

January 2017

# Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



## Mission

The mission of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) program is to increase the understanding of the environmental, organizational and other Impacts of Marine Stewardship Council certification. The ongoing M&E program augments the scientific basis of MSC activities and enhances the understanding, value and transparency of impartial, consistent and inclusive MSC activities.

## Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Monitoring and Evaluation program is to measure the achievement of MSC objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, improved processes, and performance within both MSC certified entities and the environments in which they operate.

Monitoring is a continuous function that utilises the systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and stakeholders with information on the extent of program progress and the achievement of objectives.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of activities. It provides information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into decision making processes. Evaluation determines the worth or significance of the MSC program in the context of direct impacts to assessed attributes of participating organisations, to the environments in which they operate and to broader societal benefits that eventuate.

The Monitoring and Evaluation program is an integral component of the MSC's global operations. Data are sourced and indicators generated that pertain to the improved management outcomes and impacts to the sustainability of wild caught fish; improvements in associated environmental impacts such as by catch reductions and the avoidance of endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) species; the enhanced gathering of data to underpin future improved management; the global reach of MSC fishery certification and Chain of Custody certification; the number and distribution of ecolabeled products; and, the recognition and uptake of MSC ecolabeled products by consumers. Future work is intended to examine economic and social benefits that flow on from improvements in environmental performance and assurances that products are being sourced sustainably.

The current scope of the M&E system covers all fishery and chain of custody certificate holders, and all ecolabelled products, from the inception of the program up to the present moment.

## Objectives

The M&E program focuses on critical information needs and research gaps associated with the environmental impacts and commercial reach of MSC certification. Data and information gathered and analysed are used to inform management decisions; promote the benefits of the MSC program to stakeholders, funders and consumers; underpin continual improvement; and, demonstrate credibility of the MSC program. Monitoring and Evaluation is also targeted to ensure that the MSC conforms to the ISEAL Alliance Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards (the ISEAL Impacts Code).

### Overarching Objectives

- Assess and account for the achievement of MSC objectives through the examination of outcomes, the effectiveness of processes within the MSC, and of the performance of fisheries and supply chain actors involved in the MSC program.



- Promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing with respect to outcomes of the MSC certification program as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, and future projects.
- Improve management effectiveness and accountability by defining realistic results and targets, monitoring progress toward the achievement of expected results and targets, integrating lessons learned into management decisions, and reporting on performance.

The M&E framework reflects a commitment to rigorous, systematic and transparent methods of tracking and evaluating the impacts of the MSC program. This approach is a cornerstone of the MSC's commitment to accountability, learning and continual improvement.

### Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Research program are to:

- maintain credibility by producing scientifically robust analysis and evidence of the environmental impacts of MSC certification;
- provide accountability to donors and stakeholders on the contribution of MSC certification to the sustainability of fish stocks globally;
- promote effectiveness by facilitating evidence-based decision making and reporting on organisational achievements and performance;
- enhance organizational efficiencies and cross-organizational learning;
- reinforce research capacity and information transfer to the global scientific understanding of fish stocks, fisheries management best practices and seafood certification;
- link environmental improvement and the underlying meaning of the MSC ecolabel to broader societal benefits such as social and economic resilience of fishery and seafood operations;
- generate regular reports, both internal and public such as the Global Impacts Report; and
- provide content for reports and promotional material produced by other departments of the MSC, for example the organisation's Annual Report and information produced for outreach staff use in promoting the benefits of MSC certification.

### Data Sources

The information to support the M&E can be classified as (1) internal, comprised of data from various functional areas the MSC as well as MSC assessments and reports, including pre-assessments, Public Certification Draft Reports, Public Certification Reports and Surveillance Reports and (2) external or ancillary including technical reports from management agencies, global datasets on fisheries landings and stock assessments and scientific literature published in peer-reviewed journals. These data sources are used to develop, update and/or link specific databases for fisheries, Chain of Custody (CoC) and Logo Licensing (LL).

