

MSC Fisheries Certification Process



Version 4.0, [DD Month YYYY]

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The MSC prohibits any modification of part or all of the contents in any form.

Marine Stewardship Council
Marine House
1 Snow Hill
London EC1A 2DH
United Kingdom

Phone: + 44 (0) 20 7246 8900

Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7246 8901

Email: standards@msc.org

Responsibility for these requirements

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is responsible for these requirements.

Readers should verify that they are using the latest copy of this and other documents. Updated documents, together with a master list of all available MSC documents, can be found on the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

Versions published

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
1.0	15 August 2011	First version issued for application by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).
1.1	24 October 2011	Version issued incorporating revised Group Chain of Custody (CoC) requirements and correcting typos, page numbering, wrong and missing referencing, and unreadable flowcharts.
1.2	10 January 2012	Version issued incorporating Technical Advisory Board 20 agreed changes regarding reassessment, Objection Procedure, modifications to the default assessment tree to assess bivalves, implementation timeframes, and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) requirements. Minor edits, comprised correction of wrong and missing referencing, typos, and unreadable figures.
1.3	14 January 2013	Version issued incorporating Technical Advisory Board 21 and Board of Trustees agreed changes. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
2.0	1 October 2014	Version issued incorporating changes to the standard as a result of the MSC Fisheries Standard review and changes to CAB procedures as a result of the speed and cost review.
2.1	31 August 2018	Version issued incorporating changes to the assessment process regarding streamlining, harmonisation, and labour policy development topics.
2.2	25 March 2020	Version issued incorporating changes to the confirmation of scope process, defining the Unit of Assessment and Unit of Certification, conditions, and the expedited audit process. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
2.3	26 October 2022	Version issued incorporating changes to harmonisation, stakeholder input, and traceability. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
3.0	26 October 2022	Version issued incorporating changes to process related to the release of v3.0 of the MSC Fisheries Standard, removal of the Risk-Based Framework, harmonisation, stakeholder input, and traceability.
3.1	22 July 2024	Version issued incorporating changes related to the amended Fisheries Standard v3.1.

The Marine Stewardship Council

Vision

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

Mission

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.

DRAFT

General introduction

Fisheries certification

With international consultation with stakeholders, the MSC has developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. These standards ensure that MSC labelled seafood comes from, and can be traced back to, a sustainable fishery.

MSC standards and requirements meet global best practice guidelines for certification and labelling programs.

The [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) sets out requirements that a fishery must meet to enable it to claim that its fish come from a well-managed and sustainable source.

Throughout the world, fisheries are using good management practices to safeguard jobs, secure fish stocks for the future, and help protect the marine environment. The science-based MSC environmental standard for sustainable fishing offers fisheries a way to confirm sustainability, using a credible, independent, third-party assessment process. Certification means sustainable fisheries can be recognised and rewarded in the marketplace and gives an assurance to consumers that their seafood comes from a well-managed and sustainable source.

The [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) applies to wild-capture fisheries that meet the scope requirements provided in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#).

The [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) comprises the following core Principles:

Principle 1: Sustainable target fish stocks

A fishery is conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing or depletion of the exploited populations and, for those populations that are depleted, the fishery must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery.

Principle 2: Environmental impact of fishing

Fishing operations allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function, and diversity of the ecosystem on which the fishery depends. The ecosystem includes habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species.

Principle 3: Effective management

The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national, and international laws and standards, and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.

Implementation timeframes

Effective date of the Fisheries Certification Process v4.0

Publication date: DD Month YYYY

Effective date: DD Month YYYY

CABs shall conduct any assessment process (initial assessment, surveillance audit, scope extension, expedited audit, or reassessment) against the [MSC Fisheries Standard v4.0](#) (and subsequent versions) that is announced on or after DD Month YYYY in conformity with the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v4.0.

Review

The MSC welcomes comments on the FCP. Comments will be considered as part of the next review process. Reviews will take place at least every 5 years. Please submit comments to standards@msc.org.

More information about the MSC policy development process and MSC Standard Setting Procedure can be found on the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

Introduction to this document

The Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v4.0 and the annexes define the process requirements for CABs to assess fisheries against the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).

The FCP consists of the assessment process (Sections 1–7) and process annexes (PA-PC).

Fisheries Certification Process

The purposes of the FCP are:

- To establish a defined process that enables all CABs to operate in a consistent and controlled manner.
- To provide transparency to maintain credibility with stakeholders.

The MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

Guidance is provided in the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process (GFCP) to help CABs interpret the FCP.

The headings and numbering in the GFCP, when included, match those in the FCP exactly, with numbers prefaced with the letter “G” to indicate guidance.

The MSC recommends that CABs read the FCP in conjunction with the GFCP. Text in the FCP is not repeated in the GFCP.

Where guidance is provided that generally relates to the subject of a section, or relates to the content of a specific clause, this icon  appears at the end of the section title or clause in the FCP. These icons provide hyperlinks to the related guidance section in the GFCP.

In the GFCP, this icon  provides a hyperlink back to the corresponding section or clause in the FCP.

The MSC Interpretations Log

The MSC occasionally provides additional guidance to CABs and assessment teams via interpretations that are posted on a public Interpretations Log. Interpretations are provided in response to questions submitted to the MSC, in between Program document releases, about requirements in the FCP, the [Fisheries Standard](#), and the [General Certification Requirements](#) (GCR). Interpretations help to clarify the MSC’s intent and provide additional information and guidance to explain how a requirement should be applied. They are not new requirements.

The MSC informs CABs of changes to the Interpretations Log. A link to the Interpretation Logs can be found on the Fisheries Program Documents section of the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

Auditability of the Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process and interpretations

The guidance in the GFCP and interpretations is not directly auditable. If a CAB deviates from guidance or interpretations, the CAB should provide a justification.

Derogations

Derogations are temporary normative measures that allow for an MSC requirement to be applied differently or disregarded. Derogations are provided in response to editorial errors, force majeure, where intent is no longer fit for purpose and threatens MSC credibility, or as a provision to test a policy change or modify the implementation timeframe before publishing a revised version of the normative document. Derogations are posted on a public log. The MSC requires CABs to follow relevant derogations.

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The MSC Fisheries Certification Process

1 Scope

The MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) is for Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) use when assessing fisheries against the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).

2 Normative documents

The documents listed below contain provisions that, through reference in this text, become part of the FCP.

For documents listed, the latest effective version of the document applies.

The documents are as follows:

- a. MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template.
- b. MSC Scope Declaration Template.
- c. MSC Fishery Announcement Template.
- d. MSC Client Document Checklist.
- e. MSC Fishery Assessment Scoring Worksheet (including versions for enhanced bivalves and salmon).
- f. MSC Reporting Template (including versions for enhanced bivalves and salmon).
- g. MSC Template for Initial Peer Review of MSC Fishery Assessments
- h. MSC Template for Peer Review Follow Up at PCDR Stage
- i. MSC Surveillance Announcement Template.
- j. MSC Surveillance Reporting Template.
- k. MSC Surveillance Review of Information Template.
- l. MSC Reduced Reassessment Reporting Template.
- m. MSC Database User Manual for CABs.
- n. MSC Variation Request Form – Fisheries.
- o. MSC Template for Stakeholder Input
- p. MSC At Sea Labour Eligibility Requirements Reporting Template
- q. MSC Inseparable Catch Announcement Template.
- r. [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).

In addition, the normative documents listed in the normative documents section of the [MSC General Certification Requirements \(GCR\)](#) also apply to implementation of the FCP.

All MSC forms and templates can be found on the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

3 Terms and definitions

All definitions are in the [MSC-MSCI Vocabulary](#).

Terms or phrases used in the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) that have multiple definitions are defined within the text where such terms or phrases appear.

The term “assessment” is used for the initial assessment and 5-yearly reassessments. The term “audit” is used for annual surveillance audits and expedited audits.

The term “client” is used as shorthand for client, client group, applicant, or certificate holder

4 General requirements

4.1 Submission of reports, data, and requests to the MSC

- 4.1.1 The CAB shall upload to the MSC database all reports, data, and requests that are required as per the Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) and the MSC General Certification Requirements (GCR).

4.2 Consultation requirements

- 4.2.1 The CAB shall hold stakeholder consultations so that the CAB becomes aware of concerns of stakeholders.
 - 4.2.1.1 Before the announcement of each assessment or audit, the CAB shall identify and compile a list of stakeholders. ■
- 4.2.2 The CAB shall only accept written submissions from stakeholders on the Announcement Comment Draft Report and Public Comment Draft Report if submitted using [the ‘MSC Template for Stakeholder Input’](#), or if raised at the assessment site visit, either in person or remotely. ■
- 4.2.3 The CAB shall only accept written submissions from stakeholders if submitted using the, or if raised during an on-site or off-site audit, either in person or remotely. ■
 - 4.2.3.1 An exception to 4.2.4 is permitted for information collected within an agreed timeframe as per 7.29.15.e.
- 4.2.4 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that they may raise issues with the assessment team in confidence for the assessment team to consider at the site visit, but that any confidential information cannot be used in scoring unless in compliance with confidentiality requirements, see Section 4.3.
- 4.2.5 Within 10 days of receipt of stakeholder input, the CAB shall inform the sender of how and when the CAB will address their comments.
- 4.2.6 Except where otherwise required, the CAB shall specify, in the consultation announcements, a deadline for the receipt of stakeholder input of 17:00 UTC on the last day of the consultation period.
- 4.2.7 The CAB shall consider a stakeholder as registered only if they provide written input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report (Section 7.13) or attend the site visit, in person or remotely (Section 7.14). ■

4.3 Use of confidential information in fisheries assessments

- 4.3.1 The CAB shall encourage stakeholders not to withhold information, including their concerns and knowledge about the fishery in question.
- 4.3.2 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that any information that cannot be shared with all stakeholders cannot not be:

- a. Referenced in the assessment.
 - b. Used in determining the assessment outcome.
- 4.3.3 The CAB shall ensure that information kept confidential is restricted to:
- a. Financial transactions about certification.
 - b. The financial affairs of individual companies or information that may lead to this information being made public.
 - c. Information that is the subject of relevant national privacy or data protection legislation in the client's country.

4.4 Access to information

- 4.4.1 The CAB shall ensure that key information necessary to properly review the logic used by the assessment team is available to stakeholders. ■
- 4.4.1.1 If key information referenced in a public assessment report is unpublished or not available online, the CAB shall make this information available to stakeholders. ■
 - 4.4.1.2 The CAB shall ensure that the information is available throughout the subsequent stages of the assessment process.

4.5 Confidentiality agreements

- 4.5.1 The owner of information specified under 4.3.3 may agree to make it available to stakeholders subject to signed confidentiality agreements. In these cases, the CAB shall:
- a. Require those requesting access to information to do so in writing.
 - b. Confirm signed confidentiality agreements are in place before permitting access to the confidential information.
- 4.5.2 The CAB may use the information specified under 4.3.3 in its assessment even if some or all stakeholders refuse to sign a confidentiality agreement.

5 Structural requirements

There are no requirements additional to ISO 17065 and the MSC General Certification Requirements (GCR)..

6 Resource requirements

There are no requirements additional to ISO 17065 and the MSC General Certification Requirements (GCR)..

7 Process requirements

7.1 Pre-assessment

- 7.1.1 The client may select a CAB to conduct an optional pre-assessment.
- 7.1.2 The CAB shall have objectives for the pre-assessment that include:
- a. Enabling CAB planning for a full assessment.
 - b. Informing the client of the likelihood of achieving certification.
 - c. Enabling client planning for the full assessment.

- 7.1.3 The CAB shall appoint an individual or team qualified in conformity with the requirements of Table PC2 and any 1 of the qualifications and competencies listed in Rows 1–5 of Table PC3 to conduct the pre-assessment.
- 7.1.4 The CAB shall ensure that any guidance given to clients during pre-assessment is in conformity with ISO 17065 regarding offering or providing consultancy.
- 7.1.5 The CAB shall include the following activities as part of the pre-assessment:
- a. An in-person or remote meeting with the client.
 - b. Decisions on potential field site visits, if required.
 - c. An assessment of the extent to which the UoA(s) is consistent with the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).
 - d. An evaluation of the UoA(s)'s readiness for assessment.
 - e. A review of the availability of data.
 - i. The CAB shall use [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox Section 5.2](#) to determine whether a tool for data-deficient fisheries will be used.
 - f. Defining the options for the scope of the full assessment consistent with Section 7.4 and Section 7.5.
 - g. Identifying potential obstacles or problems that may be a barrier to certification.
- 7.1.6 The CAB shall use the '[MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template](#)' that is effective at the time of preparation.
- 7.1.6.1 The CAB shall inform the client that some sections of the '[MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template](#)' are mandatory and some are optional.
- 7.1.7 The CAB shall inform the client of: ■
- a. The process of a full assessment.
 - b. Communications that may need to take place with management agencies, conservation groups, post-harvest sectors, and relevant commercial and non-commercial fishing groups to explain the MSC assessment process and the implications (including costs and benefits) of certification.
 - c. The types and extent of data and information that the client will need to make available for a full assessment.
 - d. The location, timing, and form of any announcements to be made during full assessment.
 - e. The optional MSC Fisheries Standard training webpage for certificate holders and stakeholders.
- 7.1.8 The CAB shall treat the existence, process, and outcomes of the pre-assessment as confidential to the client, the CAB, and the MSC, unless otherwise directed by the client to make the pre-assessment more widely available.

7.2 Client application for full assessment

- 7.2.1 The CAB shall refer to ISO 17065 and the MSC General Certification Requirements ([GCR](#)) for application review requirements.

7.3 Client Information Request■

- 7.3.1 Before defining the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC), the CAB shall require the client to submit a completed '[Client Information Request](#)'.

7.4 Confirmation that the UoA is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard

- 7.4.1 Prior to announcing a fishery assessment, the CAB shall confirm that the UoA meets the scope requirements in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#).
- 7.4.1.1 The CAB shall require the client to complete and submit the Scope Confirmation in the '[Client Information Request](#)'.
- The CAB shall verify that the client has provided a full and relevant response to in the Scope Confirmation in the '[Client Information Request](#)'.
 - The CAB shall verify that the '[Client Information Request](#)' covers all vessels included within the UoA.
- 7.4.1.2 The CAB shall verify that the Scope Confirmation states that the UoA meets each of the scope requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#).
- 7.4.1.3 The CAB shall verify that the review process and list of information examined by the client or client group is adequate to support their conclusion that the UoA meets each of the scope requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#).
- 7.4.2 If the scope requirements are not met, the CAB shall not proceed with the fishery assessment.
- 7.4.3 If, at any time during the assessment, the UoA no longer conforms to the scope requirements, the CAB shall not proceed with the fishery assessment.
- 7.4.3.1 The CAB shall publish a stakeholder announcement to inform stakeholders that the assessment has stopped.
- 7.4.4 If, at any time outside of a scheduled surveillance audit, the CAB obtains or receives credible information that a UoC does not meet the scope requirements in [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#), the CAB shall conduct an expedited audit (Section 7.30).
- 7.4.4.1 If the UoC no longer meets the scope requirements in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#), the CAB shall suspend the certificate as per the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#), unless the [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5.1](#) or [1.1.6.1](#) are met.
- 7.4.5 If the certificate holder excludes a vessel from the UoA, UoC, and fishery certificate under [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5.1](#) or [1.1.6.1](#) outside of the processes in 7.4.4 (full assessment) and 7.4.5 (surveillance audit), the CAB shall conduct an expedited audit (Section 7.31). 
- 7.4.5.1 The CAB may conduct the expedited audit with 1 assessment team member who meets the following:
- The personnel requirements of the [GCR](#).
 - The fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria in Table PC1.
 - Is competent to review the relevant information.
- 7.4.5.2 The CAB shall verify that the vessel is excluded from the UoA, UoC, and fishery certificate.
- 7.4.5.3 The CAB shall update the relevant certification documents.

7.5 Scope of assessment: defining the UoA and proposed UoC

- 7.5.1 The CAB shall use all available information in the '[MSC Client Information Request](#)' and pre-assessment reports about the fishery to determine the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and the Unit of Certification (UoC).

Defining the UoA

- 7.5.2 The CAB shall define the provisional UoA (i.e. what is to be assessed) as:
- a. The target stock(s). ■
 - b. The fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s). ■
 - c. The jurisdiction(s) under which the UoA operates. ■
 - d. The fishing fleets or groups of vessels, or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock. ■
- 7.5.3 The CAB shall not define the UoA by a subset of activities undertaken with the stock(s) and gear(s) combination. ■
- 7.5.4 The CAB shall not define the UoA based on the species caught as determined at the time of fishing, where the objective is simply to exclude certain hauls from the assessment. ■
- 7.5.5 The CAB shall describe the geographical area in which the UoA operates. ■

Defining the UoC

- 7.5.6 The CAB shall define the proposed UoC (i.e. what is to be covered by the certificate) as: ■
- a. The target stock(s).
 - b. The fishing gear type(s) and, if relevant, vessel type(s).
 - c. The jurisdiction(s) under which the UoC operates.
 - d. The fishing fleets or groups of vessels or individual fishing operators pursuing that stock including entities that are covered by the certificate at the point of certification.
- 7.5.7 The CAB shall define the geographical area in which the UoC operates. ■

Changes to UoAs/UoCs and withdrawal of UoAs and proposed UoCs during the assessment

- 7.5.8 The CAB shall not change a UoA and proposed UoC during the assessment unless the UoA is announced provisionally in the fishery announcement and confirmed later in conformity with 7.15.3. ■
- 7.5.9 If the fishery client decides to withdraw a UoA and proposed UoC during the assessment, the CAB shall: ■
- a. Publish an announcement informing stakeholders that the UoA and proposed UoC have been withdrawn from assessment.
 - b. Update the MSC database to remove the UoA and proposed UoC from the assessment.
 - c. Include the changes in the next assessment report.
- 7.5.9.1 If there is more than one UoA and proposed UoC the CAB shall:
- a. Review and update the key traceability factors and associated risks (7.5.9).
 - b. Confirm that traceability risks are managed and mitigated (Section 7.17).

Traceability factors

- 7.5.10 The CAB shall conduct an initial review of key traceability factors provided in the '[Client Information Request](#)' and document whether any of the following risks are applicable: ■
- a. The possibility of non-certified gears being used within the UoC.
 - b. The possibility of vessels from the UoC fishing outside the UoC or in different geographical areas (on the same trips or different trips).
 - c. The possibility of vessels from outside the UoC fishing the same stock.

- d. Any other risks of substitution between fish from the UoC and fish from outside the UoC.
- 7.5.10.1 The CAB shall inform the client of its obligations to meet traceability requirements before it sells fish or fish products from the UoC as MSC certified or under assessment, including that:
 - a. Systems are in place to ensure that fish and fish products from the UoC are traceable back to the UoC.
 - b. Systems are in place to ensure that fish and fish products from the UoC are segregated from fish or fish products not included in the UoC.

7.6 Team selection

- 7.6.1 The CAB shall form an assessment team (hereafter “team”) for a fishery assessment, comprising a team leader and a minimum of 1 additional team member, that meets the qualifications and competency requirements specified in Table PC1, Table PC2, and Table PC3 and in line with the personnel requirements in the [GCR](#).
- 7.6.2 If the team membership needs to change during an assessment, the CAB shall update the MSC Fisheries Announcement and publish a stakeholder notification.

7.7 Preparing for the Announcement Comment Draft Report

UoA with enhanced stock

- 7.7.1 If the UoA contains an enhanced fishery that is not covered in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SB](#) or [Section SC](#), the team shall:
 - 7.7.1.1 Review and, if necessary, modify the default assessment tree, taking into account the Performance Indicators (PIs) required to assess the enhancements to achieve, at a minimum, the same level of sustainability performance as the default assessment tree.
 - 7.7.1.2 Assess:
 - a. Enhancement activities against the impacts on the natural reproductive component of the associated wild stock.
 - b. The extent of translocation against:
 - i. The effect on the natural genetic characteristics of the stock.
 - ii. The environmental impacts of translocation.
 - c. Environmental modification activities under the Principle 2 assessment for their impacts on other species and the surrounding environment, including:
 - i. Feed augmentation. If feeding or disease prevention are used in hatch and catch (HAC) systems, or where other interventions are used in catch and grow (CAG) systems, the team shall confirm that these activities do not have serious negative impacts on other species and the surrounding environment.
 - ii. The use of medicines or other chemical compounds.
 - iii. Fertilisation to enhance natural food availability.
 - iv. Removal of predators or competitors.
 - d. The impacts of habitat modification under the habitats and ecosystems components in Principle 2, including:

- i. Whether serious or irreversible harm may be caused to the natural ecosystem's structure and function, including the natural food chains of predator and/or prey species.
 - ii. The types and extent of habitat modifications and the possibility of these causing serious or irreversible harm.
- 7.7.1.3 The CAB shall consult with other CABs developing modified assessment trees for similar fisheries.
- 7.7.1.4 If the team's proposed modifications to the default assessment tree for an enhanced fishery are later found by the MSC to produce a determination and/or conditions that do not conform to MSC requirements:
 - a. The team shall review and, if necessary, revise its assessment and scoring to conform to the default assessment tree.
 - b. The timing of the review and revisions shall be at the MSC's discretion and may include a requirement for an expedited audit.
 - c. The process shall be sufficient to ensure the continued validity of the determination, in conformity with the FCP.
- 7.7.1.5 If the team decides that the default assessment tree requires modification, the CAB shall follow 7.10.5.

Use of the MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox

- 7.7.2 The team shall use the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#) to determine whether to apply an assessment tool.
 - 7.7.2.1 If a non-CAB entity has applied the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#) prior to the CAB, the team shall:
 - a. Confirm that the UoA defined by the non-CAB entity is equivalent to the UoA defined by the CAB as per 7.5.5.
 - b. Review the non-CAB entity's application of the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).
 - c. Verify that the outputs are within the period of validity as per the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).
 - 7.7.2.2 The team shall apply a tool as per the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#) if the team determines that:
 - a. The non-CAB entity did not apply a tool when they should have or vice versa.
 - b. The non-CAB entity applied the appropriate tool for the situation but applied it incorrectly.
 - c. The outputs are outside their period of validity as per the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).

7.8 Announcement Comment Draft Report

- 7.8.1 For an initial assessment, the team shall prepare and complete an Announcement Comment Draft Report using, but not limited to, the information provided in the '[Client Information Request](#)'. 
- 7.8.1.1 The team may use any outputs of the optional pre-assessment stage and previous Fisheries Improvement Projects, if completed.
- 7.8.2 The team shall include the following in the Announcement Comment Draft Report:
 - a. Confirmation that the UoA is in scope ([MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#))
 - b. Confirmation of the assessment tree used to assess the UoA.

- c. The UoA(s).
 - d. The proposed UoC(s).
 - e. The Principle 1, Principle 2 and Principle 3 scoring elements.
 - f. A list of any overlapping UoAs.
 - g. Draft scores or scoring ranges (<60, 60–79, ≥80) for each PI.
 - i. If limited information is available to score a draft scoring range for the relevant PI, the team shall assign a draft scoring range no higher than 60–79.
 - A. The team shall highlight the information gap (7.8.2.j).
 - ii. If no information is available to score a PI, the team shall assign a draft scoring range of < 60.
 - A. The team shall state in the draft rationale that there is no information.
 - B. The team shall highlight the information gap (7.8.2.j).
 - iii. If the team has determined that the risk-based framework (RBF) methodology will be used, but has not yet been applied, the team shall assign a draft scoring range for the relevant PI of < 60.
 - A. The team shall state in the draft rationale that the RBF will be conducted during the assessment and that there is no information at this time.
 - B. The team shall highlight the information gap (7.8.2.j) including the information needed to conduct the RBF.
 - h. A draft rationale for each PI and Scoring Issue (SI).
 - i. A reference list.
 - j. An indication of the availability of information used to score each PI, highlighting potential information gaps.
 - k. An initial review of traceability risks identified in the '[Client Information Request](#)'.
 - l. The proposed point of change of ownership of product to any party not covered by the fishery certificate.
 - m. The proposed point from which subsequent Chain of Custody (CoC) certification is required.
 - n. A plan to review traceability systems at the site visit.
 - o. If the UoA is an enhanced fishery and is found to be within scope, a draft assessment of each enhancement activity conducted by the UoA and a documented justification for the determination that the UoA is within scope.
 - p. Identification and justification of any Inseparable Catch stock(s).
 - q. Summary of key issues for further investigation.
 - r. A plan for RBF activities that the team will conduct at the site visit (as per the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#)).
- 7.8.3 After the team has drafted scores or score ranges and rationales, as per 7.8.2.g and 7.8.2.h, the team shall determine whether the UoA overlaps with any certified or in-assessment UoA(s).
- 7.8.3.1 The team shall determine that there are overlapping UoAs where any of the following is met:
 - a. The UoAs target the same Principle 1 stock(s), as per 7.5.5.a, or
 - b. The UoAs have direct effects on the same Principle 2 species scoring element(s) (MSC Fisheries Standard SA3.1.3 to SA3.1.7).
 - 7.8.3.2 If the UoA overlaps with any certified or in-assessment UoAs, the team shall follow Annex PB.

