



Identifying further solutions to ensure MSC certified fisheries are not involved in shark finning

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 *Identifying further solutions to ensure MSC certified fisheries are not involved in shark finning*. 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 Identifying further solutions to ensure MSC certified fisheries are not involved in shark finning:

- 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

Shark finning is the practice of removing any of the fins of a shark (including the tail) and discarding the remainder of the shark at sea. This is [strictly prohibited within MSC certified fisheries](#).

The [MSC Fisheries Standard](#) requires certification assessment bodies (CABs) to assess the likelihood that any vessel in a fishery is engaged in shark finning. Through a certification assessment process, fisheries must demonstrate that they have appropriate levels of external validation and relevant policies in place to ensure shark finning is not occurring.

The current requirements are framed around an increasing level of likelihood that shark finning is not occurring. As with all MSC requirements, they increase from a minimum acceptable level of performance to a best practice level and to a state-of-the-art level. The shark finning requirements are assessed currently for target and bycatch species.

To determine the likelihood of shark finning not occurring, CABs need to evaluate the management measures in place for the fishery. Such management measures include the levels of external validation (e.g. observer coverage), regulations and policies. One such policy is fins naturally attached (FNA). This policy mandates that sharks cannot be processed at sea and the full animal with fins naturally attached to the trunk must be brought back to land. In the current requirements, if a fishery has an FNA policy, the fishery can meet the best practice level by default.

In the absence of an FNA policy, the minimum acceptable scoring level allows fins to be cut at sea, providing the fishery adheres to species-specific fins-to-carcass ratios. Furthermore, the current version of the standard allows at-sea processing, providing there are regulations in place to address shark finning, and fisheries can demonstrate and document the destination of fins. Combined with improving management measures, the likelihood of shark finning not occurring increases from the minimum acceptable level to the state-of-the-art level with increasing external validation. For example, an observer coverage of 5% is considered the minimum acceptable level, while 20% is considered best practice.

Fisheries Standard Review topics for shark finning

Two topics are considered under the Fisheries Standard Review (FSR) regarding the MSC's requirements to prevent shark finning.

1. The definition of 'shark'. The species or species groups that should be considered in MSC's requirements on preventing shark finning.
2. How the existing requirements in the Fisheries Standard should be updated to better reflect global best practice and ensure that shark finning does not occur in MSC certified fisheries.

The proposals for consultation have been developed through internal research, [a consultancy report](#) which reviewed current global best management practices for shark finning and a [public consultation held in 2020](#). The proposals have also undergone an impact assessment to identify potential positive and negative impacts of proposed changes.

Online survey

The MSC consulted stakeholders through an online survey [on identifying further solutions to ensure MSC certified fisheries are not involved in shark finning](#) that was open to everyone and available on the MSC website between 18th 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: Feedback tables](#).

Participation

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

Online survey participation

There were 55 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. There was broad sectoral representation, with a slight weighting towards non-governmental organisations, consumer and seafood supply chain. The majority of respondents who took part in the survey were based in Europe.

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

Stakeholder group	Count
Academic/Scientific	4
Consumer	13
Cultural/recreational/artisanal	1
Governance/management	2
Non-governmental organisation	16
Seafood supply chain	9
Standard setting	1
Other (please specify)	5
Unknown	4
Total	55

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

Geographical region	Count
Africa	0
Asia	5
Europe	30
North America	11

South America	1
Oceania	5
Unknown	3
Total	55

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 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.

The MSC will use the information and knowledge gained through consultations to refine the options for revisions to the Standard. The proposed revisions will be reviewed by [the MSC governance bodies](#) in late 2021.

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
Glulio Perona	Unknown	Academic/Scientific	Australia
Julia Santana Garcon	Minderoo Foundation	Academic/Scientific	Australia
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Academic/Scientific	Spain
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Academic/Scientific	UK
Claudia Feigl	Redacted at request of individual	Consumer	Germany
Craig Turley	Unknown	Consumer	UK
Georgiana Shipp	Unknown	Consumer	UK
Laurel Panchuk	Unknown	Consumer	Canada
Laurel Panchuk	Unknown	Consumer	Canada
Marisa Barkhoff	Sharkproject	Consumer	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Consumer	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Consumer	Philippines
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Consumer	Netherlands
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Consumer	Italy
Sam Macbride	Unknown	Consumer	USA
Thomas Weigel	Unknown	Consumer	Germany
Zsolt Dömötör	Unknown	Consumer	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Cultural/recreational/artisanal	Fiji
Maurice Brownjohn	PNA Office	Governance/management	Marshall Islands
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Governance/management	New Zealand
Alex Hofford	WildAid	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Brendon Sing	Shark Guardian	Non-governmental organisation	Thailand
Courtney Vail	Oceanic Preservation Society	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Dr Iris Ziegler	Sharkproject International	Non-governmental organisation	Germany

Dr. Sandra Altherr	Pro Wildlife	Non-governmental organisation	Germany
Rahel Salathé	Fair-Fish International	Non-governmental organisation	Switzerland
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	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Non-governmental organisation	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Silvia Frey	KYMA sea conservation & research	Non-governmental organisation	Switzerland
Susan Jackson	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF)	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Susan Millward	Animal Welfare Institute	Non-governmental organisation	USA
Tessa Gonzalez	Aquatic Life Institute	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Tom Pickerell	Global Tuna Alliance	Non-governmental organisation	UK
Natalie Parra	Keiko Conservation	Non-governmental organisation.	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Other: Attorney	USA
Guillermo Gomez	Gomez-Hall Associates, Fisheries, Trade and Environmental Consultants	Other: Consultant to fishing industry, governments, RFMOs and NGOs	USA
Emily Hartsfield	Unknown	Other: Healthcare	USA
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Other: Recreational Diving businesses and practitioners group	Brazil
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Other: Retail	UK
Amanda Hamilton	Tri Marine	Seafood supply chain	Singapore
Hector Martin Fernandez Alvarez	Bolton Food	Seafood supply chain	Spain
Howard Tsai	FCF CO., LTD.	Seafood supply chain	Taiwan
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Seafood supply chain	Germany
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
Sandra Hinni	Migros	Seafood supply chain	Switzerland
Louise McCafferty	Joseph Robertson	Seafood supply chain transportation of seafood products.	UK
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Standard setting	Germany
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Unknown	Unknown
Redacted at request of individual	Redacted at request of individual	Unknown	Taiwan
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.