



Supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing

Consultation Summary Report

June 2021

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Glossary of abbreviations and technical terms

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 2021 and early 2022 for stakeholders to take part in the development of the Fisheries Standard.

This report details the following for the 2021 consultation survey 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
- Feedback tables

It is the goal of MSC consultations to value authenticity, fairness and inclusiveness, secure strategic insight and build consensus and credibility. 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.

In 2020, the MSC held consultation workshops on this topic, including publishing a public survey. A summary of feedback from these consultation activities, [supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing consultation summary report 2020](#), can be viewed on our website. This consultation feedback helped inform [impact assessment](#) of various proposals aimed at making ghost gear impact and management more explicit within the standard. These proposals were subject to a further consultation activities in 2021 detailed below.

Online survey

The MSC consulted stakeholders through an online survey on [supporting the prevention of gear loss and ghost fishing](#) that was open to everyone and available on the MSC website between 17th May to 17th June 2021. Comments were submitted both through the survey and via email during the consultation period. The full feedback from the survey, with individual names and defamatory comments removed, can be found in [Annex II: Survey feedback tables](#).

Participation

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

Online survey participation

There were 35 respondents to the online survey. The full list of respondents, their stakeholder groups and country of work can be found in [Table 3](#) 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 1](#)) and geographical regions ([Table 2](#)) can be found below. Participation was sought from stakeholders representing commercial wild harvest fisheries, non-governmental organisations, seafood supply chain, as well as several respondents representing the stakeholder groups academic/scientific, conformity assessment/accreditation and governance/management. The stakeholder group with the most respondents was non-governmental organisations. Most respondents were based in Europe, followed by North America.

Table 1: Number of individual survey respondents representing each stakeholder group.

Stakeholder group	Count
Academic/Scientific	1
Commercial wild harvest fisheries	4
Conformity assessment and/or accreditation	1
Governance/management	4
Non-governmental organisation	13
Seafood supply chain	7
Other (please specify)	3
Unknown	2
Total	35

Table 2: Number of individual survey respondents representing each geographical region

Geographical region	Count
Africa	1
Asia	2
Europe	16
North America	8
South America	1
Oceania	4
Unknown	3
Total	35

Next steps

We are currently reviewing all feedback received from the consultation survey as well as independent research and our own internal data analysis. This will help us to better understand whether stakeholders consider our proposed changes effective in resolving our key ghost gear issues.

Following this consultation we will finalise impact testing and standard changes (e.g. to requirements and guidance) to be subject to review by our governance bodies at the end of 2021. If they agree with these, the new requirements and guidance will be subject to further public review in early 2022 alongside the rest of the revised standard.

Following this consultation, the next opportunity to comment on proposed changes will be during the 60-day public consultation on the draft Standard in early 2022.

The new MSC Fisheries Standard will be released in 2022 subject to approval from the MSC governance bodies.

Annex I: Participation

Table 3: 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
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Academic/Scientific	Germany
Caroline Mangalo	SARPC	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	France
Matt Tinning	At-sea Processors Association (APA)	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Commercial wild harvest fisheries	Spain
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	Conformity assessment and/or accreditation	South Africa
Maurice Brownjohn	PNA office	Governance/management	Marshall Islands
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	New Zealand
Yi-Hsien Chiu	Taiwan Fisheries Agency	Governance/management	Taiwan
Abiyoso Purnomosakti	The Minderoo Foundation	Non-governmental organisation	Australia
Christina Sophia Dixon	Environmental Investigation Agency	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Christine Grosart	Ghost Fishing UK	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Francine Kershaw	Natural Resources Defense Council	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Joel Baziuk	Global Ghost Gear Initiative	Non-governmental organisation	Canada
Kate O'Connell	AWI	Non-governmental organisation	USA
KIMO International	KIMO International	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Colombia

Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Susan Jackson	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Tessa Gonzalez	Aquatic Life Institute	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Other: Retail	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Other: Multiple Categories including Harvest/NGO/Academic	Australia
Guillermo Gomez	Gomez-Hall Associates, Fisheries, Trade and Environmental Consultants	Other: Consultant to Industry, Governments, RFMOs and NGOs	USA
Adam Townley	New England Seafood International	Seafood supply chain	UK
Hector Martin Fernandez Alvarez	BOLTON FOOD	Seafood supply chain	Spain
Howard Tsai	FCF CO., LTD.	Seafood supply chain	Taiwan
Louise McCafferty	Joseph Robertson	Seafood supply chain	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	Unknown
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	UK
Thomas CANETTI	Food4Good	Seafood supply chain	France
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Unknown	Unknown
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Unknown	Unknown

Annex II: Feedback tables

[The feedback tables](#) provide raw responses to the consultation. Please read the [consultation document](#) to get the full context.