Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) workshop
Monitoring & Evaluating the Environmental Impacts of the MSC Certification Program

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Final workshop report

Participants

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Mr Rupert Howes	Chief Executive, MSC
Ms Chris Grieve	Associate Director, MSC
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Mr Chris Ninnes	Director Operations, MSC
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This report summarises the main topics discussed at the workshop and records areas of consensus, difference and agreed actions. It is not meant as a formal set of minutes reporting individual statements or contributions. The report is based upon notes taken by the MSC Executive during the workshop's plenary sessions, the products and outputs of the breakout groups and the preparatory material produced by the workshop team which was provided to participants before the workshop.

Workshop objectives and purpose

To use the collective expertise, wisdom and insights of the participants to help the MSC Executive create and develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the environmental impacts of the MSC program.

To specifically discuss and develop methodologies to identify and understand the environmental impacts from the certification of fisheries to the MSC standard on several levels, both from fisheries certifications and in the role of the MSC in the overall shift along the ecosystem-based management spectrum.

The main products intended from the workshop were concrete, cost-effective ideas that have been discussed, elaborated and recorded, that can be used to:

1. write a Marine Stewardship Council Monitoring and Evaluation Policy; and
2. if appropriate, create specific project proposals to enable some of the work to build upon the work started with the so-called Phase 1 project.

Setting the context

Following introductory statements welcoming participants and explaining the workshop's objectives by Rupert Howes, MSC's Chief Executive, Chris Grieve, Associate Director and Rich Lincoln, International Policy Director, the preliminary sessions of the workshop were dedicated to setting the generic monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and specific MSC context for participants.

MSC's Fisheries Certification Methodology

- A brief presentation by Daniel Suddaby, Fisheries Assessment Manager, about the methodologies used to assess, certify and audit fisheries against the MSC's *Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing*.

Generic monitoring and evaluation issues

- An overview of generic monitoring and evaluation issues and considerations important for the development of a long term, strategic M&E framework for the MSC was presented by Chris Grieve. Including:
  - A proposed vision for an MSC M&E framework.
    A cost-effective and affordable program that provides credible results and outcomes about the contribution the MSC is making to the sustainability of fisheries, the uptake of ecosystem-based management and the integrity of fisheries ecosystems.
  - Suggested definitions for key concepts and terms for which feedback from participants was requested after the workshop.
  - Potential principles that could shape the MSC M&E framework to ensure outcomes are credible, robust and stand up to independent scrutiny. Again, feedback about these was requested from participants, to be forwarded to the MSC after the workshop.
  - The roles and responsibilities of the MSC (including its governing bodies and the Executive), certification bodies, certification clients, a broad range of stakeholders and the independent academic community.
  - Levels and types of monitoring and evaluation (see below for more detail).
  - Methodological considerations that have relevance to the overall M&E framework to be kept in mind during detailed discussions in the workshop including baseline

information; indicators and metrics; qualitative versus quantitative data and approaches; causality; frequency; and end users.

