

# MSC Global Stakeholder Engagement Survey

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Highlights report for stakeholders

January 2026



# Thank you

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Thank you for taking part in the 2025 edition of the MSC's Global Stakeholder Engagement Survey.

We are delighted that so many of you took the time to contribute your insights and experience to this survey. There were over one thousand participants. This level of response is a testament to the value you attach to sustainable fisheries and seafood and the work of the MSC, as well as your desire to see us continue to evolve.

Our vision of healthy, productive oceans with seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations is a common cause which unites us all. Your collective engagement over the last 25 years has helped to encourage over 730 fisheries to engage with our program and seek certification. Currently 20.6% of the world's wild marine catch is engaged with the MSC, which would not have been possible without the commitment of so many partners, all of whom have high - and occasionally conflicting – expectations of our program.

In this summary report, you will see our stakeholders believe there are many strengths in the MSC's program. You have however been clear too that there are areas that we should continue to develop. For example, you want us to reduce the complexity and cost of our program, but also to maintain quality. You also consider our advocacy efforts on behalf of the sustainable seafood movement to be important. It was pleasing to see the overlap between MSC's operational priorities and the issues stakeholders consider most important in the oceans today. Your contributions will help to inform the MSC's future strategy and work plan which will lay out our road map to 2030 by which time we aim to have at least a third of global fisheries engaged in the MSC program. I look forward to sharing progress with you and continuing our work together to achieve the goal of ending overfishing.

Rupert Howes

Chief Executive, Marine Stewardship Council

# Background and Sample Profile

The MSC Global Stakeholder Engagement Survey was conducted to enable the MSC to hear the views of key stakeholders across sectors and geographies. The survey results help to inform the MSC's strategic plans, and to identify where improvements can be made to support its stakeholders. This is the second edition of this stakeholder survey in recent years having first been conducted in 2021.

## Research Approach:

- The MSC partnered with GlobeScan, an insights and advisory firm, to conduct the research and ensure rigor and independence.
- The 10-minute, online survey was offered in 10 languages. Anonymised responses were collected from 11th July to 12th September 2025.
- Engagement and outreach with stakeholders was led by the MSC, with participation being voluntary. No respondents were excluded from the survey, unless the respondent self-declared that they lacked familiarity with the MSC.

## Total Responses, $n=1136$

Stakeholder Type	$n$ -size	Region	$n$ -size
Processor/Trader	412	North America	158
Retail/Brand	179	Latin America	52
Fishery	114	Northern Europe	252
NGO	99	Southern Europe	154
Research	90	AMESA*	45
Government	78	Asia	416
Consultant	62	Oceania	55
Conformity Assessment Body	52		
Media	18		
Other	32		

\* Africa, Middle East & South Asia

## Key Takeaways

Stakeholders continue to agree that urgent action is needed to address overfishing, ocean pollution, the effects of climate change, and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. This overlaps well with the MSC's aims.

The MSC remains a highly trusted organisation across all stakeholder groups, with trust ratings increasing from the 2021 survey, but with lower than average trust and engagement reported in North America and among NGOs.

The MSC is seen to be a committed advocate for healthy oceans and sustainable seafood by stakeholders, however, other potential roles in more specialised areas, such as labour standards, product quality, and animal welfare, are rated lower.

Stakeholders continue to believe the MSC is effective in achieving its mission and vision, with scientific rigour and transparency helping to build trust and reinforce its reputation as a standards-based organisation.

Stakeholders are concerned about the cost and complexity of achieving certification, and worry it is a barrier to the MSC's mission.

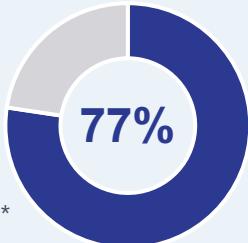
Stakeholders particularly value their engagement with the MSC's local teams and highlight the need for greater consumer education around the MSC label and its meaning.

The MSC has opportunities to strengthen processes such as a review of the Fisheries Standard, and the Chain of Custody systems. Stakeholders believe this would further enhance credibility and effectiveness.

