

MSC-MSCI Vocabulary



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MSC-MSCI Vocabulary – Normative

Purpose and scope

This vocabulary defines concepts, terms, phrases and abbreviations used by the MSC and MSCI.

Introduction

Where possible, definitions in this document are taken from or based on definitions taken from authoritative sources, including:

- The International Organization for Standardization (ISO).
- The glossary of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Department of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- ISEAL Alliance's Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards – Implementation Manual.
- The OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms.
- The International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Modifications have been made to these definitions where necessary to address the specific circumstances of the MSC requirements.

Vocabulary

Term	Definition
AAPG	Accreditation Audit Practice Group, a joint project of ISO and IAF.
AB	See: Accreditation body.
ABC	See: Allowable Biological Catch.
Accreditation	Third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body (CAB) conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks.
Accreditation body	An organisation that assesses whether or not CABs are competent to carry out conformity assessments against specified standards.
Achieving its objective	The measure or strategy is having the consequences that were expected when the measure or strategy was implemented. It is not necessary to have evidence that a long term goal or objective is being or has been achieved. It is necessary to have evidence that the measure or strategy is producing some results with regard to performance of the fishery, and the results are consistent with movement along an identified pathway towards a specific long term goal or objective.
Affiliate	Any direct or indirect holding company or subsidiary company of the relevant entity. A company is a "subsidiary" of another company, if the latter company: (a) holds a majority of the voting rights in it; or (b) is a member of it and has the right to appoint or remove a majority of its board of directors; or (c) is a member of it and controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders or members, a majority of the voting rights in it. "Company" includes any corporate or any legal entity capable under law of making a contract.
Allowable Biological Catch	A term used by a management agency which refers to the range of allowable catch for a species or species group. It is set each year by a scientific group created by the management agency. The agency then takes the ABC estimate and sets the annual total allowable catch (TAC).
Announcement Comment Draft Report	In FCP v2.1 onwards, this is the draft assessment report prepared by the assessment team and published when a fishery announces for stakeholder input.
Appeal	Request by a client for reconsideration of any adverse decision made by the CAB related to the client's desired certification status where a response is expected.
Applicant CAB	A CAB applying for MSC accreditation.
Approval (decision)	Confirmation that the CAB complies with the ASI approval requirements and MSC Requirements and can provide certification services within their scope of approval, provided that

Term	Definition
	the CAB also holds a valid Accreditation from a Participating AB as per the ASI Two-Tier Assurance Program.
Aquaculture	The farming of aquatic organisms: fish, molluscs, crustaceans, aquatic plants, crocodiles, alligators, turtles, and amphibians. Farming implies some form of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators, etc. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated. For statistical purposes, aquatic organisms which are harvested by an individual or corporate body which has owned them throughout their rearing period contribute to aquaculture.
Aquaculture operation	A (commercially managed) operation aimed at farming of aquatic organisms.
Aquaculture Stewardship Council	A certification and labelling programme for responsibly farmed aquatic organisms, which shares the MSC Chain of Custody Standard and Certification Requirements.
ASC	See: Aquaculture Stewardship Council.
ASC certified	A (commercially managed) operation aimed at farming of aquatic organisms or products resulting from this operation which has been found in compliance with the species specific ASC standard.
ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Standard	A document containing mandatory requirements for seaweed production or harvesting units seeking ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) certification. This standard can be found at www.asc-aqua.org/what-we-do/our-standards/seaweed-standard/ .
Assessment	A process that connects knowledge and action regarding a problem. Review and analysis of information derived from research for the purpose of informing the decision-making process. It may not require new research and involves assembling, organising, summarising, interpreting and reconciling existing knowledge, and communicating it to the policy-maker or other actors concerned by the problem. Assessment is used to refer to the initial certification and re-certifications of fisheries.
Assessment contract	A contract specifying the terms and obligations on all parties for an assessment.
Assessment methodology	The methodology followed by CABs when assessing conformity against standards.
Assessment team	2 or more assessors conducting a fishery assessment, supported if needed by technical experts. NOTE: 1 assessor of the assessment team is appointed as the assessment team leader.

Term	Definition
Assessment tree	The hierarchy of Principles, Components, Performance Indicators and Scoring Guideposts that is used as the basis for assessment of the fishery for conformity with the MSC Fisheries Standard. See: Default tree, Draft tree.
Assurance Provider (also 'MSC Appointed Assurance Provider')	Oversight body appointed by MSC to provide assurance services through the ASI Two-Tier Assurance Program.
Assurance Services	Any and all independent and impartial Assessment or other activities by the MSC Appointed Assurance Provider to ensure the scheme integrity.
Audit	Systematic, independent, and documented process for obtaining audit evidence (photos, records, statements of fact or other information which are relevant and verifiable) and evaluating the evidence objectively to determine the extent to which the audit criteria (a set of policies, procedures or requirements) are fulfilled by the client against the relevant standard. Refers to all audit activities carried out to assess conformity of fisheries and CoC clients against relevant MSC standards.
Audit findings	Results of the evaluation of the collected audit evidence against the standard or requirements against which the client is being audited. NOTE: Audit findings can indicate conformity or non-conformity with audit criteria or opportunities for improvement.
Audit plan or planning	The proposed activities and their timing, to be carried out by the CAB to determine the extent to which the standard criteria are fulfilled.
Audit scope	Extent and boundaries of an audit. NOTE: The audit scope generally includes a description of the physical locations, organisational units, activities and processes, as well as the time period covered.
Audit team	1 or more auditors conducting a CoC audit, supported if needed by technical experts. NOTE 1: 1 auditor of the audit team is appointed as the audit team leader. NOTE 2: The audit team may include auditors-in-training.
Auditor	Person with the competence to conduct an audit.
Biologically Based Limit	A benchmark against which status can be evaluated, and the benchmark is chosen to provide a high probability of persistence of the species over time. At a minimum this refers to the point of serious or irreversible harm.
Board of Trustees	The MSC's governing body.
Bycatch species	Organisms that have been taken incidentally and are not retained (usually because they have no commercial value). Component 2.2 in MSC Fisheries Standard v1.3.

