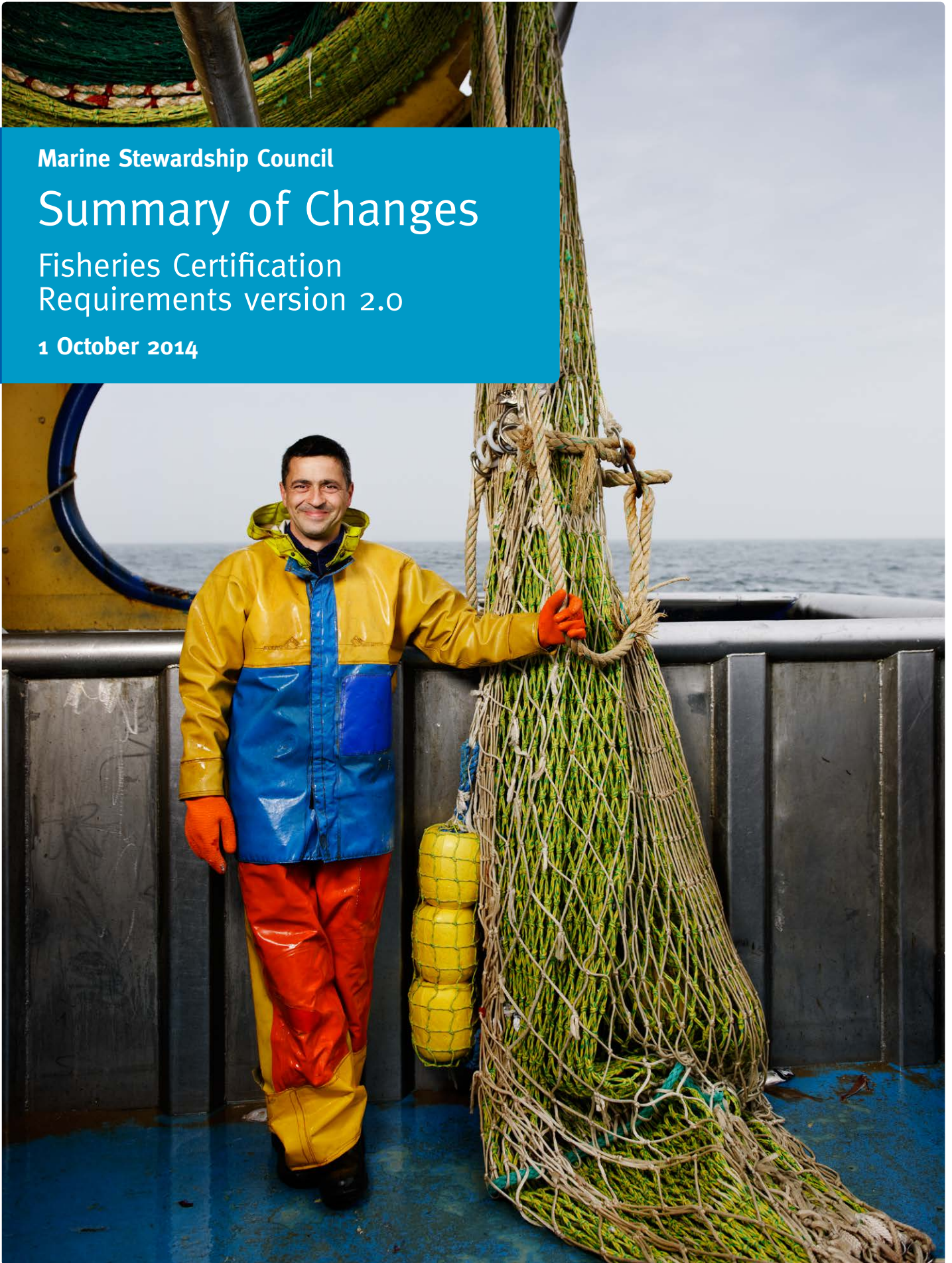


Marine Stewardship Council

Summary of Changes

Fisheries Certification
Requirements version 2.0

1 October 2014



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Disclaimer All details within this document are accurate at time of publication. If any interpretive issues arise in relation to the issues covered in this publication, the text of the English MSC scheme documents will prevail in all instances. If you are unsure of any details on any of the subject covered, please consult the relevant MSC scheme documents or contact the MSC at standards@msc.org

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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.*

1. Introduction

The Marine Stewardship Council has launched its new Fisheries Certification Requirements version 2.0, which includes changes in line with new scientific understanding and best management practices recognised globally.

The Marine Stewardship Council fisheries standard

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was created when two global organisations, WWF and Unilever, came together with a plan to tackle the issue of seafood sustainability. The result was an international non-profit organisation set up to transform the seafood market to one of sustainability. Between 1997 and 1999, the MSC consulted over 200 scientists, environmentalists and other stakeholders to establish a worldwide certification system for fisheries using environmentally sustainable practices. Currently the MSC runs the only certification and ecolabelling program for wild capture fisheries consistent with ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organizations Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries (FAO, 2009).

The MSC standard for sustainable fishing is comprised of three core Principles and a set of Performance Indicators (PIs) and Scoring Guidelines (SGs), known as the 'Default Assessment Tree'.

The three core Principles are:



Principle 1:
Health of the target fish stock



Principle 2:
Impact of the fishery on the environment



Principle 3:
Effective management of the fishery

These benchmarks correspond to levels of quality and certainty of fisheries management practices and their likelihood to deliver sustainability. They were derived from the experiences of fisheries managers, scientists, and other stakeholders worldwide. Based on this standard, the MSC assessment process reviews a set of specific indicators about a fishery's performance and management to determine its sustainability. These PIs are grouped under each of the MSC's three main Principles described above.

Each of the PIs is scored on a 1-100 scale, with the 60, 80, and 100 levels defining key sustainability benchmarks. The final overall score will result in a pass – which requires that the average score for each Principle is greater than or equal to 80, and that each PI is greater than 60; anything below this level results in a fail. A fishery can pass with some indicators less than 80, in which case the fishery receives a 'condition' requiring improvements so that the score can be raised to an 80 level, normally within five years.

The fishery must implement an agreed action plan that will deliver these improvements with time-bound milestones. Assessing a fishery's sustainability is complex, but the concept is simple – fishing operations should be at levels that ensure the long-term health of fish populations, while the ecosystems on which they depend remain healthy and productive for today's and future generations' needs.