Phase 1 study of environmental benefits from certifying fisheries

- Dr David Agnew, Fisheries Director, Marine Resources Assessment Group UK, presented the methods, results and conclusions of the Phase 1 study conducted jointly by MRAG UK and the MSC[1]. Feedback received by the MSC Executive following the publication of the Phase 1 report was also presented.
  - 10 fisheries certified to the MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing that had at least one surveillance audit, at the time of the study, were examined for evidence of environmental gain. Action taken in relation to certification conditions was the main focus of the project. Other actions taken within the 10 fisheries and beyond were also reviewed to a limited extent.
  - A system of categorisation was developed and included five levels of environmental change: 'no-gain', 'institutional gain', 'research gain', 'operational-action gain' and 'operational-result gain'.
  - 89 environmental gains over the ten fisheries and 8 instances of no-gain were detected by the analysis. Sixteen of the gains were 'operational-result' gains, which in the project team's view represent the most desirable gains and demonstrate real improvements in controlling the impact of fisheries on the environment: 11 arose directly from a certification condition, and 5 did not appear to be directly related to a condition. Of the 11 that arose directly from a condition, 8 were judged to be most likely stimulated or partially stimulated by the certification process itself; and for 3, the certification process could not be identified as the primary catalyst.
  - Operational-result gains represented 18% of the total environmental gains identified and most were supported by quantitative evidence. Taking all gains into account, and whether the gain was partially or mostly stimulated by the certification process, it appears the certification process stimulated about 65% of the gains observed.
  - There is some evidence, although not described in detail in the report, of environmental gains occurring in other unrelated fisheries as a result of certification. And there appears to be evidence that research and action in one certified fishery can have far reaching effects on both uncertified and certified fisheries on the other side of the world.
  - Peer feedback, comments from the MSC's governing bodies (Board of Trustees, Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Council) and lessons learned by the project team since the May 2006 public release of the report include:
    - Have there been instances of gain -> YES
    - Have some certified fisheries performed better than others ->YES
      - But we need some consistent way to track this.
      - Very difficult to compare certified fisheries because there is no standard metric and the surveillance reports are not consistent.
      - There is only one metric that is common to all certifications and that is stock size – and even this is not consistent in relation to reference points.
    - What about instances of no gain where we would expect one, or of worsening situations?

[1] Agnew, D., C. Grieve, P. Orr, G. Parkes and N. Barker (2006) *Environmental benefits resulting from certification against MSC's Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing.* MRAG UK Ltd and Marine Stewardship Council, London. 134 pp.

