



Introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries

Consultation Summary Report

October 2020

Table of Contents

Purpose and scope of this report	3
Background.....	4
Participation	6
Next steps.....	9
Annex I: Participation	10

This is a working paper, and hence it represents work in progress. This report is part of ongoing policy development.

The views and opinions expressed in parts of this report are those of stakeholders and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Marine Stewardship Council.

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Purpose and scope of this report

Every five years, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) initiates a [Fisheries Standard Review](#) to help ensure our assessment and certification system remains the leading measure of fisheries sustainability. The current review began in 2018 and will conclude in 2022.

Stakeholders from all sectors are at the heart of our review, helping identify issues, develop solutions and test proposed changes. We have completed research into the topics identified in the Terms of Reference, and will next develop options for revisions. One of the topics identified is *Introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries*. We are holding a series of consultations throughout 2020 and 2021 for stakeholders to take part in the development of the Fisheries Standard.

This report details the following for the 2020 consultations on the topic of *Introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries*:

- Background to topics discussed
- Participation data
- Next steps in the review process
- Full transcripts and feedback tables

It is the goal of MSC consultations to value authenticity, fairness and inclusiveness, secure strategic insight and build consensus and credibility. Our core principle is that consultations should be useful to the MSC in achieving its mission and useful to the participants in seeing how their views are considered. To achieve this, the MSC's processes for consultation follow the [ISEAL Standard Setting Code of Good Practice](#) and the [FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries](#).

ISEAL requires that participation is open to all stakeholders, and that the standard setter proactively seeks contributions from disadvantaged stakeholder groups. This is to ensure that contributors represent a balance of interests in the subject matter and in the geographical scope to which the standard applies. Publishing raw consultation feedback is considered 'aspirational good practice' by ISEAL. We publish this feedback as part of our commitment to transparency in our consultation process.

Background

Fishing activities are monitored using a variety of methods, ranging from self-reporting to fully independent monitoring systems. These different methods each have advantages and disadvantages depending on the context of the fishery and how the information is used. Information quality is crucial in determining our level of confidence regarding a fishery's impact or the performance of a management measure. It is important that the adequacy of the available information is taken into consideration during an assessment.

The [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) contains guidance to help assessors decide whether the information provided by a fishery is adequate to meet scoring guideposts. This guidance is limited, however, and allows room for interpretation and individual judgment in determining information adequacy. While expert judgement in these areas is necessary, it is important that assessment teams are consistent in their judgement of information adequacy. Without this consistency, fisheries can achieve similar scores with different levels of confidence on the intensity of their impact, or how effectively they are managed.

The project introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries is a work package of the wider [Fisheries Standard Review](#) project [Ensuring effective fisheries management systems are in place](#). It will consider how to strengthen the existing requirements and guidance on the evaluation of information adequacy, and extend it to other scoring issues that also rely on data gathered from fishery monitoring. These 'evidence requirements' will reflect latest best practice in fisheries monitoring.

This work is not restricted to [Principle 3](#), and will consider relevant scoring issues across all three MSC Principles. The intended outcome is that the evaluation of information adequacy is comprehensive and consistent across fishery assessments. In practice, this means that fisheries will need to have in place monitoring that generates information of a particular quality in order to achieve pass or unconditional scores on key scoring issues.

As part of the work, the MSC has consulted stakeholders through the consultation activities detailed below.

Consultation launch conference

On 13 May 2020, the MSC held an online conference hosted on WorkCast to launch the Fisheries Standard Review. The conference was open to all and advertised via the MSC website and media channels including *Undercurrent News*, *IntraFish* and *Seafood Source*. Stakeholders who had subscribed to receive updates on the MSC program were directly informed. At the conference, the MSC provided stakeholders with information on all topics under review and upcoming consultation events, and participants had the opportunity to direct questions to the MSC project leads.

There were 11 sessions, one of which was titled *Principle 3: Effective fisheries management - Improving fisheries management*. MSC staff gave a presentation and then conference participants were invited to submit questions in a live Q&A. The Q&A session was recorded and subsequently transcribed using a third-party transcription service operating under a confidentiality agreement with the MSC. The full transcript and all questions submitted in the chat box, with any information that could potentially identify an individual, organisation or fishery removed, can be found in [Annex II: Transcript of Q&A session](#).

Online consultation workshops

Using Zoom, the MSC held three online consultation workshops on the topic of *Introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries*:

- 0800-1100 UTC 23 June 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))
- 1300-1600 UTC 25 June 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))
- 0800-1100 UTC 1 July 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))

The workshops were advertised at the [consultation launch conference](#), on the MSC website, and to stakeholders subscribed to receive updates on the MSC program. Stakeholders were invited to register their interest through a registration portal. Some participants were recruited through targeted communications. While the workshops were open to all, it was specified that a certain level of expertise was needed to participate effectively. Places in any given workshop were limited and were allocated to ensure representative participation across all sectors. The second and third workshops were held to meet demand and ensure that all stakeholders who expressed interest in attending were able to do so.