A 'fishery' taking part in the MSC program is named to reflect the target fish species and stock, the geographic area of operations, the fishing method, gear and/or vessel type (for more details see page 5). Each of these elements within a fishery, including the whole fishery, can either pass or fail MSC assessment. Only seafood from fisheries that have passed assessment can carry the blue MSC ecolabel.

Key sustainability benchmarks

A score of 100 represents the performance expected from a 'near perfect' fisheries management system; one that has high levels of certainty about a fishery's performance and a very low risk that current operations will result in detrimental impacts to the target stocks, non-target species and supporting ecosystem.

A score of 80 conforms to the sustainability outcomes expected from fisheries management systems performing at 'global best practice' levels and infers increased certainty about the fishery's long-term sustainability.

A score of 60 represents the 'minimum acceptable limit' for sustainability practice that is established in the MSC's fisheries standard. This limit provides assurance that the basic biological and ecological processes of all components impacted by the fishery are not compromised now or into the future.

1. Introduction *continued*

Fisheries Certification Requirements

The MSC Certification Requirements:

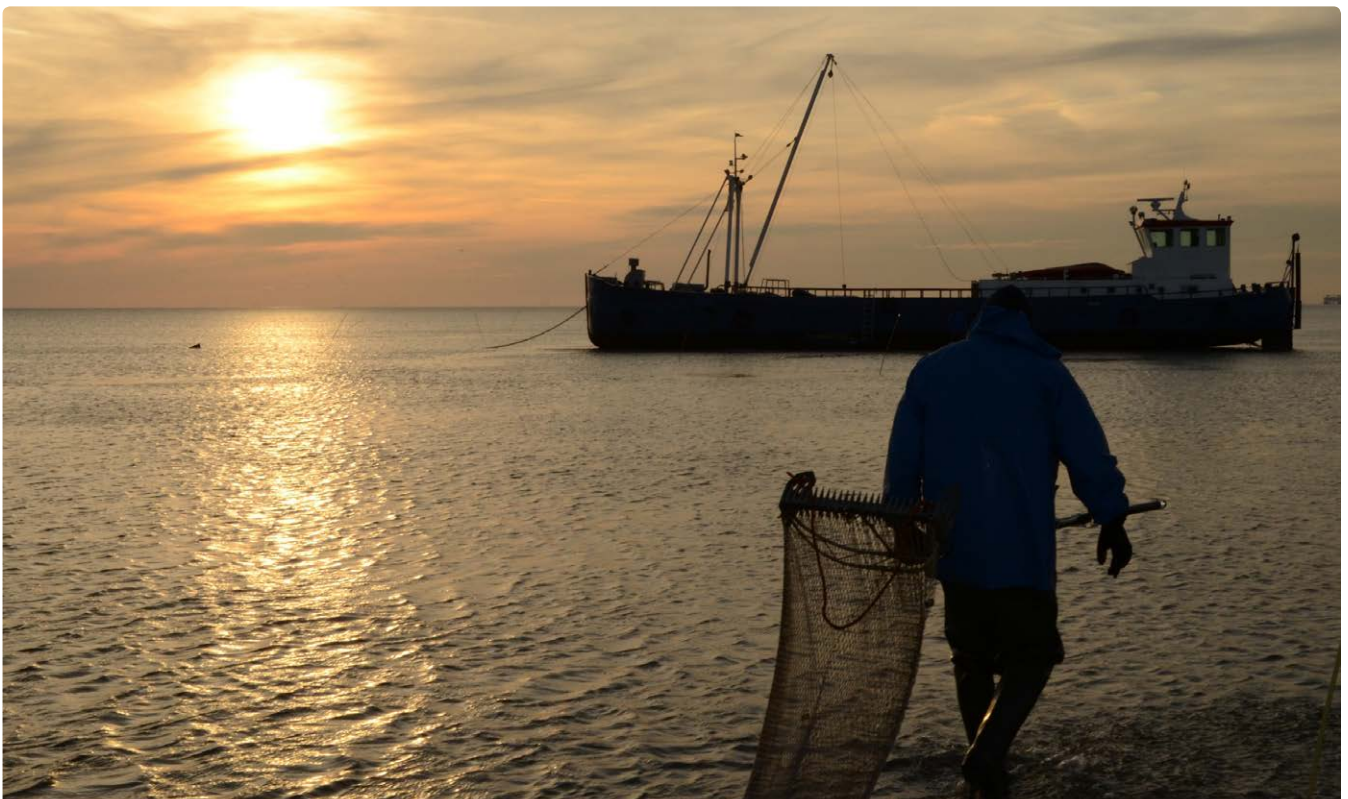
- Set out how the standards should be interpreted during assessments
- Ensure that the performance of fisheries and businesses against the MSC standards is properly assessed during assessments
- Ensure that all assessments against an MSC standard are carried out consistently, irrespective of where, when and by whom the assessment is carried out.

The Fisheries Certification Requirements are structured based on the ISO Guide 65. As the MSC is a standard setter and not a certification body, the MSC cannot be accredited to ISO (International Organization for Standardization) Guide 65 or any other ISO standard. Neither can any other standard setting body. However, MSC recognises the importance of ensuring that certification bodies conducting MSC fishery assessments and Chain of Custody audits conform to ISO Guide 65 and has therefore embedded these requirements in the program. All accredited certifiers for MSC assessments therefore have to demonstrate conformity to ISO Guide 65/17065 to Accreditation Services International (ASI), the independent accreditation body which accredits MSC certifiers.

Fishery assessment process

MSC adheres to the most rigorous international standards applicable to certification programs, including the use of third parties to assess fisheries against the MSC standard and decide whether to award certification. Whilst the MSC sets the standard, the assessments are done by independent, accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). These companies are held accountable and monitored by a separate organisation, ASI.

To ensure rigour and objectivity, the assessment process is highly transparent and is open to the scrutiny of anyone with an interest in the fishery. Relevant parties are notified of the assessment and invited to provide information and comments. The assessment is undertaken by a team of highly qualified and independent scientists who are hired by the CAB. The assessment results are described in a series of reports produced by the CAB and the scientific team. Once certified, a fishery is subject to annual surveillance audits, and undergoes a full re-assessment every five years.