Term	Definition
CAB	See: Conformity assessment body.
CAG	See: Catch and grow fisheries.
Cancellation of accreditation	Voluntary cancellation of an accreditation contract by any party to it according to the contractual arrangements.
Catch and grow fisheries	Production systems that involve wild harvest followed by a grow-out phase (e.g. mussel growing based on wild spat collection).
Central office	For Group or CFO CoC clients: the central office is the central managing function or entity responsible for managing the CoC certificate and ensuring all sites conform to the relevant CoC Standard.
Certificate	A formal document issued by a CAB or accreditation body as evidence that the party(ies) named on the certificate is in conformity with the standard(s) noted on the certificate for the scope given.
Certificate holder	An entity which holds a certificate issued by an MSC-accredited CAB.
Certificate sharing mechanism	The agreement between the client group and any other eligible fishers or other entities detailing the certificate cost sharing mechanism to be used and any other requirements needed to enable the other eligible fishers or entities to access a fishery certificate.
Certification	Procedure by which a third party gives written or equivalent assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.
Certification Process	See: Certification Requirements.
Certification Requirements	Mandatory requirements applicable to CABs for assessing applicants against the MSC Standards.
Certification scheme or program	Rules, procedures, and management for carrying out certification.
Certified	Whereby a certificate of conformity to an MSC Standard has been granted by an accredited/approved CAB.
Certified fishery	A fishery that has been granted a certificate of conformity to the MSC Fisheries Standard by an accredited/approved CAB.
Certified product	Fish or fish product that originate from a certified fishery or certified farm and are identified or labelled as certified.
Certifier	See: Conformity assessment body, CAB.
Chain of Custody	The procedures implemented by organisations purchasing or handling certified products in the supply chain. These procedures ensure conformity with the MSC Chain of Custody Standard and

Term	Definition
	provide assurance that throughout the supply chain, certified products are segregated from non-certified products and are traceable back to a certified source.
Child labour	Defined by the ILO as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, or work that interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
Client	The legal entity applying to the CAB for certification or that holds a valid MSC certificate.
Client group	Includes fishing operators within a Unit of Certification or other entities that the client identifies as being covered by and/or able to access the certificate. In cases where the client group does not fully control all fishing activity on a stock, the members should recognise that the achievement of any conditions placed on the fishery may be dependent on the actions of other parties, and thus outside their control (though some forms of influence may also be possible).
Client and Peer Review Draft Report	In FCP v2.1 onwards, this is the draft report of a fishery assessment that is provided to the client and the Peer Review College for review and comment.
CoC	See: Chain of Custody.
CoC audit checklist	The audit checklists developed by the MSC which CABs use to record evidence of conformity with the CoC Standard, available on the MSC website and scheme database.
CoC contact person	The person responsible for communicating with the CAB and ensuring that the organisation responds to any requests for information or documentation. In the MSC Chain of Custody: Group Version, the CoC contact person is referred to as the “CoC contact person/group manager”.
Competence	Demonstrated personal attributes and demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills.
Complainant	Person or organisation filing a complaint.
Complaint	Expression of dissatisfaction, other than appeal or objection, by any person or organisation, relating to the activities of an accreditation body, assurance provider, a CAB, a certificate holder, the Peer Review College, or the MSC, where a response is expected.
Component	The second level of 3 within the assessment tree structure.

Term	Definition
Condition	A requirement to achieve outcomes in order to achieve a score of 80 or above.
Conformity	Fulfilment of a need or expectation that is stated, generally implied, or obligatory.
Conformity Assessment Body	<p>Body that performs conformity assessment services and that can be the object of accreditation.</p> <p>NOTE: Whenever the word “CAB” is used in the text, it applies to both the “applicant and accredited CABs” unless otherwise specified.</p>
Consensus	<p>General agreement, characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments.</p> <p>NOTE: Consensus need not imply unanimity.</p>
Consequence Analysis	A tool within the RBF and a semi-quantitative analysis that assesses the consequence of fishing activity on a particular species subcomponent. The Consequence Analysis (CA) is partly based on the structured collection of qualitative information from a diverse group of stakeholders, as well as using information on proxies that can be used to estimate changes to the relevant subcomponent in a fishery.
Consequence Spatial Analysis	A tool within the RBF and a semi-quantitative approach to examine several consequence and spatial attributes to provide a relative measure of the Unit of Assessment’s risk to the habitat. Each habitat (scoring element) is assigned its own Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA) score.
Consumer-facing organisation (CFO)	<p>An organisation selling and/or serving seafood to the final consumer in a restaurant, catering, fish counter, or takeaway/takeout environment. Consumer-facing organisations may have a single site or multiple sites.</p> <p>NOTE: Particular eligibility criteria applies for organisations wishing to be certified against the CoC CFO Standard.</p>
Consumer-facing site	For CoC CFO clients: a discrete physical location that sells or serves certified seafood directly to a final consumer (such as a restaurant location or catering site).
Consumer ready tamper proof packaging	Any single item for presentation as such to the final consumer where the packaging cannot be removed, reused, opened, or resealed without altering the integrity of the product. This would include, for example, individual cans or freezer packs of seafood sold in a retail environment.
Contract processor	An organisation that is contracted by a certified organisation (including a subsidiary or affiliate of the certified organisation) wherein the product is altered in some way. Specifically: the processor does not own the product and the processor processes