- 7.8.4 The team shall use the default assessment tree as set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SA](#) in all assessments, with the following exceptions.
- 7.8.4.1 For enhanced bivalve fisheries, the team shall score the UoA according to the requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SB](#).
 - 7.8.4.2 For salmon fisheries, the team shall score the UoA according to the requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SC](#).
 - 7.8.4.3 For introduced species based fisheries, the team shall score the UoA according to the requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SD](#).
 - 7.8.4.4 For Principle 1 tuna stocks managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and listed in the MSC Fisheries Standard Section SE1.1.1.1 or SE1.1.1.2, the team shall score the UoA according to the requirements set out in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SE](#).
 - 7.8.4.5 If the UoA is an enhanced fishery for a species other than bivalves or salmon, the CAB shall apply 7.7.1.
 - 7.8.4.6 If the team determines that the default assessment trees referenced in 7.8.3.1–5 are inappropriate for the UoA and require modification, the CAB shall follow 7.10.5.
- 7.8.5 The CAB shall use the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' to create the Announcement Comment Draft Report.

7.9 Decision to proceed to announcement by client

- 7.9.1 The CAB shall provide the Announcement Comment Draft Report to the client.
- 7.9.2 The CAB shall ensure that any information given to the client during the Announcement Comment Draft Report stage is in conformity with ISO 17065.
- 7.9.3 If the client has a concern that insufficient information is available to support the team's decisions or that a decision has been made in error, the CAB shall give the client an opportunity to question the team and have an issue re-examined.
- 7.9.3.1 The CAB shall require the client to provide objective evidence in support of any additional claims or any claimed errors of fact.
 - 7.9.3.2 If the CAB accepts client requests for changes in the report, the CAB shall provide justifications for these changes.
 - 7.9.3.3 The CAB shall provide responses to client comments.
- 7.9.4 The CAB shall inform the client that it is the client's decision to either proceed to the announcement of assessment or delay the announcement of assessment.
- 7.9.5 The CAB may make changes to the Announcement Comment Draft Report, based on information provided by the client, at any time before the announcement of the fishery assessment.

7.10 Announcement of fishery assessment

- 7.10.1 The CAB shall announce the fishery assessment by completing and uploading the '[MSC Fishery Announcement Template](#)' and Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.10.1.1 The CAB shall follow the timeline for stakeholder input as detailed in 7.13.1.
- 7.10.2 The CAB shall include the following information in the '[MSC Fishery Announcement Template](#)':
- a. Confirmation that the fishery is within scope of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).

- b. Summary CVs of the team and team leader, including an explanation of how they meet the personnel requirements in the [GCR](#) and the qualifications and competencies in Annex PC, as well as confirmation that the team has no conflicts of interest in relation to the UoA under assessment.
 - c. The assessment tree being used to score the UoA.
 - d. Details of the site visit, including:
 - i. Dates of the site visit.
 - a) The CAB shall ensure the site visit commences after the deadline for stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report, as per Section 7.13.
 - ii. Location of the site visit.
 - e. An invitation for stakeholder participation in the assessment process.
 - i. The CAB shall ensure that stakeholders identified in the Pre-Assessment Report and/or Announcement Comment Draft Report are invited to participate in the assessment process.
 - f. Details of the opportunities and input methods for stakeholders to participate during the assessment process.
 - i. The CAB shall make it clear that all members of the team are available to meet with stakeholders in person or remotely.
 - g. The deadline for stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report, as per Section 7.13.
 - h. The hyperlink to the '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)'.
 - i. Details of any overlapping UoAs.
 - j. Any statement on certificate sharing described in 7.5.10.2.a.
 - k. Details of any Inseparable Catch as per 7.5.12
- 7.10.3 If the CAB proposes to use the RBF, the CAB shall follow the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox A2.1](#) and [A2.2](#).
- 7.10.4 At the same time as uploading the documents required in 7.10.1 to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, the CAB shall upload the following documents to the MSC database:
- a. A copy of the '[Client Information Request](#)'.
 - b. A copy of any Pre-Assessment Report(s) the CAB has written for the UoA. ■
 - i. If the CAB is aware of any other pre-assessment report(s) written by other parties, the CAB shall inform the MSC of the report's author.

Modified assessment trees

- 7.10.5 If the team decides to modify an assessment tree, the CAB shall:
- a. Before preparing the Announcement Comment Draft Report, apply for and obtain from the MSC a variation to 7.8.3.
 - b. Include in the '[MSC Fishery Announcement Template](#)' the decision to modify the assessment tree, the reasons for modifications, and the draft assessment tree.
 - c. Allow 60 days for stakeholder input (as per 7.13.1) on the draft modified assessment tree and weighting.
 - d. Respond to stakeholder input, recording why comments have been accepted or rejected.
 - e. Review the decision to modify the assessment tree, considering stakeholder input.

- f. Upload the final modified assessment tree to be used to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, within 10 days of the consultation period closing.
 - g. Include the changes to the assessment tree in the subsequent fishery assessment reports.
- 7.10.5.1 The CAB shall modify PIs in a way that facilitates appropriate drafting of conditions as per 7.16.2. ■

7.11 Assessment timelines

- 7.11.1 The CAB shall upload an indicative assessment timeline to the MSC database at the same time as the fishery assessment announcement forming the basis for stakeholders to track the assessment process.
- 7.11.1.1 If, during the assessment, the CAB determines that the publication date of the next public report will be 30 or more days before or after the date stated in the indicative timeline, the CAB shall upload a revised timeline to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.

7.12 Peer Review College ■

- 7.12.1 Upon announcement of the fishery assessment, the CAB shall send the Peer Review College a notification that the announcement of the fishery assessment and the assessment timeline have been published on the MSC website.
- 7.12.1.1 The CAB shall confirm the anticipated date that the Client and Peer Review Draft Report will become available.
- 7.12.1.2 The CAB shall inform the Peer Review College if changes are made to the assessment timeline that will affect the peer review process.
- 7.12.2 The CAB shall obtain from the Peer Review College:
- a. The names of the peer reviewers who have been proposed to conduct the peer review and details of their qualifications and competencies.
 - b. Confirmation that the peer reviewers meet the required competencies.
 - c. Confirmation of the availability of the peer reviewers within the timeline nominated by the CAB.
 - d. A statement that the proposed peer reviewers do not have any conflicts of interest relating to the UoA.
- 7.12.3 The CAB shall review the proposed peer reviewers and confirm to the Peer Review College that they do not have any conflicts of interest.
- 7.12.4 Following the site visit, the CAB shall either:
- a. Provide the Peer Review College with the contact details of all the stakeholders to enable the College to conduct the stakeholder consultation on potential conflicts of interest of the peer reviewers proposed, or
 - b. Request stakeholders to inform the Peer Review College regarding any potential conflicts of interest of the peer reviewers proposed, using the consultation form provided by the Peer Review College. ■
- 7.12.5 The CAB shall obtain from the Peer Review College confirmation that the peer reviewers have no conflicts of interest in relation to the UoA under assessment.
- 7.12.6 The Peer Review College's decision on the choice of peer reviewers is final.
- 7.12.7 The CAB shall include the information in 7.12.2.a and 7.12.2.b in the Public Comment Draft Report and subsequent reports.

7.13 Stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report

- 7.13.1 The CAB shall allow 60 days for stakeholder input.
- 7.13.2 The CAB shall provide the hyperlink to the '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)'.
- 7.13.3 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that they are required to provide objective evidence and references in support of any claims or any claimed errors of fact.
- 7.13.4 Before the site visit starts, the CAB shall upload all written submissions received from the stakeholder consultation on the Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website. ■
 - 7.13.4.1 The CAB shall inform stakeholders that 7.13.4 has been completed.

7.14 Site visits, stakeholder input, and information collection

- 7.14.1 The CAB shall plan their site visit defining the site visit assessment activities, location(s) and duration, based on risks and any information gaps identified, with the goal of:
 - a. Assessing the UoA(s)'s conformity with MSC requirements.
 - b. Gathering information to verify score and progress against any conditions of certification.
 - c. Meeting all interested stakeholders to gather additional information.
 - d. Including a review of any changes since the any previous certification activity.
- 7.14.2 The team shall conduct the site visit as planned. ■
 - 7.14.2.1 The full team shall attend all meetings at the site visit.
- 7.14.3 The team shall:
 - a. Conduct interviews to make sure that the team is aware of any concerns or information that participants may have.
 - b. Allow private interviews with the team for participants on request.
 - c. Use any information provided in private in conformity with confidentiality requirements, see Section 4.3.
- 7.14.4 The team shall only use information (in accordance with Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5) that was available on or before the last day of the site visit.
 - 7.14.4.1 If the team and any participant at the site visit agree in writing that information will be made available after the site visit, the team shall accept this information up to 30 days after the last day of the site visit.
- 7.14.5 Following the site visit, the team may change the target stock(s) listed for assessment under Principle 1.
 - 7.14.5.1 The team may assess any stock or species initially proposed for assessment under Principle 1, that will no longer be assessed under Principle 1, against the relevant Principle 2 PIs.
 - 7.14.5.2 The team shall not assess any stock or species not originally proposed for assessment under Principle 1.

7.15 Scoring the UoA

- 7.15.1 The team shall: ■
 - a. Compile and analyse all relevant information.
 - b. Discuss evidence together.
 - c. Weigh up the balance of evidence.
 - d. Agree a final score following the processes below.

- 7.15.2 The team shall determine whether scoring elements have been defined for scoring against relevant Scoring Issues (SIs) and Scoring Guideposts (SGs) within Principle 1, Principle 2 and Principle 3 components.
- 7.15.2.1 The team shall define scoring elements using the finest level of resolution for which information is available, relative to the scale of the UoA.
 - 7.15.2.2 When defining the scoring elements in Principle 1, the team shall follow SA2.2.5.b.
 - 7.15.2.3 When defining the scoring elements in Principle 2, the team shall follow SA3.1.3 – SA3.1.9.
 - 7.15.2.4 When defining the scoring elements in Principle 3, the team shall follow SA4.1.1 – SA4.1.4.
- 7.15.3 The team shall evaluate whether the SG is met for:
- a. The UoA, in situations where there are no scoring element/s.
 - b. Each applicable scoring element separately, in situations where scoring elements are defined.
- 7.15.3.1 Where the team has chosen to evaluate multiple scoring elements at once in the same rationale (e.g., due to overlapping information), the team shall count the result as a separate and identical SG outcome for each element. ■
- 7.15.4 The team shall use the information available to determine which Scoring Guideposts (SGs) are met for each SI.
- 7.15.4.1 The team shall only consider an SG as met if it is fully and unambiguously met.
 - 7.15.4.2 The team shall only consider a higher SG met if all lower SGs are also met, or not applicable.
 - 7.15.4.3 The team shall justify each SI by including supporting rationale to document:
 - a. Why each SI is fully and unambiguously met.
 - b. Where there is more than one element, that each SI is fully and unambiguously met for each element.
- 7.15.5 Where the RBF is used to score a scoring element, the team shall use the risk outcome score converted to the MSC scoring guidepost derived following the relevant RBF methodology in the MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox. ■
- 7.15.5.1 For PIs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1, where additional information relevant to the SI is available, the team may apply the requirements in A5.1.2.5 or A7.6.2.5 to determine if a higher SG in the relevant assessment tree is fully and unambiguously met.
- 7.15.6 The team shall apply Table 1 to individual SG outcomes (from 7.15.3) to determine the overall PI score for the UoA. ■

Table 1: Combining individual SG outcomes to determine the overall PI score

PI Score	Distribution of individual scores
<60	Not all meet SG60. (The team shall not assign a numeric score less than 60, but rather a score of “<60”.)
60	All meet SG60 but none meet SG80.
65	All meet SG60. Less than half also meet SG80.

PI Score	Distribution of individual scores
70	All meet SG60. Half also meet SG80.
75	All meet SG60. More than half also meet SG80.
80	All meet SG60 and SG80 but none meet SG100
85	All meet SG60 and SG80. Less than half also meet SG100.
90	All meet SG60 and SG80. Half also meet SG100.
95	All meet SG60 and SG80. More than half also meet SG100.
100	All meet SG60 and SG80 and SG100.

7.15.7 The team shall calculate the overall Principle level score for each UoA by entering the PI scores for the UoA into the '[MSC Fishery Assessment Scoring Worksheet](#)'.

7.15.7.1 The team shall use the default weighting when scoring the default assessment tree. ■

a. Where necessary, the team shall make changes to the default weighting if they propose modifications to the default assessment tree.

i. The team shall ensure that weighting in each level of the final tree (i.e. Principle, component or PI) adds up to a total of 1.

ii. The team shall give equal weighting to each PI within a component of the tree, and to each component within a Principle of the tree.

iii. The team shall use the revised weighting in the '[MSC Fishery Assessment Scoring Worksheet](#)' when scoring salmon fisheries ([MSC Fisheries Standard Section SC](#)). ■

7.15.8 The team shall report scores for each of the 3 Principles to the nearest 1 decimal place.

7.15.9 The CAB shall not certify the UoA if:

a. Any of the required PIs are not scored.

b. SG60 for any SI is not met.

c. The overall Principle level score is less than 80 for any of the 3 Principles.

7.16 Setting conditions ■

7.16.1 The team shall set conditions of certification if the UoA does not achieve the SG80 performance level for any individual SI, but meets the SG60 performance level for that SI.

7.16.1.1 The team shall set a condition to require improved performance to the SG80 level.

7.16.1.2 The team shall draft conditions to follow the narrative or metric form of the SG80 of the relevant SI(s) and accompanying requirements. ■

7.16.1.3 The team shall assign a unique identification number to each condition that remains unchanged. ■

7.16.2 The team shall include conditions in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and all subsequent reports.

- 7.16.3 The CAB shall instruct the client to develop a Client Action Plan to improve the performance of the UoA to the SG80 level for each relevant SI within five years.
- 7.16.3.1 An exception to 7.16.3 applies where the condition is derived from an outcome that has already been harmonised under Annex PB. The deadline agreed through the harmonisation activities shall apply.

7.17 Determination of traceability and product eligibility

Traceability evaluation and determination

- 7.17.1 The team shall evaluate and determine whether controls for each UoC are sufficient to maintain the identity and traceability of fish and fish products from harvest to the point at which Chain of Custody certification is required under 7.17.7, including segregation where needed to distinguish eligible from non-eligible product. 
- 7.17.2 Before the site visit, the team shall review the available description of product flows and identify the relevant risks of mixing, substitution or loss of information needed to establish UoC origin and eligibility. 
- 7.17.2.1 The review shall cover catch from outside the UoC, handling and transshipment, as applicable, and identify any information needed to complete the evaluation.
- 7.17.3 The team shall verify that the controls addressing the identified risks are implemented and effective, taking account of information gaps, inconsistencies and limitations in the evidence when making its determination. 
- 7.17.4 Where fish and fish products are transhipped on the high seas, the team shall only make a positive determination where it confirms that the relevant systems:
- a. Are verified independently of the fishery certificate holder or applicant;
 - b. Cover both the fishing and receiving vessels involved and;
 - c. Apply to all transshipment events within the scope of the determination.
- 7.17.5 The team shall ensure that an auditor who conforms to the applicable personnel requirements of the MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements and the GCR reviews the traceability evaluation and confirms whether the evidence supports the proposed determination.
- 7.17.5.1 The team shall resolve any information gaps that prevent confirmation of a positive determination before issuing it.

Entry Into certified chains of custody

- 7.17.6 The team shall only determine product eligible to enter further certified chains of custody where the traceability evaluation is positive, the applicable product eligibility date and certification status allow eligibility, and any applicable inseparable catch requirements in 7.17.177 are met.
- 7.17.6.1 For a newly certified UoC the team shall set the product eligibility date as the Public Certification Report publication date.
- 7.17.6.2 The team shall not reset the product eligibility date for a UoC that remains continuously certified at reassessment.
- 7.17.7 The team shall determine that Chain of Custody certification begins at landing
- 7.17.7.1 The team may determine Chain of custody starts earlier if required to maintain product identity, segregation or traceability.
- 7.17.8 The team shall identify the activities covered by the fishery certificate before the point determined under 7.17.7 and the vessels or fishing operators entitled to use the certificate.
- 7.17.9 The team shall evaluate whether the information transferred with product enables the first Chain of Custody certificate holder to establish the applicable UoC, product eligibility and any specific restrictions, including those relating to inseparable catch. 

- 7.17.9.1 Where separation is completed at landing under Chain of Custody certification, the team shall confirm that controls before handover preserve the origin and identity needed to distinguish eligible product, and that the receiving operation has valid CoC certification covering receipt and separation. ■
- 7.17.9.2 The team shall not require physical separation before landing where reliable identification is maintained and separation under 7.17.9.1 can establish eligibility.
 - i. Where the product cannot be reliably distinguished, the team shall apply 7.17.177 or make a negative determination for the affected product.

Negative determinations and their revision

- 7.17.10 Where controls are insufficient or the evidence does not support a positive determination, the team shall make a negative determination and state that the affected product is not eligible to enter further certified chains of custody or to be sold or labelled as MSC certified.
 - 7.17.10.1 The team shall identify the UoC and product flows affected and may only retain a positive determination for an unaffected flow only where the flow is independently identifiable, segregated from affected product as necessary, and meets all applicable requirements.
- 7.17.11 The team shall retain a negative determination until it has evaluated evidence that the reasons for it have been resolved and has issued a revised determination following review under 7.17.5. ■
 - 7.17.11.1 The team may undertake this evaluation during an assessment, reassessment, surveillance audit or scope extension, or through an expedited audit to evaluate a change in traceability or product eligibility, in accordance with the applicable FCP procedures.
 - 7.17.11.2 The team shall record the revised determination, its effective date and the product to which it applies, publish the revised Fishery Certificate Statement and supporting audit or assessment outcome through the applicable MSC procedures, and inform the client.
 - a. If the negative determination is related to any of the eligibility criteria for inseparable catch or stocks at 7.17.17 – 7.17.19, the evaluation shall include justification for the positive change in eligibility.

Reporting and continued verification

- 7.17.12 The team shall record the following on the Fishery Certificate Statement: ■
 - a. The UoC, associated UoA and the vessels or fishing operators entitled to use the certificate, directly or by reference to the controlled list under 7.17.8
 - b. The activities covered by the fishery certificate, applicable landing points, and the point, activities and entities from which CoC certification is required.
 - c. The positive or negative determination, its effective date, the product eligibility date, the affected product or product flows, and any applicable eligibility restrictions.
 - d. The information by which buyers can confirm UoC origin and eligibility, including the inseparable catch information under 7.17.21 where applicable.
- 7.17.13 In the applicable MSC Reporting Template the team shall document:
 - a. The relevant product flows and risks;
 - b. The controls evaluated;
 - c. The evidence supporting its findings;
 - d. The CoC auditor review conclusion;
 - e. The justified determination and;

- f. The reason why CoC certification begins before landing and the boundary between fishery and CoC coverage, if applicable.
- 7.17.13.1 The team may cross-reference information already reported, provided that the evidence supporting the determination can be located and understood. ■
- 7.17.13.2 The report shall reference the current Fishery Certificate Statement.
- 7.17.14 At each surveillance audit, the team shall evaluate whether the controls remain sufficient to support the determination, taking account of relevant changes and new information. ■
 - 7.17.14.1 The team shall only apply 7.17.5 where it proposes to change the determination or where those changes or information call the basis of the determination into question, and record its conclusion and supporting reasons in the surveillance report.
- 7.17.15 Between surveillance audits, the team shall use the expedited audit route where further evaluation of new information that may affect the determination is needed.
 - 7.17.15.1 Where the evidence no longer supports eligibility, the CAB shall apply 7.17.10 and update the statement under 7.17.12 without waiting for the next scheduled audit or completion of reviewer confirmation.
- 7.17.16 On becoming aware that non-eligible product has been identified or sold as MSC certified by an operator using its fishery certificate, the team shall inform certificate holder that it is required to:
 - a. Inform affected customers and the CAB within 4 days of detection.
 - b. Immediately cease selling affected product in stock as MSC certified until its status has been verified by the CAB.
 - c. Cooperate with the CAB to establish the cause and implement corrective action.
- 7.17.16.1 On becoming aware of such product, the team shall evaluate the affected product and cause, verify the response and corrective action, and revise the determination where necessary, applying any additional GCR requirements applicable to the fishery certificate.

Eligibility of Inseparable Catch

- 7.17.17 To determine whether catches of non-target stocks assessed under Principle 2 are present and are inseparable from catches of stocks assessed under Principle 1, the team shall verify the catch meets at least one of the following criteria: ■
 - a. Biologically inseparability: the Principle 2 catch cannot reliably be distinguished from the Principle 1 catch during normal harvesting or onboard handling.
 - b. Operational inseparability: the Principle 2 catch is distinguishable but cannot reasonably be kept separate during normal harvesting, onboard handling, transfer or processing before landing because of evidenced operational or technical constraints
 - i. For operational inseparability, the team shall evaluate the constraint and whether practicable identification or separation, including at landing under 7.17.9.1–7.17.9.2, would allow target catch eligibility to be established without using the inseparable catch provisions.
- 7.17.17.1 In addition, the team shall confirm that each proposed inseparable stock or species:
 - a. Meets the applicable fish and invertebrate species requirements under Principle 2, by reference to the relevant assessment conclusions and;
 - b. Is not categorised as endangered, threatened, protected (ETP) or is a bird, mammal, reptile or amphibian, and;

- c. Does not exceed 15% of the weight when combined with the catch of the Principle 1 species, calculated using:
 - i. Catch data from the 5 most recent years of fishing activity, or where there has been less than 5 years of activity, all available evidence with justification for its sufficiency and representativeness.
 - ii. Combined landed weight of all the non-target stocks or species, divided by their combined landed weight plus the landed weight of the Principle 1 catch from the same UoA over the same period, with the result expressed as a percentage.
 - iii. A consistent weight basis, including relevant landings whether or not sold as certified, and excluding discards, other UoAs, unrelated stocks and separately segregated non-target catch, without double counting.

7.17.18 The CAB shall document the annual weights and percentages, combined percentage, annual percentage range, years used and supporting evidence, including relevant estimates, conversions, missing data and uncertainty.

7.17.19 Where such catch that meets the criteria set out in 7.17.17 and 7.17.17.1 is present, the CAB shall determine its eligibility to enter certified chains of custody under **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**, as part of the determination under 7.17.1. ■

Transparency and continued eligibility

7.17.20 At initial assessment, each reassessment and before adding a stock or species to the inseparable catch determination, the team shall document in the relevant assessment report:

- a. why the stock or species cannot reasonably be included for assessment under Principle 1 at that time. ■
- b. the identity of the inseparable stock or species, the relevant UoA, UoC and product flows, the supporting evidence and conclusions against the eligibility criteria, and the calculation under 7.17.17.1.c.

7.17.21 The team shall identify eligible inseparable catch on the Fishery Certificate Statement, including:

- a. The species and stock identity and associated UoA and UoC.
- b. A statement that the catch is assessed under Principle 2 and eligible under the inseparable catch provisions, together with any specific eligibility restrictions.
- c. The combined percentage and fishing years covered for each UoA, with a reference to the supporting report, clearly stating this a UoA-level result and does not establish the composition of individual consignments.

7.17.22 At each reassessment, the team shall follow 7.17.17 – 7.17.19 and where applicable criteria continue to be met, allow continued eligibility.

7.17.23 At each surveillance audit, the team shall:

- 7.17.23.1 Review changes affecting continued eligibility and update the calculation using the most recent complete fishing years and where new evidence shows that an earlier eligibility decision relied on incorrect information, the team shall evaluate the effect on that decision. ■
 - i. Where an annual percentage exceeds 15%, the CAB shall record the exceedance and recommend that the certificate holder examine its causes and the risk of exceeding the combined percentage limit.
 - ii. An annual exceedance alone shall not remove eligibility where the CAB confirms that the combined percentage limit and all other applicable requirements remain met. ■

- iii. Where an eligibility requirement is no longer met, including where the combined proportion exceeds 15% or conformity with that limit cannot be substantiated, the CAB shall revise the determination and Fishery Certificate Statement under 7.17.10–7.17.12.
- iv. A negative determination shall also cover target catch in affected mixed product flows unless it can be separated and its eligibility independently established under 7.17.9 and 7.17.10.1.

7.18 Client and Peer Review Draft Report

- 7.18.1 Once conditions have been drafted and the point at which fish may enter further chains of custody has been determined, the CAB shall use the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' to create the Client and Peer Review Draft Report.
- 7.18.2 The team shall include in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report.:
 - a. Confirmation that the UoA is in scope ([MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#)).
 - b. Confirmation of the assessment tree used to assess the UoA.
 - c. The UoA(s).
 - d. The proposed UoC(s).
 - e. The Principle 1, Principle 2 and Principle 3 scoring elements.
 - f. The scores and weightings for each PI.
 - g. A rationale for each PI and SI.
 - h. The draft recommendation on whether or not the UoA(s) will be recommended for certification.
 - i. Any updates to the Product flow, traceability risks and mitigations table in the Traceability section, following the site visit.
 - j. Confirmation of the UoC(s) Eligibility to enter further certified Chains of Custody
 - k. A review of traceability factors as defined in 7.5.9
 - l. Any conditions.
 - m. If the UoA is an enhanced fishery and is found to be within scope, an assessment of each enhancement activity conducted by the UoA and a documented justification for the determination that the UoA is within scope.
 - n. Identification and justification for Inseparable Catch stock(s).
 - o. RBF outcomes, if completed.
- 7.18.3 The CAB shall issue the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to the client and to the Peer Review College at the same time.

