



# ENGAGING WITH SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

**Findings and next steps to enhance the engagement of small-scale fisheries in the MSC program**

March 2021



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# INTRODUCTION

Small-scale fisheries often interact with habitats and species of key importance within marine ecosystems. These fisheries also play a crucial role in supporting livelihoods and economic development. According to the [Food and Agriculture Organisation \(FAO\) report \(2020\)](#) small scale-fisheries provide approximately half the global seafood catch each year and directly employ around 40 million people worldwide. These fisheries often supply local seafood markets making them key contributors to food security. Sustainable management of small-scale fisheries is therefore essential to increase the resilience of coastal communities and marine ecosystems.

The MSC program was designed to be accessible to all types of fin and shellfish fisheries within scope, regardless of their size, scale, location or technology. Ensuring small-scale fisheries can access the MSC program is critical to achieving [our Vision and Mission](#) to protect marine resources and safeguard seafood supplies for this and future generations through our ecolabel and fishery certification program. Ensuring accessibility of the MSC program is also essential to comply with the [FAO Guidelines](#) for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fisheries Products from Marine Capture Fisheries and [ISEAL Credibility Principles](#).

## Helping small-scale fisheries access the MSC Fisheries Standard

Small-scale fisheries worldwide can face challenges to fisheries management that constrain their ability to operate sustainably. This includes a lack of data and monitoring of aspects such as stock health, weak governance and financial constraints. As a result of such challenges, these fisheries can also face issues in meeting the requirements of the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#), and retaining certification following a successful assessment.

We have engaged with small-scale fisheries since the MSC was established, and have developed several tools and initiatives to help small-scale fisheries access the MSC Fisheries Standard. These include a focus on improving accessibility of the MSC's current model<sup>1</sup>, the development of [risk-based tools to help data-limited fisheries](#), guidance on informal management approaches and [multi-fishery pre-assessment projects](#).

Our [capacity building program](#) supports fishery stakeholders in building the skills and knowledge needed to enhance understanding of the Fisheries Standard and run effective projects to improve sustainability. We have also developed the [In-Transition to MSC program](#) to offer fisheries working towards sustainability a way to independently verify their progress on an annual basis. The program helps fisheries stay on track to achieve the improvements needed to meet the MSC Fishery Standard.

## Increasing engagement with small-scale fisheries

These tools and initiatives have helped to improve engagement with small-scale fisheries, and the

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<sup>1</sup> The MSC Model refers to the totality of the MSC system of assessment, certification, Unit of Assessment definition, client definition, labelling, certified value chains, engagement and business model.

number of small-scale fisheries achieving MSC certification is gradually increasing. However, small-scale fisheries are still in the minority of certified fisheries.

In 2019/20, only 16% of the MSC certified fisheries globally were small-scale, which made up an estimated four percent of the total certified volume in the program. This has led to concern around the application of the MSC Standards, process and business model to small-scale fisheries.

We have committed to increasing engagement with small-scale fisheries in [our current strategy](#) and recognise the need to further adapt and improve the MSC program to counter some of the barriers that have limited engagement of these fisheries in the MSC program to date.

## Reviewing how we engage with small-scale fisheries

In 2019, we commissioned a consultant to undertake an Engagement Review into how the MSC program applies to small-scale fisheries across the globe. The Engagement Review was also intended to provide technical and strategic recommendations on how we may adapt, evolve or change our program to enable a step change in the level of engagement of small-scale fisheries in the program.

The analysis was structured to cover two key components:

- 1. Review the application of the MSC model to small-scale fisheries**
- 2. Recommend strategies and solutions to scale up engagement with small-scale fisheries**

These could be considered add-ons to the current model and options that are alternative, innovative and possibly a departure from the current system, which nonetheless maintain the key principles of recognition, credibility and impact.

This document provides an outline of our proposed follow up actions to integrate the key conclusions and recommendations reached by the Engagement Review. The findings and next steps are based on internal analysis and feedback together with the contribution of external partners who participated in the Engagement Review.

# KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

The Engagement Review resulted in the following conclusions and recommendations (further details can be found in the Executive Summary in Appendix One):

## Conclusions

1. Relying on certification alone is insufficient to realise the MSC Vision.
2. Barriers to engagement are well understood, but can be usefully reframed.
3. There is little appetite for altering the bar for certification, but streamlining processes and adapting the evidence burdens to reflect risk is worthwhile.

## Recommendations

- Adapt the MSC's Theory of Change
- Provide a more complete framework for improvement
- Enhance capacity building efforts
- Enhance engagement with governments
- Further enhance engagement with the non-profit and for-profit FIP community
- Simplify and streamline, language, communications and processes
- Pursue certification uptake strategically in a few priority countries

Notably, several recommendations align with the direction of previous internal conclusions. Moreover, several of the actions emerging from the Engagement Review are already covered by initiatives currently in place or under development, which shows the progress we have made in these areas. In this sense, the Engagement Review results help to validate the work already carried out, highlighting the need for a more integrated and strategic approach to develop existing and new initiatives.

It is worth noting that a number of the recommendations go beyond specific small-scale fishery challenges and tackle issues related to global accessibility of the MSC program, regardless of scale and sustainability issues. Improving global accessibility would have a higher impact in small-scale fisheries which would also help all fisheries worldwide to engage with the MSC program.

# OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE ENGAGEMENT WITH SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

Emerging from the conclusions and recommendations of the Engagement Review, we undertook a review and internal deliberation to identify opportunities to increase the participation of small-scale fisheries in the program.

The proposed actions span across a range of work areas within the MSC and recognise that current and proposed work areas are interconnected. Future work will see us reinforce, initiate, or explore these actions within these work areas as part of an integrated strategic approach to enhance the engagement of small-scale fisheries in the MSC program.

The planned or proposed cross cutting work areas that include components that will enhance MSC's engagement with Small-Scale Fisheries are outlined below.

- **Fisheries and Chain of Custody Standard reviews**
- **Supply chain and market strategy**
- **Capacity building**
- **Pathway to sustainability program**
- **In-Transition to MSC program**
- **Strategic partnerships**

## Fisheries and Chain of Custody Standards

The MSC program is underpinned by an intent for requirement and processes to be appropriate to the scale and intensity of the fishery under consideration. Over the years, the we have invested significant efforts to streamline procedures and requirements and make the program more accessible and comprehensible to users. Some of the complexity associated with the MSC program and requirements are a result of the complex nature of fisheries.

However, more can and needs to be done to ensure that the level of burden involved in demonstrating sustainability against the MSC Standards is appropriate to scale and intensity. This is essential if we are to make the MSC program more accessible to small-scale fisheries while still maintaining credibility.

The following ongoing and planned initiatives will help respond to this.



## i. Fisheries Standard Review and small-scale fisheries

We are currently undergoing a [Fishery Standard Review \(FSR\)](#) which should be completed in 2022. Sixteen topics are under consideration. A key part of the [Terms of Reference](#) for the review is ensuring accessibility. Consideration of scale and intensity is also a core part of the review and as such the FSR provides an opportunity to consider options to reduce the evidence burden that small-scale fisheries must provide to demonstrate sustainability.

Several of the FSR projects are particularly integral to small-scale fisheries including the following projects:

- [Making the MSC Fisheries Standard more efficient](#)
- [Ensuring the Risk-Based Framework continues to deliver consistent assessments for data-limited fisheries](#)
- [Reviewing Principle 1 with a focus on harvest strategies](#)
- [Expanding guidance for fisheries managed with data-limited approaches under Principle 1](#)
- [Ensuring effective fisheries management systems are in place](#)
- [Alternative management approaches for mixed and multispecies fisheries](#)
- [Clarifying the assessment of squid, crab and octopus fisheries](#)

## Chain of Custody Standard Review

Following the regular cycle of review and improvement, the MSC plans to review its [Chain of Custody Standard](#). During this review, we hope to analyse the potential challenges that Chain of Custody requirements could imply for small-scale fisheries and small-scale supply chains (local markets, fresh channels, highly fragmented supply chains). This analysis will allow identification of potential solutions to address the traceability needs of these fisheries.

We will also develop user-friendly guidance documents on application of the MSC Fisheries Standard to small-scale fisheries. A tailored guide on MSC and small-scale fisheries will ensure awareness of requirements that have interpretations that may be important to small-scale fishery assessments.