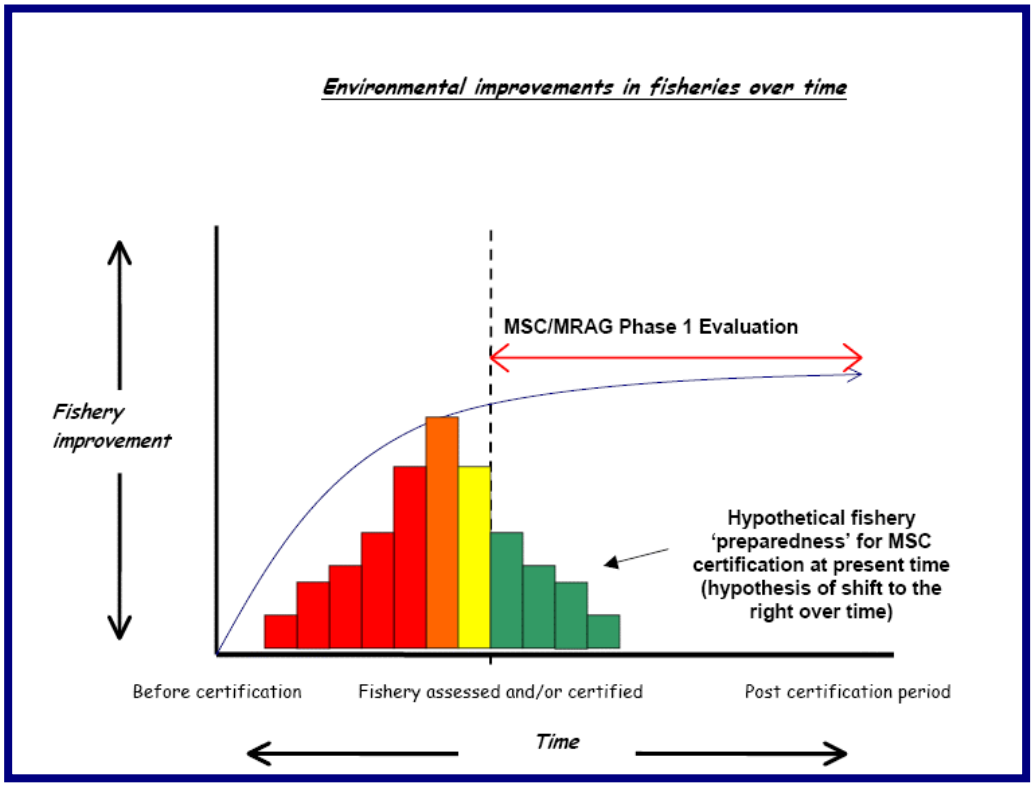
        - We need a suite of indices arbitrarily defined across which we can look for change – not as present where we looked only at the ones where we might expect change.
    - Should we restrict our analysis to the conditions? Ideally no - it should be across a range of indicators. We restricted ours to conditions because we were trying to answer the question: 'have there been instances of gain?'.
    - Need to figure out how we correctly attribute cause to a change.
    - Should we develop standard metrics for fisheries, and require that they be monitored by certifiers? During certification, surveillance or re-certification?
    - Have there been improvements prior to certification? Were these attributable to the certification process?
        - Need to analyse pre-certification situation.
        - Pre-certification reports may not be the best source of information. They are not consistent, problems are often identified that arise simply from lack of information at the pre-certification stage, and the decision not to proceed with certification may not be related to failure to reach the MSC standard.
    - Have certified fisheries made more gains than non-certified fisheries?
        - Need to analyse certified fisheries against non-certified fisheries to answer this question.
    - Do regions/ authorities with certified fisheries perform better across a range of certified and non-certified fisheries than those without certification? Is the impact of certification greater than the sum of the parts?
        - Need to analyse groups/regions of certified fisheries against groups/regions non-certified fisheries.
    - These last two questions require global analysis that routine monitoring may not be well suited to.
- The Phase 1 report will be modified by David Agnew and Chris Grieve in the light of the feedback and comments received from external reviewers and the governing bodies. The plan, commitments permitting, is to revise and publish a new edition of the Phase 1 report before the end of 2006, or early 2007, and a modified version in an appropriate peer reviewed journal next year. The following issues will be dealt with in a new edition of the report:
    - Providing more detailed explanations, caveats and terminology.
    - Different, simpler ways to present and analyse the qualitative data and analyses.
- Issues suggested for discussion by participants during this workshop:
    - Useful ideas to take forward for future analyses/studies within a framework.
    - Choose a different ranking/rating system for categories.
    - Picking a small number of conditions to track over time in certified fisheries.
    - Methods for studying pre-assessed fisheries.
    - Methods for studying certified versus non-certified fisheries.
    - Sources of information.
    - Capturing anecdotal and attitudinal information from fishing operators and governmental representatives about changes in industry/communities and government respectively.

Levels & types of M&E methodologies and a conceptual framework

- In preparation for discussions in breakout groups about potential M&E methodologies, Chris Grieve presented an overview of some concepts relating to the levels at which M&E can occur and types of M&E methodologies that that could be explored in more detail during the workshop. These were presented as ideas to help stimulate and structure workshop discussions, and not intended to capture the full spectrum of potential approaches.
  - In an MSC context, M&E could be conducted at three different scales or levels:
    1. **Fishery level (project level)** – individual fisheries, either certified fisheries, fisheries that have been pre-assessed but have not yet gone further, and fisheries otherwise contemplating or taking actions to move toward the assessment process. MSC's Phase 1 study involved individual case studies at the fishery (project) level.
    2. **Meta level (multiple "projects" or fisheries combined)** – combining fishery level projects or case studies into a meta level analysis. MSC's Phase 1 created environmental gain categories, ranked them and attached values to each. Trends were analysed to determine whether environmental benefits could be detected in a programmatic sense.
    3. **Global level** – studying whether changes (environmental benefits) are occurring at a higher level, in the broader fisheries arena. For example, in bio-regions, ecosystems, national, regional or international fisheries management contexts, studying certified and non-certified fisheries to determine whether the global environmental benefits desired from the pursuit of MSC's vision are being achieved.
  - Different types of evaluations could be developed, which in turn would determine the kind of monitoring:
    1. **Case studies** – as in Phase 1, of individual fisheries (certified, pre-assessed or specifically engaged in activities leading toward the MSC process).
    2. **Impact evaluation** – studying long-term effects at any of the above levels.
    3. **Cross cutting evaluations** – studying themes or issues across several fisheries 'projects' and at the meta level.

