



THE MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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BACKGROUND

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) ecolabel and fishery certification program strives to recognise and reward efforts to protect oceans and safeguard seafood supplies. It is designed to incentivise improvements in fisheries through market benefits¹.

To become certified fisheries must meet the MSC Fisheries Standard requirements for healthy fish stocks, ecosystems and good governance. In 2019/20:

- Over 15% of global catch MSC certified
- More than 18,000 different products sold with MSC ecolabel

The MSC's commitment to the SDG

Fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels have fallen from 90% in 1974 to 65.8% in 2017².

The MSC is working with fisheries, retailers, scientists and other partners from around the world to implement SDG 14.

SDG 14 is the goal where the least progress has been identified, and which has received the third lowest philanthropic funding³.

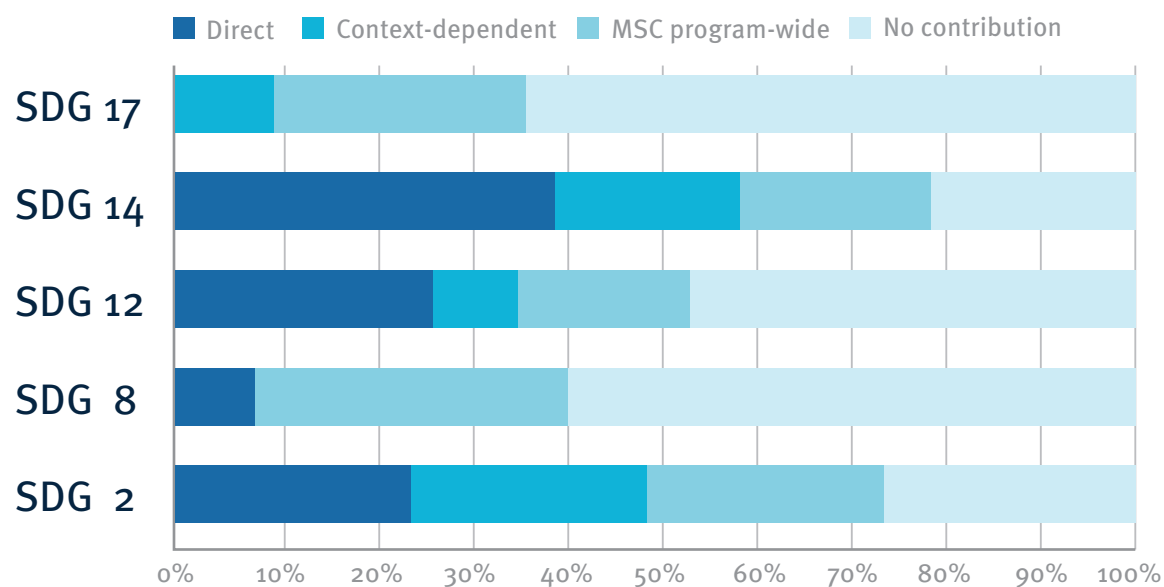
Here, we illustrate how MSC can support progress towards SDG 14 as well as 2, 8, 12 and 17.

RESULTS OF MAPPING

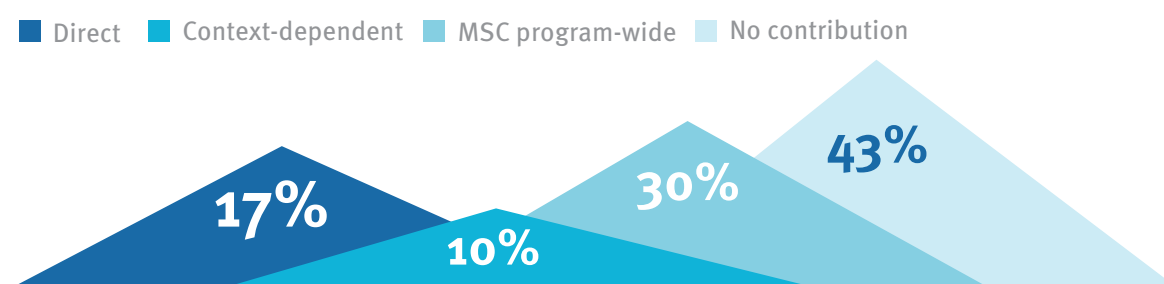
The MSC Fisheries Standard contributes to the achievement of:



MSC contribution types per SDG:



MSC contribution type across all SDGs combined:



CONCLUSION

The study illustrates that the MSC, as a voluntary sustainability standard setter, can drive contributions towards reaching many SDG targets via the MSC Fisheries Standard, its wider activities and effects on the ground.