Term	Definition
	<p>the product on instruction from the certified organisation (usually the owner of the product).</p> <p>This definition excludes contract processors that take ownership of the product, since they are required to have their own Chain of Custody certification.</p>
Correction	An action to eliminate a detected non-conformity.
Corrective action	Action to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation.
Criterion (Criteria)	A sub-division of an MSC Principle.
CSA	See: Consequence Spatial Analysis.
Culture-based fisheries	See: Hatch and catch fisheries.
Current CAB	The CAB to which an entity is currently contracted.
Current	The status of a program document that is in force and available for use.
Day	Calendar day, unless otherwise stated.
Decision-making entity	The individual or committee that makes a decision on whether or not to grant, suspend, withdraw, or change the certificate or scope of certification.
Default tree	The standard assessment tree used as a starting point to develop an assessment tree for each fishery assessment.
Designated agents	Other nominated organisations than the MSC, which may include representatives from other scheme owners for example the ASC, or from the MSC's assurance provider.
Destructive fishing practices	Fishing with poisons or fishing with explosives.
Determination	Recommended certification outcome.
Discrete high seas non-HMS	Species or stocks distributed exclusively in the high seas, i.e. in waters beyond the areas of national jurisdiction (which can be 200 miles or less) excluding species fixed on the continental shelf which remain under the sovereign rights of the coastal States, and which are not highly migratory species or stocks.
Draft tree	Proposed assessment tree; modified version of the default tree.
Ecolabel	A label that conforms to the principles described in ISO 14020:2000 Environmental labels and declarations -- General principles. The Type III Environmental Label trademarked by a certification scheme and licensed for use on products and to promote products certified by a certification body accredited/approved to the certification scheme.

Term	Definition
Ecological role	In the context of Principle 1, the trophic role of a stock within the ecosystem under assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard.
Ecosystem services	Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems. These include provisioning services such as food and water; regulating services such as flood and disease control; cultural services, such as spiritual and cultural benefits; and supporting services, such as nutrient cycling or waste degradation, that maintain the conditions for life on Earth.
Eligibility	Set of conditions that shall be fulfilled to enable qualification for a subsequent phase.
Eligibility date	The date from which product harvested from a fishery or farm under assessment may be eligible to be identified as under-assessment product, subject to specific requirements. For fisheries, the eligibility date is determined by the fishery assessment team and can be set on or between the publication date of the first Public Comment Draft Report and the certification date.
Enhanced fisheries	Any activity aimed at supplementing or sustaining the recruitment or improving the survival and growth of one or more aquatic organisms, or at raising the total production or the production of selected elements of the fishery beyond a level that is sustainable by natural processes. It may involve stocking, habitat modification, elimination of unwanted species, fertilisation or combinations of any of these practices.
Entity	See: Legal entity.
Estimated length of full assessment	The time between commencing an assessment and the predicted date by which an assessment is expected to be completed and certification awarded if the assessment result is positive.
Estimate	In the context of the information PIs, the term “estimate” means to form an opinion or judgement.
ETP	Endangered, Threatened or Protected species as defined with the fisheries standard.
External influences	A description of external influences (such as environmental issues) that may affect the fishery and its management.
FAD	See: Fish Aggregating Device.
Fish Aggregating Device	A permanent, semi-permanent or temporary object, structure or device of any material, man-made or natural, which is deployed, and/or tracked, and used to aggregate fish for subsequent capture. FADs can be either anchored (aFADs) or drifting (dFADs). (FAO. 2018. Report of the Technical Consultation on Marking of Fishing Gear. Rome, Italy, 5–9 February 2018. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Report No. 1236. Rome, FAO).

Term	Definition
	NOTE: For the purpose of MSC assessment, FADs are not considered a gear type because they do not capture fish, but merely facilitate subsequent capture.
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.
FAO Statistical Area(s)	FAO statistical area(s) – see FAO website (fao.org)
Final Draft Report	In FCP v2.1 onwards, this is the report of an assessment of a fishery prepared by the team and the CAB, after public comment, peer review and the determination of the CAB, and before the Public Certification Report. Includes scores, weightings and special conditions.
Final consumer	An individual who purchases or receives a certified product and consumes it directly but does not sell it onward to another party.
Final Report	In FCR v2.0, this is the report of an assessment of a fishery prepared by the team and the CAB, after public comment, peer review and the determination of the CAB, and before the Public Certification Report. Includes scores, weightings and special conditions.
Financial/ Fiscal year	12 months commencing 1 April.
Fins naturally attached	A policy that requires all retained sharks to be landed with their fins still attached to the carcass by prohibiting the removal of shark fins on board vessels as well as the prohibition of retaining onboard, transshipping or landing removed shark fins.
Fish and fish product	Whole fish or product that is, or is derived from, any aquatic organism.
Fishers	Individuals who take part in fishing conducted from a fishing vessel, a floating or fixed platform, or from shore. Does not include fish processors or traders.
Fishery	<p>FAO defines a fishery as a unit determined by an authority or other entity that is engaged in raising and/or harvesting fish. Typically, the unit is defined in terms of some or all of the following: people involved, species or type of fish, area of water or seabed, method of fishing, class of boats and purpose of the activities.</p> <p>The MSC requirements also use this term to refer to a Unit of Assessment (or a group of such UoAs) that is under assessment or certified against the MSC Fisheries Standard.</p> <p>In Principle 3, however, it is the management of the wider fleet which denotes the specific “fishery” that is the subject of assessment under the fishery-specific management system PIs (i.e. 3.2.1-3.2.4).</p>
Fishing gear	The tool with which living aquatic resources are captured. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Department, FAO, 2014 (www.fao.org/fishery/topic/1617/en).