- The conceptual framework developed by MSC's Rich Lincoln in the figure overleaf ('*Environmental improvements in fisheries over time*') uses the point at which fisheries do, or can, pass an MSC assessment as a threshold for categorising fisheries to help design a project level approach for evaluating fishery changes and environmental improvements.

- If we think of fisheries as the building blocks of evaluating environmental change or improvement, it is logical to consider that the current status of any individual fishery (i.e., its current versus required performance to become certified) has a fundamental bearing on the type and amount of environmental gain that could occur as a result of preparing for, or passing, an assessment. It is essential that the MSC's monitoring and evaluation program be designed to encompass the entire range of fishery types in order to fully evaluate the impact of its program.



- In the figure above, the vertical dashed line is intended to represent the point in time when a fishery meets the MSC's Principles & Criteria performance threshold (the MSC standard), where fisheries to the right of this line are currently certifiable. A hypothetical distribution of fisheries is shown in relation to this threshold, with the certifiable fisheries coloured green.
- It is useful to note that the Phase 1 MSC/MRAG project evaluation examined fisheries in this category and in fact used conditions from currently certified fisheries to test a model of measuring improvements. While one might suggest that the relative importance of these fisheries from an environmental improvement standpoint is less than those to the left of the certification threshold, it is also useful to note that certified fisheries form the basis for the programme's hypothesis that certification will create the 'draw' toward the program for fisheries not currently performing at a level consistent with MSC's standard.
- We also have the fisheries that need to make improvements before they could become certified. These are reflected hypothetically as the yellow, orange and red bars to the left of the certification threshold in the figure. This category of fisheries essentially reflects a core target area for MSC's mission/vision of transforming the world's fisheries, reversing global stock decline, improving ecosystem based management approaches, etc.
- At a project level, it may be useful to discuss whether assessment of environmental gain would need to be any different between the two kinds of fisheries presented in the figure (e.g., above or below the threshold).
- The working hypothesis suggested is that the amount of gain to be realised to the left of the certification threshold would be much greater than to the right. While evaluation work is required in both areas, it might be focussed, prioritised or staged to reflect these differences.

"Project" and "Meta" level breakout and plenary sessions

The workshop was divided into three breakout groups, each tasked with designing M&E methodologies at the project (fishery) and meta (multiple fisheries) levels. In doing so, the groups were asked to try to answer the following questions:

1. How would you go about monitoring and evaluating environmental impacts?
2. What methods would you use?
3. What metrics and/or categorisation might you use, and how might these differ across methodological approach?
4. What might be the pitfalls of your approach? And how might you overcome them?
5. What else is important to consider in your design?

The common themes and differences that emerged from the breakout sessions and discussed in plenary are summarised below.

Methods

Project (fishery) level – certified fisheries

On an annual basis, at the 'project' level (individual, certified fishery), a core set of performance indicators (PIs) would be tracked, scored and reported on by certification bodies for each fishery. Note there is some discussion under 'Issues' about the use of PIs derived directly from Assessment Trees.

The PIs could be related to both condition and non-condition indices – but should have clearly articulated metrics where possible and be derived from assessment trees. The fishery specific PIs should be identified at the time of first certification. Quantitative indicators are preferable, but might be blended with qualitative indicators.

There should be a blend of common indicators across all fisheries (i.e., looking at similar/important/critical issues that arise across similar kinds of fisheries), plus fishery unique PIs, tracked over time.

The certification bodies should rely upon information collected both during initial assessment for certification and during annual surveillance audits.

Perceptions about MSC's role in bringing about change could also be captured through qualitative stakeholder surveys (see section below on causality).