Fisheries Standard Review

The MSC was committed to undertake a review of its fisheries standard following decision made by the MSC Board of Trustees (July 2012) and its Standard Setting Procedure, which aligns with FAO ecolabelling guidelines and the ISEAL Standard Setting Code. The Fisheries Standard Review (FSR), which took place in 2013 and 2014, focussed on the MSC Certification Requirements version 1.3 (CRv1.3) Default Assessment Tree and other fishery client performance requirements. In addition, the Speed and Cost Review (SCR) was undertaken to reform the fishery assessment process in order to reduce the time, cost, and complexity of certification.

The reviews are now complete and changes have been adapted to create Fisheries Certification Requirements version 2.0 (FCRv2.0) and the Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Requirement v2.0 (GFCRv2.0).

The FSR was an open, transparent, multi-stakeholder process, during which the MSC conducted public consultations with fisheries experts, scientists, eNGOs, retailers and the fishing industry. The independent MSC Stakeholder Council and Technical Advisory Board both provided detailed input into the scope of the review. In addition, the MSC commissioned a significant amount of scientific research to help inform the program improvements.

The review considered on the performance of CRv1.3 Default Assessment Tree, to ensure the standard is able to continue to adequately assess fisheries against today's understanding of ecological sustainability and best practice management.

The FSR focussed on the following topics:

- **Principle 1:** Sustainable fish stocks – provide clarifications and guidance when assessing the sustainability of fish stock
- **Principle 2:** Minimising environmental impact – ensure consistency and to reflect best practice throughout Principle 2
- **Principle 3:** Effective management – consider changes to the Performance Indicators used to assess fishery management systems
- **Risk-based Framework** – Improving consistency and applicability of the framework

The MSC Board of Trustees decided that the review should not consider elements (e.g. carbon footprint, animal welfare, or post-harvest usage) that are outside the scope of the current standard. By undertaking the FSR, the MSC has ensured its standard remains fit for purpose as the world's leading sustainable wild-catch seafood certification program.

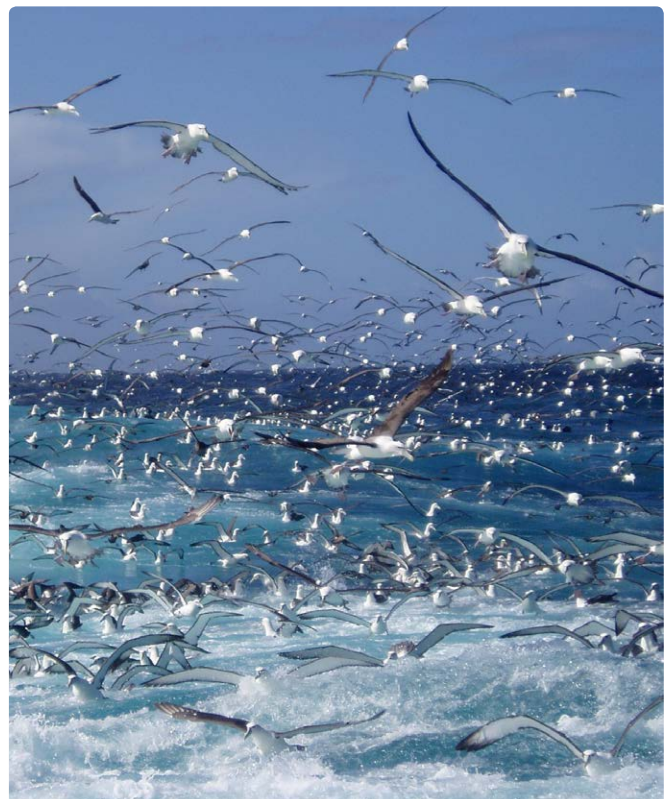
Speed and Cost Review

The SCR ran in parallel with the FSR and focussed on reducing the time, cost, and complexity of the fishery assessment process, while maintaining the robustness and integrity of the process and the effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.

The following topics were reviewed:

- Surveillance audits
- Fishery re-assessments
- Reporting templates (pre-assessment and full assessment templates)
- Combination and review of assessment stages
- Certification extensions in fisheries
- Peer Review College

The intention was to develop measurable benefits to fisheries in the program through the reduction in costs and time spent on the assessment. Additional process elements were also reviewed, which include harmonisation of fisheries, traceability and forced labour.



1. Introduction *continued*

Fisheries Certification Requirements version 2.0

With the launch of FCRv2.0 in October 2014, the MSC standard retains at its core a fundamental reliance on rigorous and objective science, and demonstration of sustainable outcomes. The intent and scientific justification for the standard has been clarified significantly and the audit process has been both simplified and made more rigorous, with additional reliance on third-party review of the assessment results.

The following scheme documents have been made available at www.msc.org to support the FCRv2.0:

- General Certification Requirements (GCR)
- Fisheries Certification Requirements (FCR)
- Guidance to the Fisheries Certification Requirements (GFCR)
- MSCI Vocabulary

The scheme documents listed above and that are now available to fisheries, CABs, and other stakeholders involved in the MSC fisheries assessment process, include all the changes that have taken place as a result of the FSR, with clear references to how FCRv2.0 differs from CRv1.3.

Summary of changes to the standard:

- Unit of Certification
- Principle 1: Clarification for scoring of target stocks and scoring of Harvest Control Rules
- Principle 1 and Principle 2 species: Reviews of alternative impact mitigation measures and changes to information Performance Indicators
- Principle 2 species: Cumulative impacts of MSC fisheries
- Shark finning
- Risk-based Framework
- Principle 2 habitats: New requirements on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems and Risk-based Framework options
- Principle 3: Performance Indicators
- Default Assessment Tree for Salmon Fisheries

Summary of changes to the assessment process:

- Surveillance audits
- Re-assessments
- Assessment steps and timelines
- Templates
- Extension of scope of certification
- Peer Review College
- Harmonisation
- Traceability
- Forced labour

