



Fisheries Standard Review
Clarifying requirements for modified assessment trees
Impact Assessment Report

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1. Impact Assessment Report - Overview

1.1. Impact Assessment Framework

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.

1.2. Problem statement

This project includes the Modified Assessment Trees; the enhanced bivalve modified assessment tree (Annex SB), the salmon modified assessment tree (Annex SC), and introduced species based fisheries (ISBF, Annex SD).

As part of the Fishery Standard Review (FSR), Annexes SB-SD were reviewed to identify, prioritise and, where required, conduct research to address aspects of the implementation of the modified trees within the Fisheries Standard that have been noted by stakeholders and logged by MSC since the release of the most recent version of the Fisheries Standard in 2014.

2. Objectives

Ensure the modified assessment trees reflect best-practice and continue to meet MSC intent for sustainable fishing.

Following the review phase this project aims to incorporate existing interpretations into guidance and address logged issues. Additionally, any changes to the Default Assessment Tree (Annex SA) resulting from other FSR projects will be reflected in updates to Annexes SB-SD where appropriate.

For **Annex SB**, the intent is to address three overarching issues:

1. Improving readability and organization,
2. Determining whether it would be appropriate to provide a definition of translocation, and
3. Resolve inconsistencies found in the Standard.

Regarding 2 above, the lack of a definition for “translocation” in Annex SB has been logged several times, most recently in the 2020 MSC ASI Calibration meeting. According to notes from that meeting, the MSC’s intent is that “translocation” refers to any movement of seed to grow out, not just the transfer of individuals from within their native range to outside of their native range.

For **Annex SC**, the intent is to address three issues:

1. Incorporate interpretation from the interpretation log,
2. Address several issues from the issue log
3. Incorporate changes proposed by the auditability and editorial reviewers
4. Integrate IPI requirement changes for the default tree into this FSR project to ensure consistency (this was the original intent – however, none of the proposed changes from the IPI project will affect the salmon tree).

For **Annex SD**, the intent is to address five issues:

1. Remove any reference to this modified assessment tree being in pilot phase,
2. Improve readability and organization,
3. Incorporate interpretations from the interpretations log,
4. Address issues from the issue log

3. Options

3.1. Impact Assessment 0 – Enhanced Bivalves

The following options were considered in Impact Assessment 0.

Option #	Option title	Description
0	Status quo / business as usual	
1	‘Translocation’ definition in requirements	Clarify MSC’s intent by providing a definition of ‘translocation’ in the requirements
2	‘Translocation’ definition in guidance	Clarify MSC’s intent by providing a definition of ‘translocation’ in guidance

3.2. Impact Assessment 0 – ISBF

The following options were considered in Impact Assessment 0.

Option #	Option title	Description
0	Status quo / business as usual	
1	Remove the first part of FCP v2.2 – Table 2.C.i	Clarify MSC’s intent on the ‘no further introductions’ portion of FCP v2.2 – Table 2.C.I by removing the 1 st part of the requirement – “There is no continuing introduction of the introduced species being considered for clarification to the location.
2	Remove the 2 nd part of FCP v2.2 – Table 2.C.i	Clarify MSC’s intent on the ‘no further introductions’ portion of FCP v2.2 – Table 2.C.I by removing the 2 nd part of the requirement – “(i.e., the species is now entirely self-sustaining in its new location).

4. Summary of impacts

4.1 Enhanced Bivalves

4.1.1. Impacts of the business-as-usual scenario

The impact of the business-as-usual scenario is that CABs are applying their own definition of “translocation,” thereby providing inconsistency in the assessments.

4.1.2. Impacts of the proposed changes – Option 1

The impact of incorporating the definition of translocation in the requirements is that it could potentially change the current application of the standard by raising the bar.

4.1.3. Impacts of the proposed changes – Option 2

The impact of incorporating the definition of translocation in guidance is that it would clarify MSC’s intent while not directly making this auditable. By including this definition in guidance, the hope is that this would give CABs and fishery clients time to resolve any issues that may arise as a result of this new guidance.

4.2 ISBF

4.2.1 Impacts of the business-as-usual scenario – Option 0

There are 2 parts to the “no further introductions” requirement in FCP v2.2 – Table 2 C.i, but the 2 parts do not necessarily mean the same thing, causing confusion and inconsistency in assessments.

4.2.2 Impacts of the proposed change – Option 1

The possible impact is that the fishery could be entirely self-sustaining in its new location but still continue introduction to the location of the introduced species being considered for certification.

4.2.3 Impacts of the proposed change – Option 2

The possible impact is that there is more clarity on MSC’s intent with regards to ‘no further introductions.’ For fisheries that complied with the second portion of this requirement but not the first, this may lead to the fishery needing to resolve any issues that may arise as a result of this clarification.

4. Impacts

The impact assessments presented in Table 1 and 2 below are based on feedback from outreach.