Meta (multiple fisheries)

At the 'meta' level, PIs could be 'clumped' up using:

- The above-mentioned PIs across fisheries.
- Look for similar / important / critical issues across fisheries (based on the notion that people generally care about the same kinds of things – status of stocks; bycatch; habitat impacts; etc).
- The same categories as Phase 1, noting that they need to be more precisely defined and applied more consistently.

At the meta level, attitudes could also be captured through qualitative stakeholder surveys (see section below on causality). This is probably not a job for certification bodies, but work the MSC could undertake or commission others to do on its behalf. Meta-level analysis would not be conducted by the certification bodies.

Analysis at the meta level would occur less frequently than each year, as data accumulates probably every two to five years.

Issues or concerns

Suggested by one breakout group stakeholders should help identify both the common/core indicators to be measured across all fisheries, as well as the fishery-specific indicators that are important/they care about in a particular fishery.

Must take care not to add significant costs to the assessment process through increased demands on the certification bodies. Perhaps client fisheries should be made responsible for providing annual information that the certification bodies verify.

Need more consideration and thought about specific, common and/or core indicators to evaluate the utility and application of the idea. (See output of, and agreed actions from the brainstorm session on PIs).

The reporting of progress on PIs needs to resonate with key MSC audiences. Perhaps this means that trends and results need to take a different form to current reports and not focus on terminology such as Performance Indicator – suggestion 'Evaluation Indicators'. There was agreement that care needs to be taken with terminology, but not on this particular suggestion.

Apart from possible confusion about the use of Performance Indicators as a term when not referring to the PIs used for assessment purposes (i.e., the certification assessment, rather than in the M&E context), there was some concern about using Assessment Tree PIs at all because of a perceived risk of the M&E process merely focussing on re-scoring those PIs. It is suggested, with some support, that such PIs will not be robust metrics, that scoring guideposts for Assessment Trees will change over time, thus nullifying any ability to monitor consistently.

When developing M&E methodologies and selecting PIs, must bear in mind data deficiency issues. Must ensure that data deficient and small scale fisheries are not excluded from the MSC process by virtue of an M&E framework being developed that is predicated on data richness.

Baselines

Two suggested approaches to capture baseline information:

1. At the time an assessment contract is signed, use the process of interviewing clients, stakeholders and others to collect information on what fishery changes had occurred from a 'self-nominated' starting point in the past. I.e., get the client, verified by stakeholders, to nominate the baseline from which changes would be tracked. Also capture information about the motivating factors for any changes in the lead up to engaging in the certification process.

OR

2. Make the pre-assessment process more structured and require standardised baseline data collection, noting this would require a change to the MSC's Fisheries Certification Methodology.

In either case, it would be desirable to identify and link PIs/metrics to those that may be tracked after certification (if successful).

The second concept could be applied to fisheries that do not go on in the process and become certified. Any fishery that chooses to engage with the MSC program leading towards certification should be encouraged to monitor their performance and progress using similar indicators established for the M&E plan.

Causality

The MSC shouldn't get too 'twisted round the axle' of proving the MSC was directly responsible for change – it's the change that is important.

Could collect the information through broad survey techniques. By using qualitative approaches to capture the stories in the fisheries and specifically enquire people's perceptions about who or what is responsible for prompting the changes observed, answers could emerge that indicate the influence the MSC program has had on decisions and actions in fisheries.

Any information that emerges from such a process could be presented alongside the project and meta-level analysis of changes in performance against the core PIs. The MSC shouldn't feel compelled to take the analysis of causality much further than the above.

Pre-pre assessment brainstorm session ~ issues & concerns to be considered

Pre-pre assessment work refers to those fisheries that are considering engaging with the MSC program but have not yet done so, or those that are working towards certification but are not yet ready to engage because more work needs to be done.