## Supply chains and markets

The MSC program directly intervenes as an enabler solution to reach and maintain environmental sustainability using market force as the key driver to generate attraction and incentives for those fisheries managed on a sustainable basis. Therefore, fisheries need to be able to respond and

adapt to deal with those market incentives. For this purpose, there is a particular need for detailed comprehension of how supply chain logistics may limit the ability of small-scale fisheries to make the best use of their certification when certified, or when working towards certification.

The MSC will explore options to address this issue through:

**i. Internal review of market challenges for small-scale fisheries**

The MSC will undertake further internal analysis of the market tools of the MSC program (CoC certification, logo licensing system, use of MSC label, MSC value proposition) to identify and understand the causes of the existing challenges for small-scale fisheries and generate adaptive solutions.

**ii. Testing and explore potential market solutions**

The MSC will test and explore the feasibility of a range of options identified from the review and select the best to test as pilots.

## Capacity building

The MSC has been implementing a [Capacity Building Program](#) since 2015 that has led to increased capacity to support fisheries working to MSC. The Engagement Review has identified interest from stakeholders for MSC to further enhance its capacity building efforts, including extending beyond the conventional domain of training so that particular needs of small-scale fisheries can be properly covered.

In line with the existing capacity building plan, and integrating the interest highlighted by stakeholders, the MSC will undertake a range of initiatives to support small-scale fisheries through capacity building including the following:

**i. Capacity Building Program review**

Review of the Capacity Building Program with the purpose to make improvements on content and methods, building on lessons learnt over the past five years of implementation and how the program has been delivered to date and exploring how to address gaps pertinent to small-scale fisheries.

**ii. New capacity building modules**

The review of the MSC Capacity Building Program will include identification and development of additional modules such as Fisheries Standard topics, chain of custody improvement module and value capture modules.

**iii. Online training**

We will scale up the Capacity Building Program by developing online learning resources that will allow for flexibility and increased access by stakeholders working with small-scale fisheries.



## Pathway to Sustainability: the MSC pre-certification approach

The Engagement Review recommended an evolution of the [MSC Theory of Change](#) and Mission, shifting from using the ecolabel and certification program as the sole means for driving change in small-scale fisheries, to a program that generates sufficient incentives for fisheries to engage in the MSC and make improvements for reasons beyond the goal of certification. We recognize this need, which builds on current trajectory of efforts to engage more comprehensively with pre-certification fisheries.

These efforts have been conceptualized in our Pathway to Sustainability approach. [The Pathway to Sustainability](#) approach comprises of pathway projects that employ MSC's pathway tools in a strategic way to engage with multiple fisheries at the same time in a specific region.

The Pathway to Sustainability approach aims for the following:

- To provide a mechanism to increase the number of fisheries that could eventually become certified to the [MSC Fisheries Standard](#).
- To provide a framework to drive progress towards sustainability for fisheries that may not consider becoming certified to the MSC.
- To provide a framework to engage with, and support government and other stakeholders in their efforts to ensure sustainable management of fisheries.

The MSC proposes to keep investing in these initiatives and efforts to provide a complete framework for improvement through the development of a comprehensive pathway to sustainability strategy. This will set out a clearer framework for the operational activities, priorities and resources required to enable pre-certification fisheries to successfully use the MSC program to advance their journey towards sustainability regardless of the endpoint. The strategy will detail the range of tools required to support fisheries working to MSC and prioritised geographies for additional pathway projects.

## In-Transition to MSC Program

In 2016, the MSC initiated the creation of an [In-Transition to MSC Program](#). The Program supports fisheries of any size in the Global South and small-scale fisheries in the Global North that are committed to achieving MSC certification. It offers a way of independently verifying a fishery's progress on an annual basis, helping them stay on track to achieve the improvements needed to meet the MSC Fisheries Standard.

The creation of the In-Transition to MSC program was motivated by our commitment to improve access for fisheries in the pre-certification space. We launched the program in September 2019 as a pilot, with a particular focus on small-scale fisheries.

The program seeks to improve performance and robustness of the process towards sustainability goals of fisheries involved in FIPs, and is expected and intended to increase the accessibility of small-scale fisheries to the MSC program.