Term	Definition
	NOTE: Distinct fishing gear types are differentiated based on the configuration of the gear, where the configuration refers to the physical arrangement. Fishing gear is not differentiated based on differences in how gear is set or deployed.
Fishing operators	Fishing vessels, or other catching units, included within the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification.
Fishing season	The seasonal operation of the fishery.
Fluctuation	Variability over time around the target reference point.
FNA	See: Fins Naturally Attached
Forced labour	All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily (International Labour Organisation Forced Labour Convention, 1930: Article 2 paragraph 1). This includes other unethical labour practices recognised under law as forced labour, including debt bondage, human trafficking and other forms of modern slavery.
Follow-up audit	An on-site audit to verify the correction of major/ open non-conformities, or to evaluate a subset of audit criteria following an audit, or as determined by the CAB, at the CoC client and/or their subcontractor's site(s).
Generation time	The average age of a reproductive individual in a given fish stock.
Geographical area (of the fishery)	A demarcated water/aquatic area (where fishing occurs). For example, FAO major fishing area may be used to define the geographical area of the fishery. See also G7.5.6 of the Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process v2.2.
Green weight	The weight of a catch prior to processing.
Grey literature	Information produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in electronic and print formats not controlled by commercial publishing (i.e. cannot be found easily through conventional channels such as publishers). It is frequently original and usually recent.
Group	For CoC certification, a central office and its associated individual sites that collectively apply for certification against the CoC Group Standard.
Guidance	Examples, explanations, illustrations, background and other information to help users understand MSC requirements.
Habitat	The chemical and bio-physical environment, including biogenic structures, where fishing takes place.

Term	Definition
Habitat function	The range of services provided to an organism, including, but not limited to, mediating trophic interactions, reproduction, shelter, feeding, and influencing the behaviour of organisms.
Habitat modified	Production systems that involve the modification of habitats to increase production or favour desirable species (e.g. lobster casitas, fish attracting devices (FADs), mussel ropes or other structures).
Habitat structure	The arrangement of physical and biogenic formations that support plant and animal communities.
HAC	See: Hatch and catch fisheries.
Harvest Control Rule	A set of well-defined pre-agreed rules or actions used for determining a management action in response to changes in indicators of stock status with respect to reference points.
Harvest strategy	The combination of monitoring, stock assessment, harvest control rules and management actions, which may include an MP or an MP (implicit) and be tested by MSE.
Hatch and catch fisheries	Production systems that involve the introduction of fish and shellfish either as eggs, larvae or juvenile and subsequent recapture (e.g. salmon stocking).
HCR	See: Harvest Control Rule.
Highly migratory species or stocks	Marine species whose life cycle includes lengthy migrations, usually through the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of 2 or more countries as well as into international waters. This term is usually used to denote tuna and tuna-like species, marlins, and swordfish.
HMS	See: Highly Migratory Species or Stocks.
History of the fishery	A description of the general history of the fishery, including initial development of the fishery and significant changes within the history of the fishery.
HM	See: Habitat modified.
IAF	International Accreditation Forum.
Implemented successfully	There is objective evidence that the fishery is following the practice(s) required by the measure or strategy, and that some expected consequences of that measure(s) are seen in the performance of the fishery. It is not necessary to have evidence that the measure or strategy has resulted in benefits to the component being modified.
Incident	An incident is a reported observation or concern with the potential to impact the credibility or integrity of the certification scheme or program.

Term	Definition
Inform	Provide information to a party, keeping a record of having provided the information.
Informative	Supplemental information such as recommendations, tutorials, commentary, background, and history which is not a requirement.
Initial audit	For CoC audits: refers to all audits prior to issuing a new CoC certificate. This includes re-certification audits unless otherwise stated within the CoC Certification Requirements and CoC Standard.
Input/output reconciliation	For CoC clients: a calculation of the conversion rate between volumes purchased and sold, and between inputs and output volumes into each processing step (where relevant). This may be between 2 time periods, in relation to 1 batch, or in relation to 1 batch within a defined time period. The purpose of the input/output reconciliation is to demonstrate that certified outputs are not greater than the inputs, except as related to added ingredients, and that the conversion rates are accurate and justifiable.
Inseparable or practicably inseparable	Where a non-target catch is practicably indistinguishable during normal fishing operations (i.e. the catch is from a stock of the same species or a closely related species) or, if distinguishable, it is not commercially feasible to separate non-target catch from the target catch due to the practical operation of the fishery that would require significant modification to existing harvesting and processing methods.
Intellectual property rights	Any and all rights to copyright, topography, databases, designs, patents, trade or service marks, know-how and all other intellectual property, any and all proprietary or other rights (whether or not any of the same are registered or able to be registered, and including any applications or rights to apply for registration of any of the same) which may exist anywhere and in any form worldwide.
Interested party	Any person or group concerned with or directly affected by a standard. Used synonymously in this document with the term “stakeholder”.
Interim certification	The issuance of a temporary CoC certificate in advance of an on-site audit by a CAB. The issuance follows permission being sought by the CAB and granted by the MSC, provided that the risk is low and manageable.
Internal audit	The mechanism through which a CoC client takes action to verify a site’s compliance with the CoC Standard or relevant internal policies. This may include on-site audits, remote paperwork reviews, or other means, and will be appropriate to the size and nature of the site.
International standard	A standard that is adopted by an international standardising/standards organisation and made available to the public.

Term	Definition
Introduced Species Based Fishery	Any fishery which catches a target fin or shellfish species that was intentionally or accidentally transported and released by human activity into an aquatic environment beyond its natural distribution range. NOTE: Does not include species that are “introduced” into a location due to an expansion in their natural geographic range.
IPI	See: Inseparable or practicably inseparable.
ISEAL Alliance	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance.
ISBF	See: Introduced Species Based Fishery.
ISO	International Organization for Standardization.
ISO 17021	ISO/IEC 17021: 2011, Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.
ISO 17065	ISO/IEC 17065: 2011, General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems.
ISO 19011	ISO/IEC 19011: 2018, Guidelines for auditing management systems.
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
Justification	Rationale establishing that no adverse impact on the competence, consistency and impartiality of the CAB’s operation of the certification program has resulted.
Key elements	Aspects of the fishery which are essential to determining how the fishery performs against the MSC Fisheries Standard.
Key information	Key information is defined as all information used by the assessment team for scoring and in rationales that is not considered confidential information under FCP v3.0/v2.3 4.3 , and that would be required to enable a stakeholder to be able to properly review the logic used by the team in their conclusion about a particular PI score.
Key personnel	Staff within an organisation that make decisions or carry out procedures related to MSC certification or conformity with MSC Standards. Within a CAB, key personnel will include staff that make decisions on certification, and top management.
Lead assessor/Lead auditor	Assessor/auditor who is given the overall responsibility for specified assessment/audit activities related to management systems conformity assessment/audit.
Legal entity	Any individual, partnership, proprietorship, corporation, association or other organisation that has, in the eyes of the law, the capacity to make a contract or an agreement and the abilities