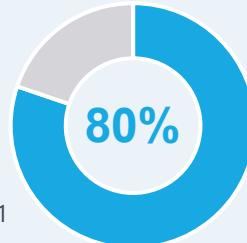
# Summary of Key Performance Areas

**Overall, the MSC performs well across key performance areas, with improvements in trust and engagement since 2021.**

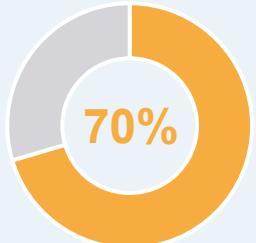
**Trust in the MSC to contribute to the health of the world's oceans**



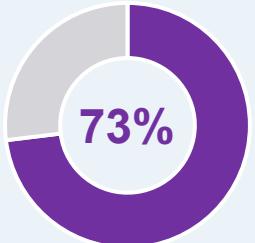
**Likelihood to speak favourably about the MSC**



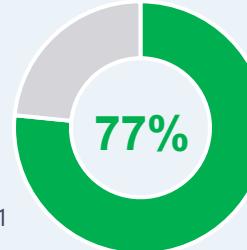
**Effectiveness in achieving the MSC's vision**



**Effectiveness in achieving the MSC's mission**



**Satisfaction with level of engagement/communications**

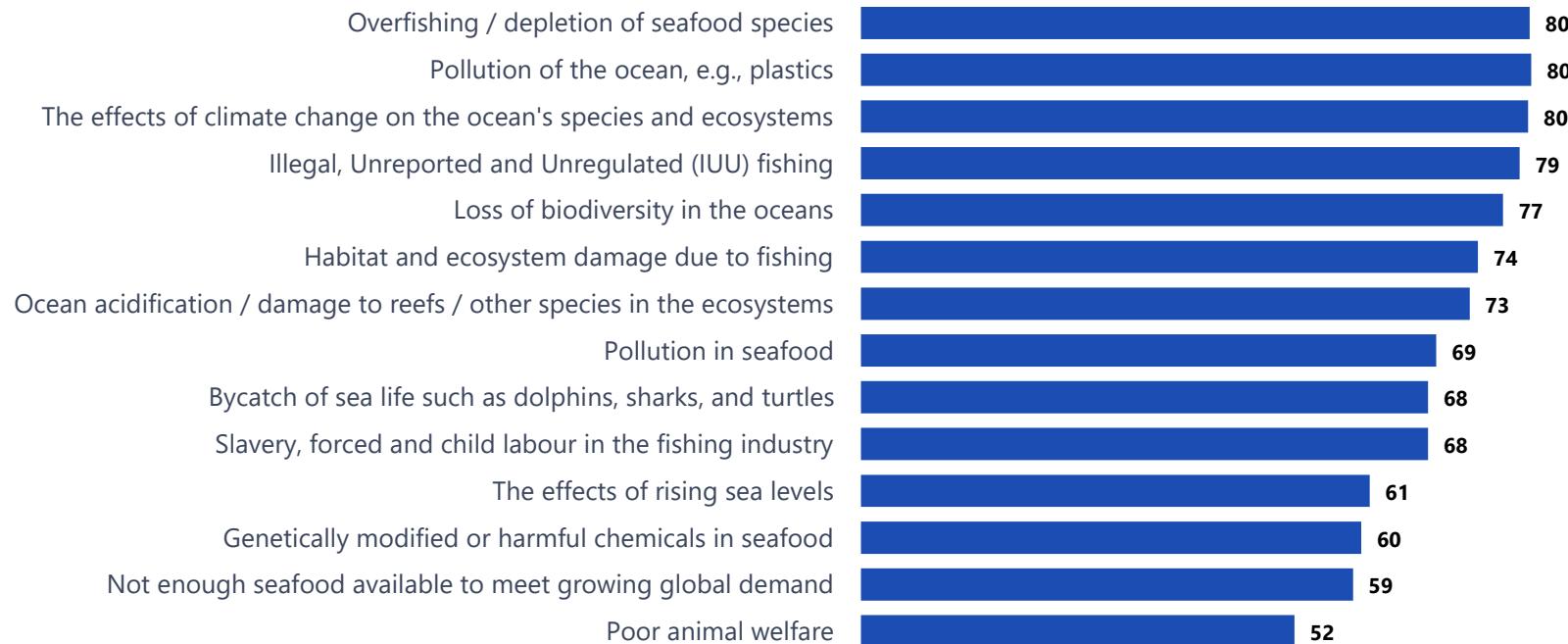


\*Score based on top 3 (5+6+7) on a 7-point scale

\*\*Question asked in 2021: How much trust do you have in the MSC to contribute to ending overfishing?