The MSC will have to rely upon partners to capture information. Therefore the MSC task is to clearly communicate the type of information it requires in the M&E context to external organisations working with the above fisheries. The guidance should be tailored to the organisation, but should include:

- Any methodologies and/or analysis should link to the products and outcomes of the MSC's current project entitled Guidelines for the Assessment of Small Scale and/or Data Deficient fisheries (GASS-DD).
  - Key concepts embedded within GASS-DD are stock productivity; susceptibility to fishing; and precaution within a framework of risk assessment.
- Confidentiality – must be explicit with clients about the potential uses of any outputs of information collected, noting that it might be possible to reassure clients that information would only be shared publicly as part of a larger analysis if they prefer, or if necessary, not sharing the information if they ultimately decide they would prefer it not be shared.
- Try to capture perceptions and views about causality explicitly.
- Emphasise 'documentation' and 'organisation' being key to pre-assessment, full assessment and potentially any M&E work that might be required of the client organisation.
- Explicit advice from MSC about the particular indicators or issues of interest from an M&E perspective.
- Narrative and qualitative information is important and has value. The MSC would also like quantitative indicators to be tracked where possible.

Performance indicator (PI) brainstorm session

The core set of PIs should relate to each of the three MSC Principles and ideally to the categories established in the Phase 1 study. For example:

	Institutional	Research	Operational-Action	Operational-Result
Principle 1				
Principle 2				
Principle 3				

Noting that a view was expressed that better categories need to be identified. However, based upon the above matrix, the plenary brainstormed potential PIs that could be used in the core set.

- Examples:
  - Catch vs TAC
  - TAC vs scientific advice
  - Biomass e.g. B / B_{MSY} + time
  - Use of reference points
  - PET (critically endangered species)
  - No fishing zones – closed areas
  - Bycatch – including incidental catch
  - IUU fishing
  - Recovery plan → time
  - Benthic impacts
  - Gear loss
  - Species composition
  - Transparency of management system
  - Discards – non-target
  - % area impacted (e.g. trawled)
  - Ratio of fishing mortality to natural mortality (F:M)
  - Management response (ability to respond)
  - Social engagement – stakeholder engagement
  - Observers / coverage
  - Fishing effort
  - Licence control
  - % coverage of VMS
  - Enforcement / compliance / MCS
  - Attitudinal PI – willingness (cultural context)
- Criteria for selection:
  - Limited no (e.g. 2 only per box or Principle)
  - Representative of Ps
  - Representative of components of Ps (i.e. some Cs)
  - Use as appropriate given fishery context
  - Simple (KISS)
  - 'squeal factor' → fishery specific (what people care about)
  - Quantifiable & well defined
  - Non-ambiguous
  - Able to be categorised
  - Redundancy (a + b + c = d PI)

Given that the above lists were generated in a brainstorming session without critical analysis or detailed discussion, the workshop agreed that the MSC Executive will take the list of potential PIs away and analyse their practicality against the criteria suggested for PI selection (including the criteria set out in the workshop papers). The results of this exercise will be available for consultation in the draft M&E policy framework document to be developed by the MSC Executive following the workshop.

"Global" level breakout and plenary sessions

The same break out groups as the previous session were tasked with developing methodologies at the 'global' level. Groups were asked the same questions as in the previous session.

There was a range of ideas that emerged from the breakout sessions. The plenary, as with some of the breakout groups, bounced between the meta- and global levels when discussing methods. The distinction between the two levels is that the global level would involve the

'non-engaged', non-certified fisheries, as well as MSC-related fisheries, whereas the meta-level encompasses only MSC-engaged fisheries (whether pre-assessed, pre-pre assessment or certified).

One group suggested a form of snapshot audit which would compare fisheries superficially against the MSC standard or a threshold that represents the MSC standard, and returns to this analysis after an agreed interval to repeat. However, the concept was also put forward as a way to show MSC fisheries against the rest of the world. For example, as a way of validating that the MSC standard does in fact result in certified fisheries that out perform the majority of the world's fisheries, that their performance levels are on average higher (potentially much higher) than a majority of fisheries.

One of the main concerns with any snapshot audit would be who would conduct it. It was acknowledged that the MSC could not do it as it cannot be seen to be auditing fisheries (the MSC program is an independent 3rd party certification program) or making statements about non-certified fisheries.