Term	Definition
	to assume an obligation and to pay off its debts. A legal entity, under the law, is responsible for its actions and can be sued for damages.
Legal requirements	Any present or future law, regulation, directive, instruction, direction or rule of any competent authority including any amendment, extension or replacement thereof which is from time to time in force.
Legal ownership	Organisations are considered to take legal ownership if they issue invoices related to the sale of certified product and collect payment for the sale of certified product, or are able to demonstrate their financial ownership of certified product materials based on other documentation (such as internal transfer slips, contracts, or deeds).
Level	Layer within the assessment tree hierarchy: principle; component; performance indicator; or scoring issue.
Licence agreement	The “Licence”, which when signed incorporates the Terms and Conditions of the Agreement and its Annexes and which together with MSCI approval constitute the Agreement.
Limit reference point	The point beyond which the state of a fishery and/or a resource is not considered desirable and which management is aiming to avoid.
Local Fisheries Management Area(s)	Local fisheries management area(s) (e.g. ICES divisions VI, VII, and VIII a, b, c). Preferably the area is marked on a map.
LRP	See: Limit reference point.
Main commercial market	The main markets within which fish and fish product resulting from the fishery are sold.
Management procedure	The combination of pre-defined data, together with an algorithm to which such data are input to provide a value for a TAC or effort control measure; this combination has been demonstrated, through simulation trials, to show robust performance in the presence of uncertainties. Additional rules may be included, for example to spread a TAC spatially to cater for uncertainty about stock structure.
Management review	Review carried out by the top management of an entity on its own organisational units to determine the ongoing suitability of its management systems to meet its desired objectives.
Management Strategy Evaluation	A process whereby the performances of alternative harvest strategies are tested and compared using stochastic simulations of stock and fishery dynamics against a set of performance statistics developed to quantify the attainment of management objectives.
Management system	The framework of processes and procedures used to ensure that an organisation can fulfil all tasks required to achieve its

Term	Definition
	objectives. In a fisheries context includes agencies involved in the management of the fishery, the legislative framework within which the fishery is undertaken, and the core management measures implemented (including the TAC for the fishery for which certification is sought).
Maximum sustainable yield	The highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken (on average) from a stock under existing (average) environmental conditions without affecting significantly the reproduction process.
May	A permitted course of action, within the limits of the standard.
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance.
MP	See: Management Procedure.
MP (implicit)	A set of rules for management of a resource that contains the elements of an MP but has not yet been evaluated through simulation trials.
MP approach	Management of a resource using a fully specified set of rules incorporating feedback control; the approach is explicitly precautionary through its requirement for simulation trials to have demonstrated robust performance across a range of uncertainties about resource status and dynamics.
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council.
MSC accredited/approved certification body (also 'MSC CAB' or 'MSC certification body')	See: Conformity assessment body.
MSC Appointed Assurance Provider (also 'Assurance Provider')	Oversight body appointed by MSC to provide assurance services through the ASI Two-Tier Assurance Program
MSC certification	See: Certified.
MSC Chain of Custody Standard	<p>A document containing mandatory requirements for supply chain companies seeking MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certification. The MSC owns the Chain of Custody Standard: Default Version and 2 variants. These are the Chain of Custody Standard: Group Version, and the Chain of Custody: Consumer-Facing Organisations (CFOs) Version.</p> <p>Depending on a client's eligibility, the CAB will audit a client against the Default version or one of the variants.</p> <p>These standards can be found at https://www.msc.org/for-business/certification-bodies/chain-of-custody-program-documents</p>
MSC eligible fish	Whole fish or product that are, or are derived from, any aquatic organism harvested in an MSC certified fishery, as defined in the Unit of Certification of a valid MSC certificate.

Term	Definition
MSC Fisheries Standard	A document containing mandatory requirements for fisheries seeking MSC Fisheries certification. This standard can be found at https://www.msc.org/for-business/certification-bodies/fisheries-standard-program-documents
MSC P&Cs	See: MSC Principles and Criteria.
MSC Principles and Criteria	The MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing.
MSC requirement	An element mandated by the MSC for CABs or for certified entities.
MSC Seafood Sampling Procedure	The procedure provided by the MSC to organisations and individuals taking seafood samples on their behalf for product authentication testing.
MSC Standard	A document established by consensus and approved by the Marine Stewardship Council, that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results and is aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.
MSCI	Marine Stewardship Council International Ltd.
MSCI Licencing Requirements	MSCI Licencing Agreements, together with the Terms and Conditions, and all Rules for ecolabel use.
MSE	See: Management Strategy Evaluation.
MSY	See: Maximum Sustainable Yield.
Multi-site	2 or more sites that are individually audited against the CoC Standard: Default Version and that share a Chain of Custody certificate.
Name of fishery	To be determined by the fishery client and the CAB. The name determined must be unique and unambiguous and in addition to specifying the species for which certification is sought, may also incorporate details of the client group for the assessment, geographical area of the fishery and the fishing gear used.
Native	Living or growing naturally in a particular region: INDIGENOUS
Non-conforming product	Fish or fish product that are identified as certified or labelled with trademarks, but which cannot be proven to come from a certified source.
Non-conformity	Failure of a CAB to conform to one or more MSC requirements, or failure of a certificate holder to conform to any requirement of an MSC standard.
Normative	A prescriptive element; a requirement.