# Overfishing, pollution and the effects climate change are seen as the most urgent ocean issues by stakeholders

## Urgency of ocean issues, Global, Very urgent (4-5 on a 5-point scale), %, 2025



Q1. How urgent do you consider each of the following ocean issues? Please use a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is "not at all urgent" and 5 is "extremely urgent."

# Stakeholders are most likely to think the MSC is a certification organisation

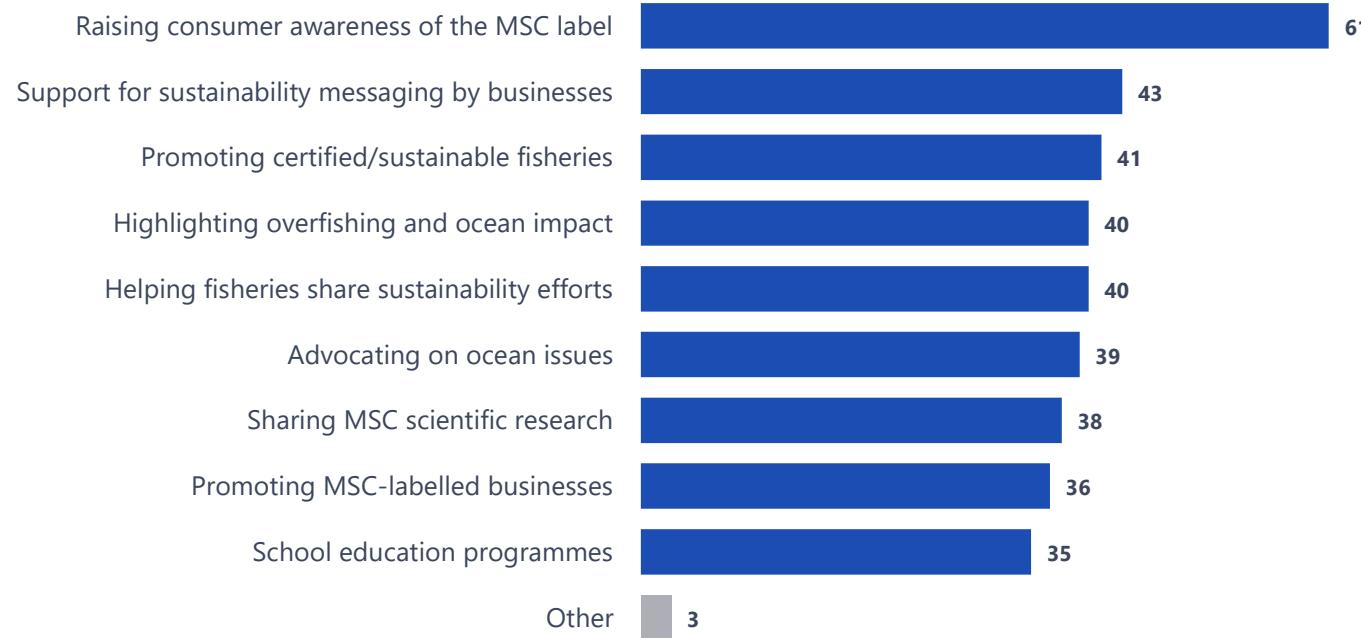
## Role of the MSC, Total Mentions, Global, %, 2025



Q4. Which of the following descriptions reflect your understanding of the MSC's role? *Please select all that apply.*