Peer review

- 7.18.4 The CAB shall submit the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to the Peer Review College for review by peer reviewers, as detailed in Section 7.12.
- 7.18.5 Upon receipt of the peer reviewers' written comments, the team shall:
 - a. Address all the issues raised, changing any part of the scoring, conditions, and report as the team sees necessary. ■
 - i. The team shall provide clear explanations, with evidence, in the CAB response column of the '[MSC Template for Initial Peer Review of MSC Fishery Assessments](#)' to support the team's conclusion on whether they accept or reject each of the issues raised by the peer reviewer.

- b. Incorporate peer reviewer comments, team responses to those comments, and any changes into the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to create the Public Comment Draft Report.
- c. Amend any conditions as required, and ensure the fishery client amends the Client Action Plan as required.

Client review

- 7.18.6 The CAB should allow the client 60 days after receipt of the Client and Peer Review Draft Report to submit a Client Action Plan. ■
 - 7.18.6.1 The CAB shall submit the Client and Peer Review Draft Report or the completed conditions table to allow the client to populate their Client Action Plan.
 - 7.18.6.2 If conditions are added as a result of the peer review, the CAB should allow an additional 30 days for the client to update the Client Action Plan.
- 7.18.7 The team shall verify that the Client Action Plan meets the following requirements for each condition: ■
 - a. Specifies the action(s) that will be implemented for each year.
 - b. Identifies the entity/entities responsible for implementing the action(s) for each year.
 - c. Identifies the output(s) for each year, where applicable.
 - d. Demonstrates that the actions specified are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely, and are expected to meet the SG80 level of performance by the condition deadline.
 - e. Demonstrates that the necessary funding, resources and other support required to implement the actions are in place or committed.
 - f. Provides evidence that each entity identified as responsible for implementing an action has agreed to its role and responsibility.
- 7.18.8 The Client Action Plan shall be completed using the relevant section in the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)'.
- 7.18.9 The team shall only accept a Client Action Plan if all requirements in 7.18.6 and 7.18.7 are met.
- 7.18.10 If the CAB does not accept the Client Action Plan, then the UoA shall not be certified.
- 7.18.11 If the CAB accepts the Client Action Plan, then the team shall use it to set a condition deadline within five years by which the SG80 level of performance will be met, and the condition is scheduled to be closed.
 - 7.18.11.1 For a condition derived from a harmonised outcome under Annex PB, the deadline shall be determined in accordance with Annex PB.
 - 7.18.11.2 The deadline shall be specified as a date and the first surveillance thereafter during which it will be assessed.
 - 7.18.11.3 If there are exceptional circumstances which mean that the SG80 level of performance cannot be met within five years, then the team may set a longer deadline. ■
 - a. Exceptional circumstances shall be applied when a condition is first drafted during assessment or at a surveillance or expedited audit if a new condition is set.
 - b. The team shall include justification for any exceptional circumstances applied.

- 7.18.11.4 If a condition is set with a deadline of five years or longer, or with a deadline that falls within the subsequent reassessment period, the team shall assess progress at a condition-update surveillance audit in accordance with 7.28.4.
- 7.18.12 The team shall use the accepted Client Action Plan to set the verification milestones for each year of the condition, which will be used during annual surveillance to verify progress of the condition.
 - a. The team shall specify how verification milestones will be assessed.
 - b. The team shall state verification milestones in a surveillance audit number format (e.g., Year 1 surveillance).
- 7.18.13 The team shall document and retain any comments made by the client on the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and responses from the team.
 - 7.18.13.1 The CAB shall make these comments and responses available to any party upon request.

7.19 Public Comment Draft Report

- 7.19.1 The team shall use the 'MSC Reporting Template' to create the Public Comment Draft Report.
- 7.19.2 When creating the Public Comment Draft Report, the team shall only make changes to scoring (Section 7.15) if:
 - a. Justified by registered stakeholder, MSC, client, or peer reviewer comments received during consultation opportunities, or
 - b. Justified by findings issued by the MSC's assurance provider, or
 - c. There are any score changes derived from applying Annex PB.
 - d. The information used to justify scoring changes was publicly available on or before the last day of the site visit as per 7.14.4.
- 7.19.3 The team shall include in the Public Comment Draft Report:
 - a. Confirmation that the UoA is in scope (MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1).
 - b. Confirmation of the assessment tree used to assess the UoA.
 - c. The UoA(s).
 - d. The proposed UoC(s).
 - e. The Principle 1, Principle 2 and Principle 3 scoring elements.
 - f. The scores and weightings for each PI.
 - g. A rationale for each PI and SI.
 - h. The draft recommendation on whether or not the UoA(s) will be recommended for certification.
 - i. A review of traceability factors as defined in 7.5.9.
 - j. The surveillance schedule as per 7.32.1 to 7.32.4.
 - k. Any conditions.
 - l. The Client Action Plan.
 - m. Verification milestones.
 - n. Peer review comments and team responses.
 - o. If the UoA is an enhanced fishery and is found to be within scope, an assessment of each enhancement activity conducted by the UoA and a documented justification for the determination that the UoA is within scope.

- p. Identification and justification for Inseparable Catch stock(s).
 - q. A review of RBF outcomes, if completed.
- 7.19.4 The team shall include in the References section of the report any references used to support statements in the evaluation tables of the reports.
 - 7.19.4.1 The team shall include an in-text reference to the relevant source. ▣
- 7.19.5 The team shall include responses from the team as per 7.19.6.d in each '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)' uploaded as per 7.19.7.
- 7.19.6 The team shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Public Comment Draft Report:
 - a. Any written submissions from registered stakeholders received during consultation opportunities on:
 - i. The Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - ii. The proposal for the modification of the default tree.
 - iii. The use of the RBF ([MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#)).
 - b. All written submissions received during site visits.
 - c. A summary of verbal submissions received during site visits that are likely to cause a "material difference" to the outcome of the assessment, including those with information that could influence:
 - i. A PI score falling below 60.
 - ii. A PI score falling between 60 and 80.
 - iii. A Principle score falling below an aggregate 80 score as a result of the changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - iv. A change in scope (as per [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#), 7.5.2, or 7.5.3).
 - d. Responses from the team to submissions described in 7.19.6.a, b, and c, including:
 - i. Any changes to scoring, rationales, or conditions that have been made.
 - ii. Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification.
- 7.19.7 The CAB shall upload the following to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website:
 - a. Any '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)' submitted by a stakeholder as per 7.19.6.a or 7.19.6.b.
 - b. Any '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)' with a summary of verbal submissions received during site visits as per 7.19.6.c.
- 7.19.8 The CAB shall upload the Public Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - 7.19.8.1 The CAB shall also upload:
 - a. An announcement with the Public Comment Draft Report including a hyperlink to the '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)'.
 - b. A statement that the team will only consider stakeholder input on the Public Comment Draft Report from registered stakeholders (4.2.8).
 - c. A statement that registered stakeholders are required to provide objective evidence in support of any claims or any claimed errors of fact.
 - d. The deadline for stakeholder input.
 - 7.19.8.2 The CAB shall inform registered stakeholders (4.2.8) that their previous input (7.19.6.a, 7.19.6.b or 7.19.6.c) and the response from the team is published on the MSC website and available for review.

- 7.19.9 The CAB shall make the Public Comment Draft Report available for input from registered stakeholders (4.2.8) for at least 30 days.
- 7.19.9.1 The team shall consider all registered stakeholders' input on the Public Comment Draft Report.
- 7.19.9.2 If the CAB receives input from stakeholders who are not registered, the CAB shall record the stakeholder input for consideration at the next surveillance audit and inform the stakeholder that their input will be reviewed at that time.

Peer reviewer comments and MSC technical oversight

- 7.19.10 The CAB shall provide the Public Comment Draft Report to the Peer Review College for::
- Peer review of the Client Action Plan, including, where necessary, the exceptional circumstances justification for any altered condition deadlines.
 - Follow-up review of the assessment team's responses to the peer reviewers' initial comments.
- 7.19.10.1 The CAB shall provide the Public Comment Draft Report to peer reviewers at the same time that it is provided to registered stakeholders for input, for at least 30 days.
- 7.19.11 The CAB shall provide the Public Comment Draft Report to the MSC to conduct technical oversight.
- 7.19.11.1 The CAB shall provide the report to the MSC at the same time that it is provided to registered stakeholders for input, for at least 30 days.

7.20 Determination

- 7.20.1 The team shall consider the suggested changes and comments made to the Public Comment Draft Report under Section 7.19.
- 7.20.1.1 The team shall confirm or amend their recommendation.
- 7.20.2 When creating the Final Draft Report, the team shall only make changes to scoring if:
- Justified by registered stakeholder, MSC, client, or peer reviewer comments received during consultation opportunities, or
 - Justified by findings issued by the MSC's accreditation body, or
 - There are any score changes derived from applying Annex PB.
 - The information used to justify scoring changes was publicly available on or before the last day of the site visit as per 7.14.4.
- 7.20.3 The team shall record the CAB's final determination in the Final Draft Report.
- 7.20.4 If changes to scoring have resulted in conditions being added or removed, the team should give the client at least 20 days to make any amendments to the Client Action Plan.
- 7.20.4.1 Once complete, the team shall add the amended Client Action Plan to the Final Draft Report
- 7.20.4.2 The team shall amend verification milestones in the Final Draft Report, if relevant.

7.21 Final Draft Report

- 7.21.1 If the period from the full assessment announcement to the publication of the Final Draft Report by the MSC is more than 18 months, the CAB shall withdraw the UoA(s) from the MSC assessment process.
- 7.21.2 The team shall use the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' to create the Final Draft Report.

- 7.21.3 The team shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Final Draft Report: ■
- a. Any written submissions from registered stakeholders received during the consultation opportunity on:
 - i. The Announcement Comment Draft Report.
 - ii. The Public Comment Draft Report.
 - b. All written submissions received during site visits.
 - c. A summary of verbal submissions received during site visits likely to cause a “material difference” to the outcome of the assessment, including those with information that could influence:
 - i. A PI score falling below 60.
 - ii. A PI score falling between 60 and 80.
 - iii. A Principle score falling below an aggregate 80 score as a result of changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - iv. A change in scope (as per [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#), 7.5.2 or 7.5.3).
 - d. If applicable, peer review follow-up and MSC technical oversight submissions.
 - e. Responses from the team to the submissions in 7.21.3.a–d, including:
 - i. Any changes to scoring, rationales, or conditions that have been made.
 - ii. Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification
 - f. The CAB shall review, and update as needed, the proposed surveillance schedule (as per 7.32.1 to 7.32.4) for the Final Draft Report to take account of any changes to the assessment.
- 7.21.4 The CAB shall upload the following to the MSC database:
- a. Any ‘[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)’ submitted by a stakeholder during the assessment and the team’s responses as per 7.22.3.a, b, and e.
- 7.21.5 Any ‘[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input](#)’ with a summary of verbal submissions received during site visits and the team’s responses as per 7.22.3.c and e. The CAB shall upload the Final Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.21.6 The CAB shall announce the objection period by uploading an announcement with the Final Draft Report. (MSC Objection Process).
- 7.21.6.1 The CAB shall include the following information in the announcement:
- a. A hyperlink to the ‘MSC Notice of Objection Template’.
 - b. The deadline for submitting a ‘MSC Notice of Objection Template’.

7.22 MSC objection period

- 7.22.1 If no objection is received during the objection period, the CAB shall proceed to publishing the Public Certification Report.
- 7.22.2 If an objection is received, the CAB shall follow the process and timeline set out in the [MSC Objection Process](#).

7.23 Public Certification Report and Certification Statement

- 7.23.1 At the end of the full assessment process, the CAB shall finalise a Public Certification Report in accordance with this section that incorporates the Final Draft Report and, if relevant, results arising from the [MSC Objection Process](#).

- 7.23.2 If the [MSC Objection Process](#) is not triggered, the CAB should publish the Public Certification Report within 60 days of the closing date of the objection period.
- 7.23.3 If the [MSC Objection Process](#) is triggered, the CAB should publish the Public Certification Report within 60 days of completion of the Objection Process, depending on the outcome of the objection.
- 7.23.4 The CAB shall use the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' to create the Public Certification Report.
- 7.23.4.1 The CAB shall review, and update as needed, the proposed surveillance schedule (as per 7.32.1 to 7.32.4) for the Public Certification Report to take account of any changes to the assessment.
- 7.23.5 The CAB shall remove the Unit(s) of Certification, Traceability and Eligibility section from the Public Certification Report and use the MSC Certification Statement Template to create a Certification Statement for the fishery.
- 7.23.5.1 The CAB shall replace the contents of the Unit(s) of Certification, Traceability and Eligibility section of the PCR with a link directing readers to the Track A Fishery page of for the fishery and a statement explaining that all information relating to certification can be found in the Certification Statement.
- 7.23.6 The CAB shall upload the Public Certification Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.23.6.1 The CAB shall upload to the MSC database, for publication on the MSC website, an announcement with the Public Certification Report including the determination to certify or fail the UoA.
- 7.23.7 The CAB shall determine which entities should or should not be allowed to use the fishery certificate.
- 7.23.8 The CAB shall only permit fish caught by those fishers that are identified by reference to or on a valid fishery certificate to be eligible to enter certified chains of custody and subsequently bear the MSC ecolabel.
- 7.23.9 The CAB shall identify the Public Certification Report publication date as the “eligibility date”, from which product harvested from a UoC may be eligible to be identified as certified product.
- 7.23.10 Products shall not be sold as certified or labelled with the MSC ecolabel, logo, or trademarks until certification and product eligibility are confirmed.
- 7.23.11 The CAB shall upload a Fishery Certificate Statement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website defining: ■
- a. Which entities are currently eligible to access the certificate.
 - i. If a group of vessels or individual fishing operators (i.e. not an entire fishing fleet) is used to define the UoA or UoC, the CAB shall require the client to provide a list of the vessels, or a hyperlink to a publicly available list of vessels using the 'MSC Vessel Information Template', for the CAB to upload to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - ii. The CAB shall only accept a link to a publicly available vessel list that contains all key data elements as listed in the 'MSC Vessel Information Template'.
 - b. Which other entities, if identified in the UoA, may be eligible to access the certificate through the mechanism of certificate sharing.
 - c. Which points of landing, auctions, or other transfer may be used for the sale of fish and fish products from the UoC into further chains of custody.
 - d. The point from which subsequent CoC certification is required.
 - e. Any specific eligibility criteria for product to be sold as certified, or where to find this information. ■

- 7.23.11.1 If there are any changes related to information on the Fishery Certificate Statement, the CAB shall update the Fishery Certificate Statement by uploading a new version with changes to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website within 14 days of the change, except for the list of vessels detailed in 7.23.11.i.
- a. The CAB shall complete the Summary of Changes table in the Fisheries Certification Statement Template
- 7.23.12 If the CAB becomes aware of any changes related to information on the 'MSC Vessel Information Template', the CAB shall upload a new version with changes to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website within 14 days of the change.
- 7.23.13 The CAB shall update information under 7.23.10.1.a at every surveillance audit.

7.24 Certification decision and certificate issue

- 7.24.1 If the CAB makes a decision to award certification, the CAB shall determine that the date of certification is the date the Public Certification Report is published on the MSC website or, for reassessments, the 5th anniversary date of the existing certificate, whichever is later.
- 7.24.2 For each UoA, the CAB shall add catch data into the MSC database for the most recent fishing year for which data is available.
- 7.24.2.1 The CAB shall complete this within 10 days from the date the Public Certification Report has been published on the MSC website.
- 7.24.3 The CAB shall upload a copy of the issued fishery certificate(s) to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.24.3.1 The CAB shall ensure that the date of certification on each fishery certificate matches the date in 7.24.1.
- 7.24.3.2 The CAB shall submit a copy of the issued certificate(s) up to 10 days after the date of certification.
- 7.24.4 If changes to the information contained on a fishery certificate are made, the CAB shall ensure the updated copy of the fishery certificate is uploaded to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website within 10 days of the changes occurring.

7.25 UoA(s) that fail or withdraw from assessment

UoA(s) that withdraw from assessment

- 7.25.1 If at any time the fishery client makes the decision not to proceed with the assessment, the CAB shall withdraw the UoA(s) from assessment and:
- a. Publish an announcement informing stakeholders that the UoA(s) have been withdrawn from assessment.
- b. Update the MSC database to withdraw the UoA(s) from assessment.
- 7.25.2 The CAB shall follow 7.5.8.1 if the fishery client decides to withdraw 1 or more UoAs and proposed UoCs from the fishery assessment whilst continuing the assessment for the remaining UoAs and proposed UoCs.

UoA(s) that fail assessment

- 7.25.3 If the CAB makes a decision not to award certification and fail the UoA(s), the CAB shall upload the Public Certification Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.25.3.1 The CAB shall not include failed UoAs in any Certification Statement.

- 7.25.4 The CAB shall include the following in the Public Certification Report of the failed UoA(s):
- Draft non-binding conditions for any PIs that score more than 60 but less than 80.
 - Specification that the conditions outlined are non-binding and serve to provide an indication of the actions that may have been required had the UoA(s) been certified.

7.25.4.1 The CAB may draft and include non-binding conditions in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report and subsequent assessment reports. ■

- 7.25.5 The CAB shall not include the following in the Public Certification Report of the failed UoA(s):
- Mandatory conditions or defined actions that would need to be conducted before the UoA(s) could be reconsidered for certification in the future.
 - An agreement from the client to address conditions as per 7.18.7.

- 7.25.6 The CAB shall follow 7.5.8.1 if 1 or more UoAs and proposed UoCs fails the assessment and the fishery client decides to continue the assessment for the remaining UoAs and proposed UoCs.

UoA(s) that re-enter assessment

- 7.25.7 If a withdrawn or failed UoA re-enters full assessment, the CAB shall follow the most recent versions of the MSC Fisheries Program Documents in full. ■
- 7.25.8 In assessment reports for withdrawn or failed UoA(s) that have re-entered assessment, the CAB shall:
- Specify that the UoA(s) have re-entered assessment.
 - Summarise the details of the previous assessment, including:
 - The results of the previous assessment.
 - The date of the previous determination not to certify.
 - Identify those PIs for which scoring and/or the rationale for scoring has changed from the previous assessment.

7.26 Addition of vessels to the fishery certificate (amending the UoC)

- 7.26.1 The CAB shall only consider a request to add vessels to a certified fishery if requested by the certificate holder.
- 7.26.2 If the certificate holder requests to make an addition to the fishery certificate, the CAB shall determine whether the proposed addition meets the scope requirements in the MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1.
- If the CAB cannot determine that the proposed addition meets the scope requirements then it shall not be added to the certificate.
- 7.26.3 If the certificate holder requests to make a vessel addition(s) to the fishery certificate that meets the scope requirements, then the CAB shall determine whether the proposed addition was:
- assessed as part of the UoA defined in 7.5.2.a-d, or
 - not assessed, but meets the definition of the UoA.
- 7.26.4 If the proposed vessel addition was assessed during the certified fishery's previous full assessment (7.26.3.a), then the CAB shall:
- Update the vessel list in accordance with 7.28.14.d.
 - Expand the certificate to include proposed addition.
 - Update the Fishery Certificate Statement (see 7.23.11.1)

- d. Upload the updated Fishery Certificate Statement and fishery certificate to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - e. Publish a stakeholder announcement to inform stakeholders of the addition.
- 7.26.5 If the proposed vessel addition was not assessed but the CAB determines that it meets the definition of the UoA (7.26.3.b) then: 
- a. The CAB shall determine whether the proposed vessel addition may result in changes to the UoA or UoC that would trigger an Expedited Audit per 7.29.1.a-d 
 - b. If the CAB determines that the proposed vessel addition may trigger an Expedited Audit, then the CAB may: 
 - i. Proceed with an Expedited Audit to assess and determine whether the proposed vessel addition may be added to the certificate, or
 - ii. Assess and determine at the next surveillance audit whether the proposed vessel addition may be added to the certificate.
 - c. For either 7.26.5.b.i or ii, if the CAB determines that the proposed vessel addition can be added to the certificate, then the CAB shall follow 7.26.4a-e.
 - d. If the CAB determines that the proposed addition would not trigger an Expedited Audit, then the CAB shall:
 - i. Apply the requirements of 7.26.4a-d
 - ii. Publish a stakeholder announcement to inform stakeholders of the vessel addition(s), which shall include a confirmation that the impacts of this addition will be assessed at the next surveillance audit.
 - iii. Include a statement describing the vessel addition in the next Surveillance Audit announcement, in addition to 7.28.13.
 - iv. Assess the impacts of the vessel addition(s) at the next surveillance audit, following Section 7.28.14
- 7.26.6 If the CAB determines that the proposed vessel addition does not meet the definition of the UoA, then the CAB shall notify the certificate holder that a Scope Extension is required to determine if the proposed addition meets the MSC standard (see Annex PA).

7.27 Merging and splitting fishery certificates

- 7.27.1 The CAB may merge 2 or more valid fishery certificates provided that:
- a. The fishery certificates that will be merged were all issued by the same CAB. 
 - b. The same version of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) was used for all assessments.
 - c. All fishery clients and client group members have agreed in writing to merge their fishery certificates.
- 7.27.2 To merge 2 or more fishery certificates, the CAB shall:
- a. Verify that any changes to key traceability factors and associated risks are identified, mitigated, and managed (see 7.5.10 and Section 7.17).
 - b. Not change existing condition deadlines and milestone timeframes..
 - c. Update 1 of the existing fishery certificates to include all UoCs and relevant information (see the fishery certification requirements in the [GCR](#)).
 - i. The CAB shall set the expiry date as the expiry date of the fishery certificate with the shortest duration remaining. 
 - ii. The CAB shall withdraw the other fishery certificate(s).
 - d. Upload a copy of the issued fishery certificate to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.

- e. Upload an updated Fishery Certificate Statement (7.24.7.2) to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - f. Publish a stakeholder announcement for each fishery to inform stakeholders that the fishery certificates have been merged.
 - i. The CAB shall include a summary of open conditions in the stakeholder announcement.
- 7.27.3 The CAB may split a valid fishery certificate during the certification cycle provided that: 
- a. All fishery clients and clients group members have agreed in writing to split their fishery certificate.
 - b. Individual UoAs shall not be split. 
- 7.27.4 To split a fishery certificate during the certification cycle, the CAB shall:
- a. Split the certificate at the next surveillance audit.
 - i. The CAB shall confirm that the request to split the certificate is not due to circumstances that would require an Expedited Audit (see 7.29.1a-d).
 - b. Inform the MSC in writing of the intent to split the certificate in advance of starting the surveillance audit process. 
 - c. In addition to 7.28.10, include within the surveillance audit announcement:
 - i. A notification to stakeholders of the intent to split certificates.
 - ii. The fisheries and UoCs that would result from the split.
 - iii. The existing scores and conditions that would apply to each new fishery.
 - d. Upload a surveillance audit report for each new fishery.
 - i. The CAB shall include in each surveillance audit report the details of the certificate split. 
 - e. To complete the fishery certificate split the CAB shall:
 - i. Withdraw the current fishery certificate.
 - ii. Reissue a new certificate with the same expiration date as the withdrawn certificate for each new fishery.
 - iii. Upload a Fishery Certificate Statement for each new fishery certificate in accordance with 7.23.5.
 - iv. Publish an updated vessel list for each fishery in accordance with 7.28.14.d

7.28 Surveillance

Surveillance schedule

- 7.28.1 During each assessment, the team shall define and agree with the client the surveillance schedule for the certification period, taking into consideration all applicable condition verification milestones and deadlines.
- 7.28.2 The following types of surveillance audit are available:
- a. On-site audit. The audit involves face-to-face engagement with the client, conducting stakeholder interviews and a review of changes in management and science in the UoA.
 - b. Off-site audit. The audit involves engagement with the client, conducting stakeholder interviews and a review of changes in management and science in the UoA, and is undertaken by the team members from a remote location.
- 7.28.3 CABs shall provide a justification in the surveillance schedule for the choice of audit type considering:
- a. How it will fulfil the Surveillance Audit Activities defined in 7.2.9.15.

- b. The number and nature of open conditions.
- c. The progress against the conditions.
- d. The ability of the CAB to verify information. ■

7.28.4 The CAB shall schedule a fifth surveillance audit to assess the progress of any open conditions where:

- a. A condition is set at assessment with a five-year deadline and is due to be closed by the fifth certificate anniversary.
- b. A condition is set with a deadline longer than five years in accordance with 7.18.10.4.
- c. A condition is raised during a surveillance or expedited audit with a deadline that is due to be closed by the fifth certificate anniversary or falls within the subsequent reassessment period.

7.28.5 The CAB may amend the surveillance schedule during planning of a surveillance audit

7.28.5.1 If changes are made, the CAB shall note where amendments to the surveillance schedule have been made, along with justification for the change, in the Surveillance Announcement.

7.28.6 The CAB may amend the surveillance schedule following a surveillance audit.

7.28.6.1 If changes are made, the CAB shall note where amendments to the surveillance schedule have been made, along with justification for the change, in the Surveillance Report.

Surveillance timing

7.28.7 The CAB shall conduct surveillance audits within 30 days prior to the anniversary date of the certificate unless the following applies.

- 7.28.7.1 The CAB may conduct surveillance audits up to 6 months earlier or later than the anniversary date, where this deviation is appropriate given the circumstances of the UoA. ■
 - a. The CAB shall provide a justification for deviating from the anniversary date as part of the surveillance schedule.
 - b. If deviations from the surveillance schedule are more than 30 days, the CAB shall inform stakeholders.

Preparing the surveillance audit

7.28.8 The CAB shall require the client to review, update if there are any changes, and re-submit the Scope Confirmation in the 'Client Information Request' at each surveillance audit.