Implementation Timeframes

Release date: 1st October 2014

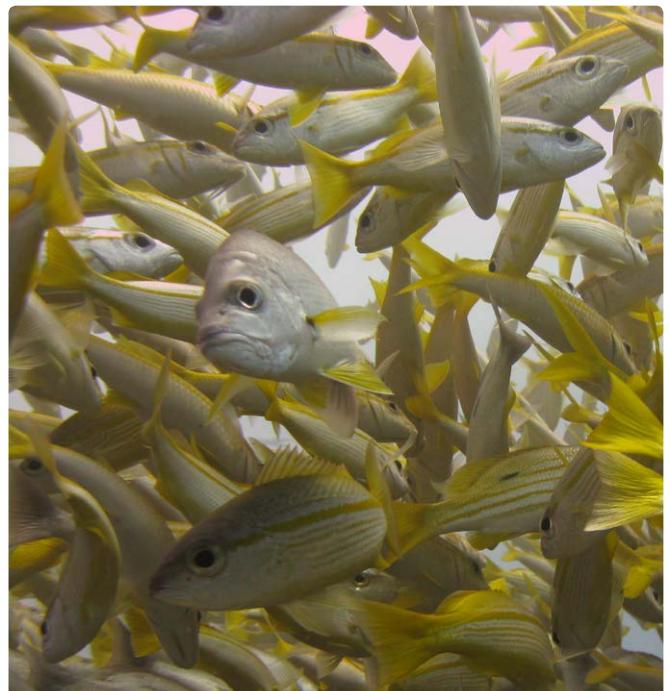
Effective date: 1st April 2015

All assessments (first assessment, surveillance audits, certificate extensions, and re-assessments) that commence after 1st April 2015 will have to use the new process requirements from FCRv2.0.

First full assessments that are announced after the effective date will have to use the new fisheries standard (performance requirements) from FCRv2.0 in addition to the new process.

Existing fisheries (in assessment or certified) will have to apply the new standard at their first re-assessment commencing after 1 October 2017.

Any fishery may elect to use the new process and performance requirements from publication (1 October) if they wish and CABs can confirm their readiness to apply.



2. Summary of changes to the standard

Unit of Certification

Context:

During the FSR, clarification for terms such as ‘Unit of Certification’ (UoC), ‘client’, ‘client group’, and ‘other eligible fishers’ was identified as being required in order to make clear the options for certificate sharing and the eligibility for different entities to access the certificate.

Clarity was also needed as to whether multiple species, stock units or gear types can be included as separate scoring elements within a single UoC – most fisheries do score these as separate UoCs, but this has not always been the case.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

A new term, the ‘Unit of Assessment’ (UoA) has been introduced in FCRv2.0 to define the full scope of a fishery assessment. A UoA includes the target stock, fishing method and practice, and any fleets, groups of vessels, individual fishing operators and ‘other eligible fishers’ that are involved in an MSC fishery assessment. Such ‘other eligible fishers’ may not be initially included in a certified fishery, but may join later through the process of certificate sharing, since they were included in the assessment of the fisheries’ impacts.

The term **UoC** is retained in just a few places in FCRv2.0 to refer to those elements of the UoA that are currently covered by the certificate. The client group is not the same as the UoC, because it may include other entities, such as processors, that were not part of the assessment of the fishery impacts, but may also access the certificate if accepted by the client.

Additional clarification includes:

- UoA based on catch content – fisheries may not decide which catches should be counted as part of the UoA simply based on the species in the catch. The full impacts of the use of the defined gear should be assessed.
- Gear variations in the UoA – some limited variation in the gears assessed within a single UoC is allowed.
- Quota trading – does not imply automatic access to a fishery (the client will need to confirm that the recipient was assessed as part of the UoA and has been accepted as part of the UoC).

Guidance has now been added to allow multiple species / stocks to be assessed as scoring elements in Principle 1, which increases flexibility for the CAB and client and could lead to speed and cost benefits in the reporting of the fishery.

Principle 1: Clarification for scoring of target stocks and scoring of Harvest Control Rules

Context:

Principle 1 requires that target stocks are likely to be above the ‘point at which recruitment could be impaired’ (PRI) and also fluctuating around a target level that is approximately consistent with the concept of taking a Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). However, the MSC had not previously defined exactly how such ‘fluctuating around’ the target should be scored, which had led to inconsistencies in CAB approaches during assessment.

CABs were also using different interpretations of exactly what should be required to meet the SG60 level for the Harvest Control Rules (HCR). In addition to these issues, the structure of Principle 1 had been found to have some redundancies between PIs that could potentially lead to inappropriate scoring in some special types of fishery.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

In FCR v2.0, the MSC has made modifications to the Principle 1 part of the Default Assessment Tree and Guidance in order to increase the clarity of the requirements and the consistency of scoring by CABs.

Firstly, the structure has been simplified by removing the Reference Points PI (1.1.2) and moving those original requirements to other PIs. The nature of reference points used in a fishery has also been clarified with a distinction made between the ‘outcome’ reference points used to measure stock status (in PI 1.1.1), and the ‘trigger’ reference points that form part of the HCRs. Extensive guidance has been added on the scoring of the fishery against such reference points, including cases where ‘proxy’ reference points are used, and how trends in stock levels should be considered in scoring fluctuations (see section GSA2.2.2). The guidance includes clarification on the expectations for exploitation rates in a fishery, both in scoring the success of HCRs, and in cases where the stock is reduced below the levels at which it can be regarded as ‘fluctuating around’ an MSY-consistent level. Where the fishing mortality rate is estimated, it should normally be below F_{MSY} in these cases, consistent with achieving a recovery to MSY-consistent levels within no longer than two generation times or 20 years. A few special exceptions to such rules are defined (see Box GSA5).

The HCRs define how the fishery management actions will maintain the stock at sustainable levels. FCRv2.0 clarifies that a 60 score can be achieved by the HCR being ‘generally understood’ (as in previous versions) but also, in cases where the stock is still abundant, by a HCR that has not previously been used, but can be shown to be ‘available’ to the management agency and reasonably expected to be used by managers if and when stocks decline to a level below B_{MSY} .

2. Summary of changes to the standard *continued*

In addition, guidance and definitions have been added to the UoC section of FCRv2.0, to help assessments that are based on ‘metapopulations’. In this situation, local populations inhabit discrete habitat patches but inter-patch dispersal and connections lead to varying degrees of connectivity and dependence between the different units. Assessment teams should consider the connectivity between such components of a metapopulation and the underlying source-sink dynamics and thereby more clearly define the actual unit stock that is assessed against Principle 1, and allow for any uncertainties.