# Raising consumer awareness and understanding remains a key activity for the MSC to prioritise

## Prioritisation of MSC communication topics, Total Mentions, Global, %, 2025

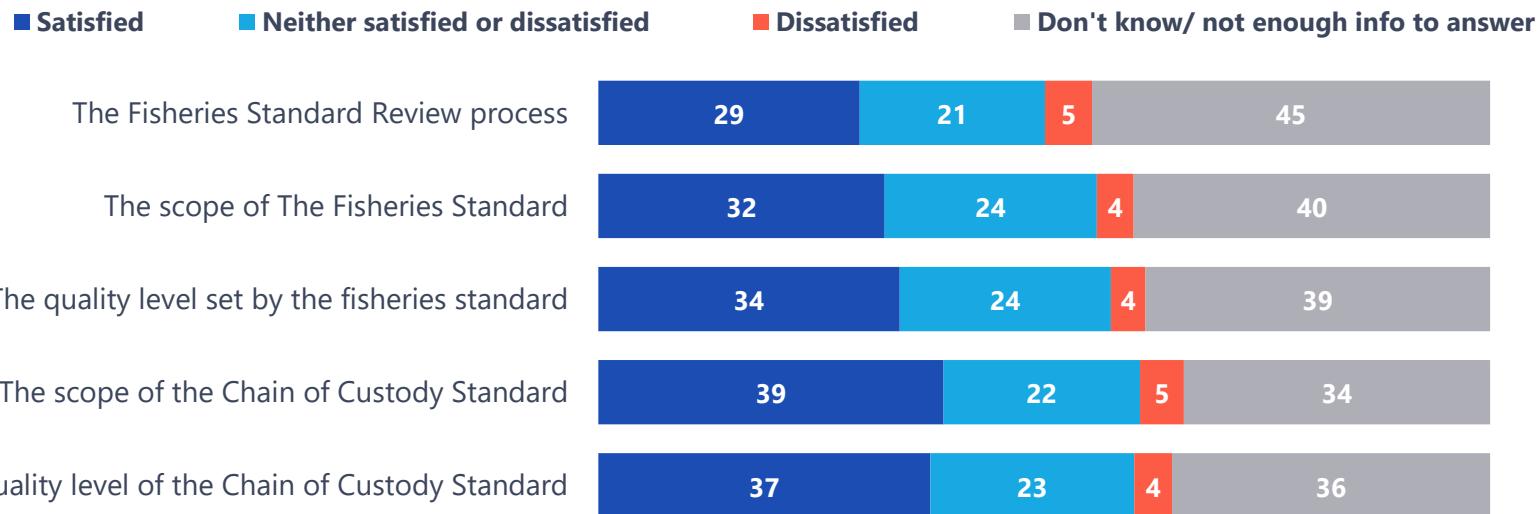


Q28. Which of the following kinds of communication activity do you think the MSC should prioritise?  
Please select all that apply.



