographies, modes of operation etc.)
 - expected outcomes after the workshop(s) and how the proposer will monitor impact

*Possible learning outcomes:

-describe what an at-sea monitoring programme is and why at-sea monitoring is necessary;
-understand what the MSC requirements for monitoring, surveillance and observer coverage are;
-compare and contrast various methods of at-sea monitoring, linking the most suitable method to specific types of fisheries;
-critically assess the at-sea monitoring method that could be used in your fishery (may be a hybrid of methods) to fulfil MSC's requirements

- propose a timeline only including activity that will transpire within 12 months from April 2026
- provide a high-level indication of the funding required, which must include provision for participants' travel, along with details of any match funding or in-kind support for the proposal
- aim to engage multiple MSC certified fisheries and potentially other fisheries as well (we will advise shortlisted applicants regarding which fisheries specifically would benefit from their proposal and applicants will be expected to use this information to develop a Full Proposal)
- encourage and facilitate collaboration between fisheries beyond the duration of the grant
- attach information on the Lead Organisation's legal status, structure (including details of Board members and management team) and financial stability (e.g. through the provision of audited accounts)

What are the assessment criteria for Theme 1 (At-Sea Monitoring)?

We are looking for Expressions of Interest that demonstrate:

- clear aims and learning objectives and ways on monitoring impact
- wide applicability for fisheries in the MSC Program
- how the project will create change and lead to improvements
- strong credentials in the area of at-sea monitoring

Proposals should enable fisheries to identify and pursue solutions that best fit their context. They must not promote or endorse any particular commercial proposition, product, or service provider.

How to apply:

The Expression of Interest Form can be found on MSC's website at [Science and Research Fund | Marine Stewardship Council](#). Expressions of Interest must be submitted to OSF@msc.org by 23:59 UTC on 10 November 2025.

Science and Research Fund Theme 1 application timeline



Theme 2: Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules

We are also welcoming proposals that deliver research in harvest strategies and/or harvest control rules which is essential for maintaining MSC certification. We are particularly interested in proposals that apply existing tools such as MERA (method evaluation and risk assessment).

Who can apply to this call?

This call is open to submissions from academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, independent researchers and MSC certified fisheries.

How much funding is available under Theme 2 (Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules)?

The maximum funding available is £50,000 over a period of up to 2 years. Funds can be used to cover a range of costs, including the services of a consultant, consumables, development costs, travel, meetings, essential fixed assets and staff salaries.

What are the eligibility criteria for Theme 2 (Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules)?

- Applications must be linked to an MSC certified fishery or fisheries
- Applications must deliver research essential for the participant fishery(ies) to close a condition or conditions of certification on Harvest Strategies and/or Harvest Control Rules
- Applications must produce a resource that MSC can disseminate and make available to other fisheries in the MSC Program as an example of good practice in harvest strategies/harvest control rules
- The lead organisation must submit only one application for funding and will be the grant holder if the application is successful
- The lead organisation must not have received a Science and Research Fund grant within the last three years of the application

What are the assessment criteria for Theme 2 (Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules)?

All Science and Research Fund applications are assessed using quantitative appraisal criteria including:

- clarity of project aims, outputs and outcomes
- research impact
- feasibility of research
- Principal Investigator credentials
- research team credentials

Reviewers will consider the following as priorities for funding:

- the strategic importance of the fishery(ies)
- potential to benefit multiple fisheries
- match funding, both in-kind and external, already secured
- communication potential
- involvement of local stakeholders

When do applications for Theme 2 (Harvest Strategies/Harvest Control Rules) open and when do they close?

Applications will open from 22 September 2025 and will close at 23:59 UTC on 1 December 2025.

How to apply:

Interested applicants must contact their local MSC representative to begin the application process.

[Find your local MSC fisheries representative](#)

For further information, please contact: OSF@msc.org

Science and Research Fund Theme 2 application timeline

1

1 December 2025 - Application deadline

Applications should be submitted through the online portal

2

Technical Assessment and scoring

3

Senior Advisory Group review

Includes two expert external reviewers from MSC's Technical Advisory Board

4

Governing Committee review and approval

5

March 2026 - Successful applicants notified

To see examples of current Science and Research Fund projects, please click on the images below:



Recertification Assistance Fund

What is the Recertification Assistance Fund?

This Fund supports MSC certified fisheries that have been in the MSC Program a long time by covering a proportion of their Conformity Assessment Body fees for their second or subsequent recertification assessment.

Who can apply?

Any eligible fishery client or client group or nominated representative of the fishery client/client group.

How much funding is available?

The maximum recertification funding is limited to the lower of:

- 75% of the cost of the Conformity Assessment Body's recertification assessment, or
- GBP 30,000

Any surveillance costs or fees relating to objections or consultancy work not directly involved with the reassessment should be excluded from the application.

What are the eligibility criteria?

- Applications must be linked to an MSC certified fishery
- The fishery must have achieved their second or subsequent recertification i.e. they must have been certified at least three times overall
- Only one application per fishery is permitted for each eligible recertification. The application must encompass all members of the fishery client group for all Units of Certification in the MSC certified fishery.
- The Public Certification Report relating to the last recertification must have been published within the last 12 months of the application
- The lead organisation must also be the grant holder if the application is successful and be responsible for apportioning the grant among members of the fishery client group

When is the Recertification Assistance Fund open and when does it close?

The Fund is always open for applications, but fisheries must apply within 12 months of the publication of their Public Certification Report. Applications are reviewed once a year after 15 October. Any applications received after this date will be reviewed in the following year's round of applications.

How to apply:

The application form and guidance can be accessed on the [Ocean Stewardship Fund Grants Portal](#)

For further information, please contact: OSF@msc.org