#### Databases (Internal)

- E-cert
- Fisheries Scoring Database
- Chain of Custody Database
- Pre-Assessment Database

- Conditions Database
- Bycatch (P2) Database
- Technical Oversight Database
- Objections Database
- Stakeholder Comments Database
- Spatial Database
- Stock Database

#### **Databases (External)**

- RAM Legacy Database
- FAO global capture production database
- ICES stock assessment database

#### **Other Sources**

- Management agency stock assessment reports
- Peer-reviewed articles

## Indicators

Indicators are measures that aim to describe how well the program is achieving its objectives. Indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

A series of key indicators has been developed in consultation with MSC staff and stakeholders including:

#### **Indicators of Program Reach**

Reach indicators illustrate the success of the MSC in encouraging fisheries and supply chain business to participate in the program, for example by monitoring the number of certified fisheries or number of ecolabelled products. These indicators do not directly measure the environmental impacts of certified entities, but are of course vital to understanding the fundamentals for program growth. The ongoing monitoring of a wide variety of meta data associated with certified entities, is also a prerequisite of being able to conduct environmental impact evaluations.

#### **Strategy Indicators**

The MSC employs a range of strategies to ensure that the program produces its intended outcomes. Central to the credibility of the MSC and the successful implementation of the program is the 3<sup>rd</sup> party certifier system. Certifiers are independently accredited by Accreditation Services International, and selected fisheries assessment reports are subject to independent peer review. Fishery reports are also subject to technical oversight (TO) by the MSC Fisheries Team. TO findings and non-conformities are recorded by the MSC Fisheries Team and by ASI (respectively), and these are reported on internally on an annual basis to inform continuous improvement of certifier performance.

The MSC also seeks to promote of consumer awareness of the ecolabel in order to further the mission, and actively encourages stakeholder engagement in fishery assessments and standard development. Independent assessments of consumer awareness, opinions, and purchasing behaviour are conducted every 2 years. Stakeholder participation is tracked on an ongoing basis, and has been reported in the Global Impacts Reports of 2014-2016.

#### **Environmental and Fisheries Management Indicators**

Performance of all certified fisheries is tracked against the MSC performance indicators on an ongoing basis. Improvements in scores are used to illustrate the influence of certification in incentivizing sustainability improvements in certified fisheries. See for example [Global Impacts Report 2016](#), chapter 3.

The M&E team also collects stock data from external sources in order to directly assess improvements in biological status of stocks in the programme. See [Global Impacts Report 2016](#), chapter 2.

## Reporting and Outputs

### **Dashboard and reviews (internal)**

A dashboard showing near real-time data is available internally within the MSC. It includes graphs with downloadable underlying data tables relevant to fishery and catch data, Chain of Custody information, ecolabel licencing, and developing world activity.

### **Global Impacts Report (public)**

The 4th edition of the MSC's Global Impacts Report was released in June 2016. The purpose of this report is to explore the impacts of the program on fisheries and seafood companies, using the data and indicators listed in the previous section. The target audience of the report includes the scientific community and other informed stakeholders. A summary version of the report containing major highlights of the impacts of MSC certification is also available and is suitable for more general distribution at a variety of venues.

### **Peer-reviewed papers (public)**

When possible, specific research projects associated with M&E activities are submitted in scientific paper form to scientific journals for peer-review and publication. This expands the scientific reach of the MSC program and exposes information and analyses to external scrutiny.

## Contact Us

For further information, you are welcome to contact the MSC Monitoring and Evaluation Team by sending an email to the Senior M&E Manager. Contact information for the entire M&E team is available on the MSC website here: <https://www.msc.org/global-impacts/measuring-global-impacts/monitoring-and-evaluation-program>

## Stakeholder Engagement

Transparency is an important part of the MSC's approach to sustainability, and applies to all aspects of the organisation. As such, the MSC is committed to consulting with stakeholders in the development, review and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation programme. Any interested parties are encouraged to contact the M&E team at any time. During revision periods of the M&E system, relevant stakeholders will be contacted directly and encouraged to participate in surveys and workshops. The results of previous consultations can be found on the MSC website in the [About the Monitoring and Evaluation Program](#) section.