Term	Definition
Notification Report	In FCR v2.0, this is the report from the CAB formally notifying the MSC of a fishery client's intent to undergo a full assessment.
Objections Procedure	Procedure as described in the MSC Disputes Process.
Objective evidence	Verifiable information or records pertaining to the quality of an item or service or to the existence and implementation of a quality system element, which is based on visual observation, measurement or test. Can include independent witnesses, peer-reviewed scientific research, or otherwise verifiable and credible information.
Operating model	A dynamic simulation of the evolution of stock biomass in response to changes in fishing mortality and other parameters.
Operations site	For CoC CFO clients: a discrete physical location that is involved in processing, storage, distribution, packing or repacking of certified product. A CFO CoC client may have both operations and consumer-facing sites included in their CoC certification.
Other eligible fishers	Other fishers that have been included in the assessment and are part of the Unit of Assessment; but are not currently part of the Unit of Certification and are potentially eligible to join the Unit of Certification under a certificate sharing arrangement. This group will be defined by the CAB and would normally comprise fishers targeting the same stock using the same gear and operating under the same management regime as the fishers included in the Unit of Certification. It might also include other situations, for example the catches of a stock defined in the Unit of Assessment that are taken as incidental catch in another certified fishery.
Other fisheries in the area	A description of other fisheries in the vicinity not subject to the certification that may interact with the fishery being assessed.
Overfished	The stock may remain overfished (i.e. with a biomass well below the agreed limit) for some time even though fishing pressure might be reduced or suppressed.
Overlapping assessment	An assessment of overlapping fisheries.
Overlapping fisheries	2 or more fisheries which require assessment of some, or all, of the same aspects of MSC Principles 1, 2 and/or 3 within their respective Units of Certification.
P1	Principle 1 of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
P2	Principle 2 of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
P3	Principle 3 of the MSC Fisheries Standard.
Partial audit	An audit focusing on the area of non-conformity, or on areas where information is deficient.

Term	Definition
Peer Review Draft Report	In FCR v2.0, this is the draft report of the assessment of the fishery submitted to peer reviewers. Follows preliminary draft report, precedes Public Comment Draft Report.
Performance Indicator	The lowest level of sub-criterion of an MSC Criterion in the decision tree; the level at which the performance of the fishery is scored by the team.
PI	See: Performance Indicator.
PISG	Performance Indicators and Scoring Guideposts. See: Performance Indicator, Scoring Guidepost.
Point of recruitment impairment	The stock level below which recruitment may be impaired.
Pre-assessment report	Report to a client from the CAB following a pre-assessment.
Precautionary approach	The precautionary approach shall be interpreted to mean being cautious when information is uncertain, unreliable or inadequate and that the absence of adequate scientific information shall not be used as a reason for postponing or failing to take conservation and management measures.
Preliminary Draft Report	In FCR v2.0, this is the draft report of the assessment of the fishery provided to the client prior to peer review. Precedes Peer Review Draft Report.
Preventive action	Action to eliminate the cause of a potential non-conformity or other undesirable potential situation.
PRI	See: Point of recruitment impairment.
Principle	A fundamental element in the MSC Fisheries Standard used as the basis for defining a well-managed and sustainable fishery.
Probability	Probability interpretations of terms such as “highly likely” are provided for general guidance and for when quantitative measures are available, not to imply that a quantitative measure is required. Probability interpretations are intentionally defined differently in the default tree for Principle 1 and components of Principle 2. They reflect differences in understanding about these components, legal requirements or past MSC practice.
Processes and production methods standard	A standard that sets out criteria for the processes and/or production methods by which a product or service is produced, in pursuit of specific social and/or environmental objectives.
Product authentication testing	The use of DNA analysis or other product authentication tools which, for example, identify seafood by species, catch area, or farm of origin.
Productivity Susceptibility Analysis	Used as the ‘Level 2’ analysis in the RBF. This semi-quantitative approach examines several attributes of each species that

Term	Definition
	contribute to or reflect its productivity or susceptibility, to provide a relative measure of the risk to the scoring element from fishing activities. The PSA is required when using the RBF to score target species in P1 and may also be triggered for retained species or bycatch species in P2. Each species (scoring element) identified within a given PI is assigned its own PSA score.
PSA	See: Productivity Susceptibility Analysis.
Public Certification Report	The report of the fishery assessment accepted by the MSC for publication on the MSC website; includes the Final Draft Report (FCP v2.1 onwards) or Final Report (FCR v2.0), and any written decisions by the CAB including any resulting from the MSC Disputes Process.
Public Comment Draft Report	The draft report of the assessment of the fishery prepared by the team and the CAB released for public comment. Follows Client and Peer Review Draft Report (follows Peer Review Draft Report in FCR v2.0 assessments). Precedes Final Draft Report (precedes Final Report in FCR v2.0 assessments).
Qualitative data	Qualitative data are data describing the attributes or properties that an object possesses. The properties are categorised into classes that may be assigned numeric values. However, there is no significance to the data values themselves, they simply represent attributes of the object concerned.
Quantitative data	Quantitative data are data expressing a certain quantity, amount or range. Usually, there are measurement units associated with the data (e.g. metres) in the case of the height of a person. It makes sense to set boundary limits to such data, and it is also meaningful to apply arithmetic operations to the data.
RBF	See: Risk Based Framework.
Reassessment	Assessment of a fishery.
Re-certification audit	For CoC clients: refers to an audit of an already certified organisation before issuing the CoC certificate for a new certification period. See: Initial audit.
Reduced surveillance	For fisheries: Surveillance level that requires on-site surveillance audits on the second and fourth anniversaries of certification.
Reduction of scope of accreditation/approval	Process of suspending or withdrawing accreditation/approval for part of the scope of accreditation/approval.
Reference points	Biological reference points; stock status reference points used to define management action in response to stock status.
Registered stakeholder	Within a fishery assessment, a registered stakeholder is a stakeholder that has participated in the site visit, either in person or remotely, and/or has provided input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report