7.28.9 If the UoC no longer meets the scope requirements in the MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1, the CAB shall suspend the certificate as per the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the GCR, unless the MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5.1 or 1.1.6.1 are met.

7.28.10 The CAB shall appoint a team that meets the requirements in PC1, PC2, and PC3.

7.28.11 The CAB shall use the '[MSC Surveillance Announcement Template](#)' to inform stakeholders and the MSC of:

- a. Time, dates, and location of the surveillance activities.
- b. What will be assessed/reviewed during the audit.
- c. The relevant skills and expertise of team members carrying out the surveillance audit.
- d. Details of the opportunities and input methods for stakeholders to participate during the surveillance audit.
- e. The CAB shall make it clear that all members of the team are available to meet with stakeholders in person or remotely.

- 7.28.12 The CAB shall include a hyperlink to the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input' in the Surveillance Announcement Template.
- 7.28.13 The CAB shall upload the Surveillance Announcement to the MSC database so that it is published on the MSC website at least 30 days before the surveillance audit activities are carried out.
- 7.28.14 The CAB shall allow at least 30 days for stakeholder input into the surveillance audit.
- 7.28.14.1 If the team and any participant in the surveillance audit agree in writing that information will be made available after the surveillance audit activities, the CAB shall accept this information up to 30 days after the last day of the surveillance audit activities.

Surveillance audit activities

- 7.28.15 During each surveillance audit, the team shall:
- a. Actively seek the views of the client on:
 - i. Any changes to the information provided in the Scope Declaration as per 7.4.5.1.
 - ii. Changes to the UoA and its management and area of operation.
 - iii. Performance in relation to any relevant conditions of certification.
 - iv. Any developments or changes within the UoA that affect traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products. ■
 - v. Any other significant changes in the UoA.
 - b. Hold interviews and actively seek the views of stakeholders and surveillance audit participants to ensure that the team is aware of any stakeholder concerns.
 - i. If stakeholders do not wish to be interviewed, the team shall inform them that they may submit written information to the team using the '[MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Surveillance Audits](#)'.
 - c. Apply the provisions set out in Sections 4.3–4.5 regarding access to information.
 - d. If a group of vessels or individual fishing operators (i.e. not an entire fishing fleet) is used to define the UoA or UoC, require the client to provide an updated list of the vessels, or a hyperlink to a publicly available list of vessels using the 'Vessel Information Template'..
 - i. The CAB shall verify that the vessel list published on the MSC website is up to date..
 - ii. If there have been any changes the CAB shall upload an updated 'Vessel Information Template' to the MSC database to be published on the MSC website within 14 days.
 - e. Review and include in the Surveillance Report:
 - i. Any potential or actual changes in management systems.
 - ii. Any changes or additions/deletions to regulations.
 - iii. Any personnel changes in science, management, or industry and their impact on the management of the UoA.
 - iv. Any potential changes to scientific information, including stock assessments.
 - v. Any changes to the geographical area in which the UoA operates.
 - vi. Any changes affecting traceability.
 - vii. Any score changes derived from applying Annex PB.
 - viii. Any changes in scope (as per [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#), 7.5.2, or 7.5.3).
 - ix. Full PI and Principle Summary Score tables whether updated in the surveillance or unchanged.

- 7.28.15.1 Where the information for PI scores has changed, the team shall:
- a. Report and record what information has changed.
 - b. Rescore the SIs and PI following scoring processes as per Section 7.15.
 - i. If a new SI score is less than SG80, the CAB shall set conditions and instruct the client to develop a Client Action Plan for the new conditions as per 7.16 and 7.18.
- 7.28.16 At each surveillance audit, the team shall:
- a. Determine whether the applicable verification milestones for each condition are fully met or not met.
 - b. Provide a justification for the determination.
- 7.28.17 If a verification milestone is not met, the team shall:
- a. Provide a written notification to the fishery client that the verification milestone is not met and the justification for this.
 - b. Allow a period of up to 30 days for the fishery client to amend the remaining years of the Client Action Plan, including remedial actions to close the condition by the original deadline. ■
- 7.28.18 The team shall only accept a revised Client Action Plan if it continues to meet 7.18.6 and 7.18.7.
- 7.28.19 If the team has accepted a revised Client Action Plan, the CAB shall change the verification milestones which will be used during each subsequent annual surveillance audit to verify progress of the condition.
- 7.28.20 If the team determines, at consecutive surveillance audits, that the applicable verification milestone for a condition, whether revised or unrevised, is not met, the CAB shall:
- a. Consider progress as inadequate.
 - b. Apply the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#).
 - c. Inform the fishery client that they cannot enter the same UoA(s), or any entity in the UoA(s), into full assessment under either the same or an alternative name unless the cause for suspension has been addressed. ■
- 7.28.21 If all verification milestones have been met for a condition, the team shall:
- a. Rescore all relevant SI SGs relating to that condition, to verify that the SG80 performance level is met.
 - b. Close the condition only if SG80 is met for SIs relating to the condition.
 - c. Document the justification for the rescoring and closing of the condition in the Surveillance Report.
- 7.28.22 If a condition is not closed by its deadline, the CAB shall:
- a. Consider progress as inadequate.
 - b. Apply the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#).
 - c. Inform the fishery client that they cannot enter the same UoA(s), or any entity in the UoA(s), into full assessment under either the same or an alternative name unless the cause for suspension has been addressed. ■
- 7.28.23 During each review of information surveillance audit, the team shall perform the activities specified in 7.28.14.a.
- 7.28.23.1 If the team becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the UoA, and/or of new information, that may cause a “material difference” as defined in 7.20.6.c during a review of information audit, the team shall conduct an off-site audit according to 7.28.14.

- 7.28.24 During an off-site audit or a review of information, if the team determines that the information required to conduct the required surveillance audit activities (7.28.15 - 7.28.18) has not been provided or is unavailable, the team shall conduct an on-site audit.

7.28.24.1 The CAB shall re-announce the surveillance audit as per 7.28.13.4–7.

Reporting

- 7.28.25 The team shall prepare a Surveillance Report using the relevant MSC template:
- For on-site and off-site surveillance audits, the team shall use the '[MSC Surveillance Reporting Template](#)'.
 - For review of information surveillance audits, the team shall use the '[MSC Surveillance Review of Information Template](#)'.
- 7.28.26 The team shall send the Surveillance Report to the client along with any requests or conditions that may arise from surveillance activities.
- 7.28.26.1 If new conditions are identified, the team should allow a period of up to 30 days after receipt of the Surveillance Report for the client to prepare a Client Action Plan.
- 7.28.27 The team shall include the following in a separate section or appendix to the Surveillance Report:
- All written submissions and a summary of verbal submissions made by stakeholders during the annual surveillance audit process.
 - Responses from the team to the submissions in 7.28.24.a, including:
 - What (if any) changes to scoring, rationales, or conditions have been made.
 - Where changes are suggested but no change is made, a substantiated justification.
- 7.28.28 At the time of submission of each Surveillance Report, the CAB shall add catch data into the MSC database, for each UoC, for the most recent fishing year for which data is available.
- 7.28.29 Within 60 days of completing the audit, the CAB shall upload the Surveillance Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website. ■
- 7.28.29.1 If the client has revised the Client Action Plan following surveillance, the CAB shall, within 90 days of completing the audit, upload the Surveillance Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.

Additional audit considerations

- 7.28.30 If there are Inseparable Catch stock(s) within the scope of certification, the team shall follow Annex PA during each surveillance audit.

7.29 Expedited audits

- 7.29.1 The CAB shall conduct an expedited audit if the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the UoA and/or of new information that may cause: ■
- A PI score to fall below 60.
 - A Principle score to fall below an aggregate 80 score as a result of changes to the score for 1 or more PIs.
 - Changes to the traceability determination as per 7.17
 - Loss of conformity with the scope requirements of the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section 1](#)
- 7.29.2 The CAB shall assign a person who meets the fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria as set out in the [GCR](#) and Table PC1, and is competent to review the relevant information.
- 7.29.2.1 The CAB shall send the assigned person the relevant information for review.
 - 7.29.2.2 The assigned person shall determine whether an expedited audit needs to be conducted.
- 7.29.3 An expedited audit can be an off-site audit or on-site audit, based on what the CAB determines necessary.
- 7.29.4 The CAB shall announce an expedited audit, if triggered, within 30 days of becoming aware of the relevant information.
- 7.29.4.1 The CAB shall appoint a team of 2 or more team members to conduct the expedited audit.
 - The team shall comprise a team leader and a minimum of 1 additional team member who together meet the Fishery Team qualifications and competency requirements relevant to what will be assessed.
 - 7.29.4.2 The CAB shall use the '[MSC Surveillance Announcement Template](#)' to inform stakeholders and the MSC of:
 - Time, dates, and location of the expedited audit activities.
 - What will be assessed/reviewed during the expedited audit.
 - The relevant skills and expertise of team members carrying out the expedited audit.
 - 7.29.4.3 The CAB shall upload the Surveillance Announcement to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.29.5 The team shall review the relevant information by completing the activities as defined in 7.28.14 except for 7.28.14.a.iii.
- 7.29.6 The team shall prepare an expedited audit report using the '[MSC Surveillance Reporting Template](#)'.
- 7.29.7 The team shall send the expedited audit report to the client along with any new conditions.
- 7.29.8 Within 60 days of announcing the expedited audit, the CAB shall upload the expedited audit report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
- 7.29.9 The CAB may include the expedited audit in a surveillance audit providing that:
- The surveillance audit is announced within 30 days of the CAB becoming aware of the relevant information.

- b. The CAB follows Section 7.28.

Expedited audits during a full assessment or scope extension

- 7.29.10 If the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the UoA and/or of new information after the site visit, except for information subject to 7.14.4, the CAB shall follow 7.29.1–8 during the initial assessment. ■
- 7.29.10.1 The CAB shall not use the results of the expedited audit in the determination or certification decision for the UoA(s).
- 7.29.11 For an expedited audit conducted during an initial assessment or scope extension, if the 60-day reporting deadline (7.29.8) is prior to the publication of the Public Certification Report, the CAB shall upload the expedited audit report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website on the same date as the Public Certification Report.
- 7.29.11.1 If the expedited audit results in a score of less than 60 for any PI or a weighted average score of less than 80 for any Principle, the CAB shall apply the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#) with the following modifications:
- The CAB shall set the effective date for the fishery certificate suspension as the date of certification, disregarding the 30-day notice period.
 - The CAB shall announce the suspension by completing and uploading the '[MSC Notice of Suspension Template](#)' to the scheme database, to be published on the MSC website on the date of certification.
 - If the eligibility date was set before the date of certification, the CAB shall inform the client and stakeholders in the notice of suspension that the eligibility date has been changed to the certification date.
- 7.29.12 If the CAB becomes aware of changes to the circumstances of the UoA and/or new information during a reassessment, the CAB shall follow 7.29.1–8 for both the existing certificate and the reassessment. ■
- 7.29.12.1 For an expedited audit conducted during a reassessment, if the 60-day reporting deadline (7.29.8) is prior to the publication of the Public Certification Report, the CAB may upload 1 expedited audit report that includes the results for both the existing certificate and the reassessment.
- 7.29.12.2 If the expedited audit results in a score of less than 60 for any PI or a weighted average score of less than 80 for any Principle, the CAB shall:
- For the existing certificate, apply the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#).
 - For the reassessment, apply the suspension or withdrawal of certification requirements of the [GCR](#) with the following modifications:
 - The CAB shall set the effective date for the fishery certificate suspension as the date of certification, disregarding the 30-day notice period.
 - The CAB shall announce the suspension by completing and uploading the '[MSC Notice of Suspension Template](#)' to the MSC database, to be published on the MSC website on the date of certification.
 - If the eligibility date was set before the date of certification, the CAB shall inform the client and stakeholders in the notice of suspension that the eligibility date has been changed to the certification date.

7.30 Reassessment

- 7.30.1 For reassessments the CAB shall follow the full assessment processes (7.10 to 7.25) with exceptions as detailed below

Announcing a reassessment

- 7.30.2 The CAB shall announce the reassessment of a UoA no later than the 4th anniversary of the existing certificate.
 - 7.30.2.1 The CAB, in consultation with the client, shall determine the timing and planning of the reassessment.
- 7.30.3 The CAB shall allow at least 30 days between uploading the 'MSC Fishery Announcement Template' and the site visit start date.
- 7.30.4 The CAB shall announce the reassessment by completing and uploading the 'MSC Fishery Announcement Template' to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website.
 - 7.30.4.1 The CAB shall complete the Reassessment Planning appendix of the "MSC Fishery Announcement Template" to ensure transparency to all stakeholders on the focus of the reassessment.
- 7.30.5 The CAB shall notify the Peer Review College that the reassessment announcement and timeline have been published on the MSC website.
- 7.30.6 At the time of uploading the announcement, the CAB shall also upload:
 - a. An updated '[MSC Client Document Checklist](#)' if new UoAs are being added at reassessment.
 - b. An updated 'At Sea Labour Eligibility Requirements Reporting Template'
 - c. An updated 'Scope Declaration Template'.

Scoring in a reassessment

- 7.30.7 The team shall apply 7.15 to score each UoA.
- 7.30.8 The team shall apply 7.16 and 7.18.6-12 to set conditions.
- 7.30.9 The team shall only rescore a PI related to any open conditions with evidence to support the closure of that condition.
- 7.30.10 The team shall clearly identify all open conditions in the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)'.
 - a. The team shall clearly identify whether an open condition is being carried over into the next certificate.
 - b. The team shall clearly identify whether an open condition will be closed at an upcoming fifth surveillance audit.
- 7.30.11 If the narrative or metric form of the SG80 SI(s) and accompanying requirements against which the open condition is set are materially different from that in the assessment tree used in the reassessment, the team shall determine if the condition is still appropriate to deliver the SG80 outcome for the SI, or the equivalent SI, in the assessment tree used in the reassessment.
 - 7.30.11.1 If the condition and Client Action Plan is not appropriate to deliver the SG80 outcome applying the tree used at reassessment, the team shall:
 - i. Revise the condition as per 7.16.1.2, maintaining the unique condition identifier as per 7.16.1.3.
 - ii. Allow the client to update the Client Action Plan as per 7.18.5.
 - iii. Verify the Client Action Plan as per 7.18.6.
 - iv. Only accept the Client Action Plan if the condition deadline is unchanged and 7.18.8 is met.
 - 7.30.11.2 The team shall include justification for decisions made relating to 7.30.11.1 in the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)'.

- 7.30.12 The team shall clearly identify if any new conditions relate to conditions that were closed during the previous certification period and include a justification for each. ■
- 7.30.13 The CAB shall follow the [MSC Objection Process](#) during reassessment.
- 7.30.13.1 If an objection is accepted during a reassessment, the CAB may extend the current certificate up to a maximum of 6 months from the date that the objection is accepted, to allow this procedure to be followed.
- 7.30.14 The team shall use the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' to create the Full Reassessment Report.

Reduced Reassessment Activities

- 7.30.15 A UoA is eligible for reduced reassessment if:
- a. The UoA was covered under the previous certification or scope extension.
 - b. The UoA had no conditions remaining after the 3rd surveillance audit.
 - c. The CAB confirms that all stakeholder input related to the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) has been addressed by the 3rd surveillance audit.
 - d. The reassessment is against the same version of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) as the UoA.
- 7.30.16 If multiple fishery clients wish to combine their UoAs into 1 reassessment, the CAB may conduct a reduced reassessment provided all the UoAs meet the eligibility criteria under 7.30.15.
- 7.30.17 If the UoA is eligible for reduced reassessment, the CAB shall provide a detailed explanation of how the reduced reassessment criteria (7.30.15) are satisfied in the reassessment announcement.
- 7.30.18 For a reduced reassessment, the CAB shall follow the full reassessment requirements, with the following modifications: ■
- a. The CAB may conduct the site visit with 1 team member on site and other team member(s) joining remotely.
 - i. The CAB shall determine which team member competencies are required on site and remotely, based on:
 - A. The topic(s) that stakeholders raised in previous audits.
 - B. The availability of information on Principle 1, Principle 2 or Principle 3 components that would enable comprehensive review by an off-site team member.
 - b. Only 1 peer reviewer is required to review the reassessment peer review report.
- 7.30.19 The team shall use the '[MSC Reduced Reassessment Reporting Template](#)' to create reduced reassessment reports.

7.31 Management system requirements for CABs

- 7.31.1 To identify any corrective or preventive actions that would contribute to continual improvement of the assessment process, the CAB shall conduct, and document, a review of each full fishery assessment.
- 7.31.1.1 The CAB shall consider, and document, submissions and/or comments from stakeholders or other parties on the CAB's activities and processes in the review.
 - 7.31.1.2 The CAB shall keep records of the reviews.
- 7.31.2 For any complaint evaluated by the CAB as per the complaints and appeals requirements of the [GCR](#), and that relates to the MSC Fisheries Program, the CAB shall send a

summary of the complaint and decision(s) taken to the MSC via complaints@msc.org within 20 days of closure of the complaint.

End of Fisheries Certification Process

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Annex PA: Scope extension assessments – normative

Scope

- PA1.1.1 The requirements of this annex shall apply where a scope extension assessment is requested to add or amend a proposed Unit of Assessment (UoA) for an existing fishery.
- PA1.1.2 The CAB shall only accept a request for a scope extension assessment from a holder of a valid MSC fishery certificate.
- PA1.1.3 The CAB shall only follow this annex to add a new UoA or amend an existing UoA, as defined in 7.5.2, if:
 - a. The proposed Principle 1 target stock was previously assessed under Principle 2 of the existing UoC.
 - b. The proposed addition shares some assessment components with the existing UoC. 
 - c. The proposed addition operates in either an overlapping or adjacent fishing area to the UoA.
- PA1.1.4 If PD1.1.3a-c are not met then the CAB shall inform the certificate holder that a full assessment process is required.
- PA1.1.5 The CAB shall use the same version of the assessment tree that was applied for the existing UoA(s) when a scope extension assessment is required.

PA1.2 Scope extension assessment process

- PA1.2.1 The CAB shall upload an announcement and Announcement Comment Draft Report to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website, announcing a scope extension assessment.
- PA1.2.2 The CAB shall follow 7.10.2 and 7.10.3 when conducting a scope extension assessment.
 - PA1.2.2.1 The CAB shall include the following additional information in the announcement:
 - a. The new UoA(s) or the amended UoA(s).
 - b. The assessment components held in common between the existing UoA(s) and the proposed UoA(s)
 - c. The assessment components that will be assessed in the scope extension assessment.
 - d. Justification for which PIs will be assessed in the scope extension assessment.
- PA1.2.3 The CAB shall follow Section 7.13, allowing 30 days for stakeholder input.
- PA1.2.4 The CAB shall include in the scope extension assessment at least the following steps:
 - PA1.2.4.1 The CAB shall announce at least 1 team member who meets:
 - a. The criteria in Table PC2.
 - b. The criteria in Table PC3 rows 1–4 appropriate to the assessment components to be assessed.
 - PA1.2.4.2 The team shall conduct the scope extension either during an on-site assessment or a regular on-site surveillance audit.
 - PA1.2.4.3 The team shall evaluate the assessment components using all relevant requirements in the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) and following the process as described in Sections 7.15, 7.16 and 7.17.

- a. If the stock under assessment overlaps with another UoA(s), the team shall follow the harmonisation steps in Annex PB.
- b. If there are any changes in the other assessment components, the team shall rescore the relevant PIs. ■

PA1.2.4.4 The team shall conduct the scope extension assessment in compliance with timelines as set out in 7.11.1 and 7.22.1.

PA1.3 Reporting

PA1.3.1 The team shall produce the following reports using the MSC Reporting Template:

- a. Announcement Comment Draft Report.
- b. Client and Peer Review Draft Report.
- c. Public Comment Draft Report.
- d. Final Draft Report.
- e. Public Certification Report.

PA1.3.1.1 The team shall follow requirements in Sections 7.8, 7.12, and 7.19–7.24.

PA1.3.2 If the scope extension assessment site visit is taking place at the same time as an on-site surveillance audit of the existing UoC(s), the team shall produce a separate report for the scope extension assessment as required in Sections 7.19–7.24.

PA1.3.3 There shall be at least 1 peer reviewer for the scope extension assessment.

PA1.3.4 The CAB shall follow all other requirements for peer review in 7.19.3–7.19.5 and 7.20.10.

PA1.4 Certification decision and certificate issue

PA1.4.1 The CAB shall make a determination regarding the scope extension assessment outcome and inform stakeholders of the Final Draft Report.

PA1.4.2 The CAB shall follow the [MSC Objection Process](#).

PA1.4.3 If the CAB determines that the scores from the assessed PIs in combination with the scores obtained for the commonly held components with the existing UoC(s) meet the requirements for certification, the CAB shall:

- a. Include the new UoC within the scope of the existing valid fishery certificate.
- b. Follow the requirements on certification decision and certification issue as per Section 7.25.

PA1.4.3.1 If the scope extension assessment results in certification, the CAB shall make the duration of the certification for any new UoC only as long as the existing fishery certificate.

PA1.4.3.2 Where the scope extension assessment identifies Performance Indicators that do not meet the requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard, the CAB shall set conditions in accordance with 7.16.

PA1.4.4 If the CAB determines that the new UoA has not met the requirements for certification, the CAB shall report this in the Final Draft Report and Public Certification Report.

PA1.4.4.1 The CAB shall not make changes to the existing certificate's scope, which shall remain valid.

End of Annex PA

Annex PB: Harmonisation of overlapping Units of Assessment – normative

PB1 Harmonised Units of Assessment – normative

PB1.1 General Requirements

PB1.1.1 The team shall use this annex where UoAs overlap as per 7.8.3.1. ▣

PB1.1.1.1 If the overlapping UoAs have been assessed against different versions of the MSC Fisheries Standard, teams shall only harmonise Principle 1 scoring issues following PB1.3.2 to PB1.3.4.

PB1.2 Review of existing harmonised outcomes

PB1.2.1 The team shall:

- a. Identify the latest published scores for the overlapping UoAs.
- b. Identify the latest published conditions and deadlines, where applicable, for the overlapping UoAs.
- c. Compare the scores, conditions, and deadlines against those drafted for the UoA to determine whether outcomes are already harmonised in accordance with PB1.3.

PB1.2.2 If the team determines that outcomes are already harmonised in accordance with PB1.3, the team shall document the harmonised outcomes in the next assessment or audit report.

PB1.2.3 If the team determines that outcomes are not already harmonised in accordance with PB1.3, the team shall harmonise the outcomes following the process in PB1.4.

PB1.3 Harmonised outcomes ▣

PB1.3.1 For overlapping UoAs that are identically defined, even if the corresponding UoCs are different, the teams shall ensure that the same scoring guideposts are met for each UoA or scoring element, as applicable. ▣

Principle 1

PB1.3.2 The team shall ensure that all overlapping UoAs meet the same scoring guideposts for each scoring issue in Principle 1 except:

- a. PI 1.2.1, scoring issues (a), (b), (e), and (f); and
- b. PI 1.2.2, all scoring issues.

PB1.3.3 In PI 1.2.1 scoring issues (a) and (b) and in all PI 1.2.2 scoring issues, the team shall ensure that the same scoring guideposts are met for only those overlapping UoAs which are:

- a. Assessed under Section SE, if the team is applying Section SE in its own assessment.
- b. Not assessed under Section SE, if the team is not applying Section SE in its own assessment.

PB1.3.4 The team shall ensure that overlapping UoAs with the same target stock reach the same determination on whether the stock is a key low trophic level stock, in accordance with Fisheries Standard SA2.2.8–SA2.2.11.

Principle 2

PB1.3.5 If the same Principle 2 scoring element (MSC Fisheries Standard, SA3.1.2) is assessed for the overlapping UoAs, the team shall ensure that its categorisation is the same as follows:

- a. Fish and invertebrate scoring elements categorised as ETP (Fisheries Standard SA3.5.2);
 - b. Fish and invertebrate scoring elements categorised as “less resilient” (Fisheries Standard SA3.5.4.b);
 - c. Bird, mammal, reptile and amphibian scoring elements categorised as ETP (Fisheries Standard SA3.9.2);
 - d. Habitat scoring elements categorised as “more sensitive” (Fisheries Standard, SA3.13.4.b).
- PB1.3.6 If applying the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) in Tool A of the MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox, the team shall ensure that the same productivity attribute scores are assigned to the same scoring element in:
- a. PI 2.1.1 scoring issues (a) and (b).
 - b. PI 2.2.1 scoring issues (a) and (b).
- PB1.3.7 The team shall ensure that the same scoring element meets the same scoring guidepost in: ■
- a. PI 2.1.1 scoring issue (b), where the main fish and invertebrate scoring element is assessed based on its status relative to the PRI or MSY.
 - b. PI 2.2.1 scoring issue (b), where the non-ETP bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian scoring element is assessed based on its status relative to the level at which reproduction may be seriously threatened.

Principle 3

- PB1.3.8 The team shall ensure that the same jurisdiction scoring element meets the same scoring guideposts across overlapping UoAs for: ■
- a. PI 3.1.1, scoring issue (a), and
 - b. PI 3.2.3, scoring issue (a).

Conditions

- PB1.3.9 The team shall ensure that the wording and deadlines of conditions resulting from the harmonised scoring outcomes in PB1.3 are the same for the overlapping UoAs. ■

Demonstrable differences

- PB1.3.10 If there are demonstrable differences between the overlapping UoAs that do not justify a harmonised outcome under PB1.3.2–PB1.3.8, the team may determine a different outcome for the UoA, provided that: ■
- a. The teams of the overlapping UoAs agree that the differences justify different outcomes.
 - b. The team documents the differences and how they justify the outcome determined for the UoA.