Definitions of Principle 2 species

As part of the introduction of the cumulative impact requirements, several terms and definitions have now been revised and the key new terms are summarised below. In CR v1.3 the terms ‘retained’ and ‘bycatch’ were used in Pls 2.1.x and 2.2.x, respectively. However, in v2.0 the allocation of species between different components has been changed so that ‘primary’ species are assessed in Pls 2.1.x and ‘secondary’ in Pls 2.2.x. As a result of this change, some species that would have been designated as ‘retained’ or ‘bycatch’ in v1.3 may be assessed under a different set of Pls in v2.0.

Out of scope species:

MSC have now defined taxa that cannot be a target species of the fishery under Principle 1; these are amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals

Primary species (assessed under Pls 2.1.1-2.1.3):

Primary species are those where management tools and measures are in place, expected to achieve stock management objectives reflected in either limit or target reference points.

ETP (Pls 2.3.1-2.3.3):

Endangered, threatened and protected (ETP) are defined either by national legislation or by the binding international agreements defined in the MSC standard. New to FCRv2.0, out of scope species listed on the IUCN Red List as vulnerable, endangered or critically endangered can also be considered in the ETP category.

Secondary species (Pls 2.2.1-2.2.3):

All other species fall into this category, including non ETP amphibians, birds, reptiles and mammals.

Main filters:

≥5 per cent of the total catch (use a 3-5 year average to determine) or

If ‘less resilient’ (most sharks etc) ≥2 per cent of the total catch

Out-of scope species are always main, regardless of catch volume and assessed under Pls 2.2.1.

Principle 1 and Principle 2 species: Review of alternative measures to minimise unwanted catch and changes to information Performance Indicators

Context:

Within the management Pls for Principle 2 species (in CR v2.0 referred to as primary, secondary and ETP species), there are requirements for measures or strategies designed to maintain or to not hinder rebuilding of species. However, the CRv1.3 wording in these Pls and in the Principle 1 PI on harvest strategy (PI 1.2.1) provided little additional incentive for fisheries to minimise mortality of unwanted catch to the extent practicable.

Additionally, the CR v1.3 information Pls for Principle 2 species do not have clear requirements on how to assess the adequacy of information in relation to the outcome status of these species.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

A new requirement has been introduced for fisheries to regularly review alternative mitigation measures, and implement them where appropriate, so as to minimise mortalities of unwanted catch or of ETP species. The MSC defines ‘unwanted catch’ as *the part of the catch that a fisher did not intend to catch but could not avoid, and did not want or chose not to use*. This definition is in line with the way ‘bycatch’ is described in the *FAO International Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards* and is applicable to both Principle 1 (e.g. discards of target species) and Principle 2. The fishery needs to implement the alternative measure reviewed if it is more effective at minimising mortality of unwanted or ETP species and is comparable to existing measures in terms of effect on target species catch, and vessel and crew safety, is not likely to negatively impact other species or habitats, and is not cost prohibitive to implement. MSC considers that a strategy to manage habitats should contain consideration of ways to reduce impacts of gear on habitats at the SG100 scoring level.

By introducing these new requirements, the MSC is aligning with international best practice as presented in the *FAO Guidelines* mentioned above. Fisheries will not be required to implement reviewed measures if there are significant negative consequences for doing so, but the intent is that the mortality of unwanted catch – including if it is discarded or unobserved – is minimised.

See principle 1 harvest strategy (PI 1.2.1) and principle 2 species management Pls (Pls 2.1.2, 2.2.2 and 2.3.2).

The language used in Principle 2 Species Information Performance Indicators (Pls 2.1.3, 2.2.3 and 2.3.3) was clarified to improve consistency in how these requirements are assessed and reported. This includes a requirement that data sources with high levels of validity and low bias

are used when the importance or difficulty of estimating the true impact of the fishery on a species in relation to its status increases (e.g. when a species is close to or below its biologically based limit or status is uncertain).

Another requirement is that the assessment team reports the catch and fishery-related mortality of all main species taken, including a description of the information sources used to determine this.

Principle 2 species: Cumulative impacts of MSC fisheries

Context:

The MSC requirements in CRv1.3 (and earlier) for Principle 2 were increasingly seen by some stakeholders as inconsistently applied and not in line with best practice, with one of the most pressing concerns being what has been identified as the ‘cumulative impacts problem’. This problem occurred because impacted fish and shellfish species were assessed on an individual fishery basis in Principle 2, so it was possible that while one fishery may not have hindered recovery of a depleted Principle 2 stock or population, the cumulative impacts of two or more MSC fisheries that catch that species could in fact be sufficient to hinder recovery.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

The MSC has introduced requirements for cumulative impact assessments in Principle 2 with the release of FCRv2.0. These requirements will ensure that MSC certified fisheries will no longer cumulatively be at risk of generating negative impacts on Principle 2 species (and habitat). The cumulative impacts of MSC fisheries will be assessed as an outcome requirement for all species groups, but impacts of two or more fisheries will be assessed at different levels depending on which PI is evaluated, i.e. whether the species is primary, secondary or ETP.

During assessments, CABs should note all MSC fisheries that impact the same Principle 2 species stock or population. For primary species (see page 7), teams need to evaluate whether the cumulative or collective impact of overlapping MSC fisheries are hindering the recovery of ‘main’ primary species that are below a point of recruitment impairment (PRI) i.e. ensuring that the combined impact of MSC fisheries are not harming the recovery of the stock. For secondary species, the same intent applies when a species is below a biologically based limit, but only in cases where two or more MSC fisheries have ‘main’ catches that are ‘considerable’, defined as a species being 10 percent or more of the total catch. For ETP species, the combined impacts of MSC fisheries on all ETP species needs to be evaluated, but only in cases where either national and/or international requirements set catch limits for ETP species and only for those fisheries subject to the same national legislation or within the area of the same binding agreement.

All of the requirements for cumulative impacts for species are applicable to their respective Outcome PIs. For habitats, in contrast, cumulative impacts are evaluated in the management PI (PI 2.4.2). The requirements here aim to ensure that vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) are managed cumulatively to ensure serious and irreversible harm does not occur. The MSC expects these MSC UoAs to take appropriate coordinated actions within measures / strategies to avoid impacting VMEs.

See also section on Principle 2 habitats for further clarification on these new requirements.

