



Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing

Consultation Summary Report

October 2020

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Glossary of abbreviations and technical terms

CAB – Conformity Assessment Body

FAO – The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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 potential options for revisions. One of the topics identified is *Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing*. 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 Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing:

- 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

‘Ghost gear’ is fishing gear that has been abandoned, lost or discarded in the ocean. Fisheries certified to the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) should minimise gear loss and must know the impact that lost gear could have on marine life.

Our Standard currently assesses ghost gear impacts indirectly by including criteria for assessing how fisheries are preventing ghost fishing. Concerns have been raised by both the MSC and stakeholders that the implicit way current criteria handle this issue does not encourage fisheries to adopt effective strategies to prevent gear loss and ghost fishing. It could also lead to inconsistent assessment outcomes.

The [Fisheries Standard Review](#) project [Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing](#) aims to ensure that Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are assessing the impact of ghost fishing on marine life consistently and correctly. We therefore want to clarify the requirements for ghost fishing within the MSC Fisheries Standard. We also aim to align the requirements in the MSC Fisheries Standard with the latest in best practice management, with a focus on gear loss avoidance strategies and mitigation actions in MSC certified fisheries.

To date we have discussed this topic with stakeholders at international events, held workshops with assessors, and benchmarked our Standard against other fishery standards. We have also reviewed global synthesis reports and scientific literature focused on this issue. This work helped to inform the scope and content of 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 2: Minimising environmental impacts - Preventing gear loss and ghost fishing*. 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 workshops on the topics of *Endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species, and ghost gear*:

- 1400-1700 UTC 16 June 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))
- 0700-1000 UTC 18 June 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))
- 1400-1700 UTC 30 June 2020 (see [workshop agenda](#))

These were joint workshops with the Fisheries Standard Review project [Clarifying best practice for reducing impacts on endangered, threatened and protected \(ETP\) species](#).

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. 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.

For the part of the workshop focused on *supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing*, the participants were asked to provide feedback on:

- Outcomes: what are the most important aspects for effective gear loss avoidance strategies and mitigation actions?
- Scale: how should ghost gear aspects be addressed by the MSC Fisheries Standard?
- Location: where in the MSC Fisheries Standard framework do ghost gear considerations sit best?

Participants were provided with [background information](#) prior to the workshop.

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 16 June 2020](#)
- [Annex IIIb: Transcript of workshop 18 June 2020](#)
- [Annex IIIb: Transcript of workshop 30 June 2020](#)

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

The MSC also held a series of workshops on the topic of *Introducing requirements on the type and quality of evidence needed for scoring fisheries*, where the topic of gear loss and ghost fishing was discussed. See the separate [Consultation Summary Report](#) for more information about these consultation events.

Online survey

A [survey on supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing](#) was open to all on the MSC website between 26 June and 29 July 2020. The survey was advertised through the same routes as the [online consultation workshops](#).

Feedback was submitted both through the survey and via email during the consultation period. This feedback, with any information that could potentially identify an individual, organisation or fishery removed, can be found in [Annex IV: Survey feedback tables](#).

The survey included questions on the topics of:

- Considering ghost gear in the MSC Standard
- Impact of ghost gear
- Managing the impact of ghost gear
- Changing the MSC Standard requirements

There were additional questions directly related to how ghost gear is currently managed in fisheries. Answering these questions required involvement with a particular fishery or set of fisheries.

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 2: Minimising environmental impacts - Preventing gear loss and ghost fishing* had 117 external participants that attended live, 15 of whom asked questions. Later, 33 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	15
Commercial wild harvest fisheries/aquaculture	19
Comms/media	2
Conformity assessment/accreditation	20
Governance/management	2
Non-governmental organisation	28
Seafood supply chain	16
Other	15
Total	117

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

Geographical region	Number
Africa	6
Asia	4
Europe	66
Latin America	14
Middle East/North Africa	1
North America	20
Oceania	2
Russia	0
South Asia	4
Total	117

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 72 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 completing the survey.