# Satisfaction with the MSC's Fisheries Standard and Chain of Custody Standard

Global, %, 2025

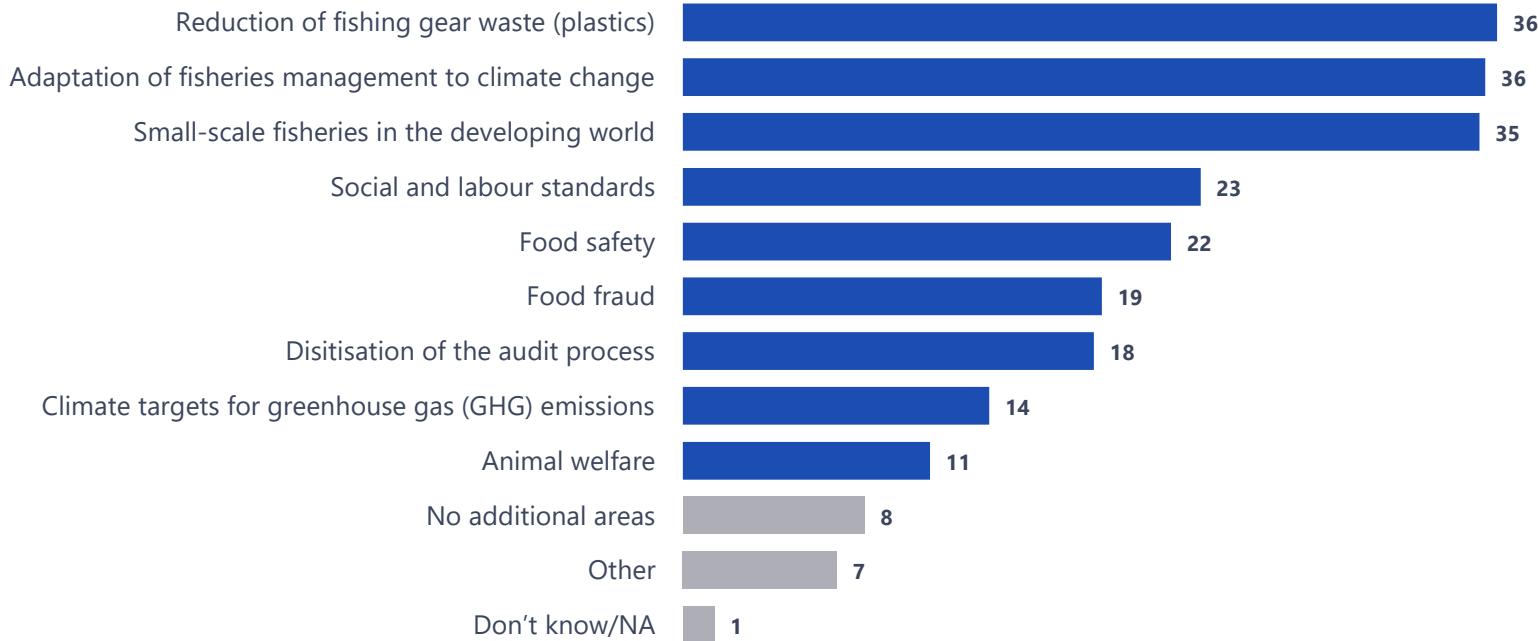


Q10. The following questions are about the MSC's Fisheries Standard Review process and the Chain of Custody Standard. If you have knowledge of or any interaction with this part of MSC's work, how satisfied are you with the following...?



# Stakeholders would like to see the MSC program develop to include the reduction of fishing gear waste, adaptation of fisheries to climate change, and inclusion of small-scale fisheries in the developing world

## Program development areas for the MSC, Total Mentions, Global, %, 2025



Q15. In the future are there any additional areas that you would like to see the MSC program develop more into?  
Please select up to three.

# When asked about advice for the MSC, stakeholders call for more support for small-scale fisheries, more consistency and stronger communication from the MSC

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## Suggestions for the MSC, Unprompted Mentions, Thematic Analysis, Global

- Consistency and science-based transparency
  - Ensuring fisheries are being assessed in a consistent manner, and to support producers with policies that show the value of MSC-certified products
- Look to prove more financial and localized support for small-scale fisheries
  - Potentially introduce a cheaper, more accessible option of certification to appeal to smaller-scale, emerging fisheries
- Call for greater education and public awareness across supply chain
  - To improve public perception of the MSC label through continued education, collaboration with retailers, and the use of good-news stories
- Focus on greater transparency of communications
  - Build trust with end use consumers through greater communication efforts and in continued transparency to inform processors of potential risks which may cause loss of certification
- Stick with the MSC's core mission and avoid drift into other areas
  - Building the certification into social issues may lead to lack of trust in the MSC label

Q30. Finally, what is the one piece of advice or recommendation that you would give to the MSC to help achieve its mission?

# Stay informed about the MSC

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- **Support the development of our Standards**

- Provide feedback and technical input on policy proposals
- [Sign up to our policy development mailing list](#) to receive updates

- **Engage with fishery assessments**

- Provide input throughout the assessment process
- All assessments are publicly reported on and accessible via [Track a Fishery](#)

- **Join our newsletter mailing lists**

- Be kept informed of our events and the latest news

- **Follow us on social media**





Marine  
Stewardship  
Council

The Marine Stewardship Council is an international non-profit organisation. We recognise and reward efforts to protect oceans and safeguard seafood supplies for the future.

We want future generations to be able to enjoy seafood and oceans full of life, forever.

Our vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

Our mission is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

[www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)

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We equip clients with insights to navigate shifting societal and stakeholder expectations, crafting evidence-based strategies that reduce risks and create value for their organizations and society.

Our purpose is to co-create a sustainable and equitable future.

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