## Enhancing strategic partnerships

Key to enhancing the engagement with small-scale fisheries will be a stronger and more strategic relationship with the community of NGOs engaged in fisheries improvement, governments, actors operating in the supply chain, and other partners focusing on the socio-economic aspects of the fisheries sector.

We will increase our investment in capacity building and partnerships with these stakeholders to generate enabling conditions for improvement initiatives. These partnerships will also serve to develop additional tools to support pre-certification fisheries, including tools to facilitate data-collection, best practice guides against performance indicators and to increase the synergies between environmental and socio-economic impacts in fisheries, which are fundamental in the small-scale fisheries context.

Governments are key stakeholders in the implementation of the MSC program. Engagement from governments has principally involved provision of input into fishery assessments and support to fisheries to make improvements to meet MSC performance requirements. This contribution is crucial to achieve sustainable management and to support fisheries towards certification, notably for small-scale fisheries. On this basis, we propose the establishment of strategic relationships with governments to use the MSC framework for fisheries reform and to help achieve FAO guidelines and the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) in cases of limited capacity to meet those obligations.

In the specific context of the pre-certification space and, therefore, the implementation of the Pathway to Sustainability approach, to achieve the objectives of the pathway projects it is important that fisheries continue to make progress through the pathway stages (Figure one).

This will imply developing new partnerships to support improvements, seeking funding mechanisms, promoting direct government engagement and identifying new tools and incentives to encourage those improvements. For this purpose, we will seek to work with existing and new partners to initiate new pathway projects and reactivate inactive ones.

Taking into account these considerations, we will develop the following actions to enhance the partnerships with stakeholders specially focusing on small-scale fisheries:

- i. **Systemic partnerships with FIP organisations**  
Investigate and implement collaborative partnerships and pilot projects with key partners, especially those working on socio-economic aspects.
- ii. **Capacity building strategy for NGO's**  
Initiate a program of training and mentoring to enable a deeper understanding of the MSC, how the Standards work and requirements that fisheries and supply chain actors need to meet to achieve performance consistent with it.
- iii. **Regional/national partnership projects**

Initiate the development and implementation of pilot projects in partnership with governments in one or more of our priority regions.

**iv. Enhanced value proposition for governments**

Articulation of a clear value proposition for governments.

## SUMMARY

The conclusions and recommendations arising from the Engagement Review have helped to identify new and ongoing initiatives to reinforce our commitment to small-scale fisheries from an integrated strategic approach.

To achieve our goal of increasing engagement with small-scale fisheries, we will develop and promote the incentives of the MSC program. We will keep developing approaches to facilitate the interpretation of the MSC Fisheries Standard in the context of small-scale fisheries. We will also expand our intervention in the pre-certified and fisheries improvement spaces and continue to partner with stakeholders acting in the complementary fields of fisheries and market development. We will also invest in dedicated efforts to strengthen the capacities of small-scale fishery actors and collaborate in the development of new tools and models to support small-scale fisheries in accessing the MSC program and achieving sustainability.

The MSC's Vision to protect ocean life and safeguard seafood supplies for this and future generations throughout the sustainable management of fisheries, is shared by many stakeholders around the world. To achieve this mission, it is important that we continue to collaborate and establish partnerships.

Sustainably managed small-scale fisheries are fundamental for the health of marine life and the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide. We are committed to support the efforts of small-scale fisheries to operate on a sustainable basis and will contribute with the opportunities that our program can offer.



## Increasing the participation of small-scale fisheries.

A report prepared for the Marine Stewardship Council.

### Executive Summary

#### The Project

Stemming from a desire to enhance their engagement with small-scale fisheries in both the developed and developing world the MSC commissioned a project with the objective to:

*“Review the application of its program to small scale fisheries (SSFs) and to provide a set of recommendations to the MSC on modifications and improvements that would lead to an increase in the participation of small-scale fisheries in the MSC across the globe.”*

A combination of literature review, key informant interviews and stakeholder workshops were employed to gather data, validate thinking and develop options for consideration. The literature review ensured past analysis of and actions on the constraints and deficiencies of the current program and the recommendations made to address them were fully appreciated. Interviews with 39 individuals (21 MSC staff and 18 external stakeholders) allowed current perspectives on the key constraints to SSF engagement with the MSC, the effectiveness of the various initiatives that have been undertaken to address challenge, and other options that should be considered or excluded. 37 people participated in 1 - 1.5 day workshops (23 MSC staff and 14 external stakeholders). Each workshop was divided into two parts, the first to better characterise the challenge space, the second to identify options for consideration.