These different cumulative impact requirements and the accompanying revision of the species categories introduced with FCRv2.0 result in an increase to ‘the bar’ of the standard compared to previous Default Assessment Trees (CRv1.3). It also ensures that the combined impacts of MSC fisheries are sustainable. However, the requirements in Principle 2 remain lower than the requirements applied to species in Principle 1, where all impacts (MSC and non-MSC fisheries) on a stock are considered.

Shark finning

Context:

During public consultations, MSC stakeholders expressed the need for shark finning requirements to be included as part of the Fisheries Certification Requirements.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

MSC requirements prohibit shark finning; and a fishery will be scored on the level of certainty that shark finning is not taking place. The CAB should not certify or maintain the certification of a fishery when there is objective verifiable evidence of shark finning.

Best practice for ensuring shark finning is not occurring comes from sharks being landed with fins naturally attached (FNA). Thus, when fisheries land sharks with FNA scores of 80 or 100 will be achieved depending on the level of external validation in place.

Where landing sharks with FNA is not possible, for example when sharks are destined for processing and utilisation, an adequate level of regulation, full documentation of the destination of shark bodies and independent observation are required.

If sharks are landed with fins separate from the body and are not destined for processing, there needs to be good external validation (e.g. at least 20 per cent observer coverage) and the fins and carcasses should be landed in an appropriate ratio specific to the shark species landed.

This change allows the MSC requirements to meet both scientific best practice and management best practice.

2. Summary of changes to the standard *continued*

Risk-based Framework

Context:

The Risk-based Framework (RBF) is a set of assessment methods contained in the Certification Requirements that can be used when there is insufficient data to assess the fishery using the Default Assessment Tree. RBF allows certifiers to use a structured framework to assess the risk that a fishery is operating unsustainably. In CR 1.3, the RBF comprised of two methodologies, Spatial Intensity Consequence Analysis (SICA) and Productivity Susceptibility Analysis (PSA). During the FSR, concerns were raised around difficulties in the application of the RBF methodology for species (PIs 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1) and the consequence that this may have for scoring fisheries robustly. Furthermore, concerns were raised about using the SICA to scoring data-deficient habitats.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

Along with the SICA and PSA, two new methodologies have now been added to the RBF: the Consequence Analysis (CA) and the Consequence Spatial Analysis (CSA).

CA and PSA for PI 1.1.1

For data-deficient species assessed under PI 1.1.1, the score will be determined using both PSA and CA scores. The CA is based on the SICA, but requires consideration of semi-quantitative information and it does not require scoring of spatial scale, temporal scale and intensity of the fishing activity. For PI 1.1.1 it was considered that the scoring language for intensity was difficult to interpret and hard to explain to stakeholders. Furthermore, assessors noted that the information used to determine the temporal scale was not actually directly used in determining a consequence score, also that the scoring of spatial scale is duplicated as it is scored in the PSA.

When setting conditions for PI 1.1.1, the restriction on the use of the RBF at re-assessment has been lifted, so long as the fishery is capable of raising both the CA and PSA score to at least 80 within the specified timeframe and prior to the re-scoring of the fishery at re-assessment. If the condition cannot be met, the RBF for this species cannot be used in subsequent MSC assessments and it will be required to collect other information and undertake analysis to provide a direct measure of stock status that can be compared with biologically-based reference points by the time of re-assessment.

PSA for PIs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1

For all data-deficient species assessed under PIs 2.1.1, 2.2.1 and 2.3.1, the score will be determined using the PSA instead of SICA. In addition for PIs 2.1.1 and 2.2.1, species are allowed to be grouped according to similar taxonomies. Representative species from each group can then be scored and be used to determine the score for the group.

PSA developments and Principle 2 species

A specific productivity attribute for invertebrates has now been incorporated to the PSA in order to achieve the same probability of outcome (level of precautionary level) as for finfish.

New selectivity risk cut-offs have been developed that can be used to score all gear types, providing the principles of risk that should be considered.

As mentioned above (page 8), cumulative impacts of other MSC UoA's will be assessed when scoring Principle 2 main species at the SG80 level. When considering cumulative impacts of other MSC UoAs for data-deficient species, a weighted average of PSA scores for each fishery affecting the given stock is calculated in order to derive the final PSA score. If catch proportions cannot be estimated quantitatively or qualitatively, the susceptibility score for the overall PSA shall be based on the attributes of the gear with the highest susceptibility score. This requirement was included as there was some confusion around how to weight fisheries for which there is no data, this new requirement ensures that in situations where there are unknown catch proportions of the different gear types impacting the species, that the highest-risk gear type is used to score the fishery, rather than applying a heavy weighting to the unknown.

CSA for PI 2.4.1

In order to adequately assess the impact on habitat structure and function, the new CSA methodology has been incorporated in the RBF to score PI 2.4.1 when the available information is not adequate to score the default SGs within the Default Assessment Tree. The CSA has been introduced as an alternative to the existing quantitative methodology for habitats to provide a semi-quantitative method rather than qualitative methods (SICA) to ensure the MSC's intent with regards to habitats is met. This will increase consistency of application of benthic habitat assessments since many locations around the world lack quantitative habitat information (e.g., habitat mapping). More information on habitats can be found on page 10.

Principle 2 habitats: Aligning with best practice

Context:

The MSC standard for habitats was increasingly seen by some stakeholders as inconsistently applied and not in line with international best practice. Concerns were also raised regarding the MSC's accessibility for data-deficient fisheries.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

To improve the consistency of scoring, the MSC has incorporated definitions into the FCRv2.0 to cover what is meant by 'serious or irreversible harm' and 'main' habitats, 'area of consideration', cumulative habitat impacts, as well as the development of CSA (mentioned above).

Serious or irreversible harm – The MSC definitions of ‘serious harm’ and ‘irreversible harm’ have been combined in FCRv2.0 and is now more in line with the FAO Guidelines definition of ‘significant adverse impacts’. For ‘serious or irreversible harm’, the requirement asks whether the changes caused by the UoA fundamentally alter the capacity of the habitat to maintain its ecological function. To assess this, CABs will need to consider whether the habitat would be able to recover at least 80 per cent of its structure and function with a 5-20 year period if fishing on the habitat were to cease entirely.

