



Species strategies

Impact Assessment Report

Megan Atcheson

November 2021

Table of Contents

1. Impact assessment.....	4
2. Problem statement.....	5
3. Objectives.....	5
4. Options.....	5
5. Summary of impacts.....	5
5.1 Impacts.....	6
6. Additional options and impacts.....	8
7. Discussion and conclusion.....	8

The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Marine Stewardship Council. This is a working paper, it represents work in progress and is part of ongoing policy development. The language used in draft scoring requirements is intended to be illustrative only, and may undergo considerable refinement in later stages. This work is licensed under Creative Commons BY 4.0 to view a copy of this license, visit (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)

How to reference this report: Atcheson, M. 2021. Species strategies. Fisheries Standard Review Impact Assessment Report. Published by the Marine Stewardship Council [www.msc.org], (<https://www.msc.org/standards-and-certification/developing-our-standards/the-fisheries-standard-review/projects/clarifying-the-assessment-of-squid-crab-and-octopus-fisheries>), 8 pages

1. Impact assessment

The aim of impact assessment is to provide clear information on the impacts of the options developed to sort out the policy issues identified in the project inception. It serves as a basis for comparing options against one another and against the business-as-usual scenario, and identify a preferred option if possible. It does not replace decision-making but is used as a tool to support the decision-making process and underpin evidenced based decision-making; increasing transparency, making trade-offs visible and reducing bias.

Impact assessment should help to:

- Specify how proposed options will tackle the identified issues and meet objectives
- Identify direct and indirect impacts, and how they occur
- Assess impacts in both qualitative and quantitative terms.
- Help find perverse or unintended consequences before they occur.
- Where possible, make risks and uncertainties known.

This is achieved by following MSC's Impact Assessment Framework that outlines when and how to undertake Impact Assessment. This ensures an efficient, systematic and consistent approach to policy development to underpin a responsive, robust and credible program. In particular, the Impact Assessment Framework defines the different types of impact (see below) and a suite of methodologies best suited to assessing each type.

The impact types used in the Impact Assessment are defined as follows:

1. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the change is deemed likely to be successful in producing the desired results and resolving the issue(s) originally identified.
2. **Acceptability:** The extent that the change is considered tolerable or allowable, such that the MSC program is perceived as credible and legitimate by stakeholders.
3. **Feasibility:** The practicality of a proposed change and the extent to which a change is likely to be successfully implemented by fisheries within a given setting and time period.
4. **Accessibility & Retention:** The extent to which the change affects the ability of fisheries (both currently certified and those potentially entering assessment in the future) to achieve and maintain certification (i.e. changes in scores, conditions and pass rates).
5. **Simplification:** The extent to which the change simplifies and does not further complicate the Standard such that it can be easily and consistently understood and applied.
6. **Auditability:** The extent to which the change can objectively be assessed by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and Accreditation Services International (ASI) to determine whether the specified requirements are fulfilled, and CABs can provide scores.

The Impact Assessment report presents the results of this process, whereby each of the options for proposed changes to the Fisheries Standard are tested to understand their potential effects across the six defined impact types.

2. Problem statement

MSC recognised that increased engagement with species that have historically been underrepresented in the MSC program (squid, crab and octopus) is key to the success of the program in certain large marine ecosystems. To increase accessibility, we sought to determine whether the Standard, specifically Principle 1, was fit-for-purpose for assessment of these species.

3. Objectives

To ensure Principle 1 of the MSC Fisheries Standard is accessible to crab, squid and octopus fisheries.

4. Options

The four options assessed for their impacts were as follows:

1. Status quo
2. Guidance associated with PI 1.1.1
3. Guidance associated with PI 1.2.x
4. Bespoke scoring trees for PI 1.1.1

Table 1 Identification of options to take forward relative to their impact type. High Likert score (i.e. 3 or greater) are marked with an x.

Impact Type	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Effectiveness		x	x	
Acceptability		x	x	
Feasibility		x	x	
Accessibility and retention	x	x	x	x
Simplification		x	x	
Auditability		x	x	x

Based on the objective of this project, accessibility and effectiveness were identified as the priority impact types. Options 1 & 2 were taken forward based on their potential for the greatest positive impact.