Stakeholder group	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Survey	Total
Academic/scientific	4	0	3	6	13
Aquaculture	0	1	0	0	1
Commercial wild harvest fisheries	6	5	4	9	24
Comms/media	0	0	1	0	1
Conformity assessment/accreditation	1	2	4	4	11
Governance/management	1	2	4	6	14
Inter-governmental organisation	1	2	1	0	4
Non-governmental organisation	9	6	10	10	35
Seafood supply chain	0	0	2	10	12
Other	1	1	1	2	5
Total	23	19	30	47	119

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 and completing the survey.

Geographical regions	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Survey	Total
Africa	0	2	1	1	4
Asia	1	2	0	2	5
Europe	5	7	20	24	56
Latin America	2	0	0	5	7
Middle East/North Africa	0	0	0	0	0
North America	14	0	9	11	34
Oceania	1	8	0	3	12
Russia	0	0	0	0	0
South Asia	0	0	0	1	1
Total	23	19	30	47	119

In the workshops, non-governmental organisations had the highest number of participants, but there was broad sectoral representation ([Table 3](#)). The majority of participants were based in Europe or North America, with additional participants based in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania ([Table 4](#)).

Note that the three workshops were held at different times to accommodate different time zones, and that this is reflected in the regional representation at each workshop. The low representation of stakeholders 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 language as an alternative to participating in the workshops, and translated versions of the online survey were available on request.

Online survey participation

There were 47 respondents to the survey. 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. There was broad sectoral representation, with even numbers of respondents from commercial wild harvest fisheries, non-governmental organisation and seafood supply chain, as well as several respondents representing the stakeholder groups academic/scientific, conformity assessment/accreditation and governance/management. Most respondents were based in Europe and North America.

Next steps

We are currently reviewing all feedback received from the consultation workshops and survey as well as independent research and our own internal data analysis. This will inform our decisions on proposed changes to the MSC Fisheries Standard. 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 16 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
New England Aquarium	Academic/scientific	USA
New England Aquarium	Academic/scientific	USA
Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata - CONICET	Academic/scientific	Argentina
At-sea Processors Association	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Blue Ocean Gear	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Commonwealth Fisheries Association	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Australia
Danish Fishermens Producers Organisation (DFPO)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Denmark
US Pacific Tuna Group FIP	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
US Pacific Tuna Group FIP	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
MRAG Americas	Conformity assessment/accreditation	USA
FAO	Governance/management	Iceland
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Inter-governmental organisation	UK
American Bird Conservancy	Non-governmental organisation	USA
AWI	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Fauna & Flora International	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Natural Resource Defense Council	Non-governmental organisation	USA
New England Aquarium	Non-governmental organisation	USA
ProDelphinus	Non-governmental organisation	Peru
The Nature Conservancy	Non-governmental organisation	USA
WWF	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Yayasan Masyarakat dan Perikanan Indonesia (MDPI Foundation)	Non-governmental organisation	Indonesia
Landwirtschaftskammer Niedersachsen	Other: Consultant for POs engaged in MSC certificates	Germany

Table 6: List of participants in the online consultation workshop on 18 June 2020, including organisation, stakeholder group and country of work.

Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
Maruha-nichiro	Aquaculture	Japan
Association of Sustainable Fisheries (ASF)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	UK
OPAGAC	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Spain
Southern Fishermen's Association	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Australia
The South African Deep-Sea Trawling Industry Association (SADSTIA)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	South Africa
Tuna Australia	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Australia
Did not specify	Conformity assessment/accreditation	Australia
Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Ministry for Primary Industries	Governance/management	New Zealand
Seafish	Governance/management	UK
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Inter-governmental organisation	South Africa
Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP)	Inter-governmental organisation	New Zealand
Independent	Non-governmental organisation	Australia
Sharkproject International	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Tangaroa Blue Foundation Australian Marine Debris Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	Australia
The Pew Charitable Trusts	Non-governmental organisation	Australia
WWF	Non-governmental organisation	Netherlands
Independent Consultant	Other: Fisheries consultant	Indonesia

Table 7: List of participants in the online consultation workshop on 30 June 2020, including organisation, stakeholder group and country of work.

Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
"Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati	Academic/scientific	Romania
Academia and research	Academic/scientific	Germany
Independent	Academic/scientific	UK
Atlantic Groundfish Council	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
Clearwater Seafoods	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada

Cooperative Fisheries Organization (CVO)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Netherlands
Pacific Halibut Management Association of BC	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
On The Hook campaign	Comms/media	UK
Control Union	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Lloyd's Register	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
SAI Global	Conformity assessment/accreditation	France
Defra	Governance/management	UK
Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Governance/management	Canada
FAO	Governance/management	Italy
Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN)	Governance/management	Germany
International Whaling Commission	Inter-governmental organisation	Portugal
BirdLife	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Blue Ventures	Non-governmental organisation	Madagascar
Ecology Action Centre	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Global Ghost Gear Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Global Ghost Gear Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	USA
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	Spain
International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	Spain
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Whale and Dolphin Conservation	Non-governmental organisation	UK
WWF Germany	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Ecolibrium, Inc	Other: NGO/Scientific/consultancy	USA
CO-OP	Seafood supply chain	UK
New England Seafood	Seafood supply chain	UK

Table 8: List of respondents to the online survey. For those respondents who consented to this, their names and organisations are included.

Name	Organisation	Stakeholder group	Country
Julio Ricardo Alarcón Vélez	CD LIMA CIP	Academic/scientific	Peru
Kun Xing	Dalian Ocean University	Academic/scientific	China
Sandra Cuadros Diaz	Did not specify	Academic/scientific	Peru
Mustafa Md Golam	Ecosystem Conservation Society	Academic/scientific	Bangladesh
Mariano Sergio Gutierrez Torero	INSTITUTO HUMBOLDT DE INVESTIGACIÓN MARINA Y ACUICOLA	Academic/scientific	Peru
Paul Mboya Tuda	Leibniz Centre for Tropical marine Research	Academic/scientific	Germany
Christopher Oliver	Alaska Seafood Co-op	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Christina Burridge & Andy Hough	Association of Sustainable Fisheries (ASF)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	UK
Joe Murphy	LuenThai Fishing Venture Co. Ltd.	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Canada
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Tor B. Larsen	The Norwegian Fishermen's Association	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Norway
Michael Park	The Scottish White Fish Producers Association Ltd (SWFPA)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	UK
Rhys Arangio	Austral Fisheries	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Australia
Gaetan Fabritius	Collecte Localisation Satellites (CLS)	Conformity assessment/accreditation	France

Robert Blyth-Skyrme	Did not specify	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Gudrun Gaudian	Independent	Conformity assessment/accreditation	UK
Samuel Dignan	SAI Global (MSC CAB)	Conformity assessment/accreditation	Ireland
Lester G Gittens	Dept. of Marine Resources, Government of The Bahamas	Governance/management	Bahamas
Yi-Hsien Chiu	Independent	Governance/management	Unknown
Maurice Brownjohn	Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)	Governance/management	Marshall Islands
Richard Banks	Parties to the Nauru Agreement (PNA)	Governance/management	Australia
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Governance/management	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Governance/management	Canada
Kate O'Connell	AWI	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Annkathrin Sharp	Fauna & Flora International	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Joel Baziuk	Global Ghost Gear Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Susan Jackson	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Ecuador
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Dr Iris Ziegler	Sharkproject International	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Hayley Swanlund	WWF-UK	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Ian Falconer	Fishy Filaments Ltd	Other: Fishing gear recycler	UK

Kortney Opshaug	Blue Ocean Gear Inc.	Other: Gear innovations for wild harvest fisheries	USA
Thomas Canetti	Food4Good	Seafood supply chain	France
Nigel Edwards	Hilton Food Group	Seafood supply chain	UK
Hannah Macintyre	Marks & Spencer	Seafood supply chain	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
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
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	Denmark
Uyi Edem Effiom	Stand out For Environment Restoration (SOFER)	Seafood supply chain	Nigeria
Giles Bartlett	Whitby Seafoods	Seafood supply chain	UK