PB1.4 Harmonisation process ■

- PB1.4.1 If outcomes are not already harmonised, as per PB1.2.3, the team shall:
- a. Notify the teams of overlapping UoAs that a harmonisation activity is required.
 - b. Agree a provisional month in which the harmonisation activity will take place, taking into account the timing requirements in PB1.4.4 for annual harmonisation or PB1.4.5 for expedited audits.
- PB1.4.2 If the outcomes of the overlapping UoAs resulted from the previous harmonisation activity and remain harmonised, the team shall:
- a. Adopt the previously harmonised outcomes until the next harmonisation activity.

- b. Indicate in the next assessment or audit report that the previously harmonised outcomes have been adopted until the next harmonisation activity.
- PB1.4.3 If the outcomes of the overlapping UoAs are not the result of previous harmonisation, or if multiple overlapping UoAs have outcomes that are not harmonised with each other, the team shall:
 - a. Adopt the outcomes drafted by the team for the UoA.
 - b. Indicate in the next assessment or audit report that the drafted outcomes may change following the next harmonisation activity.
- PB1.4.4 Unless PB1.4.5 applies, the team shall conduct harmonisation activities with the teams of overlapping UoAs no more than once per calendar year.
 - PB1.4.4.1 If harmonisation has already taken place during the calendar year, the teams shall conduct any further harmonisation activity in the next calendar year.
- PB1.4.5 An expedited audit shall be conducted to achieve harmonised outcomes where new information becomes available outside annual harmonisation that would cause:
 - a. A PI score to fall below 60; or,
 - b. A Principle score to fall below 80.
- PB1.4.6 When conducting harmonisation activities, the teams shall:
 - a. Consider information received in assessments or surveillance audits since the previous harmonisation activity, including:
 - i. Fishery information.
 - ii. Stakeholder input.
 - iii. Peer reviewer comments.
 - iv. MSC Technical Oversight comments.
 - b. Attempt to agree harmonised outcomes in accordance with PB1.3, including:
 - i. Scoring outcomes at scoring issue level for each scoring elements.
 - ii. Categorisation of scoring elements.
 - iii. Conditions wording and conditions deadlines.
 - c. Adopt the harmonised outcomes where agreement is reached.
 - d. Follow the disagreement process in PB1.5 if agreement on harmonised outcomes is not reached.
- PB1.4.7 If the team receives a request from a stakeholder for the outcome of harmonisation before the next assessment or audit report is published, the CAB shall provide a summary of the harmonised outcomes to the stakeholder within 10 working days.
 - a. If the harmonisation process has not been completed, the CAB is not required to provide a summary of the harmonised outcomes.

PB1.5 Disagreement process

- PB1.5.1 If the teams are unable to reach agreement on harmonised outcomes, the teams shall:
 - a. Request the Peer Review College to appoint 3 anonymous independent reviewers that have no conflict of interest with the overlapping UoAs.
 - b. Prepare a rationale for each proposed alternative outcome.
 - c. Submit each proposed alternative outcome and rationale to the Peer Review College.
- PB1.5.2 The independent reviewers shall determine which proposed outcome and rationale best conform to the applicable MSC requirements.

- PB1.5.2.1 The independent reviewers shall reach a single determination.
- PB1.5.2.2 If the independent reviewers are unable to reach agreement, the determination shall be based on the majority view of the independent reviewers
- PB1.5.3 The teams shall adopt the harmonised outcome supported by the determination of the independent reviewers.
 - PB1.5.3.1 The teams shall document the outcome of the disagreement process in the next assessment or audit report.

End of Annex PB

Annex PC: Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies – normative

PC1 Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies

PC1.1 Scope

PC1.1.1 This annex sets out additional requirements to the [MSC General Certification Requirements](#) (GCR) for fishery team leader, team member and team qualifications and competencies, which the CAB shall verify in accordance with [GCR](#).

PC1.2 Fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria

Table PC1: Fishery team leader qualification and competency criteria

1. Assessment & Audit Experience
Qualifications
Has shadowed an MSC full assessment and has acted as Team Leader on an assessment while being witnessed by another MSC Team Leader, demonstrating competence for the tasks that the CAB assigns to a Team Leader.
Competencies
a) Plan the assessment and assign tasks according to the specific competence of individual audit team members; b) Ability to interact with all levels of personnel and stakeholders c) Develop and maintain a collaborative working relationship among the assessment team members; d) Manage the assessment process, including: i) Making effective use of resources during the assessment; ii) Managing the uncertainty of achieving assessment objectives; iii) Protecting the health and safety of the assessment team members during the assessment, including ensuring compliance of the team with the relevant health and safety, and security arrangements; e) Directing the assessment team members as needed; f) Preventing and resolving conflicts and problems that can occur during the assessment, including those within the assessment team, as necessary. g) Ensure that Stakeholder contributions are captured in assessment reports
Verification mechanisms
• CAB records • Previous employer reference letter • Witness or office audits by an MSC's assurance provider body • Previous audit reports
2. Understanding of MSC Fisheries Standard and MSC Fisheries Certification Process
Qualifications

- a. Review any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually. ■
- b. Pass the MSC's fishery team leader training course at least every 5 years. ■
- c. Pass new versions of the compulsory online training modules when new versions of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) or certification process are published prior to undertaking assessments against the revised [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) or certification process.
- d. Pass new online training modules on modifications to the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) before undertaking assessments using these modifications, such as enhanced bivalves, salmon, and other modifications that may be developed in the future.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass
- Witness or office audits by MSC's assurance provider
- CAB witness audits

PC1.3 Fishery team member qualification and competency criteria ■

Table PC2: Fishery team member qualification and competency criteria

1. General
Qualifications
a. University degree in fisheries, marine conservation biology, natural resources environmental management, or relevant field (for example, economics, mathematics, or statistics), or b. 3-years' management or research experience in a marine conservation biology, fisheries, natural resources, or environmental management position.
Verification mechanisms
• CV • Certificates
2. Understanding of MSC Fisheries Standard and relevant MSC Certification Process requirements
Qualifications
a. Review any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually. ■ c. Pass the MSC's fishery team member training course at least every 5 years. ■ d. Pass new versions of the compulsory online training modules when new versions of the MSC Fisheries Standard are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new MSC Fisheries Standard. e. Pass new online training modules on modifications to the MSC Fisheries Standard before undertaking assessments using these modifications, such as enhanced bivalves, salmon, and other modifications that may be developed in the future.
Competencies
Ability to: i. Describe the intent and requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard. i. Score a fishery using the default assessment tree. ii. Describe how conditions are set and monitored.

1. General

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass
- CAB records

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PC1.4 Fishery team qualification and competency criteria

PC1.4.1 The CAB shall ensure that the fishery team collectively meets the qualification and competency criteria listed in Table PC3.

Table PC3: Fishery team qualification and competency criteria

1. Fish stock assessment
Qualifications
a. 3-years' or more experience of applying relevant stock assessment techniques being used by the fishery under assessment, or b. Primary authorship of 2 peer-reviewed stock assessments of a type used by the fishery under assessment.
Competencies
i. Ability to conduct a stock assessment using stock assessment techniques relevant to the fishery.
Verification mechanisms
• CV with full publication list • Employer's reference letter • CAB witness audits
2. Fish stock biology/ecology
Qualifications
a. 3-years' or more experience working with the biology and population dynamics of the target species or species with similar biology.
Competencies
i. Can demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to interpret, scientific information relating to the biological processes of the target species, or species with similar population dynamics.
Verification mechanism
• CV with full publication list • Employer's reference letter • CAB witness audits
3. Fishing impacts on aquatic ecosystems
Qualifications
a. 3-years' or more experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of, the impact of fisheries on aquatic ecosystems, including at least 2 of the following topics: i. Bycatch ii. Endangered, Threatened, or Protected (ETP) and Out-of-Scope (OOS) species iii. Habitats iv. Ecosystem interactions

Competencies

- v. Can demonstrate knowledge of, and ability to interpret, scientific data relating to the impact of fisheries on at least 2 of the topics in 3.a.i–iv above.

Verification mechanisms

- CV
- Employer's reference letter
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body
- CAB witness audits

4. Fishery management and operations**Qualifications**

- a. 3-years' or more experience as a practising fishery manager and/or fishery/policy analyst/consultant.

Competencies**Ability to:**

- i. Identify likely problems for a fishery under Principle 1 and Principle 2 that would arise from poor management.
- ii. Demonstrate a good understanding of the types of management system(s) and laws applicable to the fishery under assessment.

Verification mechanisms

- CV with full publication list
- Employer's reference letter
- Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body
- CAB witness audits

5. Current knowledge of the country, language and local fishery context**Qualifications**

- a. Knowledge of a common language spoken by clients and stakeholders, and 1 of the following:
 - i. 2-years' fishery work experience in the country or in a relevant fishery in the last 15 years.
 - ii. 2 assignments in the country or region in which the fishery under assessment is based in the last 10 years.
 - iii. Primary authorship of at least 1 published paper in a journal or grey literature in the last 5 years on a fishery issue in the country or region in which the fishery under assessment is based.

Competencies**Ability to:**

- i. Communicate effectively with stakeholders in the country in a common language.
- ii. Explain the geographical, cultural, and ecological context of the fishery under assessment.

Verification mechanisms

- iii. CV
- iv. Employer's reference letter
- v. Journal extracts
- vi. Witness or office audits by an MSC-appointed accreditation body
- vii. CAB witness audits

6. Understanding of the Chain of Custody Standard and Chain of Custody Certification Requirements

Qualifications

- 1. Pass the MSC's Traceability training module every 5 years.
- b. Pass new versions of the training when new traceability requirements are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new requirements.
- c. Review any updates to the traceability requirements at least annually. ■

Competencies

- viii. Ability to explain the elements of traceability that are relevant to fishery assessments.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass
- CAB records
- CAB witness audits

7. Use of the Risk-Based Framework

Competencies

Demonstrate an understanding of:

- i. When the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) can be used.
- ii. How to implement RBF components.
- iii. How to engage stakeholders effectively when the RBF is used.
- iv. How Performance Indicators are scored when the RBF is used.
- v. The reporting of the RBF process and outcomes.

Verification mechanisms

- Examination pass
- CAB witness audits

End of Annex PC

End of Fisheries Certification Process

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MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process



Version 4.0, DD Month YYYY

1.1 Copyright notice

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The MSC prohibits any modification of part or all of the contents in any form.

Marine Stewardship Council

Marine House

1 Snow Hill

London EC1A 2DH

United Kingdom

Phone: + 44 (0) 20 7246 8900

Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7246 8901

Email: standards@msc.org

1.2 Responsibility for the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

The Marine Stewardship Council is responsible for the MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process.

Readers should verify that they are using the latest copy of this and other documents. Updated documents, together with a master list of all available MSC documents, can be found on the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

Versions published

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
2.0	1 October 2014	New document released as part of the Fisheries Standard Review completed in 2014.
2.1	31 August 2018	Version released incorporating guidance to support changes to the fisheries assessment process, including streamlining, harmonisation, and labour policy development topics.
2.2	25 March 2020	Version issued incorporating guidance to support changes to the confirmation of scope process, defining the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC), conditions, and the expedited audit process. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
2.3	26 October 2022	Version issued incorporating guidance to support changes to: harmonisation, stakeholder input, traceability. Minor edits and clarifications were also incorporated.
3.0	26 October 2022	Version issued incorporating guidance to support changes to the assessment process related to the release of v3.0 of the MSC Fisheries Standard, removal of the Risk-Based Framework, harmonisation, stakeholder input, and traceability.
3.1	22 July 2024	Version issued incorporating changes related to the amended Fisheries Standard v3.1.

1.3 Introduction to this document

The MSC Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Certification Process (GFCP) is provided to help conformity assessment bodies (CABs) interpret the MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP).

The headings and numbering in the GFCP, when included, match those in the FCP exactly, with numbers prefaced with the letter “G” to indicate guidance.

The MSC recommends that CABs read the FCP in conjunction with the GFCP. Text in the FCP is not repeated in the GFCP.

Where guidance is provided that generally relates to the subject of a section, or relates to the content of a specific clause, this icon ■ appears at the end of the section title or clause in the FCP. These icons provide hyperlinks to the related guidance section in the GFCP.

Within the GFCP, this icon ▲ provides a hyperlink back to the corresponding section or clause in the FCP.

Auditability of the Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Certification Process

The guidance in the GFCP is not directly auditable.

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The MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

Guidance to implementation timeframes ▲

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) does not expect the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) to change between versions of the MCS Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) during any assessment or audit process.

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G4 General requirements

G4.2 Consultation requirements ▲

Stakeholder consultation is a critical component of the MSC fisheries assessment process, as:

- A robust stakeholder consultation process is fundamental to conducting a high-quality assessment.
- Stakeholder input provides important information to assessment team members and the CAB.
- Stakeholder input contributes significantly to the credibility and outcome of the assessment process.

The MSC's intent for stakeholder consultation throughout the FCP is to ensure:

- Early identification of relevant stakeholders, each of whom are given adequate opportunity to provide their views during relevant stages of the assessment.
- Issues raised by stakeholders are acknowledged and reported as early in the assessment process as possible to provide maximum opportunity for resolution.
- Comments from stakeholders are targeted and relevant to each assessment.
- Responses from the CAB are presented in a way that makes it easy to see how, where, and why the comments have (or have not) been considered.

Awareness of cultural norms and technical capacity of stakeholders

To ensure stakeholders are provided adequate opportunity to provide input on the assessment, the CAB should design and carry out the stakeholder consultation process in a way that is culturally and technically appropriate for each stakeholder. The CAB may use different consultation mechanisms for different stakeholders to accommodate culture norms and technical capacity of stakeholders.

Awareness of cultural norms and expectations and the technological capabilities of those to be consulted will contribute to the design and implementation of an appropriate and successful consultation process. For example, there may be specific acceptable channels through which to approach community or tribal leaders, or elected officials. Ignorance or insensitivity regarding these factors, even though unintended, may cause embarrassment or offence to the parties, the CAB, and/or the MSC, and may seriously undermine efforts to obtain useful input.

It is important to understand the technical capacity of individuals or organisations, particularly regarding communications mechanisms such as email, telephones, and videoconferencing. For example, in some circumstances it may be inappropriate to require written input or refer someone to a website for information. In some situations, communication services may be unreliable, or fishers may be at sea for extended periods and unable to communicate promptly. It is also important to understand and consider cultural sensitivities when contacting and planning meetings with different stakeholders.

Contacting stakeholders

Throughout the FCP, where there is a requirement that stakeholders are contacted, neither the uploading of a document for publication on the MSC website nor the inclusion of a notification in the MSC Fisheries Updates email should be viewed as a substitute for the CAB directly contacting a stakeholder.

G4.2.1.1 Identifying stakeholders ▲

The MSC takes an inclusive approach when considering the definition of a stakeholder. A stakeholder is a group or individual who may affect or be affected by the outcome of an MSC fisheries assessment. Stakeholder groups may vary from one assessment to another, but will generally fall under these 2 categories:

1. Organisations or individuals who can provide information that is relevant to the assessment.
2. Organisations or individuals who may be affected by the outcome of an assessment. This includes individuals and organisations that have expressed a particular interest in the assessment, the fishery being considered for certification, or in other resources potentially affected by the fishery.

The only exception to this in MSC fishery assessments is the organisation seeking certification, which is considered the client, rather than a stakeholder. The client provides information and input into the assessment in other ways (for example, via the [‘MSC Client Document Checklist’](#)).

Typical stakeholders may include:

- Government agencies (with direct fishery management, research responsibility, or responsibility for related resources or research).
- Non-governmental conservation or other public interest organisations (these may be local, regional, national, and/or international organisations).
- Academic researchers.
- Adjacent or potentially affected fisheries (other than the client fishery) or other potentially affected commercial interests (e.g. the post-harvest sector).
- Community or tribal entities or individuals.

The CAB should compile a list of potential stakeholders at the start of the assessment or surveillance process. The approach to identifying stakeholders will differ from one assessment or audit to another. As a starting point, the following steps can be taken:

- If a pre-assessment was undertaken, the CAB should include any stakeholders identified in the pre-assessment process.
- The CAB should ask the client for a list of potential stakeholders. The client will typically have a good idea of the primary parties who have shown interest in the fishery at the local, regional, national and/or international levels. The client is also a good first source of information about any cultural or political issues or sensitivities that should be considered when planning stakeholder consultation. To ensure the client does not withhold information, either intentionally or unintentionally, the CAB should inform the client about:
 - Who can be considered a stakeholder in the context of an MSC fishery assessment.
 - The importance of engaging stakeholders, including those who may be critical of the fishery.
 - The risk of objections if stakeholders are not provided with adequate opportunity to comment during the early stages of an assessment.
- The CAB should make use of organisational knowledge, including the experience of the assessment team, when identifying stakeholders (for example, by considering the stakeholders who expressed interest in similar or nearby assessments).
- The CAB may contact the MSC to seek information about stakeholders to consider including on the initial contact list. MSC regional staff are often knowledgeable about the stakeholders interested in certain fisheries and may be able to provide information about national and international interest groups (particularly industry, conservation, government entities, academics, and technical experts) who have a history of interest in the fishery in question or a similar one, or in issues that could emerge in the fishery under examination. The MSC cannot, however, provide an exhaustive list of stakeholders for use in the assessment.

Other sources of information that could inform stakeholder lists may include coverage of the fishery or specific fishery issues in the media, interest group publications, and the public record.

Prior to the site visit being announced, the CAB should contact the identified stakeholders to coordinate a date for the site visit that ensures the highest level of attendance. There may be some instances where identified stakeholders cannot be engaged ahead of announcing the full assessment; in such instances, the CAB may choose to postpone the announcement of the site visit date until these stakeholders have been engaged in the process.

At each surveillance audit, and at the start of each reassessment, the CAB should:

- Revisit the full list of stakeholders.
- Add any new stakeholders.
- Contact all stakeholders again and offer them the opportunity to provide input.

The CAB should have stakeholder management systems in place to ensure the correct stakeholders are contacted and provided with adequate opportunity to provide input during each part of a fishery assessment. These management systems may go above and beyond the requirements and guidance set out in the FCP and the Guidance to the FCP (GFCP).

If stakeholders do not wish to actively engage with a fishery assessment but would like to be kept updated about progress on the assessment, the CAB should support this. CABs should inform stakeholders that they can sign up to the MSC Fisheries Update emails to keep track of assessments and can keep up to date with progress via the [MSC Track a Fishery](#) website.

G4.2.2 Consultation announcements ▲

“Relevant stakeholders” should be taken to mean all identified stakeholders, except for during consultation on the Public Comment Draft Report and Final Draft Report, at which stage only registered stakeholders (see G4.2.8) should be contacted.

As part of consultation announcements, CABs can ask stakeholders contacted to confirm the following, as appropriate to the consultation period:

- Whether they are interested in providing input on the report or attending the site visit.
- If an organisation is identified, who the most appropriate contact in the organisation is for matters relating to the fishery assessment or audit.
- If an individual representing an organisation has been contacted, that the individual is the most appropriate person in the organisation to be contacted.
- If they are aware of any other stakeholders who should be contacted.

G4.2.3–4 MSC Templates for Stakeholder Input ▲

The main purpose of the MSC stakeholder Input Template is to enable stakeholders to easily track how the team considers input provided by stakeholders and incorporates the input into assessments. This ensures that stakeholder input and CAB responses are reported transparently.

G4.2.7 Registered stakeholders ▲

If stakeholders do not participate during the site visit or comment on the Announcement Comment Draft Report, they cannot comment during later stages of the assessment.

G4.4 Access to information

G4.4.1 Key information ▲

The CAB should interpret “key information” to mean information that is essential for a stakeholder to have access to so that they are able to properly review the logic that the team has used in scoring rationales.

For information that is available online, the CAB should provide a full reference to make it easy for stakeholders to find this information. Where possible, the CAB should include a hyperlink, and include additional details that can be used to find the information if the hyperlink breaks.

If peer-reviewed literature that is not open access is cited within a public assessment report, the CAB should provide the details required for a stakeholder to find and gain access to the peer-reviewed literature. However, the CAB is not expected to provide this access.

G4.4.1.1 Unpublished information ▲

The CAB may use the 'Supporting Information' annex within the reporting templates to make available information that is unpublished or not online. Alternatively, the CAB may make the information available by sharing it directly with stakeholders and the Peer Review College on request.

G7 Process requirements

G7.1.7 Communication CAB-client ▲

The CAB should inform the client that failure to prepare properly – if the relevant information is not available, or if critical issues have not been addressed – might mean that the Unit of Assessment (UoA) could fail assessment.

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G7.3 The MSC Client Document Checklist ▲

The intent of the 'MSC Client Document Checklist' is to ensure that all available information needed to complete the Announcement Comment Draft Report has been collated.

G7.4 Confirmation that the UoA is within scope of the MSC Fisheries Standard ▲

In the context of the [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5](#) and [1.1.6](#), if a fishery is not vessel-based, the CAB should interpret the term "vessel" as "individual operators".

G7.4.5 CAB process if a vessel is excluded ▲

The CAB should follow the process outlined in Figure G1 if the client (or client groups) informs the CAB that a vessel has been excluded from the UoA, UoC, and fishery certificate under [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5.1](#) or [1.1.6.1](#). Examples in Figure G1 are for illustrative purposes only.

If a vessel has been excluded due to a scope issue related to the [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5](#) and [1.1.6](#), the client may request to re-join the UoA, UoC and fishery certificate once the client can demonstrate that 2 years have passed since the vessel's exclusion. In this instance, the CAB should follow the requirements in Section 7.27.

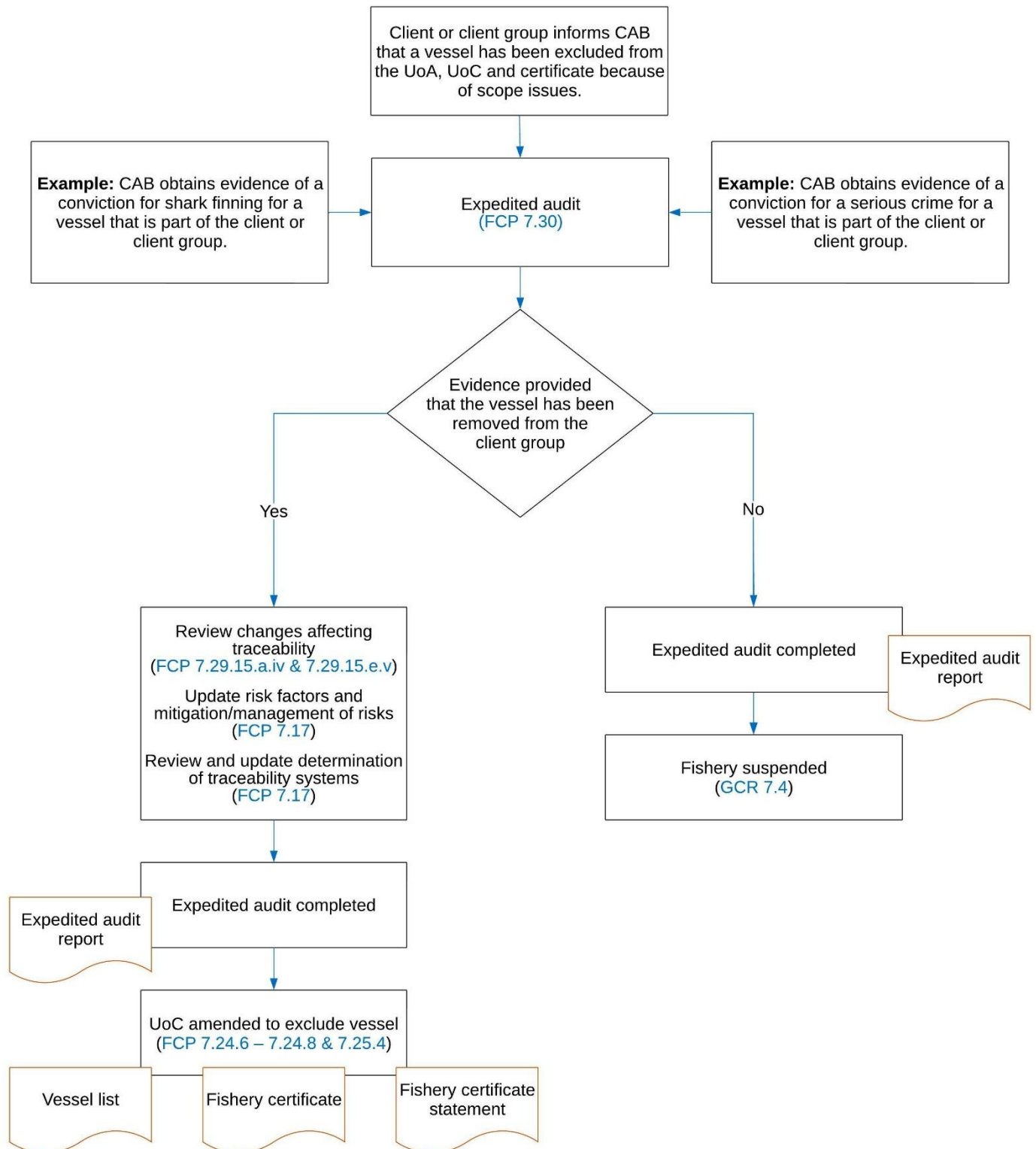


Figure G1: The process the CAB should follow when the client or client groups inform the CAB that a vessel has been excluded from the UoA, UoC, and certificate under the [MSC Fisheries Standard 1.1.5.1](#) or [1.1.6.1](#).