Another suggestion was to look for change over a five year period by taking local and regional snapshots of similar fisheries, comparing high MSC activity regions against others and using attitudinal, anecdotal surveys. However, some of the main challenges would involve identifying appropriate similar fisheries; and who might conduct such a study. The group determined that the MSC should definitely not conduct this type of exercise – it would not be cost-effective and the credibility could be 'bad'.

The third group took a slightly different approach by attempting to determine what data may be available to conduct some kind of global analysis. Ultimately they concluded that there were many challenges: finding and choosing appropriate 'similar' fisheries; causality; data constraints would hamper efforts; snapshot audit methodologies not developed at this time; surveys of attitudes would be one-off exercises and what would their utility be after that?

The plenary discussion identified a number of common themes or questions:

- Is it worth it? Should the MSC engage in this level of M&E given that the cost-benefit is likely to be low, particularly when linked to low credibility if MSC does the analysis itself.
- Who should do it? There was a sense that MSC should not undertake this level of M&E, but could publicise its wish that some other agency do so. Perhaps it is an FAO opportunity?
- How would any gross change be detected?
    - Region by region comparisons – not global comparisons.
    - Issue based comparisons (eg, bycatch of similar species; or IUU fishing)
    - Attitudinal surveys about changing fisheries management.
    - Snapshot audits – comparing fisheries / species against a standard or threshold; or comparing on an issue basis, eg, ranking fisheries on a single indicator such as biomass.
- Questions or hypotheses that might be of interest in an MSC global context:
    - How well is MSC performing compared to other programmes?
    - Has the MSC done 'the job' better than some other program or initiative?
    - How well are MSC certified / engaged fisheries performing compared to non-engaged fisheries.
    - Is MSC influencing Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) uptake?
    - Is MSC influencing more environmental gain than without the MSC?
    - Validating the MSC standard (is it credible) – are the performance requirements set at the right level?

There was clear consensus that the MSC should not be trying to conduct the global level analysis, that this ought to be the domain of independent researchers and academics. This was discussed in more detail in the context of the overall M&C framework and the conclusions are set out overleaf.

Overall MSC Monitoring & Evaluation Policy Framework plenary session

Following a brief presentation by Chris Grieve reminding participants of the key elements of an overall MSC M&E policy or framework that were presented on Day 1, discussion focussed on the question of the end users of the products and outcomes of MSC's M&E work. This began with asking two fundamental questions: 1) who are the end users; and 2) what do they want to see? A quick brainstorm session resulted in the following ideas:

Funders – need confidence that their investments are helping MSC achieve its objectives.

Environmental and other NGOs – need confidence that the system is credible and their investment of time engaging means their contributions get taken seriously and can make a difference.

MSC Board of Trustees and MSC Executive staff – need to be able to effectively review the MSC's performance in meeting its objectives and use the information to adapt the program appropriately.

Development agencies – need confidence that the MSC program is available to and works for developing country fisheries.

Fisheries managers – need to know that the MSC does make a difference, that change is possible and how that can occur.

Fishing operators – need confidence that improvement expectations do not constitute shifting goal posts, that the environmental NGO community is confident in their environmental performance and that their efforts are beneficial investments in the resource base.

Public – might need confidence that the industry does care and can make a difference.

Retailers / buyers / processors – give confidence that their 'green' products are continuing to make a positive difference.

Consumers – same as for public, and that their purchasing decisions are contributing to improving environmental conditions.

Certification clients – that they are making a difference, that the goal posts are not shifting.

ISEAL members – that collectively, certification programmes are contributing to improving environmental conditions.

Academics – that the program is scientifically robust and credible.

Critics from all the above groups – that the program is credible and robust.