4.1. Overview of impacts

Table 1. Impact assessment (Annex SB – translocation)

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: Translocation definition in req’ts	Option 2: Translocation definition in guidance
Effectiveness	<i>Is the change effective at meeting the MSC’s intent?</i>	Review showed that CABs were not following MSC’s intent	Clarifying MSC’s intent would lead to more consistent scoring (but would not be appropriate at this time, given this project falls within the effectiveness workstream)	Clarifying MSC’s intent would lead to more consistent scoring (and putting it in guidance would give CABs/ fisheries time to sort this out without raising the bar)
	<i>The option seems effective at resolving the issue(s) consistently and reliably</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
Acceptability	<i>Is the change acceptable to stakeholders?</i>	CABs and ASI have shared their frustration w/ the MSC on not knowing how to define “translocation	Clarifying MSC’s intent by providing a definition would alleviate some stakeholder frustration but including it in the requirements may change the bar.	Yes, clarifying what MSC’s intent is would remove some of the frustration, though some fisheries would presumably be affected by this newly proposed guidance.

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: Translocation definition in req'ts	Option 2: Translocation definition in guidance
	<i>The option seems acceptable to stakeholders</i>	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree
Feasibility	<i>Is the change feasible to fishery partners?</i>	This would not be ideal, but I think fishery partners would be ok w/ it	The proposed change may lead to more PIs/SIs needing to be scored, but the change should be feasible.	The proposed change may lead to more PIs/SIs needing to be scored, but the change should be feasible.
	<i>The option seems technically feasible for fishery partners</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
	<i>The option seems affordable for fishery partners</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
	<i>The option seems possible given the management contexts of fishery partners</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
	<i>The option seems doable within 5 years for fishery partners</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
	<i>Does the change affect the accessibility and retention of fisheries in the MSC Program?</i>	No	There may be a few fisheries whose scores would change as a result of this new guidance. The accessibility and retention of these fisheries may be affected.	No – including it in guidance should not affect the bar, so accessibility and retention should not be affected
Accessibility & Retention	<i>The option seems accessible to fisheries seeking certification in the future</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
	<i>The option seems accessible to currently certified fisheries</i>	4 = Agree	4 = Agree	4 = Agree
Simplification	<i>Does the change simplify the Standard?</i>	N/A	Yes and No. Yes, in that it would make it easier for CABs to score translocation if we provide a definition of it. No, because it may require more PIs/SIs to be scored.	Yes and No. Yes, in that it would make it easier for CABs to score translocation if we provide a definition of it. No, because it may require more PIs/SIs to be scored.
	<i>The option seems to simplify the Standard</i>	2 = Disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree
Auditability	<i>Is the change auditable by CABs?</i>	N/A	Yes	It's guidance, so it wouldn't be directly auditable.
	<i>The option seems to be auditable by CABs</i>	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	4 = Agree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree N/A – added to guidance so would not need to be auditable.

Table 2. Impact Assessment 1 (Annex SD – No further introductions)

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: Remove the 1 st part of the requirement in FCP v2.2 – Table 2 C.i	Option 2: Remove the parenthetical in FCP v2.2 – Table 2 C.i
Effectiveness	<i>Is the change effective at meeting the MSC's intent?</i>	Review showed that 1 CAB was not following MSC's intent.	No, it would not meet MSC's intent – the fishery could be continuing introductions even if the species is entirely self-sustaining.	Removing the parenthetical would mean that CABs are clearer on what we mean by "no further introductions"
	<i>The option seems effective at resolving</i>	1 = Completely disagree	2 = Disagree	4 = Agree

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: Remove the 1 st part of the requirement in FCP v2.2 – Table 2 C.i	Option 2: Remove the parenthetical in FCP v2.2 – Table 2 C.i
	<i>the issue(s) consistently and reliably</i>			
Acceptability	<i>Is the change acceptable to stakeholders?</i>	N/A	Unclear	Perhaps not for the CABs/ fisheries that believed they were in scope for following the “self-sustaining” part of the requirement and not the “no continuing introductions” part of the requirement.
	<i>The option seems acceptable to stakeholders</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>
Feasibility	<i>Is the change feasible to fishery partners?</i>	Y	Y	Y – I’ve only identified 1 in-assessment fishery that this may affect, but the change should be feasible.
	<i>The option seems technically feasible for fishery partners</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
	<i>The option seems affordable for fishery partners</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
	<i>The option seems possible given the management contexts of fishery partners</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
	<i>The option seems doable within 5 years for fishery partners</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
Accessibility & Retention	<i>Does the change affect the accessibility and retention of fisheries in the MSC Program?</i>	No	I don’t think so	Maybe – if the 1 identified in-assessment fishery (and those that enter assessment in the future) are not able to follow the updated requirement, it may affect accessibility and retention.
	<i>The option seems accessible to fisheries seeking certification in the future</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
	<i>The option seems accessible to currently certified fisheries</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>
Simplification	<i>Does the change simplify the Standard?</i>	N/A	Yes, the change makes it clearer what we mean by “no further introductions.”	Yes, the change makes it clearer what we mean by “no further introductions.”
	<i>The option seems to simplify the Standard</i>	<i>2 = Disagree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
Auditability	<i>Is the change auditable by CABs?</i>	N/A	Y	Y
	<i>The option seems to be auditable by CABs</i>	<i>2 = Disagree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>

5.2 Pilot testing

Pilot testing has not been done on the modified trees. The salmon tree (Annex SC) is the only modified tree that has undergone auditability review.

5.3 Consultations

No consultations have occurred in connection with the modified trees.

5. Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion, Option 2 for both the translocation issue (Enhanced Bivalves) and the 'no further introductions' clause (ISBF) are the preferred options.