G7.5 Scope of assessment: defining the Unit of Assessment and proposed Unit of Certification ▲

The Unit of Assessment (UoA) and Unit of Certification (UoC) may appear to be similar, but are distinct from one another and should not be confused. The UoA defines the full scope of what is being assessed, while the UoC defines what has been certified and is included on the certificate. Both the UoA and UoC need to be defined at the start of assessment.

The MSC allows an entire fishery (i.e. a combination of stocks/gears/jurisdictions/vessel groups) to be assessed, but only part of that fishery to be certified. Assessing the entire fishery from the outset allows the parts which are certified to change over time, without having to conduct separate assessments on each part as it is added. Therefore, the UoA may be equal to or larger than the UoC. If there is any difference between the UoA and UoC, the CAB must communicate this clearly to the MSC and other stakeholders.

G7.5.2.a Target stock(s)

In defining a UoA, stocks could be different species, or different “more or less isolated and self-sustaining” groups within a species.

Assessment of metapopulations within the UoA

The MSC requires that fishing activity on Principle 1 species is assessed at a level that is sustainable for the stock. However, the application of the “stock” concept may vary depending on the knowledge available and complexity in management¹.

Generally, from the fisheries management point of view, a “unit stock” can be defined as a group of fish that can be treated as a stock and managed as an independent unit, as long as the results of the assessment and the impact of management measures do not differ significantly from what they would be in the case of a truly independent stock².

In some cases, stocks may be structured as “metapopulations” – systems in which local populations (= sub-populations) inhabit discrete habitat patches, and inter-patch dispersal is neither so low as to negate significant demographic connectivity, nor so high as to eliminate any independence of local population (LP) dynamics³.

In these cases, the team should consider the connectivity between sub-populations of the metapopulation that defines the underlying source-sink dynamics, and thereby clearly define the actual unit stock that is to be assessed against Principle 1.

Connectivity patterns range from a well-mixed larval pool (maximal connectivity) at one extreme to a collection of closed self-sustaining populations (minimal connectivity) at the other. However, most situations are intermediate to these two extremes. Connectivity is rarely symmetrical, and larval flows between 2 subpopulations will nearly always be stronger in 1 direction with maximum asymmetry found in non-reproductive pseudo-populations (absolute sinks). Source-sink models describe a situation where larvae or adults from source locations supplement less-productive sink areas. In a sink location, reproduction is insufficient to balance local mortality, and the LP therefore persists only because it receives immigration from more-productive sources. Source locations are considered net exporters of individuals whereas sinks are net importers of individuals.

¹ Maguire, J.-J.; Sissenwine, M.; Csirke, J.; Grainger, R.; Garcia, S. (2006). The state of world highly migratory, straddling and other high seas fishery resources and associated species. FAO Fisheries Technical Paper. No. 495. Rome: FAO, 84pp.

² Gulland, J.A. (1983). Fish stock assessment. A manual of basic methods. Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, FAO/Wiley series on food and agriculture. Vol. 1: 223pp.

³ Sale, P.F.; Hanski, I.; Kritzer, J.P. (2006). The merging of metapopulation theory and marine ecology: establishing the historical context. In: Kritzer JP, Sale PF (Eds) Marine Metapopulations. Chapter 1. Elsevier, Amsterdam: 3–28.

The degree of self-recruitment and connectivity among sub-populations dictates the specific management required to achieve a sustainable harvest. Where management recognises a metapopulation, it may need to ensure that fishing effort and catches consider the abundance or biomass in each local population.

In cases where fisheries are targeting a mixture of LPs that cannot be clearly separated, a practical management approach may be to consider the whole metapopulation as the unit stock. In this case, more precautionary reference points or other adjustments to the harvest strategy may be needed to allow for uncertainties in the stock structure. However, where appropriate and justified, 1 or more LPs can also be designated as the unit stock(s) on which the outcome and harvest strategy components are to be assessed.

The team should be alert to the special issues of metapopulation in assessing a UoA. At the time of reporting on the fishery assessment, the team should include detailed information in the assessment report, clarifying whether the unit stock is based on 1 or more LPs or on a metapopulation as a whole. Details should be provided on the appropriateness of the level of assessment and management chosen, explaining:

- In the case that management is based on the whole metapopulation, how it is expected to avoid local depletion.
- If based on 1 or more local populations:
 - Whether these are believed to be sources or sinks.
 - The relationship among subpopulations.
 - How management avoids over-exploitation within both the selected local populations and more broadly in the whole metapopulation.

Table G2 shows the level of assessment expected and considerations for scoring the stock outcome and harvest strategy components of a unit stock for a normal single population stock (case A), and for 3 different forms of metapopulations (cases B, C, and D). Teams should note that harmonisation between Principle 1 assessments would normally be expected only in cases where 2 fisheries are fully overlapping in their definition of the unit stock. Fisheries on 2 separate LPs within a wider metapopulation, for example, need not have harmonised outcomes.

Table G1: Level of assessment expected and considerations when scoring the stock outcome and harvest strategy components of a unit stock for different forms of metapopulation

Stock structure	Description (degree of connectivity and self-recruitment)	Implications for management of the stock (assessment of Outcome and Harvest Strategy)
A. Single population	Completely isolated. Self-contained with no emigration or immigration of individuals from or to the stock. Occupies a well-defined spatial range and is independent of other stocks of the same species.	Whole population. Fishing on the population has no effect on the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Normal expectations may apply for reference points. The fishery must manage the stock above the point of recruitment impairment (PRI) to ensure recruitment is sustained.
B. Local population with partial isolation	Partially isolated and minimal connectivity. Self-sustaining. The degree of connectivity with other LPs in the metapopulation is so weak that, for management purposes, it can be considered a self-sustaining population. This may be true	Local population. Fishing on the local population appears to have no effect on the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Normal expectations may apply for reference points. The fishery must manage its own local unit stock above the PRI to ensure recruitment is sustained. Requires information on the biology of the species, larval dispersal, source-sink dynamics, and oceanographic conditions supporting management at a local level.

Stock structure	Description (degree of connectivity and self-recruitment)	Implications for management of the stock (assessment of Outcome and Harvest Strategy)
	even if occasional larval exchanges between LPs are enough to maintain a certain degree of genetic flow and homogeneity.	Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in Performance Indicators (PIs) 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and 1.2.4.
C. Local population(s) with moderate connectivity within the meta-population	Moderate connectivity. The degree of connectivity between LPs is enough to maintain genetic flow and some degree of homogeneity. Source-sink dynamics with variable degree of self-recruitment. Sources of recruits act as core areas in the species range where the species occurs in all years and where the typical age composition exhibits regular recruitment patterns with multiple age classes present. There may be sinks where occasional individuals or low densities usually occur and where populations typically consist of only 1 or a few age groups, often of old individuals.	Local population(s). Fishing on local populations affects the dynamics of neighbouring populations. Fishing and the management decision affecting upstream populations will have impacts on the components downstream. Local populations are not entirely in control of their productivity. The fishery must manage its own local unit stock above the PRI to ensure recruitment is sustained, but reference points also need to take into account connections with and dependences on neighbouring local populations. Per recruit reference points (e.g. percentage spawners per recruit) may confirm the good management of the fishery to contribute to the wider surrounding populations. Separate monitoring of absolute reference points (either of incoming recruitment or of local population levels) may also be needed to confirm that the inputs of external recruitment are being sustained. Requires information on the biology of the species, larval dispersal, source-sink dynamics, and oceanographic conditions supporting management at local level. Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in PIs 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and 1.2.4.
D. Local populations with maximum connectivity within the meta-population	Maximum connectivity. Metapopulation is panmictic (mating is random within the entire metapopulation). Subpopulations are arbitrary. Well-mixed larval pool.	Whole metapopulation. Fishing on local populations affects the dynamics of neighbouring populations. The fishery must manage the whole metapopulation (unit stock) above the PRI to ensure that recruitment is sustained. Special attention may be needed in setting reference points to ensure that the LP structure is not affected by fishing. Scored against the whole metapopulation. Information and uncertainties related to stock structure need to be scored in PIs 1.2.2, 1.2.3, and 1.2.4.

G7.5.2.b Defining gear type(s) used in the UoA ▲

“Fishing gear” is defined as the tool with which living aquatic resources are captured. For MSC assessments, “fishing gear” type is distinguished based on the physical configuration, rather than how the gear is deployed. For example, the CAB should consider a beam trawl with sumwing as a different fishing gear type to a beam trawl with tickler chains, because these fishing gears have different configurations (i.e. different accessory equipment). However, the CAB should not consider beam

trawling on sandy bottom and beam trawling on rocky substrate as different fishing gears types and should include both activities in a single UoA.

Single UoA/UoC with multiple gears

Where there are discrete variations in the type of fishing gear used (such as 2 different mesh sizes used in a standard type of trawl gear), the CAB may include these within a single UoA. The CAB should clearly describe the gears and the variations, and consider these in the assessment and scoring. If the UoA is certified, the CAB should monitor the use of each fishing gear type at surveillance audits to ensure that the effort applied to each has not changed to the extent that the impact of the UoA has also changed; if this occurs, the CAB should update the scoring. If 2 or more fishing gear types included in a single UoA and scored together, the CAB should use the lower score to determine the result. The CAB should consider the benefits of joint scoring against the risks (e.g. a lower score an individual analysis on a gear type resulting in a fail for all the others in the UoA).

Single UoA/UoC with single gear

In cases where the CAB defines the UoA/proposed UoC by a single gear type, the CAB should determine whether there are any variations in use (e.g. how the gear is deployed, or type of bait used). If so, the CAB should:

- Describe these variations and any potential differences in impact on Principle 2 components.
- Monitor any changes in use at surveillance to ensure the full impact of the variations are considered in scoring.

The CAB should define the UoA/UoC to include all activities undertaken for the specified fishing gear type. For example, if the gear type is purse seine and it is used in multiple ways, such as setting on a FAD and on a free-school of fish, the CAB should define the UoA to include all set-types.

The CAB may take a flexible approach in order to minimise the complexity of assessment reports as far as possible while ensuring that all fishing impacts for the combined gear types/variations are fully assessed.

Trading of catch quota between vessels

In cases where catch quotas for certified fish stocks are traded between vessels, fleets, or nations, the CAB should only include such catches in UoA/UoC if the recipient of the quota is:

- Already explicitly included within the UoA/UoC and/or recognised as a member of the client group, or
- Itself certified and catches that fish in conformity with its own UoA/UoC.

Such trading of catch quota does not automatically grant the right to enter catches into MSC certified CoCs, although this may be possible in the above circumstances.

The team should assess the impacts of fishing by any quota recipients consistent with the normal requirement that the Principle 1 assessment covers all impacts on the stock. Any changes in such access arrangements in an existing certified UoA should be considered during surveillance audits.

G7.5.5.c Defining the UoA jurisdiction(s) ▲

The intent of 7.5.5.c is to ensure that the jurisdictional context of the UoA is clearly identified at the point the UoA is defined. This supports transparency and provides structured information for the assessment of the UoA.

The jurisdiction(s) applicable to the UoA may include, as relevant:

- a. Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).
- b. High seas.
- c. Areas under the competence of a regional fisheries management organisation or arrangement.
- d. The flag State(s) of the vessels or fleets included in the UoA.

A UoA may operate across more than one jurisdiction. The identification of jurisdictions under 7.5.5.c is not intended to require the CAB to define separate UoAs for each jurisdiction, or to fragment the UoA by jurisdiction.

The CAB may define separate UoAs by jurisdiction where this is appropriate for the assessment. For example, the CAB may define separate UoAs for fisheries targeting the same stock with the same gear where the vessels are flagged to different States, where this provides a more appropriate basis for the assessment.

The jurisdictional information should be sufficient to allow stakeholder to understand where the UoA undertakes fishing operations and which authorities or arrangements may be relevant to the assessment.

G7.5.2.d Defining the UoA by fleets, groups of vessels, or operators ▲

The team should define the fishing fleets, groups of vessels or individual fishing operators with sufficient detail to ensure it is clear which fleets, vessels or fishing operators are included within the assessment. This could be either the full fleet (taken here to mean all vessels that target the same stock, using the same gear, operating under the same jurisdictions), or a clearly defined subset of those vessels.

A subset may be defined by reference to individual vessels or to an objectively identifiable group, such as a company, producer organisation, association, management arrangement, contracting arrangement or other defined grouping.

Where a group is used, the CAB should verify that:

- the basis for membership of the group is clear;
- the boundaries of the group can be objectively determined;
- the group has meaningful management, contractual or other arrangements relevant to the fishery; and
- the definition and membership of the group can be audited.

It is not the MSC's intent that fleets, vessels or fishing operators are defined in the UoA in such a way that the objective is to avoid full assessment of certain vessels and add them later during the certification period. However, the team should consider and discuss with the fishery client the intended degree of flexibility when defining the UoA. How the fishing fleets, groups of vessels or individual fishing operators are defined will determine who is eligible to access the certificate and what

process will be required when vessels which to join or leave the certificate in future. If the UoA is larger than the UoC, then vessels which were included in the group defined in the UoA are potentially eligible to join the certificate (**Section 7.26**). If the UoA is defined more tightly to only include the initial vessels that are to be included in the UoC, then any addition of vessels in the future will require a change of UoA (**Annex PA**).

G7.5.3 Defining the UoA by subset of activities ▲

While the MSC allows a portion of the fishery to be certified, it does not allow the UoA or UoC to be defined by a subset of activities undertaken with the stock(s)/gear(s) combination. For example, if assessing a fishery using a purse seine with multiple set types such as FAD-set and free school-set, the CAB should include all set-types within the UoA.

G7.5.4 Definition of UoA at time of fishing ▲

The CAB should not define a UoA based on the species caught as observed at the time of landing. The CAB should include in the assessment all potential impacts of the UoA from all hauls or landings that are defined as having been taken by the gear type and in the area defined in the UoA. The CAB should not define the UoA based on, for instance, a subset of hauls that are defined as targeting a Principle 1 species and for which a calculation of the proportion of the catch that includes that Principle 1 species is required.

G7.5.5 Geographical area of the UoA ▲

This is a description of the geographical area within which the fishery is undertaken. It should include the following:

- FAO Major Fishing Area, identified by name and two-digit code (www.fao.org/cwp-on-fishery-statistics/handbook).
- Commonly used name for the body of water (e.g. North Sea).
- Local fisheries management area (e.g. ICES divisions VI, VII, and VIII abc).
- Stock region, which may be all or part of the biological stock unit assessed in Principle 1.

The geographical area is not a component of the UoA definition itself and should not be used to create separate UoAs where the target stock(s), gear type(s), jurisdiction(s), and fishing fleets, groups of vessels or individual fishing operators are otherwise the same.

The CAB should nevertheless consider the implications of the geographical area for the assessment of Principle 2, as the area in which fishing takes place may affect the composition of species encountered and the habitats impacted by the fishing activity. The CAB should also consider whether the UoA complies with applicable spatial management measures, including area closures, protected areas and other spatial restrictions, as relevant to the assessment under Principles 2 and 3. Furthermore, the CAB should consider how future changes in the area of operation of the fishery within the described geographical area might impact the scores of the UoA, and how these changes are required to be assessed and reported on during surveillance audits.

G7.5.6 Defining the UoC

The UoC defines what may use the resulting certificate if a CAB determines that the UoA meets the MSC Fisheries Standard. The target stock(s), gear type(s), and jurisdiction(s) of the UoC are the same as the UoA on which the UoC is based. The difference between a UoC and UoA is based on how the fishing fleets, groups of vessels, or individual fishing operators have been defined between the UoA and UoC. If the UoC is smaller than the UoA, then the fleets, vessels or fishing operators of the UoC are a subset of those defined in the UoA.

G7.5.7 Geographical area of the UoC ▲

This is a description of the geographical area within which the fishery is undertaken. It should include the following:

- FAO Major Fishing Area, identified by name and two-digit code (www.fao.org/cwp-on-fishery-statistics/handbook).
- Commonly used name for the body of water (e.g. North Sea).
- Local fisheries management area (e.g. ICES divisions VI, VII, and VIII abc).
- Stock region, which may be all or part of the biological stock unit assessed in Principle 1.

In describing the geographical area, the CAB should consider the fishery client's ability to track and trace to it, as per 7.5.10 (initial traceability risk assessment) and Section 7.17 (Determination of the traceability systems and point(s) at which fish and fish products enter further certified Chains of Custody).

G7.5.8 Changes to UoA/UoC ▲

During an assessment, the CAB should limit changes to the UoA and proposed UoC to the target stocks identified for consideration under Principle 1, as per 7.15.3. The MSC recognises that stocks initially proposed as target stocks (and assessed under Principle 1) may be recategorised as Fish & Invertebrate species and assessed under Principle 2.

For example, a client may want to propose multiple species for consideration under Principle 1, but the CAB may not have sufficient information to confirm whether that species is best assessed under Principle 1 or Principle 2 until after the site visit. A CAB may therefore confirm the species to be assessed under Principle 1 after the site visit, to be formally confirmed within the Public Comment Draft Report, see 7.14.5.

It is not the MSC's intent that the CAB announces a provisional UoA and adds additional target stocks or gear types or makes other changes during an assessment except those in 7.14.5.

The CAB should consider whether any changes to the UoC made during an assessment will have an impact on the traceability and ability to trace and identify product to each UoC.

G7.5.9 Withdrawing a UoA and proposed UoC during the assessment ▲

For fishery assessments with multiple UoAs and proposed UoCs, a client may decide to withdraw 1 or more UoAs and proposed UoCs during the assessment process, for example to remove a gear type.

G7.5.10 Review of traceability factors ▲

The intent of this requirement is to ensure that the UoCs are defined in such a way that it will be possible for the fishery client to trace and identify them, in order to be eligible to sell product as MSC certified. The risk of vessels outside the UoC fishing on the same stock is relevant where this is for commercial purposes (i.e. intending to sell on this catch rather than discard it). Other risks of substitution may occur between point of harvest and point of sale to any party not covered by the fishery certificate, for example transshipment of product between a catch vessel in the UoC and another vessel, or sale via auction.

G7.5.10.1 Notification of obligation to meet traceability requirements ▲

Fisheries may have systems in place to manage traceability but may not be fully aware of MSC traceability requirements until later in the assessment process, particularly if the UoC does not cover the entire fishery. The intent of this requirement is to enable clear communication with the client group

so that they are aware of the traceability requirements early in the assessment process. Key traceability risks can be documented in the traceability section of the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)', and the client will have more time to implement traceability solutions during the remainder of the assessment process.

G7.7 Preparing for the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

G7.7.1 Fishery with enhanced stock ▲

Background

The intent is that management systems exist to control exploitation rates on wild stocks in order to allow for self-sustaining, locally adapted wild stocks (i.e. adequate wild stock levels that can perpetuate themselves at harvestable levels on a continuing basis, consistent with Principle 1). The management of enhancement activities related to the fishery should not prevent the ability of wild stocks to sustain themselves at their optimum levels, according to their natural habitat-related and biologically based productive capacities.

G7.7.1.2.b Extent of translocations ▲

For these requirements, translocation does not include the transfer of species to outside the distribution of their native range. The latter should be considered as an introduction of a species, to be considered under [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SD](#).

The extent of translocation must be considered to ensure that the fishery enhancement programs predominantly utilise stocks or populations that are native to the natural production area from which the UoA's catch originates.

The means of confirming that fish are "native" to a fishery production area (i.e. from within the "natural range") may not be simple, except in cases where no movement occurs.

PIs may need to be developed to determine the extent of movement within a range that can be considered to have acceptably low risks. Related performance assessment will require the identification of the "natural production area" or genetic range of a stock.

Translocation of fish/shellfish in enhanced fisheries should ensure that fisheries maintain the diversity, structure, and function of the ecosystem on which they depend while minimising any adverse effects. Inadequately managed translocations of fish/shellfish between different areas may have genetic and other impacts that need to be assessed (e.g. the spread of diseases between areas, or accidental species introductions).

G7.7.1.2.c.i Other interventions ▲

Currently, the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) does not cover the issues of feed augmentation and the use of medicines or other chemical compounds.

Examples of other interventions used in catch and grow (CAG) systems include:

- Fertilisation to enhance natural food availability, or
- Removal of predators or competitors, either to maximise capture or minimise post-capture mortality.

G7.7.1.2.d Habitat modification ▲

The cumulative impacts of multiple production operations, areas, facilities and systems within a geographical region must be considered.

For example, a small mussel rope facility may have minimal impact on the natural ecosystem's structure and function, but filling a whole bay with such structures may have much greater impacts.

Consideration is needed for those situations where an individual operation is the subject of an assessment under the MSC Program but is only 1 of several similar operations in a finite space. The assessment should consider whether the cumulative impacts of a particular production system are likely to cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure and function.

G7.8 The Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The Announcement Comment Draft Report provides draft scoring and rationales, and identifies where more information is needed.

One of the objectives of the Announcement Comment Draft Report is to assist the site visit by facilitating stakeholder input to the assessment before the site visit. The Announcement Comment Draft Report also ensures the CAB, the client, and stakeholders are better informed and prepared for the site visit.

G7.8.1 Preparing the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The MSC's intent is that the drafting of the Announcement Comment Draft Report is a desk-based exercise using information provided in the '[MSC Client Document Checklist](#)'. However, additional resources that are readily available can also be used. For an initial assessment, information available in pre-assessments or from Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) may be used.

The MSC does not expect assessment teams to conduct stakeholder interviews or site visits for the purposes of completing the Announcement Comment Draft Report. If a CAB chooses to conduct stakeholder interviews or site visits during the drafting of the Announcement Comment Draft Report, this will not count towards meeting the requirements in Section 7.14.

G7.10 Announcement of fishery assessment ▲

G7.10.4.b Pre-assessment reports uploaded to database ▲

The MSC will maintain confidentiality of pre-assessment reports. The client may require the MSC to sign a confidentiality agreement.

G7.10.5.1 Modifications to the default tree ▲

The CAB should draft quantitative PIs, where appropriate. For example:

- Potential biological removals (PBR) of marine mammals – where fishing activity does not impede the recovery rate of populations.
- Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) – the UoA is at or above MSY, or biomass at maximum sustainable yield (B_{MSY}), or some other variation of an appropriate fisheries management reference point.

G7.12 Peer Review College ▲

The MSC has set up a Peer Review College to fulfil the following objectives:

- Increase the independence of peer reviews of fishery assessments.
- Increase the quality and consistency of peer reviews, and the reliability of their use by CABs, stakeholders and independent adjudicators.

- Not to increase, and if possible reduce, the cost of peer reviewers to fishery clients undergoing assessment.

The CAB will need to request peer reviewers from the College according to the requirements in Section 7.12. The operations of the College are described separately to this guidance. Peer reviewers will have similar competencies to auditors.

G7.12.4.b Proposed peer reviewers after the site visit ▲

Following the site visit:

- The Peer Review College will ensure that all registered stakeholders are proactively invited to comment on the potential conflicts of interest of the proposed peer reviewers for a period of 10 days.
- The College will review any conflicts of interest highlighted by stakeholders, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the FCP.

If stakeholders do not agree with the Peer Review College's determination on conflict of interest:

- They have the right to appeal to the Peer Review College who shall inform the MSC within 10 working days.
- The MSC will appoint a third party to conduct a review of the decision.
- The MSC Executive will inform the Peer Review College of the outcome of the review.
- The MSC Executive will provide instructions on how the Peer Review College should proceed.

Once the consultation and appeals process is complete and the Peer Review College has acted as directed by the third party, the CAB and stakeholders will be informed of the decision that no conflict of interest exists for the peer reviewers appointed to conduct the peer review.

G7.13 Stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

G7.13.4 Publish stakeholder input on the Announcement Comment Draft Report ▲

The CAB should upload the stakeholder input in a timely manner to the MSC database for publication on the MSC website. The purpose of publication is to keep the stakeholders informed before the site visit about what has been raised. Additionally, the stakeholder input is useful for the assessment team to prepare the site visit.

G7.14 Site visits, stakeholder input, and information collection ▲

G7.14.2 Additional site visits ▲

The team may require further site visits by 1 or more team members where:

- Information is not available, or
- The client or stakeholders have not assembled information in time for the first assessment visit to adequately assess and analyse the evidence.

G7.15 Scoring the UoA ▲

G7.15.1 Scoring decision ▲

The MSC's intent is that the full team appointed by the CAB agrees the scoring of the UoA. Although individual team members may lead on the scoring of a particular Principle, their conclusions should be

agreed in discussion with the team as a whole. Discussions on scoring may begin at the site visit. However, these discussions often cannot be completed until after the team has dispersed, when virtual interactions may be needed; for example, by teleconference and exchange of emails.

G7.15.3.1 Evaluating multiple scoring elements at once ▲

The number of SG outcomes identified should always match the number of elements (as defined in the MSC Fisheries Standard) rather than the number of rationales for groups of elements.

For example, if there are six seabird species in catch data, of which all are subject to the same management strategy, the team may deem it more efficient to write one rationale for “seabirds”. However, this rationale should be counted as six element SG outcomes rather than one because the six species in the catch are known. In contrast, if for example catch data only record a general “seabirds” catch, and the species composition cannot be determined, then that is the finest resolution of information available (consistent with the definition of an element in the MSC Fisheries Standard), and thus the rationale should be counted as a single “seabirds” SG outcome.

G7.15.5 Scoring using the RBF ▲

Guidance for scoring the UoA using the RBF is given in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Toolbox](#).