It was acknowledged that some of the above end users may just represent different communication challenges drawing from a common information source, i.e., that each group and hypothesis would not need a different methodological approach, which would be unsustainable and impractical for the MSC. Rather that the products and outcomes of the relatively simple methods for capturing and analysing information at the fishery and multiple fisheries levels would lend themselves to being communicated to different groups in relevant and appropriate ways.

It was very clear that there are three categories of fisheries of interest to MSC and its stakeholders in an M&E context:

1. MSC certified fisheries.
2. Fisheries engaged in the process, either directly through pre-assessment or in preparing to enter the process at some point in the future.
3. Fisheries not engaged in the process at all.

One of the methodological conclusions was that the MSC should focus its M&E activity on the first two and should probably not try to undertake analysis of fisheries in the third category. This should be left to independent researchers and academics. There appeared to be some

consensus that the MSC could communicate its interest in the outcomes of such studies, even going so far as to outline some of the suggested methodologies within its M&E policy framework document. Thus the MSC would not conduct the research directly, but rather invite other partners to engage with the MSC, taking on the work themselves in accordance with the MSC's stated objectives, needs and hypotheses for the research. It was also agreed that the information gathered from MSC's M&E activity should be made available in a way that would lend itself to easy use and incorporation in other broader studies. Finally, it was suggested that these ideas should be some of the focal points for consultation on the draft MSC M&E policy framework.

Conclusions and next steps

Methods

There was much consensus about methods for analysing individual and multiple fisheries that fall into the first two categories above and less consensus about specific methods for analysing the third category. There was consensus that the MSC should structure an M&E framework around the first two, and incorporating the third as part of a 'wish list'.

Communication strategies and communication as a methodological component

There was significant discussion about the need to capture and communicate the stories of change, especially positive stories. There was clear and strong consensus that conducting qualitative analyses and capturing the narratives emerging from fisheries is an important component of any M&E methodology. The narratives need to highlight fishery participants' and fishery managers' perspectives, as well as those of other stakeholders. There was a clear sense that this sort of work needs to be incorporated into a formal M&E framework in order to consistently and regularly capture the information. Another big message, however, was about the need to find ways to tell the stories to the end users described above, especially to stakeholders and funders. In accomplishing that, strategies to overcome some of the communication challenges articulated above (I.e. discussion about end users and finding appropriate ways of packaging and presenting the outcomes of qualitative/narrative M&E work) may be needed.

Integrating workshop discussions into a draft MSC M&E policy framework

The workshop was a critical next step acknowledged and recommended by the Phase 1 project team. Upon completion of the workshop report in October 2006, the MSC Executive will draft a monitoring and evaluation plan or framework that incorporates the ideas and options discussed by workshop participants. This will be the subject of further external expert review and stakeholder consultation in December 2006-January 2007 so that an initial plan of action can be finalised and funds can be secured for its implementation. This draft plan should be complete by early 2007.

In the meantime, the MSC Executive's Policy Department will examine implementation strategies for some of the ideas that were discussed at the workshop regarding issues like collecting baseline or 'historic' data for fisheries that may be entering into, or moving towards, MSC assessment/certification, so that changes in key ecological indicators can be measured over time.

The MSC Executive will also be analysing what key indicators or metrics might be useful to measure fishery improvements that would lend themselves to a broad range of fisheries and/or geographies.

The economic and social dimensions

The MSC intends to broaden the scope of the analysis of impact of the MSC certification program to include the economic and social dimensions. There are many reasons that

fisheries become engaged in the MSC program that do not necessarily relate to environmental improvement or simple market benefits. The Phase 1 study highlighted the case of the Mexican Baja lobster fishery where local community improvements like provision of long-term electricity supplies and roads were implemented by the Mexican government and clearly stimulated by the MSC certification of the fishery.

The MSC Executive will begin a scoping analysis on how social and economic benefits or impacts of engagement with the MSC certification program could be monitored and evaluated. Many of the conceptual ideas and generic M&E issues discussed in the workshop are relevant to the social and economic dimensions, so the intention is to build upon the workshop discussions and modify/adapt those considerations to a broader examination of the impacts of certification.

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