Option 4 will not be taken forward as information from earlier consultancies identified that the default tree is not currently a barrier for certification. This position was supported by the MSC's Technical Advisory Board in December 2018 and the MSC Board in January 2020.

5. Summary of impacts

Outreach confirmed that many small-scale fisheries that are considered dynamic do not even consider MSC because their management does not seem to fit, and that guidance will hopefully alleviate this and encourage them to engage with the program.

The suitability of the current requirements was also tested via pre-assessment reports of crab, squid and octopus fisheries. While these did not identify specific barriers to MSC assessment and certification of these species, recommendations for guidance as to how to interpret reference points in the context of these species.

5.1 Impacts

Table 2 Identification of options to take forward relative to their impact type. High Likert score (i.e. 3 or greater) are marked with an x.

Impact types	Description	Option 1 (status quo)	Option 2 - Strengthen guidance in PI 1.1.1	Option 3 - Strengthen guidance in PI 1.2.x	Option 4 - Requirements specific for crab, squid and octopus
Effectiveness	Is the change effective at meeting the MSC's intent? Please explain your answer and rationale – following the guidelines in Step 4	No change will result in ongoing issues with unclear intent	Allows clearer use of reference points if estimates on MSY, PRI etc not known. However main issues are to do with lack of quantitative assessments and possibly management responses	Similar to dynamic fisheries although issues mainly to do with PI 1.1.1	Clarifies the intent for these fisheries being able to be certified, but likely doesn't need bespoke trees as MSY based reference points attainable
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems effective at resolving the issue(s) consistently and reliably.</i>	2	4	3	2
Acceptability	Is the change acceptable to stakeholders? Please explain your answer and rationale – following the guidelines in Step 4	Some stakeholders perceive the status quo to be a barrier for these fisheries	Yes, likely PI 1.1.1 the key area to have further guidance with emphasis on proxies	Possibly as it would clear up how to apply the management PIs for shorter lived species, particularly squid	Likely, though may create additional data/cost barrier as MSC would be setting the management/stock frameworks. No best practice established.
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems acceptable to stakeholders</i>	2	4	3	2

Feasibility	Is the change feasible to fishery partners?	Unlikely to appease fears/concerns that these types of species are able to maintain certification	Yes, likely to help the key area where these fisheries seem to have the issue.	Likely to help although not the key area these fisheries trip up in assessments.	May align the standard to certain species types, though best practice not widely established nor needed given MSY reference points attainable
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems technically feasible for fishery partners</i>	3	4	4	3
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems affordable for fishery partners</i>	2	4	3	3
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems possible given the management contexts of fishery partners</i>	4	4	4	2
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems doable within 5 years for fishery partners</i>	4	4	4	2
Accessibility and retention	<i>Does the change affect the accessibility and retention of fisheries in the MSC program?</i>	No change impacts these fishery types being able to maintain certification	Increases the ability to maintain or attain certification as it will be clearer how to apply proxies to the default tree	Increases the accessibility though the management PIs are not the biggest issue for these types of fisheries	Additional data or computational demands may exist, though likely allows bespoke scoring if fisheries do not have MSY reference points
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems accessible to fisheries seeking certification in the future</i>	3	5	3	3

	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems accessible to currently certified fisheries</i>	3	4	3	3
Simplification	<i>Does the change simplify the Standard?</i>	No, the issues remain	Likely improves but may add unneeded complication given existing proxy guidance was established in v2.0.	Likely improves but may add unneeded complication as management PIs of P1 not the biggest issue.	A change like this adds complexity to the standard as another scoring pathway provided. Initial information showed this isn't needed.
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems to simplify the Standard</i>	1	3	3	2
Auditability	<i>Is the change auditable by CABs?</i>	No, the issues remain	Guidance will help though not the key area for auditability as guidance not normative.	Guidance will help though not the key area for auditability as guidance not normative.	May allow greater auditability of PI 1.1.1 though MSC would be forging ahead of global fisheries in terms of guessing best practice.
	Please state whether you agree/disagree with the following statement: <i>The option seems to be auditable by CABs</i>	2	3	3	3

6. Additional options and impacts

N/A

7. Discussion and conclusion

Beyond increased accessibility, and effectiveness of the proposed changes to accomplish this, there are no other anticipated impacts. Accordingly, no risks to proceeding with the options have been identified.