G7.15.6 Applying Table 1 to SG outcomes and scoring rationale ▲

The report’s text should include explicit rationales for all scoring elements.

Example: Rationale for a score of 75 in Principle 2 (fish and invertebrate species, Management PI 2.1.2)

The rationale for a score of 75 for PI 2.1.2 might read as follows:

There are 5 fish and invertebrate species and therefore 5 scoring elements.

- For 3 of them, they are not categorised as ETP, and catch by weight of each species is less than 5% of the UoA’s total catch, so they would not be considered “main”. For these species, there is a management strategy in place that:
 - Is primarily designed for the fisheries that target these 3 species.
 - Recognises limit reference points (LRPs) that are based on sensible assumptions about the stock.

Although the strategy is implemented, there is no evidence that is fully evaluated for the UoA. None of the species is a shark, so the shark-finning SI is not scored. All 3 species are landed and sold; additionally, the team considers that unobserved mortality is negligible based on research of similar fisheries. Given these points, the unwanted catch SI is not triggered. As the ghost gear SI has been scored in PI2.2.2, the ghost gear SI within this PI is not scored (this applies to all fish and invertebrate species scored within this PI).

Given the information above, only SIs (b) and (c) are scored for the minor species scoring elements. As none of the species are main:

- They meet the SG100 requirements for SI (b) – management strategy for main and minor scoring elements.
- They do not meet the SG100 for SI (c) – management implementation.
- A fourth species (hake):
 - Is not categorised as ETP.
 - Is a major target species of high value to another fishery.
 - Is assessed and managed rigorously.

- Makes up 20% of the UoA catch.
- Has quotas applied to the UoA and its major target fishery that are effectively monitored and enforced. Evidence indicates that there is a high degree of certainty that the stock status is above the PRI.
- Is landed and sold; additionally, the team has determined that unobserved mortality is negligible based on published research of similar fisheries. Given these points, unwanted catch SI (d) is not triggered.
- Is not a shark species so SI (e) on shark finning is not scored

Given the information above, only SIs (b) and (c) are scored and this scoring element meets the SG100 requirements.

- The fifth species is a deepwater species that is:
 - Not categorised as ETP.
 - Managed using reference points and robust harvest control rules (HCRs).
 - Well above its PRI.
 - Not utilised, and most of the catch is thrown back with a high mortality rate.
 - Is not a shark species so SI (e) on shark finning is not scored.
 - The UoA has reviewed current measures to minimise capture of this species as well as other measures. A cost-effective and practical measure was identified, but it has not yet been implemented.

Given the information above, SIs (b), (c) and (d) are scored for this scoring element. This species meets SG80 for SIs (b) and (c) but only meets SG60 for SI (d).

When applying Table 1 to combine individual SG outcomes in the above scenario, the overall PI score is 75. All of the scoring elements meet the SG60 level, and more than half achieve higher performance at or exceeding the SG80 level. However, 1 scoring element does not achieve the SG80 level. Therefore, using Table 1, the overall PI score shall be less than 80. In such cases, a condition is raised, regardless of whether any other elements are at the SG100 level.

The rationale for this scoring result is shown in tabular form below.

Table G2: Example scoring result

Scoring Issue	SG 60	SG80	SG100
a	No scoring elements	No scoring elements	No scoring elements
b	Hake: Y Deepwater: Y	Hake: Y Deepwater: Y	Minor 1: Y Minor 2: Y Minor 3: Y Hake: Y Deepwater: N
c	Hake: Y Deepwater: Y	Hake: Y Deepwater: Y	Minor 1: N Minor 2: N Minor 3: N Hake: Y Deepwater: N

d	Deepwater: Y	Deepwater: N	Deepwater: N
e	No scoring elements	No scoring elements	No scoring elements
f	No scoring elements	No scoring elements	No scoring elements
Combine SGs	5/5 met	4/5 met	5/11 met
Overall PI score	75		

G7.15.7.1 Weighting ▲

Table G3 below shows the default weighting when using the default tree.

This information can be found in the **'MSC Fishery Assessment Default Scoring Worksheet'**. Table G3: Default weighting to be applied when using the default assessment tree

Principle weight	Component weight	PI		Weight within component and Principle	
1	Outcome 0.333	1.1.1	Stock Status	EITHER	
				1	0.333
				OR	
				0.5	0.167
		1.1.2	Stock Rebuilding	EITHER	
				0	0
				OR	
				0.5	0.167
	Management 0.667	1.2.1	Harvest Strategy	0.25	0.167
		1.2.2	Harvest Control Rules & Tools	0.25	0.167
		1.2.3	Information & Monitoring	0.25	0.167
		1.2.4	Assessment of Stock Status	0.25	0.167
2	In-scope species 0.2	2.1.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.1.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.1.3	Information	0.333	0.067
	Endangered, Threatened, or Protected (ETP) species 0.2	2.2.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.2.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.2.3	Information	0.333	0.067

	Habitats species 0.2	2.3.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.3.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.3.3	Information	0.333	0.067
	Ecosystem 0.2	2.4.1	Outcome	0.333	0.067
		2.4.2	Management	0.333	0.067
		2.4.3	Information	0.333	0.067
3	Governance and Policy 0.5	3.1.1	Legal/Customary Framework	0.333	0.167
		3.1.2	Consultation, Roles & Responsibilities	0.333	0.167
		3.1.3	Long Term Objectives	0.333	0.167
	Fishery-specific management system 0.5	3.2.1	Fishery Specific Objectives	0.25	0.125
		3.2.2	Decision Making processes	0.25	0.125
		3.2.3	Compliance & Enforcement	0.25	0.125
		3.2.4	Management Performance Evaluation	0.25	0.125

G7.15.7.1.a.iii Weighting to be applied in enhanced salmon fisheries ▲

Default weighting is applied in the '[MSC Fishery Assessment Default Scoring Worksheet](#)', adjusted as appropriate for the additional PIs in salmon fisheries.

G7.16 Setting conditions ▲

Background

Conditions provide for agreed further improvement in the UoA and provide one of the bases for subsequent audits. They are intended to improve performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard, in terms of target species status, maintenance of ecological function, and management system performance.

If scores of less than SG80 are awarded, then measurable, outcome-oriented, and time-bounded conditions of certification are prepared.

Conditions can relate to:

- Reducing uncertainty.
- Improving processes and/or implementation.
- Reducing risk.
- Improving outcomes.

These elements can be hierarchical and may be linked together in pursuing a longer-term outcome and potential continuous improvement.

G7.16.1.2 Drafting conditions ▲

The CAB should draft conditions that articulate the outcome that needs to be achieved by the condition deadline. This should reflect the language used in the SG80 SISG and draw upon relevant text in the [MSC Fisheries Standard Section SA](#), Section SB, Section SC and Section SD clauses and guidance. The CAB should not simply repeat the SG80 SISG.

G7.16.1.3 Condition numbers ▲

When assigning unique identification numbers to conditions, teams should prefix the number with the fishery number obtained from the MSC database (e.g., Fi-00000000XXX_001). Condition numbers should remain in place for the lifetime of the certificate, and should not be reused when the condition is closed. This is to aid in the tracking of the condition over time.

G7.17 Assessment of traceability and product eligibility ▲

Background

Fisheries often have robust systems in place to manage traceability, through regulatory or voluntary controls. However, these systems may not be sufficient for differentiating between certified and non-certified products, especially if the UoC only covers specific vessels or gear types. The intention of this section is to enable clearer documentation of the traceability systems in place for a certified fishery and to make clear how substitution risks are adequately controlled by the fishery client. This can be informed through the site visit and completed in the '[MSC Reporting Template](#)' after the site visit and before the Public Comment Draft Report.

The intent of this section is to ensure that all fishery assessment reports clearly:

- Describe the systems that ensure product segregation and identification to the UoC for all activities and product movements covered by the fishery certificate.
- Identify risks of substitution or mislabelling of certified products.
- Explain how the traceability systems and controls in place mitigate these risks.

G7.17.1 Evaluation and determination ▲

The fishery evaluation covers traceability up to the point where CoC certification begins. The receiving organisation's CoC audit covers its activities from that point.

G7.17.2 Identifying relevant risks ▲

A product-flow description or discussion with operational staff can help identify risks, such as mixing catches, transshipment or losing origin information. These are prompts, not a checklist requiring a response to every example.

G7.17.3 Evaluating evidence ▲

Evidence may include records, interviews and observation of handling. Its extent can reflect the risks and reliability of existing information. Written procedures alone may not show that controls work in practice.

G7.17.9 Landing handover and Fishery Key Data Elements ▲

The CAB should explain that, under the Fishery Key Data Element provisions, where requested by the first CoC certificate holder receiving the fishery's product, the Fishery is expected to provide access to the applicable Fishery KDE information associated with the certified product supplied to that certificate holder. The CAB should refer the fishery to the applicable KDE requirements detailed in the CoC standard for the circumstances in which access may be requested. This request is separate from routine handover information; the fishery's provision of, or ability to provide access to, the fishery KDEs is not assessed as part of the Fishery's assessment.

G7.17.9.1 ▲

Where separation takes place at landing, the team checks the controls before handover and the receiving organisation's CoC certificate and scope. The team's assessment does not duplicate the receiving organisation's CoC audit.

G7.17.11 Reviewing a negative determination ▲

The expedited audit route allows for review before the next scheduled audit. Where FCP procedures permit, documentary evidence may be reviewed remotely. The evidence needs to address the cause: a corrected record alone may not show that a failed handling control now works.

G7.17.12 Certificate information and records ▲

The certificate statement gives buyers the information needed to establish eligibility. Supporting evidence belongs in the report. An unchanged surveillance review does not require a new statement solely to update its review date.

G7.17.13.1 Coordinated reporting ▲

Cross-references to existing assessment records, the Principle 2 assessment and the inseparable catch calculation can avoid duplicate reporting. Provisional information can be identified as such and completed at the applicable FCP reporting stage.

G7.17.14 Surveillance and new information ▲

Changes in fishing, handling, participants or product flows may affect traceability. Existing evidence can still be used where relevant. New information calls for evaluation; it does not automatically make product ineligible.

G7.17.17 Eligibility of Inseparable Catch ▲

Biological inseparability may involve different stocks of one species or closely related species. What matters is whether they can reliably be distinguished during normal harvesting or onboard handling.

Operational examples may include continuous pumping or transfer systems that prevent separation. Relevant evidence can explain the constraint and available separation options, including at landing. Cost, inconvenience, low volume or lack of a market alone do not establish inseparability, although they may affect whether a solution is practicable.

GError! Reference source not found..c Calculating and presenting the proportion ▲

The percentage uses combined relevant weights over the required period, not an average of annual percentages. For example, 400 tonnes of inseparable catch and 4,000 tonnes of target catch give $400 \div (400 + 4,000) \times 100 = 9.09\%$. The 15% limit applies to the combined inseparable catch for the UoA, not separately to each stock or consignment.

Existing assessment data may be used where suitable. Estimates may help address missing data if they support a reliable, representative result. Missing recent years cannot be replaced with earlier favourable years.

G7.17.179 Scope of inseparable catch eligibility ▲

These provisions cover non-target catch assessed under Principle 2. Mixtures consisting entirely of eligible Principle 1 catch are addressed through the general traceability requirements; the 15% allowance does not apply to them.

Eligibility through this route is not separate Principle 1 certification of the non-target stock and does not permit an inaccurate species claim.

GError! Reference source not found.0.a Documenting the Principle 1 justification ▲

A short explanation supported by evidence can set out why the stock cannot reasonably be included under Principle 1. No particular format, additional P1 preassessment or prediction of a passing score is prescribed. The justification is not routinely repeated at surveillance.

G7.17.23 Continued eligibility at surveillance ▲

Changes in catch composition, stock status or separation methods may affect continued eligibility. The updated calculation and relevant new evidence inform the review. The P1 justification is revisited at the stages specified in the requirements, including where earlier information was incorrect.

GError! Reference source not found.23.1.ii Responding to an annual exceedance ▲

An annual exceedance may reflect changes in catches, fishing practices or data quality. It does not automatically end eligibility if the combined limit and other criteria remain met. The CAB's recommendation does not create a separate requirement for a client investigation or mitigation plan.

G7.18 The Client and Peer Review Draft Report ▲

G7.18.5.a Address peer reviewer comments ▲

The team should note that peer reviewers will have the right of reply to the team's conclusion during the Public Comment Draft Report stakeholder consultation in common with other peer review processes, such as those used by scientific journals. The peer reviewer's reply states whether they agreed or disagreed with the team's response, as this could assist with the [MSC Disputes Process](#).

If any of the peer reviewers' comments are contradictory, the team should provide justified responses for each different comment. It may be possible that the team agrees with some of the peer reviewers' comments, but not all. The team should provide clear justifications for all of their responses, including references to the relevant MSC requirements (Standard and/or FCP), and any MSC interpretations or derogations, as appropriate.

The above also applies to the team's responses to 2 or more sets of stakeholder comments where these are interpreted as contradictory.

G7.18.6 Client review of report ▲

The client has up to 60 days to consider and respond to the report. If the client response is received before the end of the 60-day period and the peer review is complete, the team may move on to the next assessment stage without waiting for the full 60 days to elapse.

G7.18.7 Preparation of the Client Action Plan by the client ▲

Specific parts of the Client Action Plan may cover more than 1 PI even though each PI must have its own condition. However, the Client Action Plan should refer to these specific conditions.

The important points for the CAB are that the client demonstrates to the CAB's satisfaction that a condition can be met and how the outcome or result will be achieved.

G7.18.11.3 Exceptional circumstances ▲

Exceptional circumstances include situations when the SG80 level of performance cannot be met within five years due to circumstances beyond the client's control.

Examples: exceptional circumstances

Examples of exceptional circumstances are the time taken for:

- Natural ecological functions, response and recovery in the absence of continued impact.
- More complex or longer-term relevant research to be funded, undertaken and concluded.
- Statutory, regulatory or legislative processes to move from drafting to adoption/implementation.
- Bi-lateral or multi-national management arrangements to be drafted, agreed and adopted

G7.18.12 Verification milestones ▲

Verification milestones are set by the team upon receipt of a Client Action Plan. Verification milestones are the evidence that the team will use to monitor progress of the condition and to confirm that the actions in the applicable year of the Client Action Plan have been undertaken by the responsible entities. If the evidence described in the verification milestones is not available at the time of the surveillance, then the milestone is not met. Verification milestones may be the same as the outputs identified for each year in the Client Action Plan, but if no output is identified for a year in the Client Action Plan (for example, if an action is not due to complete within that year) a verification milestone is still required. For example, if an action is ongoing, a verification milestone could be evidence of that activity, such as evidence of research being underway.

G7.19 The Public Comment Draft Report ▲

G7.19.4.1 References in Public Comment Draft Report ▲

The reference should include identifying details such as number, author, and date.

G7.20 Determination ▲

The CAB should also refer to the [MSC General Certification Requirements](#) (GCR) and ISO 17065.

The determination is a recommendation the team makes to the CAB's decision-making entity.

G7.21 The Final Draft Report ▲

G7.21.3 CAB response to stakeholder input ▲

During the 30-day Public Comment Draft Report consultation, registered stakeholders may provide follow-up comments to the CAB's responses to their previous input.

Registered stakeholders may also provide input at Public Comment Draft Report stage on issues they have not previously raised, providing that the information the comments are based on was available on or before the site visit.

Stakeholder input into MSC fishery assessments

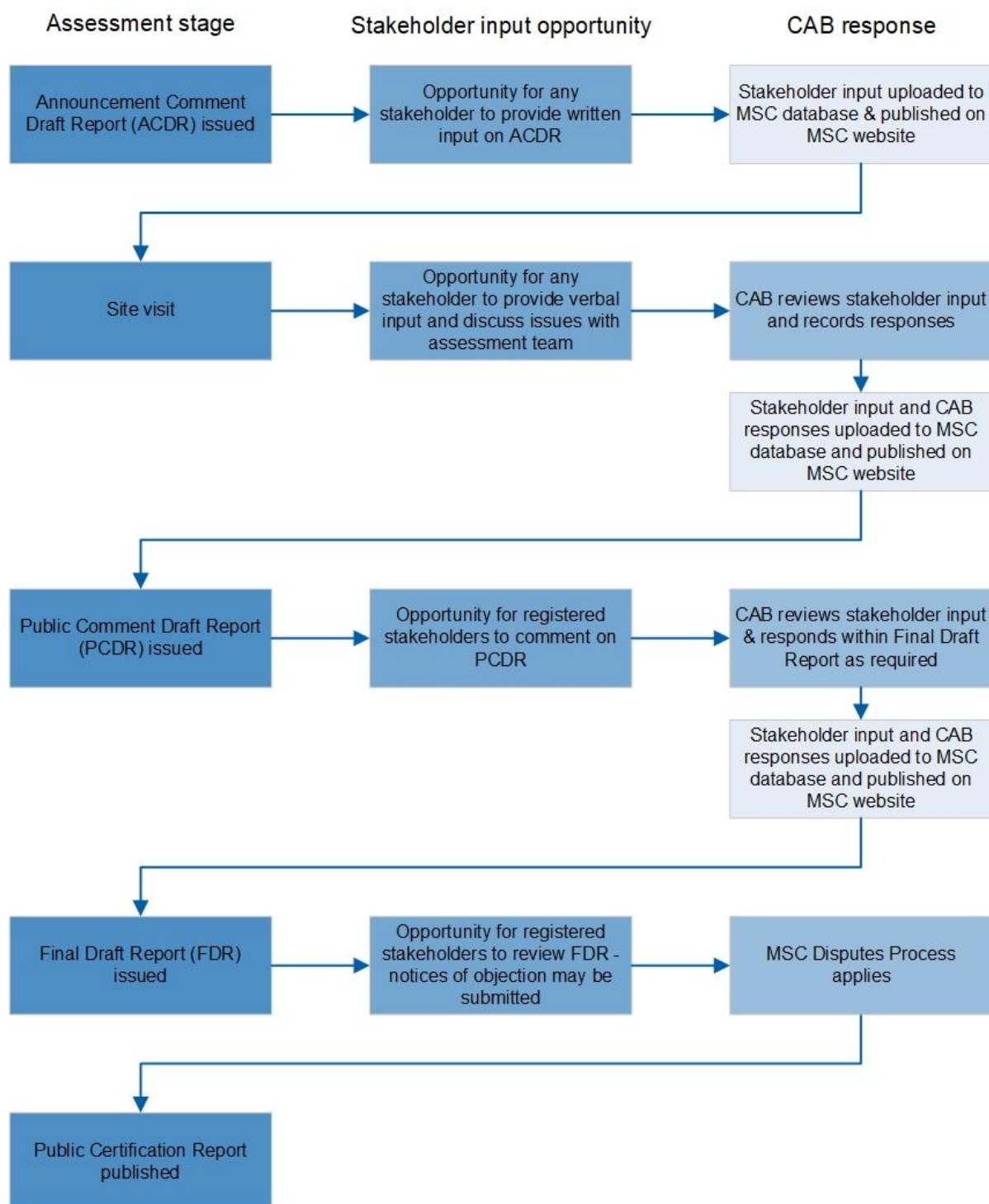


Figure G2: Stakeholder input opportunities and CAB response during the MSC fishery assessment process

G7.23 The Public Certification Report ▲

G7.23.11 The Fishery Certificate Statement ▲

The Fishery Certificate Statement may be included in the Fishery Certificate or made an annex to it.

The advantage of a Fishery Certificate Statement or as annex is the ability to update it more frequently, e.g. changes with client certificate sharing agreement details, than the Fishery Certificate; while a Fishery Certificate is a statement of fact, the Fishery Certificate Statement can include more explanation.

The CAB should include all information from the 'MSC Reporting Template' Section 'Eligibility to enter Chain of Custody' into the Fishery Certificate Statement in order to provide sufficient information to CoC holders buying from the UoC.

If a negative determination is made, it should be clear in the Fishery Certificate Statement that fish or fish products are not eligible to enter certified chains of custody.

- The entities with access to the certificate referred to in this clause should include:
- Vessels or fleets within the UoA or UoC.
- Client group members, which may be fishers or other bodies such as processing companies.
 - If the client wishes to make the certificate available to non-fishing client group members at the exclusion of non-client group members, a list of named companies needs to be provided or linked to here.
- Sales agents with the right to sell product on behalf of the fishery client into certified chains of custody.

G7.23.11.e Other limits to eligibility ▲

The Fishery Certificate Statement should detail all exclusions to product eligibility that the client has defined, which could include:

- Sale through the client group.
- Product forms (e.g. fish meal) being excluded from eligibility.
- Trip exclusions (e.g. the trips that go both inside and outside the UoC).
- Landing processes where eligibility is verified (e.g. verifying catch area or gear).

The Fishery Certificate Statement may also include other information relevant to the first buyer. This could include:

- Where the CoC starts and from whom certified product can be purchased (e.g. relevant auctions, agents, and/or client group members).
- How product can be identified as certified when it enters the CoC. This is copied from the fishery assessment report including a description of documents or labels.

G7.24 Certification decision and certificate issue ▲

A fishery certificate is the formal document that is issued to a fishery client as evidence that a fishery is certified against the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#). The CAB should refer to the certification decision-making entity requirements of the [GCR](#) and ISO 17065.

G7.26 UoA(s) that fail or withdraw from assessment ▲

G7.26.4.1 Non-binding conditions ▲

The CAB should clearly report in the Client and Peer Review Draft Report (CPRDR) and subsequent assessment reports why conditions are non-binding. If, for any reason, there are score changes that result in the UoA passing after the CPRDR stage, the CAB should follow 7.19.6–7.19.9.

G7.25.7 Reporting ▲

The following are to be provided in full and should not report only on elements revised between the initial and subsequent assessment of the UoA:

- Announcement Comment Draft Report.
- Client and Peer Review Draft Report.
- Public Comment Draft Report.
- Final Draft Report.
- Public Certification Report.

G7.26 Additions to the fishery certificate (amending the UoC)

G7.26.5 Additions that have not been assessed

Proposed additions are additions of vessels to those vessels that have already been defined in the UoA and assessed previously. When a vessel(s) is proposed for addition to the UoC, the CAB should determine whether the vessel(s) meets all the components of the existing UoA definition. In other words, the vessel(s) targets the same stock, using the same gear, within the same jurisdictions, and is included in the defined vessel-group (either the full fleet or subset of it) even if it had not been assessed when the UoA was first defined. Where the vessel(s) does not meet the existing UoA definition, its addition extends the UoA and therefore requires a Scope Extension (Annex PA). Non-exhaustive examples of proposed additions are provided below.

Examples of proposed additions to the UoC.

Example 1

A UoA has been defined as a specific stock/gear/jurisdiction and all vessels belonging to “Sustainable Fishing Association (SFA)”. SFA owns 10 vessels at the time of assessment and these are assessed during the full assessment process. Some years later, an 11th vessel joins the SFA and would like to be included in the certificate.

Here, the CAB could add the vessel to the certificate because it meets the UoA definitions of “vessels belonging to Sustainable Fishing Association”

Example 2

A UoA has been defined as a specific stock/gear/jurisdiction and all vessels belonging to “Client X who is part of the Sustainable Fishing Association (SFA)”. Client X owns 5 vessels at the time of assessment and these are assessed during the full assessment process. Some years later a new client, Client Y, joins SFA and would like their vessels to be added to the certificate.

Here, the CAB would need to conduct a Scope Extension because Client Y does not meet the definition of the UoA.

G7.26.5.a Vessel additions that may result in significant changes

The CAB should evaluate the potential overall effect of vessel additions. This should include consideration of significant changes in vessel numbers, fishing operations, management arrangements, traceability or assessment risk. CABs are required to take a precautionary approach when it is not clear whether a proposed addition may significantly impact the performance of the UoA against the MSC Fisheries Standard, or affect the UoC's certification.

It is the MSC's intent that additions under 7.26.5 are possible in order to reflect the dynamic nature of fishery operations and to allow well-defined vessel-groups the flexibility in changing their fleet composition. It is not intended that a significant number of vessels are added after the UoA has been assessed in order to avoid the appropriate level of assessment.

G7.26.5.b Process for adding vessels that may result in significant changes

If proposed additions may trigger an expedited audit, then the CAB may proceed to do so through an expedited audit or wait to do so at the next surveillance audit after confirming the preferred process with the certificate holder. The certificate holder may choose to wait until the next surveillance audit to avoid the additional cost that would be incurred by conducting an expedited audit. In either case, the proposed additions would only be able to be added to the certificate if they do not result in the material changes listed in 7.29.1a-c.

CABs should also consider the magnitude of the addition and the implications it would have on rescoring PIs, setting new conditions, as well as the drafting of the Client Action Plan and Expedited Audit Report and whether this would be achievable within the timeframes required for expedited audits. For example, a large portion of Principle 2 may need to be rescored if a significant number of vessels are proposed to be added. CABs should also consider whether there is any particular interest in the fishery by stakeholders and whether an expedited audit would provide sufficient opportunity for stakeholders to engage. The addition of vessels through an expedited audit is intended to allow flexibility for fishery clients, but not at the expense of the transparency and robustness of the MSC Fishery Certification Process.

G7.27 Merging fishery certificates ▲

G7.27.1.a Certificate merging when certificates are issued by different CABs

If 1 or more of the fishery certificates were issued by different CABs, then the certificates must all be transferred to the same CAB before being merged. The CABs should refer to the GCR requirements on the transfer of certificates.

G7.27.2.c.i Merging fishery certificates – expiry dates ▲

The CAB should not extend certificate durations for any of the certificates being merged.