#### Key Findings

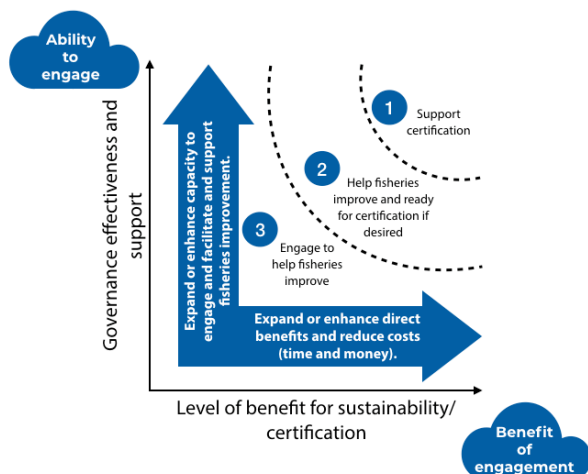
##### 1. Relying on certification alone is insufficient to realise the MSC Vision.

The challenge of engaging small scale fisheries differs markedly depending on context. In essence the landscape comprises two segments for which solutions are required. The first are fisheries for whom certification is a realistic proposition, either without changes to the current approach or by addressing current constraints. The second are fisheries for whom certification is never likely to be either feasible and/or sufficiently attractive. A very high proportion of small-scale fisheries in most regions, fall into this latter category.

Addressing the challenge for the second category, does not fit readily within the MSC’s current certification driven approach, but there was a strong appetite among stakeholders for the MSC to adapt its scope to address this. Because of the size of this market segment, most stakeholders felt that the MSC would not realise its potential to deliver sustainability outcomes and realise its vision without doing so.

##### 2. Barriers to engagement are well understood, but can be usefully reframed.

Neither interviewees nor workshop participants added substantially to the list of barriers to certification described in the literature. It would appear, therefore, that for fisheries that might seek certification, the challenge is well characterised. However, to ensure that barriers or constraint are not considered in isolation, or focus on certification per se, a revised conceptual framework that consider fisheries in terms of their ability to engage and their incentives for doing so is useful.



3. There is little appetite for altering the bar for certification, but streamlining processes and adapting the evidence burdens to reflect risk is worthwhile .

There was no indication that a substantive revision of the standard to enhance engagement by small scale fisheries is warranted. Yet, while the standard itself is widely held as appropriate, there is a strong argument that the processes required to pursue and maintain certification are overly bureaucratic and burdensome. A reduction in these burdens without compromising the standard appears both achievable and warranted. Matters of process, reporting, language and documentation all require attention.

The question of tiering - whether some sort of formal recognition should be given to fisheries falling some level short of the standard - is a related, but somewhat different question. Views on tiering are mixed, with some passionate advocates and others concerned about eroding the incentive to reach a fully certifiable level. Leaving aside the argument for any decision regarding forms of recognition for fisheries that are performing below the certification benchmark, addressing the demand for a pathway for improvement does suggest that efforts to make more explicit what a particular score implies for a fishery is warranted.

## Recommendations

### 1. Adapt the MSC Theory of Change

The MSC's current Mission and Vision statements are as follows:

*"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." [my underline]*

The key assumption underlying this Theory of Change is that the certifiable universe of fisheries (ie those that are able to achieve certification and have the incentive to do so) is sufficiently large to deliver impacts on ocean sustainability at the desired scale. Analysis from this study, however, suggests that this assumption must be questioned. Moreover, whether the universe of certifiable small-scale fisheries is large enough to meet the MSC ambition for impact or not, there is undoubtedly an appetite among stakeholders for the MSC to enhance its potential for impact by playing a much more active role in supporting small-scale fisheries improvements more broadly.