Main habitats – Explicit definition has now been included in FCRv2.0 that describes a ‘main habitat’ as commonly encountered and/or a vulnerable marine ecosystem (VME). A commonly encountered habitat is one that comes into regular contact with a gear used by the UoA, considering the spatial (geographical) overlap of fishing effort with the habitat’s range within the ‘managed area’. A VME, as defined by FAO Guidelines, can include uniqueness and rarity, functional significance of the habitat, fragility, life-history traits of component species that make recovery difficult, and structural complexity. The outcome PI (PI 2.4.1) has been split into three scoring issues (instead of the one scoring issue of the earlier requirements) to explicitly assess the fishery’s impact on commonly encountered habitats, VMEs, and minor habitats.

Area of consideration – FCRv2.0 includes a redefinition of the boundary of the habitat considered in the assessment, formerly ‘regional or bioregional basis’. The definition was changed to the area covered by the governance body(s) responsible for fisheries management in the area(s) where the UoA operates’. Referred to as the ‘managed area’ for short, the team will need to consider the habitats that occur within the area managed by the local, regional, national, or international governance bodies relevant to the UoA’s operation area. However, if the habitat’s range is not completely enclosed within the ‘managed area’, the team will consider the habitat’s range both inside and outside the ‘managed area’.

Cumulative habitats impacts – A specific requirement has been introduced for MSC fisheries to avoid creating cumulative impacts on VMEs. The MSC now requires that the fishery implement precautionary management measures to protect VMEs (PI 2.4.2). At the SG60 level, the UoA must comply with any management requirements (e.g. move-on rules) to protect VMEs. At the SG80 and SG100 levels, the UoA must comply both with any management requirements and with measures put in place by other MSC UoAs or by non-MSC fisheries.

Principle 3 Performance Indicators

Context:

During the review of Principle 3, a number of redundancies and overlaps with Principle 1 and Principle 2 were identified. In addition, gaps were found in the guidance, which may have caused an inappropriate obstacle to the certification of small-scale and developing world fisheries.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

To simplify the MSC assessment process and increase CAB consistency in scoring, changes were made relating to three PIs in Principle 3:

Scoring of fishing incentives PI (PI 3.1.4) has been removed, while the consideration of subsidies has been made explicit in the guidance for Principle 1 and Principle 2 management PIs. CABs must still consider whether fleets are subsidised to the point of overcapacity, and whether that overcapacity is hindering effective management in both Principle 1 and Principle 2.

Research plan requirements PI (PI 3.2.4) has been removed, however, reference has been made for the need to consider the existence of strategic research planning at the SG100 level for both Principle 1 and Principle 2 information PIs. The external review of management systems PI (PI 3.2.5) remains, where guidance has also been added on how scoring may recognise the traditional and informal approaches often present in small-scale and developing world fisheries.

Default Assessment Tree for salmon fisheries

Context:

There are unique characteristics to salmon fisheries that are not accounted for in the Default Assessment Tree, developed for wholly marine or wholly freshwater species. These unique considerations include enhancement and the complex stock structure of salmon. The MSC Default Assessment Tree for Salmon Fisheries has been in development since 2008 and is now ready for use by CABs for the basis of new and future assessments.

FCRv2.0 solution:

The new Default Assessment Tree for salmon fisheries is consistent with existing salmon assessments, providing a default where previously CABs had modified the general Default Assessment Tree. The new salmon standard captures scientific and management best practice, accounts for the unique population dynamics and stock structure of salmon and includes special requirements for assessing the impact of enhancement activities.

The tree accounts for the unique stock structure of salmon fisheries by requiring that both the overall production from the fishery is high, while the diversity and productivity of individual populations are also maintained.

The tree also requires CABs to score any enhancement activities in salmon fisheries, such as hatchery production, and their impacts on the wild stocks and receiving environment.

The new requirements will help to ensure robust and consistent assessments of salmon fisheries, ensuring the long-term sustainability of salmon.

3. Summary of changes to the process

Speed and Cost Review

The reason for conducting the SCR was to make the certification process more effective and cost efficient.

The MSC has revised the requirements for surveillance and re-assessment audits and made allowances for expansions of an existing certificate. This will allow high performing fisheries, which have few conditions and transparent access to information, to reduce the cost of surveillance and continued recertification. It will also allow fisheries to more easily extend the certificates to new species, gear or fishers.

Surveillance audits

During the five years of certification, the CAB annually monitors progress against the conditions and milestones, and reviews any changes to the fishery (e.g. stock status, management). There are three types of surveillance audits: on-site, off-site, and review of information. Within FCRv2.0 CABs determine whether a fishery can have a reduced surveillance level from the default surveillance level (four on-site audits) based on new criteria:

- Number of conditions, and
- Ability of the team to verify information remotely

For on-site surveillance audits there is now also the option to have 1 auditor to go on-site who is supported remotely by another auditor.

In the initial certification period, at least two auditors must carry out a surveillance audit. In second and subsequent certification periods, a single auditor may be used where the fishery has conditions associated with only one Principle.

In the development of the surveillance program there is increased flexibility in the timing of surveillance audits to allow for alignment to management decision timelines and fishing seasons. Audits may be carried out up to six months earlier or later than the anniversary date of the certificate.

Re-assessments

By the fourth anniversary of an existing certificate, the CAB should consult with their client whether to commence the re-assessment of the certified fishery. As part of FCRv2.0, there are now two types of re-assessment: full re-assessment, where all steps and activities involved in a full assessment must be carried out and reduced re-assessment, which fisheries could qualify for if they meet the following criteria:

- No conditions remaining after third surveillance audit
- CAB confirms that all standard related issues raised by stakeholders have been satisfactorily addressed by the CAB by the third surveillance audit
- Fishery was covered under the previous certificate (or scope extension).

Reduced re-assessment requirements:

- Assessment with one assessment team member onsite and other team member(s) working from a remote location
- Only one peer reviewer
- Use of the Reduced Re-assessment Report Template.

If by the third surveillance audit there are no outstanding conditions, all valid standard-related comments from stakeholders have been addressed and where the fishery entering re-assessment was covered under the previous certificate or has undergone a scope extension, the fishery can qualify for reduced re-assessment.

Assessment steps and timelines

The MSC fishery assessment process contains a large number of steps and required timelines for these steps. The duration of the process has been reduced from over three years, in earlier assessments, to an average of approximately 13 months. However, a number of fisheries still experience assessments lasting several years. Long assessments can be more costly for clients and stakeholders (as they require repeated engagement).