The objectives for the online workshops were to gather feedback on the strengths and limitations of the [proposed framework for implementing evidence requirements](#), and to consider the type, quality and sources of evidence needed in scoring the requirements for:

1. Endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species and gear loss avoidance strategies and mitigation actions.
2. Prevention of shark finning and compliance with management rules.

The topics discussed were closely linked to other [Fisheries Standard Review](#) projects that, additionally, were consulted on separately. These are reported in the following consultation summary reports:

- [Clarifying best practice for reducing impacts on endangered, threatened and protected \(ETP\) species](#)
- [Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing](#)

- [Evaluating the MSC's requirements for the prevention of shark finning](#)
- [Establishing best practice in monitoring, control and surveillance](#)

The workshops were recorded and later transcribed using a third-party transcription service. Subsequently, a third-party service redacted individual names, organisations, countries, fisheries and species. Confidentiality agreements were signed between the MSC and the third-parties. The full transcripts, with any information that could potentially identify an individual, organisation or fishery removed, are available in:

- [Annex IIIa: Transcript of workshop 23 June 2020](#)
- [Annex IIIb: Transcript of workshop 25 June 2020](#)
- [Annex IIIc: Transcript of workshop 1 July 2020](#)

These documents also contain comments submitted in the chat box during the workshops.

Online form (follow-up survey)

The workshops were followed up by an [online form](#) that was open to all on the MSC website between 1 and 29 July 2020. The form was primarily intended as an opportunity for workshop participants to provide further feedback. The full feedback from the online form, with any information that could potentially identify an individual, organisation or fishery removed, can be found in [Annex IV: Online form feedback tables](#).

Participation

This section presents participation data for the consultation activities detailed above.

Consultation launch conference Q&A participation

The consultation launch conference session on *Principle 3: Effective fisheries management - Improving fisheries management* had 125 external participants that attended live, 15 of whom asked questions. Later, 39 more watched the recording online, and therefore could not participate in the live Q&A session.

Table 1: Number of external participants that attended the live Q&A session representing each stakeholder group.

Stakeholder group	Number
Academic/scientific	18
Commercial wild harvest fisheries/aquaculture	26
Comms/media	1
Conformity assessment/accreditation	17
Governance/management	7
Non-governmental organisation	34
Seafood supply chain	8
Other	14
Total	125

Table 2: Number of external participants that attended the live Q&A session representing each geographical region.

Geographical region	Number
Africa	6
Asia	7
Europe	53
Latin America	22
Middle East/North Africa	1
North America	23
Oceania	2
Russia	0
South Asia	11
Total	125

There was broad sectoral representation ([Table 1](#)). Most participants were based in Europe, North America or Latin America ([Table 2](#)). The lower numbers of participants from Asia, South Asia and Oceania could be explained by time differences. Recordings of the conference sessions were made available online to accommodate stakeholders in other time zones.

Online consultation workshops participation

The workshops attracted 50 participants. The full list of participants, their stakeholder groups and country of work can be found in [Tables 5 to 7](#) in [Annex I: Participation](#).

Table 3: Number of individual participants/respondents representing each stakeholder group. Note that the total represents the number of participations, not the number of individual participants, as several people participated twice; by attending a workshop and

Stakeholder group	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Online form	Total
Academic/scientific	2	5	1	3	11
Commercial wild harvest fisheries	0	3	2	0	5
Comms/media	0	0	1	1	2
Conformity assessment/accreditation	4	2	2	4	12
Governance/management	2	1	2	1	6
Inter-governmental organisation	1	0	0	1	2
Non-governmental organisation	3	9	3	7	22
Seafood supply chain	0	0	2	2	4
Other	2	1	2	2	7
Total	14	21	15	21	71

Table 4: Number of individual participants/respondents representing each geographical region. Note that the total represents the number of participations, not the number of individual participants, as several people participated twice; by attending a workshop a

Geographical regions	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Online form	Total
Africa	0	0	3	1	4
Asia	3	0	0	1	4
Europe	7	6	12	11	36
Latin America	0	1	0	1	2
Middle East/North Africa	0	0	0	0	0
North America	0	14	0	4	18
Oceania	3	0	0	1	4
Russia	0	0	0	0	0
South Asia	1	0	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	0	2	2
Total	14	21	15	21	71

In the workshops, the stakeholder groups with the highest numbers of participants were non-governmental organisations, followed by conformity assessment/accreditation and academic/scientific ([Table 3](#)). The majority of participants were based in Europe and North America, with additional participants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania and South Asia ([Table 4](#)). Note that the workshops were held at two different times to accommodate different time zones, and that this is reflected in the regional representation at each workshop.

The low participation from certain regions might be explained by a number of factors, most importantly language barriers, rate of certifications in relevant countries/regions and general interest in the topic. The MSC offered interviews in stakeholders' own languages as an alternative to participating in the workshops, and translated versions of the online form were available on request.

Online form (follow-up survey) participation

There were 21 respondents to the online form. The full list of respondents, their organisations, stakeholder groups and country of work can be found in [Table 8](#) in [Annex I: Participation](#). For respondents that did not consent to their names being published, only stakeholder group and country is available.