### 2. Provide a more complete framework for improvement.

The MSC standard provides a clear globally recognised end point objective for fisheries seeking to adopt best environmental practice. However, reaching that end point, at least in the foreseeable future, is a pipe dream for many. Despite this, many small-scale fisheries may be motivated by the opportunity to embark on an improvement process that is explicitly linked to the MSC standard. Herein lies an opportunity for the MSC to provide enhanced global public good by providing a more comprehensive framework and tools (either in house, or endorsed by MSC) to support those working to improve the environmental performance of fisheries. Key to this effort will be to further elaborate on the standard throughout its entire range from 0 to 100. Adding such a narrative will serve to shift the conversation more completely from whether or not the standard is, or can be, met to what current performance against the standard implies and what should be done to take the next step up the improvement ladder.

Providing clarity of this sort also opens the way for a de facto tiered standard, without risking the pitfalls that formal tiering may open up. Consideration might then be given, for example, to providing SSFs with some non-market facing benefits when certain hurdles are reached. This might involve the opening up of business to business benefits, such as access to the MSC traceability or chain of custody system, when a certain level is reached. Alternatively, non-certified but improving small-scale fisheries

might get some kind of public recognition (but not within the supply chain), and the "prize" for those that become certified will be the access to the market through the chain of custody certification system.

### 3. Enhance capacity building efforts.

Many of the suggestions by stakeholders for concrete actions the MSC could take to enhance engagement related to capacity building in some form, particularly if one adopts contemporary thinking on this topic that extends capacity-building beyond the conventional domain of training.

Specific recommendations for consideration are:

- ◆ Adapting and simplifying benchmarking tools for use in self assessment.
- ◆ Curating a knowledge base of MSC endorsed tools and approaches with explanations of the pros and cons of each.
- ◆ Enhancing the capacity building toolkit in line with stakeholder feedback, giving consideration to including modules on business planning, chain of custody, project management, product quality improvement.

With respect to training, consideration should be given to prioritising efforts in key strategic markets (see below). Supporting the development of CABs and institutions active in supporting fisheries improvements may be particularly beneficial in this regard.

### 4. Enhance engagement with governments.

A related dimension of capacity building that deserves separate treatment concerns the enhancement of the enabling environment in which fisheries are prosecuted. In this context engagement with governments is likely to be especially effective. A relationship with the MSC and adoption of an MSC endorsed framework for fisheries reform could prove attractive to governments who are publicly committed to FAO guidelines and the SDGs, but have limited capacity to meet those obligations.

Develop a program of policy engagement with key governments to:

- ◆ Encourage the adoption of the MSC framework for environmental sustainability.
- ◆ Encourage government endorsement and support for fisheries improvement efforts.
- ◆ Engage in and broker policy dialogues related to national fisheries reform where current policies are barriers to certification.
- ◆ Broker implementation partnerships that include the government to improve sector performance (see below). Further enhancing the PPA approach has particular potential in this regard.

### 5. Further enhance engagement with the non-profit and for-profit FIP community.

Key to enhancing engagement with small-scale fisheries will be a stronger and more strategic relationship with the community of NGOs engaged in fisheries improvement, especially those operating in the developing world. Recent developments that broaden FIPs to move beyond considering only environmental sustainability to include economic/organizational and social dimensions ("The Triple Impact FIP") makes such engagement especially attractive.

The emergence of new FIP approaches such as the concept of a "Triple Impact FIP" and value rescue may present a particular opportunity for the MSC to embed its environmental sustainability framework more completely within a broader improvement context that greatly increases the likelihood that improvements will be sustained. A strategic engagement with the community of organisations that are championing these developments is likely to be of mutual benefit to MSC and this community.



Specifically, the MSC should examine ways in which it can align with and support the triple impact approaches that are emerging and the NGO community that is developing them. Particular consideration should be given to:

- ◆ Engaging with NGO partners to help further develop and refine the new FIP Evaluation Frameworks and approaches.
- ◆ Endorsing and promoting methodologies such as the Triple Impact approach and exploring options for a formal relationship with key implementing partners.
- ◆ Sharing completed pre-assessments for which new approaches might be suited.
- ◆ Exploring linkages with on-going or planned project pre-assessment programmes to implement new FIP methodologies.