As a result of the SCR, there has been a reduction in the number of assessment steps and time taken from fishery assessment announcement to site visit and a reduced assessment timeline from site visit to certification.

Templates

For FCRv2.0 a number of new templates are available.

Reporting templates now include:

- Full assessment (including normal re-assessment)
- Pre-assessment – *revised*
- Reduced re-assessment – *new*
- Surveillance – *new*
- Surveillance – review of new information – *new*

Other templates include:

- Full assessment announcement (including re-assessment) – *new*
- Surveillance announcement – *new*
- Notification report
- Client document checklist – *new*
- Use of RBF in an assessment
- Scoring worksheets (now separate from salmon and bivalves)
- PSA, CSA worksheets – *new*
- Peer review
- Stakeholder comment
- Variation request

Extension of scope of certificate

The MSC requirements already allows certificate sharing with fishers that are part of the UoA. In addition, there are provisions to allow fisheries to extend their certificate to another fishery if the new target species has been previously assessed under Principle 2 in the earlier assessment.

There was, however, no mechanism to allow a certified fishery client to extend its certificate in other situations when 'Assessment Tree components' are held in common between a certified fishery and an applicant fishery.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

As part of FCRv2.0, fishery certificates may be extended to a new, spatially proximate fishery, with the following conditions:

- Willingness of the client owner of the existing certificate to extend the certificate
- Presence of Assessment tree components held in common between the applicant fisheries and the certified fishery
- Fulfilment of additional but limited assessment requirements.

If the applicant fishery is deemed eligible for an extension of an existing certificate they will be eligible for the following reduced requirements in the extension assessment:

- Reduction in the number of assessment team members
- Reduction in the number of peer reviews
- Reduction in reporting and scoring requirements.

The extension assessment may be conducted as an expedited audit or during a regular surveillance audit.

Peer Review College

Context:

The peer review is already an integral part of the fishery assessment process. It provides a review of the draft certification report and is carried out by fishery experts with similar expertise to the assessment team. The peer reviewers are appointed by CABs for between two to five days, depending principally on the number of certification units and the number of species included in an assessment. CABs are also recommended to ensure the reviewers are trained in the MSC Certification Requirements.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

In order to provide a more standardised peer reviewer process and improve efficiency within the assessment process, the MSC has created an independent Peer Review College.

The Peer Review College will carry out all the procedures for the selection and appointment of peer reviewers that were previously handled by CABs. This has the added value of removing any perceived conflict of interest through the CABs both appointing and paying for the peer reviewers as occurs under the current process. The Peer Review College will also give peer reviewers the right to reply to CAB responses during the Public Comment Draft Report (PCDR) phase, which will give greater weight to peer review comments, as the Independent Adjudicator will be able to refer to these additional comments at the Objections Procedure stage (see www.msc.org for more details about how objections work and improve assessments).



3. Summary of changes to the process *continued*

Harmonisation

Context:

Where a fishery under assessment overlaps with a certified fishery, a CAB is required to coordinate the assessment to make sure the key assessment products and outcomes are harmonised. The previous Certification Requirements did not explicitly state whether harmonised fisheries with conditions must be given the same timelines to complete the conditions or whether the timelines should be harmonised with the existing certified fisheries.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

New guidance has been developed to improve CAB consistency in setting the timelines for conditions in overlapping fisheries. In justified cases, this allows that later fisheries should not be always required to achieve the timelines already set in earlier fisheries.

Revisions have also been included both in the FCRv2.0 and in guidance documents to clarify the MSC's intent that harmonisation normally results in the same scores and conditions. Greater coordination will be needed by CABs to achieve such harmonised outcomes throughout the processes of assessment, surveillance and re-assessment, and reflecting changes in fisheries status over time.

In addition, new guidance has also been provided on the harmonisation processes relating to the cumulative impacts of overlapping UoAs in Principle 2 primary species and habitats (PIs 2.1.1 and 2.4.2). MSC's intent regarding these processes is to reduce the impacts of such cumulative assessments in the short term, in order to give time for overlapping MSC-certified fisheries to work together and reduce their impacts (e.g. achieving any conditions in the process).

Traceability

Context:

The fishery assessment includes reviewing and documenting traceability elements in the fishery report. CABs are required to make a determination that the systems are sufficient to ensure products sold as certified originate from the certified fishery. However, a number of issues were identified during the FSR that needed to be addressed:

- Traceability may sometimes be considered as an afterthought by clients and therefore solutions may not be possible before the fishery is certified
- Fisheries with similar traceability risks may be reported on and handled differently
- Reports do not always give enough information about a fishery's UoC or how traceability risks are handled
- Traceability issues are not formally handled during the five-year certification period

FCRv2.0 solutions:

CABs will now need to assess and record that management systems ensure traceability to the UoC, rather than 'certified fishery', and will document in reports specifically how products can be traced back to the UoC. Fishery client groups will need to maintain records that allow certified products to be traced back to the UoC if a traceback was requested.

More complete and consistent documentation of traceability factors will be required and certain high-risk traceability factors will be reviewed when the scope is first determined. The PCDR will include a specific statement on where subsequent Chain of Custody (CoC) is needed. The Fishery Assessment Reporting Template has been updated to assist this process, and the MSC website will also provide publicly-accessible information on the client group/ eligible vessels, and where CoC begins, to assist those wishing to purchase from the fishery.

Also, traceability systems will need to be reviewed during surveillance audits, and if fisheries sell non-certified product as 'MSC-certified' they need to notify customers and the certifier of the incident. This is consistent with 'non-conforming product' obligations for CoC-certified companies.



Forced Labour

Context:

As a marine ecolabelling charity that operates a science-based standard for environmentally sustainable fishing, the MSC does not include a requirement for the assessment of the social and employment conditions of fisheries and their supply chains. However, the MSC condemns the use of forced labour.

FCRv2.0 solutions:

Within FCRv2.0, the MSC has included clear policy on the issue of forced labour. Companies successfully prosecuted for forced labour violations shall be ineligible for MSC certification. To ensure that a certification entity remains eligible for MSC certification with respect to forced labour violations, companies, fishery client group members and their subcontracted parties should ensure compliance with national and international laws on forced labour and follow relevant guidance where available.

“MSC certification allows fisheries to prove they operate sustainably”



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