Term	Definition
Reinstatement	Re-activation or lifting by written approval of the suspended part(s) of the scope of certification or accreditation/approval following successful implementation of corrective action.
Remote audit	For CoC clients: an initial, surveillance or re-certification audit that is performed without the auditor being on-site. This option is only open to organisations that meet specific criteria.
Remote surveillance	For fisheries: surveillance level that requires annual audits alternating on-site and off-site audits (“non-consecutive off-site audits”).
Retained species	Species that are retained by the fishery (usually because they are commercially valuable or because they are required to be retained by management rules). Component 2.1 in MSC Fisheries Standard v1.3.
Responsible personnel	Individuals within an organisation that are that are responsible for making decisions or carrying out procedures related to the MSC Standards. For a certified organisation, this would typically include the MSC representative as well as any staff developing procedures related to MSC or handling or labelling certified products. For CoC clients, the MSC representative is termed “CoC contact person”.
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation.
Risk Based Framework	A framework of assessment tools for scoring ‘outcome’ Performance Indicators in cases where insufficient information is available to score the UoA using the default Scoring Guideposts. See: Consequence Analysis, Consequence Spatial Analysis, Productivity Susceptibility Analysis and Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis.
Root Cause	The source or origin of non-conformity, as well as any contributing factors involved.
Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis	The Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis used as the ‘Level 1’ analysis in the RBF. This qualitative approach identifies the activities mostly likely to be associated with ‘worst case’ impacts on any species, habitat or ecosystem. A SICA is best conducted with the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders who are able to provide a range of knowledge about the fishery under assessment.
Scheme database	A collection of records on the fishery, farm and CoC certification program that is updated by CABs and held by the certification program/scheme.
Scheme or program document	Official documents setting out rules and procedures for accreditation/approval, certification, assessment and audit relevant to the MSC certification program.
Scope of certification	Specific activities and products for which certification is sought or has been granted.

Term	Definition
Scope of MSC accreditation/approval	Specific tasks for which accreditation/approval is sought by a conformity assessment body or has been granted.
Scoring elements	Matters that are to be considered when determining the score of a Performance Indicator; also, the matters used in determining a Scoring Guidepost benchmark. In the case of Principles 1 or 2, used to mean a sub-division of individual parts of the ecosystem affected by the fishery, such as different species/stocks/sub-stocks or habitats within a Component.
Scoring guidepost	The benchmark level of performance established by the team in respect of each numeric score or rating for each indicator sub-criterion.
Scoring issues	The different parts of a single Scoring Guidepost, where more than 1 part exists and covering related but different topics.
Serious or irreversible harm to structure and function	Serious or irreversible harm to structure or function means changes caused by the UoA that fundamentally alter the capacity of the habitat or ecosystem to maintain its structure and function. For the habitats component, definitions as they relate to “more” and “less” sensitive habitats are provided separately in the Fisheries Standard. For the ecosystem component, serious or irreversible harm to structure or function means the reduction of key features most crucial to maintaining an ecosystem’s resilience and productivity. This includes, but is not limited to, trophic cascades, permanent changes in the biological diversity of the ecological community, and the ecosystem’s capacity to deliver ecosystem services.
MSC Seafood Sampling Procedure	The procedure provided by the MSC to organisations and individuals taking seafood samples on their behalf for product authentication testing.
Semi-structured interviews	Formal interview based on questions prepared in advance but with sufficient flexibility that allows the questioner to adapt to the specific situation on hand by probing emerging themes with additional questions that may deviate from those planned in advance.
SG	See: Scoring Guidepost.
Shall	Denotes a requirement.
Shared stocks	Stocks of fish that migrate across the boundaries of adjacent Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of 2 or more coastal States.
Shark finning	The practice of removing any of the fins of a shark (including the tail) while at sea and discarding the remainder of the shark at sea.
Should	Denotes a requirement that shall be followed unless there are reasons not to. If the requirement is not followed, the justification shall be recorded.

Term	Definition
SICA	See: Scale Intensity Consequence Analysis.
Simulation test	See: Simulation trial.
Simulation trial	A computer simulation to project resource dynamics for a particular scenario forward for a specified period, under controls specified within an MP, to ascertain performance; such projections will typically be repeated a large number of times to capture variability.
Site	A discrete physical location.
Species common name(s)	Common name(s) for the species. This should include common names used in the key commercial markets for the species.
Stakeholder	Any person or group (including governmental and non-governmental institutions, traditional communities, universities, research institutions, development agencies and banks, donors, etc.) with an interest or claim (whether stated or implied) which has the potential of being impacted by or having an impact on a given project and its objectives. Stakeholder groups that have a direct or indirect "stake" can be at the household, community, local, regional, national, or international level.
Stock	The living resources in the community or population from which catches are taken in a fishery. Use of the term "stock" implies that the particular population is a biologically distinct unit. As noted in the FAO Fisheries Glossary, some species form a single stock (e.g. southern bluefin tuna) while others are composed of several stocks (e.g. albacore tuna in the Pacific Ocean comprises separate northern and southern stocks).
Stock assessment	An integrated analysis of information to estimate the status and trends of a population against benchmarks such as reference points.
Stock name	A textual description of the biological unit stock exploited by the fishery, as commonly used in management and assessment reports.
Stock region	A textual description of the geographic area within which the fishery is undertaken.
Straddling stocks	Stock which occurs both within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and in an area beyond and adjacent to the EEZ.
Stratification	The process of dividing a population into sub-populations, each of which is a group of sampling units, which have similar characteristics.
Subcontractor	An entity that is contracted to carry out work for a third party or affiliate (this could include contract processors, transportation organisations, and distribution and storage organisations). In CoC audits, subcontractors are companies that handle certified product without taking legal ownership of it.