A breakdown of stakeholder groups ([Table 3](#)) and geographical regions ([Table 4](#)) can be found above. The sectoral representation is dominated by non-governmental organisations. The majority of respondents who took advantage of this opportunity that was open to all, were based in Europe.

Next steps

We are currently reviewing all feedback received from the consultation workshops and online form, which focused on the high level concept of evidence requirements for scoring fisheries, as well as independent research and our own internal data analysis. The next phase of work will develop the details of the proposal, including the criteria used in evaluating information quality and assessing risk, and the evidence requirements themselves. We will carry out an impact assessment on the proposed changes. We will also seek the advice of our governance bodies on the proposed changes.

In making changes to the MSC Fisheries Standard, we need to consider the following:

- a) Do proposed changes meet [strategic objectives](#)?
- b) Do proposed changes affect the ability to deliver on the [MSC's Theory of Change](#)?
- c) Do proposed changes to the Standard align with the [MSC's three Principles](#)?

We will engage with stakeholders in early 2021 to share any potential changes to the Standard and explain how we developed these changes. We will hold further consultations in 2021 and the revised Standard will be publicly reviewed in early 2022 to ensure changes are clear and that the new Standard delivers the intentions of our program.

To be notified of future activities and developments, [sign up to our Fisheries Standard Review update](#).

Annex I: Participation

Table 5: List of participants in the online consultation workshop on 23 June 2020, including organisation, stakeholder group and country of work.

Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
Academia and research	Academic/scientific	Germany
Ecosystem Conservation Society	Academic/scientific	Bangladesh
Consulting	Conformity assessment/accreditation	Japan
Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Not specified	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Ministry for Primary Industries	Governance/management	New Zealand
National Park Administration Schleswig-Holstein	Governance/management	Germany
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Inter-governmental organisation	New Zealand
Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine e.V.	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
WWF	Non-governmental organisation	Australia
Yayasan Masyarakat dan Perikanan Indonesia (MDPI Foundation)	Non-governmental organisation	Indonesia
Independent Consultant	Other	Indonesia
Seafish	Other	UK

Table 6: List of participants in the online consultation workshop on 25 June 2020, including organisation, stakeholder group and country of work.

Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Academic/scientific	USA
Independent	Academic/scientific	UK
Independent consultant	Academic/scientific	UK
INSTITUTO HUMBOLDT DE INVESTIGACIÓN MARINA Y ACUICOLA	Academic/scientific	Peru
Private Consultancy	Academic/scientific	UK
Atlantic Groundfish Council	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
At-sea Processors Association	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Pacific Halibut Management Association of BC	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
Control Union	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
MRAG Americas	Conformity assessment/accreditation	USA
Fisheries First Ltd.	Governance/management	Canada
BirdLife	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Ecology Action Centre	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Global Ghost Gear Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Natural Resource Defense Council	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Sharkproject International	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
The Nature Conservancy	Non-governmental organisation	USA
The Nature Conservancy	Non-governmental organisation	USA
The Pew Charitable Trusts	Non-governmental organisation	USA
WWF	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Ecolibrium, Inc	Other	USA

Table 7: List of participants in the online consultation workshop on 1 July 2020, including organisation, stakeholder group and country of work.

Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
FishFix	Academic/scientific	Portugal
Association of Sustainable Fisheries (ASF)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	UK
The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	South Africa
On The Hook campaign	Comms/media	UK
CapFish cc	Conformity assessment/accreditation	South Africa
Lloyd's Register	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Danish Fishermens Producers Organisation (DFPO)	Governance/management	Denmark
Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	Governance/management	Germany
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	Spain
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	Spain
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Other	South Africa
I am a barrister in private practice, and I would be attending on behalf of a client (World Wise Foods Ltd).	Other	UK
Sainsbury's	Seafood supply chain	UK
Waitrose	Seafood supply chain	UK

Table 8: List of respondents to the online form. For those respondents who consented to this, their names and organisations are included. A total of two respondents did not provide any personal information, and are not included in this table.

Name	Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
Kun Xing	Dalian Ocean University	Academic/scientific	China
Craig Turley	For the purpose of this questionnaire, I am an independent consultant and do not represent the opinions of any of the organisations that I may consult for.	Academic/scientific	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Academic/scientific	Germany
Amy Hammond	On the Hook	Comms/media	UK
Gudrun Gaudian	Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Richard Banks	MRAG Americas	Conformity assessment/accreditation	Australia
Rob Blyth-Skyrme	Did not specify	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Samuel Dignan	SAI Global (MSC CAB)	Conformity assessment/accreditation	Ireland
Omar Fabian Ballesteros	Did not specify	Governance/management	Argentina
Anton Wolfaardt & Igor Debski	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Inter-governmental organisation	South Africa
David Wiedenfeld	American Bird Conservancy	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Rory Crawford	BirdLife International	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Shannon Arnold	Ecology Action Centre	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Dr Iris Ziegler	Sharkproject International	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Jamie Gibbon	The Pew Charitable Trusts	Non-governmental organisation	USA

Alex Hofford	WildAid	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	UK