## 6. Simplify and streamline, language, communications and processes.

A strong message emerging from stakeholders was that current communication materials and assessment and certification processes remain a considerable hurdle to engagement. Although it was acknowledged that the MSC had made considerable progress there is still a substantial amount of sand in the gears, and further investment is warranted. Effort is required in several areas, relating to both the content of materials and to the mechanisms for accessing and using them.

Consideration should be given in particular to:

- ◆ Reviewing all documentation relating to the standard and making it accessible in plain and simple language. As part of this effort prepare an eight page plain language summary of the standard and the operational implications for meeting it.
- ◆ Simplifying all project planning templates into easily readable (and printable) formats.
- ◆ Standardising and simplifying reporting formats to minimise the time and effort required to complete them.
- ◆ Improving online accessibility to templates and information. (The MSC website is notoriously difficult to navigate for those seeking specific information).
- ◆ Developing a next generation documentation platform and reporting tools to simplify and streamline the work required by CABs and others. Completing word documents and excel spreadsheets is inefficient for all concerned.
- ◆ Further refining and streamlining the Risk Based Framework and the Data Limited Methods.

## 7. Pursue certification uptake strategically in a few priority countries.

There is considerable potential to increase the number of certified fisheries, both large and small. For small-scale fisheries in particular, however, this will only occur to any significant degree where the incentives for certification are in place in the fisheries' national or export markets and with appropriate business development effort by the MSC.

The MSC already has a strong footprint in several markets and maintaining current efforts in these markets is warranted. Arguably, however, there are also several national markets that are approaching a tipping point with respect to demand for sustainably certified product.

Because national contexts are likely to differ widely, an appropriately tailored approach to market development is required - generic (global) approaches are unlikely to be effective. In view of this, a focussed effort on developing a small number of new markets is recommended. The insights and lessons from such efforts can then inform future efforts as other markets mature. Developing the partnerships for implementing Triple Impact FIPs in these geographies (see Recommendation 5) may prove especially powerful.

Specific actions in such markets might include:

- ◆ Developing a coordinated strategy with partner organisations active in the country to work along the supply chain to further develop value propositions for certification. (For example, exploring potential for supplementary origin labels or supporting product quality improvements and/or assurance).
- ◆ Developing a tailored social marketing campaign to promote the benefits of certification to stakeholders and value to consumers.
- ◆ Prioritising capacity building efforts for stakeholders in these markets (see Recommendation 3).
- ◆ Engaging with the national government to enhance the climate and appetite for sustainably certified product.

### Organisational Implications.

A case can be made, that most, if not all, of the recommendations in this report can be viewed as simply extensions or elaborations of approaches and initiatives that are already underway. The key initiatives the MSC is currently engaged in (either internally or through external collaborations) that are of relevance for each recommendation are summarised in the full report along with the added value envisaged by the recommendation and a brief reflection on its wider implications.

It would be foolish to underestimate the scale and significance of the changes proposed and the investment that will be required to implement them. Whether enhancing current capacity building or policy engagement, or developing new initiatives to build a more complete improvement pipeline and engage with the development in Triple Impact FIPs, acting on any one of these recommendations will require careful design and project management to ensure that it meets the expectations of stakeholders and is fully integrated into the organization's systems, processes and culture. Oversight and sponsorship of any implementation plan will almost certainly need to reside at Executive level, with a senior staff member accountable for day to day leadership.

### Concluding Comments

After reading this report, readers hoping for radical new solutions to the questions posed by the MSC may be disappointed. That nothing radical emerged from the project is perhaps a reflection of the complexity of the problem, the multi-faceted elements that need to be addressed, and the pro-active approach that the MSC has been taking up to now.

A range of sources has been drawn upon to address the questions posed by the MSC. Of particular importance were the perspectives of interviewees and workshop participants. Given the number and diversity of stakeholders that were engaged, opinions on most topics were surprisingly consistent. This degree of alignment, and the level of enthusiasm shown by all stakeholders, is encouraging and suggests that efforts to implement the recommendations in this report are likely to be well received. A clear stakeholder communication strategy to explain the recommendations and decisions emanating from this report is strongly recommended.

Stephen J. Hall  
Avalerion UK Ltd

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