The international community and individual fishing nations who have committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 could use the MSC program to progress towards targets under goals 2, 8, 12, 14 and 17.



QUESTION

Does the Marine Stewardship Council program contribute towards reaching targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2 (End hunger), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 12 (Sustainable consumption and production), 14 (Life below water) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals), especially with MSC certified small-scale fisheries in the Global South? And if so, in what way?



METHODS

Stage 1 - Potential contributions were mapped of the latest version of the MSC Fisheries Standard, as well as the wider MSC program towards reaching the specified SDG targets.

Categorisation of contributions to SDG targets:

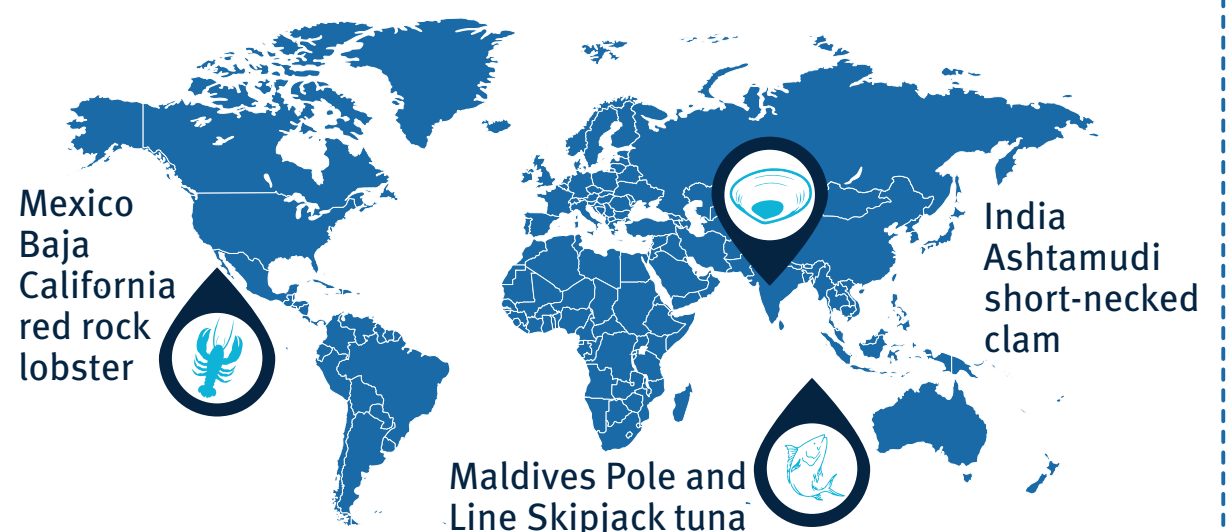
Direct contribution from the MSC Fisheries Standard	Direct, explicit linkage identified between the MSC Fisheries Standard and the SDG target.
Context-specific contribution from the MSC Fisheries Standard	Implicit linkage identified between the Fisheries Standard and the SDG target. This means that a direct contribution to the target is not guaranteed and is highly dependent on the context of the fishery.
MSC program-wide contribution	An explicit link to MSC programs (such as Capacity Building Tools) but not the MSC Fisheries Standard. Includes the effects of MSC certification on the ground, such as market access.
No contribution	No linkage found within the Fisheries Standard or the MSC program as a whole.

Stage 2 - All contributions to the SDGs were analysed for three small-scale fisheries in the Global South, based on the improvement actions the fisheries must make to maintain their MSC certification.

RESULTS OF CASE STUDIES

MSC was found to be a catalyst for development of collaborative partnerships. Certification of fisheries resulted in improved local governance, research plans development and implementation, as well as production of scientific information and capacity building.

Notably, 6 out of 10 direct contributions to SDG targets (2.4, 12.2, 12.A, 14.2, 14.4, 14.A) were identified in all the three fisheries analysed.



¹Arton, A., Leiman, T., Petrokofsky, G., Toonen, H. & Longo, C. 2020. "What do we know about the impacts of the Marine Stewardship Council seafood ecolabelling program? A systematic map". Environmental Evidence

²FAO. (2020). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2020. Sustainability in action. Rome.

³Singh, G.G., Cisneros-Montemayor, A.M., Swartz, W., Cheung, W., Guy, J.A., Kenny, T., McOwen, C.J., Asch, R., Geffert, J.L., Wabnitz, C.C.C., Sumaila, R., Hanich, Q., Ota, Y. (2019). A rapid assessment of co-benefits and trade-offs among