Term	Definition
Sub-criterion	A criterion below the level of the MSC Criteria; the assessment tree may contain any number of levels of sub-criteria.
Succeeding CAB	The CAB to which a client wishes to transfer their certificate.
Superseded	Status of a MSC certification program document that has been replaced with a new version.
Supply chain reconciliation	The reconciliation of purchases and sales of MSC certified product between buyers and sellers over a defined period of time. These reconciliations are carried out by the MSC to monitor conformity with the CoC Standard.
Surveillance	Set of activities, except re-assessment, to monitor the continued fulfilment by accredited/approved CABs of requirements for accreditation/approval, or of certificate holders of requirements for certification.
Surveillance audit	The periodic or random review and assessment of a certificate holder's activities in order to determine ongoing conformity with standards and compliance with conditions and/or non-conformities raised.
Surveillance level	Audit type (remote or on-site audit) and frequency of surveillance. See: Surveillance, Remote surveillance, Reduced surveillance.
Surveillance Report	The report of a surveillance audit.
Surveillance cycle	All surveillance audits and activities carried out within the timeframe of a certificate.
Suspension of accreditation/approval	Process of temporarily making MSC accreditation/approval invalid, in full or in part of the scope of accreditation/approval.
TAB	See: Technical Advisory Board.
TAC	See: Total Allowable Catch.
Target reference point	The point which corresponds to a state of a fishery and/or resource which is considered desirable and which management is trying to achieve.
Target stock(s)	Those fish stocks which have been assessed under Principle 1 of the MSC Fisheries Standard. Only the target stock(s) from the Unit of Certification shall be eligible to carry the MSC ecolabel.
Team	The team leader and team member(s) working on a conformity assessment of an organisation. While a team for a CoC audit may be 1 person, a team for a fishery audit will always be 2 or more persons.
Team leader	A person who manages assessment activities.

Term	Definition
Team member	A person who performs assessment activities.
Technical Advisory Board	A body appointed by the MSC's Board of Trustees.
Termination	Voluntary cancellation of the certification contract by either party according to the contractual arrangements. See: Cancellation.
Testing	The involvement of some sort of structured logical argument and analysis that supports the choice of strategy. In the context of a fishery, it can include the use of experience from analogous fisheries, empirical testing (for example practical experience of performance or evidence of past performance) and simulation testing (for instance using computer-intensive modelling such as management strategy evaluation).
The MSC claim	MSC-approved text which must accompany the MSC ecolabel when displayed on product, menus or catering lists. Can also refer to the claims alongside labels or logos trademarked to recognised certification schemes sharing MSC CoC.
Tools	Mechanisms for implementing strategies under Principles 1 or 2. For example, total allowable catches, mesh regulations, closed areas, etc. could be used to implement Harvest Control Rules.
Total Allowable Catch	The total catch allowed to be taken from a resource in a specified period (usually a year), as defined in the management plan. The TAC may be allocated to the stakeholders in the form of quotas as specific quantities or proportions.
Traceback	An activity carried out to trace a product back to its origin based on collecting and reviewing traceability documentation. The MSC carries out periodic tracebacks to verify that certified product sold with trademarks originate from a certified fishery, through verifying records of each CoC certified organisation in the supply chain.
Trademarks	Refers to either the MSC ecolabel as per the MSCI Licence Agreement, the words "Marine Stewardship Council", the initials "MSC", or all copyright, design rights and any other intellectual property rights in or relating to any of the above. Can also apply to trademarks of recognised certification schemes sharing MSC CoC, such as ASC.
Agreed transfer date	Date on which all rights and obligations for maintaining the certificate shall be passed from the current CAB to the succeeding CAB.
TRP	See: Target reference point.
Type III Environmental Label	Quantified environmental life cycle product information, provided by a supplier, based on independent verification (e.g. third party) and (critically reviewed) systematic data, and presented as a set of categories of parameter (for a sector group).

Term	Definition
UoA	See: Unit of Assessment.
UoC	See: Unit of Certification.
Uncertainty	Lack of perfect knowledge of many factors that affect stock assessments, estimation of biological reference points and management, and the consequence of this lack of perfect knowledge.
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
Uncontrolled copy	Any copy of a controlled document held by the MSC (e.g. used for audits, training, revisions or public information) will be considered as an uncontrolled copy and will not be updated. Users should ensure that any copy they have is the latest version.
UNFSA	Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 Relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks.
Under-assessment product	Fish or fish product harvested from a fishery or farm that is under assessment for certification against the MSC Fisheries Standard or against another recognised certification scheme that shares MSC CoC (e.g. ASC). Under-assessment product must be harvested on or after the eligibility date specified in the fishery or farm report and must originate from the Unit of Certification for that fishery or farm.
Unit of Assessment (UoA)	The full scope of what is being assessed. The target stock(s) combined with the fishing gear type(s), vessel type(s) if relevant, and the fishing fleets or groups of vessels, or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock, including any other eligible fishers that are outside of the proposed Unit of Certification. In some fisheries, the UoA and UoC may be further described based on the specific fishing seasons in which it operates.
Unit of Certification (UoC)	The unit entitled to receive an MSC certificate. The target stock(s) combined with the fishing gear type(s), vessel type(s) if relevant, and the fishing fleets or groups of vessels, or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock including entities initially intended to be covered by the certificate. NOTE: other eligible fishers may be included in some Units of Assessment but not initially certified (until covered by a certificate sharing arrangement).
Unpublished information	Does not include peer-reviewed, published or grey literature.
Unwanted catch (of species)	The part of the catch that a fisher did not intend to catch but could not avoid and did not want or chose not to use.
Vessel type	A category of vessel having common characteristics.

Term	Definition
	<p>NOTE 1: Types of fishing vessels are usually classified based on (i) the structural characteristics of the vessels and (ii) the fishing gear used (e.g. trawler, factory trawler, liner, etc.).</p> <p>NOTE 2: Non-fishing vessels are usually classified based on the type of activity carried out (e.g. mothership, fishcarrier, etc.).</p> <p>NOTE 3: FAO describes the categories of vessel based on two major classifications: fishing vessel and non-fishing vessel.</p> <p>Source: FAO, 1985. Definition and classification of fishery vessel types. FAO Fish. Tech. Pap., (267):63 p.</p>
<p>Withdrawal of accreditation/approval</p>	<p>Process of terminating accreditation/approval, in full or for part of the scope.</p>
<p>Writing</p>	<p>Includes e-mail, post, but not SMS (short message service) or IMS (instant message service).</p>