G7.27.3 Splitting certificates during the certification cycle

Fishery certificates are normally split when a fishery is undertaking a reassessment process, but a certificate split during the certification cycle may be requested when there is an administrative or logistical reason to do so.

The certificate splitting process is distinct from the transfer of certificated between CABs. Where fishery clients request to split their certificate with the intent that one or more of the new certificates are to be transferred to a new CAB, the certificate split must first take place before following the certificate transfer process in the GCR.

G7.27.3.b Individual UoAs cannot be split

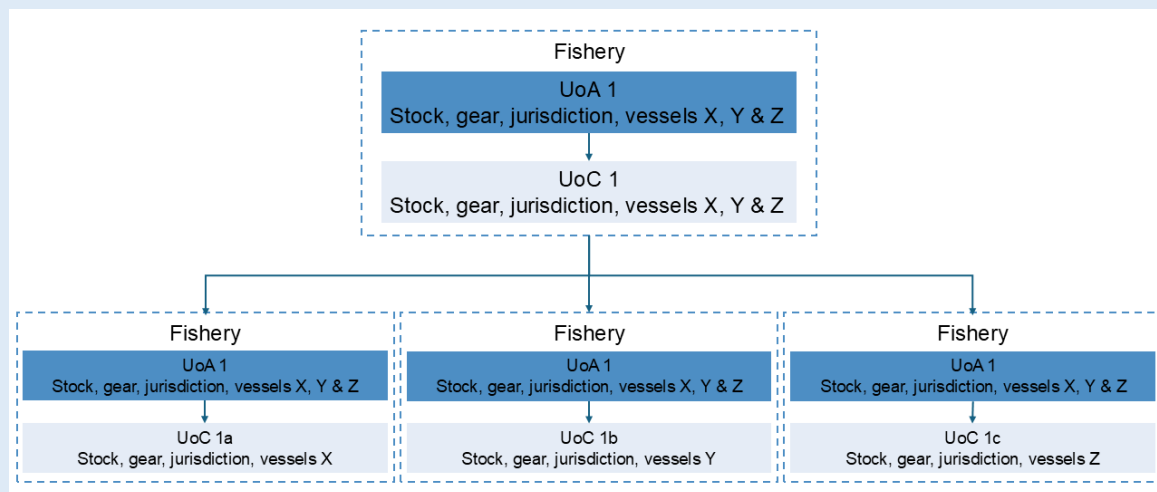
Certificate splitting cannot be used to amend a defined UoA, but can be used to split a UoC or separate UoAs and UoCs from each other. It is not possible for certificate splitting to be used, for example, to redefine a UoA where the intent is to alter scores or conditions in order to avoid suspension.

Examples of splitting certificates

Example 1

A UoA has been defined as a stock, gear, jurisdiction and vessels belonging to client X, Y and Z. The UoC is the same size as the UoA, and is also defined as the stock, gear, jurisdiction and vessels belonging to client X, Y and Z.

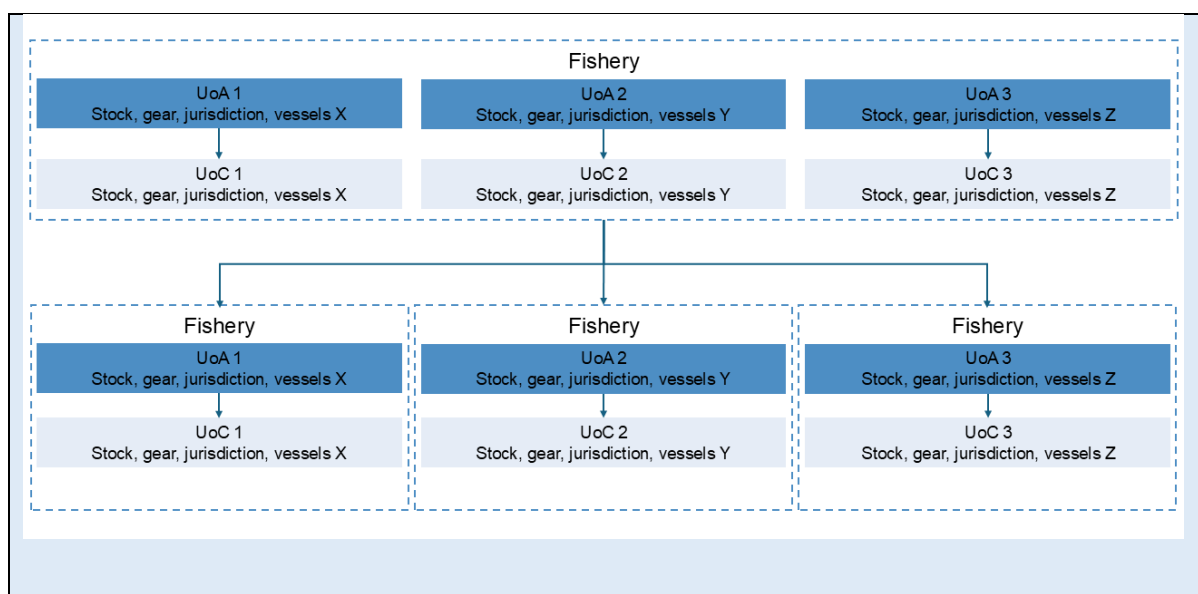
The clients agree to split their certificate and create 3 separate fisheries. In this instance, the UoA remains unchanged and the scores and conditions that apply to the UoA will be shared between the 3 new fisheries. Although splitting a certificate this way is possible it is not recommended, as clients will still need to cooperate to close out any open conditions. CABs should ensure evidence exists that confirms that this cooperation will take place, and clients will need to update their Client Action Plans.



Example 2

Three UoAs have been defined based on a stock, gear, jurisdiction and vessels belonging to clients X (UoA1), Y (UoA2), and Z (UoA3). The corresponding UoCs are defined in the same way.

The clients agree to split their certificate and create 3 separate fisheries. In this instance the CAB may separate the UoAs from each other to create new fisheries and issue separate certificates for each UoC. The scores and conditions that are applicable to each UoA will be maintained.



G7.27.4.b Informing the MSC in advance of splitting certificates

It is intended that CABs inform the MSC in advance of starting the certificate splitting process so that any administrative arrangements can be made to avoid delays. CABs should inform the MSC at least 10 working days in advance.

G7.27.4.d.i Including details of the certificate split within the surveillance report

A summary of the certificate splitting process should be included in the surveillance report so that stakeholders can follow and understand the history of the fishery. For example, if a certificate split results in new fisheries being created on the MSC website, then the CAB should make it clear what the original fishery was called and how the new fisheries are linked to it. The history of the existing conditions should also be explained.

G7.28 Surveillance ▲

G7.29.3.d Verification of information ▲

To decide the ability of the CAB to verify information the CAB should create a list of information, information resources, and aspects of the UoA that need to be reviewed in the annual audit. For each item, the CAB should use Table G10 below to determine the likelihood that it will be able to access the required information remotely and that it can confirm veracity of the information.

In determining how fisheries meet the criteria on verification of information, the CAB may consider the type, nature, and complexity of the UoA. UoAs will be at different points on the spectrum, from a very limited ability to a highly advanced ability to provide information remotely. The CAB should use its expert judgement and knowledge of the UoA to determine a surveillance level commensurate with the fishery client's ability to provide the information remotely for verification by the CAB.

Table G4: Assessment of information available to enable the determination of appropriate surveillance

	Ability to verify remotely is low (low)	Ability to verify remotely is high (higher)	CAB evaluation (high)
Client and stakeholder input	Electronic forms of communication and other mechanisms to engage with clients and stakeholders (such	There are ample opportunities and mechanisms to engage with clients and stakeholders including electronic forms of	

	Ability to verify remotely is low (low)	Ability to verify remotely is high (higher)	CAB evaluation (high)
	as video-conferencing, phone-conferencing, email, phone) are absent, limited, or inefficient and ineffective in providing the information required for an audit in the particular circumstances of the fishery.	communication, such as video-conferencing, phone-conferencing, email, and phone. The mechanisms are effective in the particular circumstances of the fishery.	
Fishery reports, government documents, stock assessment reports, and/or other relevant reports	Fishery reports and other types of report, which are required for the surveillance and to demonstrate fishery performance in relation to any relevant conditions and ongoing performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard, are not available publicly and cannot be transmitted electronically. There is no remote access to the information and there are no or very limited other sources available to triangulate and confirm status of the fishery with respect to the MSC Standard.	Fishery reports and other documented evidence, which can be used to demonstrate progress against conditions and other issues relevant to the MSC Fisheries Standard, can be easily and transparently checked remotely. This is due to such information being available publicly, such as being available on a website or having been widely distributed and made publicly available to several stakeholders. The reports can be transmitted electronically, and veracity easily confirmed.	
Information appropriate to determination of Principle 1 and Principle 2 information requirements (see the Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard)	Information from electronic monitoring of position, observer data, logbooks, fisher interviews, dockside monitoring, etc. is required for audits but cannot be easily transmitted to a remote auditor in a form that can be easily interpreted.	Where information from electronic monitoring of position, observer data, logbooks, fisher interviews, dockside monitoring, etc. is required to verify performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard, this information is available to be transmitted electronically to auditors in a form that can be easily interpreted.	
Transparency of the management system	Level of transparency of information by management is low such that information about the performance of the fishery is generally not easily or widely available.	There is a high level of transparency in management, such that information on the fishery is widely and publicly available or known to the wider group of stakeholders. Any information provided on the fishery can be easily verified.	
Vessels, gear, or other physical aspect of the fishery	There are milestones and conditions that require inspection of vessels or other physical aspects of the fishery during the audit and there are no reliable mechanisms for verifying these aspects of the fishery from a remote location.	There are no milestones that require investigation of physical aspects of the fishery or, if there are any such milestones, there are reliable mechanisms to enable verification of developments with respect to that milestone from a remote location.	

G7.28.7 Surveillance timing ▲

The 6-month flexibility either side of the anniversary date allows:

- Surveillance audits to align with key dates in the fishery management cycle.
- Surveillance audits to align with the expected delivery of conditions according to the Client Action Plan.
- The coordination of site visits with the surveillance audits of other nearby MSC fisheries, thereby minimising the inputs required from management agencies and stakeholders.

This flexibility means that some or all surveillance audits will not be held on the anniversary date of the certificate.

Regardless of revised surveillance audit timings, 4 surveillance audits are to be conducted before the expiry date of the existing certificate, see 7.29.9.

G7.28.14.a.iv Changes to traceability ▲

Changes that affect traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC product may be to:

- The systems or tools used for traceability, and/or
- The UoC(s).

The team should include this response and the review of the traceability change (as per 7.29.15.e.v) within the surveillance audit report as per the template.

G7.28.16.b Remedial action ▲

Remedial action can include the client setting new actions, outputs or deliverables to be assessed at following surveillance audits, provided these are still expected to achieve the condition within the deadline identified at the time of setting the condition.

G7.28.19.c & G7.28.19.21.c Full assessment after suspension related to conditions ▲

The MSC's intent is that if a fishery client has failed to achieve a condition by its deadline, the fishery client is not allowed to enter the same UoCs, or entities in the UoC(s), into (re)assessment under either the same or an alternative name or alias where the effective intent is to extend the duration of the condition into a new certification period.

G7.28.28 Completing the audit ▲

In line with ISO 17065 and ISO 19011 requirements, the CAB is required to have an audit plan established with clear timeframes. The plan is required to justify when evidence-gathering will take place in an audit process. During both on-site and off-site audits, the end of the evidence-gathering stage should be used as the start day for surveillance report submission timelines.

G7.29 Expedited audits ▲

G7.29.1 New information ▲

Examples of "changes to the circumstances of the UoA and/or new information" that may require completion of an expedited audit include:

- Major changes in management.
- New information describing a major impact of the UoA.

However, as the FCP states, there must be good reason to think that these are actual material differences, and not a likely temporary change in indicated status; such a change might arise, for example, from the introduction of a new and not yet validated stock assessment model.

The MSC's intent is that if the CAB is uncertain whether changes to circumstances or new information will cause any of the triggers as defined in 7.30.1.a–c, the CAB should:

- Take a precautionary approach.
- Complete an Expedited Audit to assess the impact.

G7.29.10 Expedited audits during full and initial assessment or scope extension ▲

The MSC's intent for expedited audits during full assessments is as follows:

- Expedited audits are triggered at any point after the information cut-off date.
- Expedited audits are conducted alongside the assessment process.
- The determination and certificate decision are based on the information that was available up until the information cut-off date (7.15.1.1).
- If the draft determination is to certify a UoA but the expedited audit results in the rescoring of an individual PI to less than 60 or a Principle score to less than 80, the determination and certificate decision is not affected (i.e. the certificate is issued). However, the result of the expedited audit means that the certificate is suspended immediately. The expedited audit report and the '[MSC Notice of Suspension Template](#)' are published at the same time as the Public Certification Report.
- The suspension is immediate, with no 30-day notice period.

G7.29.12 Expedited audit during a reassessment ▲

If the reassessment is against a new version of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#), it is possible that an expedited audit is triggered for the existing certificate and not the reassessment, or vice versa, due to difference in PISGs.

When an expedited audit is triggered as per 7.30.1 for both the existing certificate and the reassessment, the MSC does not expect the CAB to conduct 2 separate expedited audits. Therefore, the CAB may:

- Conduct the expedited audit activities so that all relevant information and PISGs are considered at the same time.
- Publish a single expedited audit report.

However, if there are differences in the Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts due to a new version of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) being used for the reassessment, the CAB will need to:

- Record the results separately.
- Clearly identify the results that are relevant to the existing certificate and the reassessment.

When an expedited audit is triggered for both the existing certificate and the reassessment, the expedited audit report is published within 60 days of announcing the expedited audit regardless of when the Public Certification Report is published. This allows the supply chain to prepare for the suspension of the UoC once the reassessment is complete.

G7.30 Reassessment ▲

G7.30.10 Open conditions at reassessment ▲

There are a number of scenarios under which a UoA could enter reassessment with an open condition(s):

- The condition is being carried over into the next certificate (see G7.30.10.a).
- The condition deadline is the 5th-year surveillance audit and the 5th surveillance audit has not been conducted at the time of announcing the reassessment and publishing the Announcement Comment Draft Report.
- The condition deadline is in the 5th year.

G7.30.10.a Carrying over conditions ▲

Conditions can be carried over in the following scenarios:

- Exceptional circumstances apply, as per 7.16.6.
- The condition was set during a surveillance audit during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set during a scope extension assessment during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set during an expedited audit during the most recent certificate cycle.
- The condition was set on PI 1.2.1 SI (a). The stock is at or above B_{MSY} and “available” harvest control rules (HCRs) are in place (the [MSC Fisheries Standard Table SA5](#) and the [MSC Guidance to the Fisheries Standard GSA2.5](#)).

G7.30.12 Related conditions ▲

A related condition is a condition:

- That was closed during the previous certification period, and
- Where a new condition on the same PI or SI is set at the subsequent assessment or audit, or
- That involves the same scoring element or topic (e.g. collecting information on P2 species).
- The scenarios under which a related condition is opened could include:
 - A change in the assessment tree that has led to an increase in the performance required at the SG80 level (i.e. the sustainability bar has been raised).
 - There has been a change in status since the condition was closed; this would only be applicable for outcomes PIs.
 - The scoring element now falls under a different component. For example, in the previous assessment a species was designated as an in-scope species but is now designated as an ETP/OOS species.

G7.30.18 Reduced reassessment ▲

Remote team members can provide support to the on-site team member. However, the CAB should determine how the team can best make use of on-site and remote team member(s) during the reduced reassessment.

The reduced reassessment may benefit from remote team member(s) participating in stakeholder consultations conducted at the site visit by the on-site team member. This should be considered and arranged as part of the planning process. There may be some stakeholder consultation meetings where it is not necessary for the remote team member(s) to participate remotely. If so, their time could be used more effectively for other reduced reassessment activities.

The team member selected to conduct the site visit (i.e. the on-site team member) should be the person most relevant to the content of the stakeholder interviews and information gathering that is needed to assess the UoA. For example, if the UoA had conditions on Principle 2 components, then

the Principle 2 expert should be the on-site team member. The Team Leader will provide oversight of the reduced reassessment process.

End of Annex GPA Guidance

DRAFT

Annex GPA Scope extensions

GPA1 Extension of scope of fishery certificate (scope extensions) ▲

Background

This section provides for limited extensions to the scope of a Unit of Assessment, as requested by an existing fishery client, to include other fishing operations in the same area or an adjacent area. Such extensions may, for example, bring in a gear type or fleet of vessels under the management of a jurisdiction that also targets the main Principle 1 species but was not included in the original assessment. The process also allows for the movement of a target species from Principle 2 to Principle 1, so that it can be included in the existing certificate. It is provided as an alternative, cost-effective assessment option for fishery clients in cases where a whole new assessment is not needed. In these instances, some form of certificate sharing will often be involved between the original and new fisheries.

GPA1.1.3.b Confirming the fisheries' eligibility for extension ▲

The MSC default assessment tree identifies 8 assessment "components":

- Principle 1 – Target stock outcome (status); target stock management.
- Principle 2 – Fish and invertebrate species; Birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibian species; habitats; ecosystems.
- Principle 3 – Governance and policy; fishery-specific management.

The CAB may use Table G8 below to determine which assessment components are the same across the proposed UoA and the existing UoA(s). This table may then be included within the Scope Extension announcement (PA1.2.2.1.b)

Table G5: Assessment components between existing and proposed UoAs

Assessment component	UoA – Fishery 1 (identify the scoring elements for each assessment component)	UoA – Fishery 2 (provide justification to confirm whether the scoring elements in the proposed UoA are the same as those in the existing UoC)
Principle 1 – Outcome	Target species stock + Management of target species stock	
Principle 1 – Harvest strategy	Target species stock + Management of target species stock	
Principle 2 – Fish & Invertebrate species	Fish & Invertebrate normally retained by client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – Birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibian species	Birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibian species bycatch of client gear type in client geographical area	

Assessment component	UoA – Fishery 1 (identify the scoring elements for each assessment component)	UoA – Fishery 2 (provide justification to confirm whether the scoring elements in the proposed UoA are the same as those in the existing UoC)
Principle 2 – Habitat	Habitat impact of client gear type in client geographical area	
Principle 2 – Ecosystem	Broad ecological community and ecosystem in which the fishery operates	
Principle 3 – Governance and policy	Overarching management framework Multi-jurisdictional management framework (as appropriate)	
Principle 3 – Fishery-specific management system	Local management framework + Client-specific management	

GPA1.2 Assessment process

GPA1.2.4.3.b Considerations for rescoring of Principle 2 species ▲

In cases where there are a number of stocks identified as main in-scope in a certified fishery, assessing 1 or more of these against Principle 1 instead will mean that they are removed as scoring elements from Principle 2 in-scope species.

The remaining scoring elements in Principle 2 in-scope species should then be rescored according to Section 7.15. This does not require a Principle 2 expert.

If the new Principle 2 score causes a failure of the fishery due to the reallocation of Principle 2 species to Principle 1, the CAB may choose to discontinue the scope extension process for 1 or more stocks.

End of Annex GPA Guidance

Annex GPB Harmful Fishing Units of Assessment – Guidance

GPB1 Background ▲

The general principle in Annex PB is that assessments and audits of overlapping UoAs should take into account previously harmonised outcomes so that harmonisation is maintained over time.

GPB1.1.1 Overlapping Units of Assessment ▲

CABs may use the [MSC's Harmonisation Database](#) to identify overlapping Units of Assessment (UoAs).

GPB1.3 Harmonised outcomes ▲

Where harmonised scoring outcomes are required under PB1.3, teams are not required to use identical scoring rationales. Each rationale should logically support the harmonised outcome.

GPB1.3.1 Identically defined UoAs ▲

Where overlapping UoAs are identically defined, differences between the corresponding UoCs should not result in different harmonisation outcomes.

GPB1.3.7 Status of scoring elements ▲

PB1.3.7.a-b apply to the conclusion on whether the scoring element meets the status-based part of the scoring guidepost.

At SG60 and SG80, if this part is not met and the team assesses the alternative UoA-specific requirement relating to “direct effects”, the overall scoring guidepost outcome may differ between overlapping UoAs.

GPB1.3.8 Principle 3 harmonisation ▲

The MSC recognises that it may be impractical to harmonise all UoAs managed under the same jurisdiction. Teams should use expert judgement to identify the overlapping UoAs and the jurisdiction scoring element that is common and applicable to them for the purposes of PB1.3.8.

GPB1.3.9 Conditions ▲

PB1.3.9 does not require milestones to be the same across overlapping UoAs. Teams may harmonise milestones where this supports implementation of the harmonised condition and deadline.

GPB1.3.10 Demonstrable differences ▲

Examples of demonstrable differences between overlapping UoAs may include:

- In Principle 1, where 2 countries share a stock but use different methods to monitor UoA removals, resulting in different scoring outcomes for PI 1.2.3 scoring issue (b).
- In Principle 2, where an ETP species is nationally listed in 1 country but not another.

GPB1.4 Harmonisation Process ▲

Where annual harmonisation is required under PB1.4, teams should collectively determine the timing of the harmonisation activity. Teams should consider the timing of relevant management advice and surveillance audits when determining when harmonisation will take place.

For example, where annual management advice is available before scheduled surveillance audits, teams may conduct harmonisation after the management advice is released so that the harmonised outcomes can be incorporated into subsequent audit reports.

Example

Management advice for stock A is released in April every year. There are 4 UoAs that include stock A as the Principle 1 target stock. The surveillance audits for the 4 UoAs are scheduled to take place between July and October. The teams may decide to hold the harmonisation activities in May, once the stock management advice has been released. The teams may decide to bring forward the surveillance audits so that the harmonisation activities take place during the surveillance audit and the harmonised outcomes can be incorporated into the surveillance reports.

immediately. Alternatively, the teams may decide to announce the surveillance audits soon after the harmonisation activities have concluded so that the harmonised outcomes can be incorporated into the surveillance reports as soon as possible.

GPB1.4.5 New information ▲

The intent of PB1.4.5 is that an expedited audit is triggered by new information that would result in one of the scoring changes specified in PB1.4.5. A difference of opinion between teams based on the same information does not, by itself, constitute new information.

GPB1.4.7 Summary of harmonised outcomes ▲

A summary provided under PB1.4.7 may include relevant harmonised scores, categorisation of scoring elements, conditions, and deadlines.

PB1.4.7 does not require the CAB to provide a line-by-line response to stakeholder input outside the assessment or audit reporting process.

Annex GPC Fishery team leader, team member, team and peer reviewer qualifications and competencies – guidance

GPC1.2–4 Fishery team qualifications ▲

The qualification requirements for fishery team leaders, members and the team overall (Tables PC1, PC2 and PC3) each require at least 3 years' experience in different aspects of fisheries science and management. Experience that may be counted towards the 3-year requirement includes:

- Experience working on MSC assessments (e.g. as part of a team on a previous fishery assessment).
- Relevant research experience, including that gained during higher-level research degrees (e.g. a PhD or a Masters by thesis). However, the CAB should not include lower-level research (e.g. during a Masters by coursework with a short summer project) or undergraduate training.

The CAB should note the additional ISO19011 training requirements for team leaders in the personnel requirements of the [GCR](#).

GPC1.2 Table PC1: Team leader qualifications ▲

2.a Review of updates to MSC Fisheries Program Documents ▲

This may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

2.b Pass the fishery team leader course ▲

The fishery team leader training course consists of a set of compulsory online training modules, which are listed on the [MSC Online Training Platform](#).

GPC1.3 Table PC2: Team member qualifications ▲

2.a Review of updates to MSC Fisheries Program Documents ▲

This may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

2.b Pass the fishery team leader course ▲

The fishery team member training course consists of a set of compulsory online training modules, which are listed on the [MSC Online Training Platform](#).

GPC1.4 Table PC3: Team qualifications ▲

1 Fish stock assessment ▲

Where 3 years' or more experience is stated, the "3 years" refers to an individual team member needing to have 3 years' experience. The experience cannot be the accumulated experience of different team members (e.g. 1+2 years).

2 Fish stock biology/ecology ▲

For a team member to comply with this requirement, “similar biology” in this context means that where the target species is:

- A demersal fish species, experience with other demersal fish species qualifies. A pelagic fish species, experience with other pelagic fish species qualifies. A crustacean species, experience with other crustacean species qualifies. A mollusc species, experience with other mollusc species qualifies.
- Similarly, for any other taxon.
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5 Current knowledge of the country, language, and local fishery context ▲

“Common language” means knowledge of a language that is spoken by clients and stakeholders. The intent of the requirement is to ensure that information can be clearly exchanged between the team, client, and stakeholders, and understood by most parties. For example, “the common language” in Indonesia could be Bahasa, and in African countries it could be English, French, or Portuguese.

A “relevant fishery” in this context means where the scale of the fishery, the stock assessment techniques, and management approaches are similar to those in the fishery under assessment. For example, if the fishery under assessment is a small-scale operation with limited quantitative information and informal management systems, then “relevant fisheries” would also have these characteristics. Similarly, if the fishery under assessment is large scale or industrial with fully quantitative stock assessment approaches and related management systems (such as harvest control rules related to input/output measures) then “relevant fisheries” would also have these characteristics.

6.c Review traceability requirements ▲

The review of any updates to the traceability requirements may take the form of a search of the MSC website for new updates issued during the preceding year.

End of Annex GPC Guidance

End of Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Process

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