



# MSC Improvement Program

# Context for the MSC Improvement Program

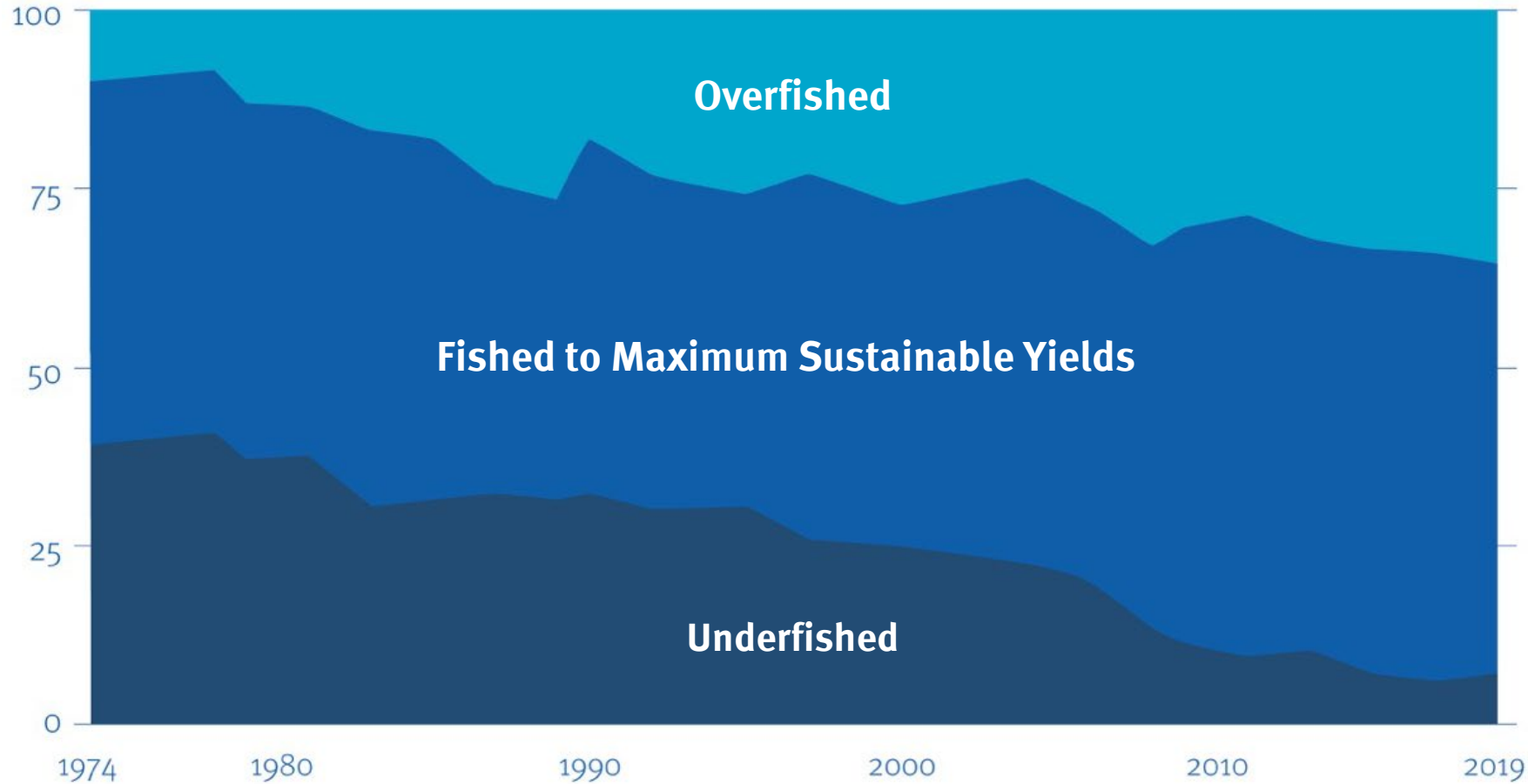


# Challenge of overfishing

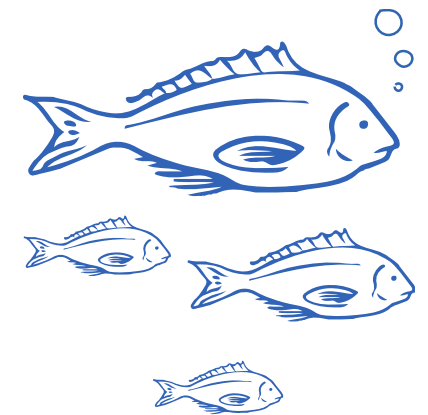
- Overfished stocks
- Decline in marine biodiversity
- Threats to livelihoods
- Diminished food security



# Overfished stocks increasing over time



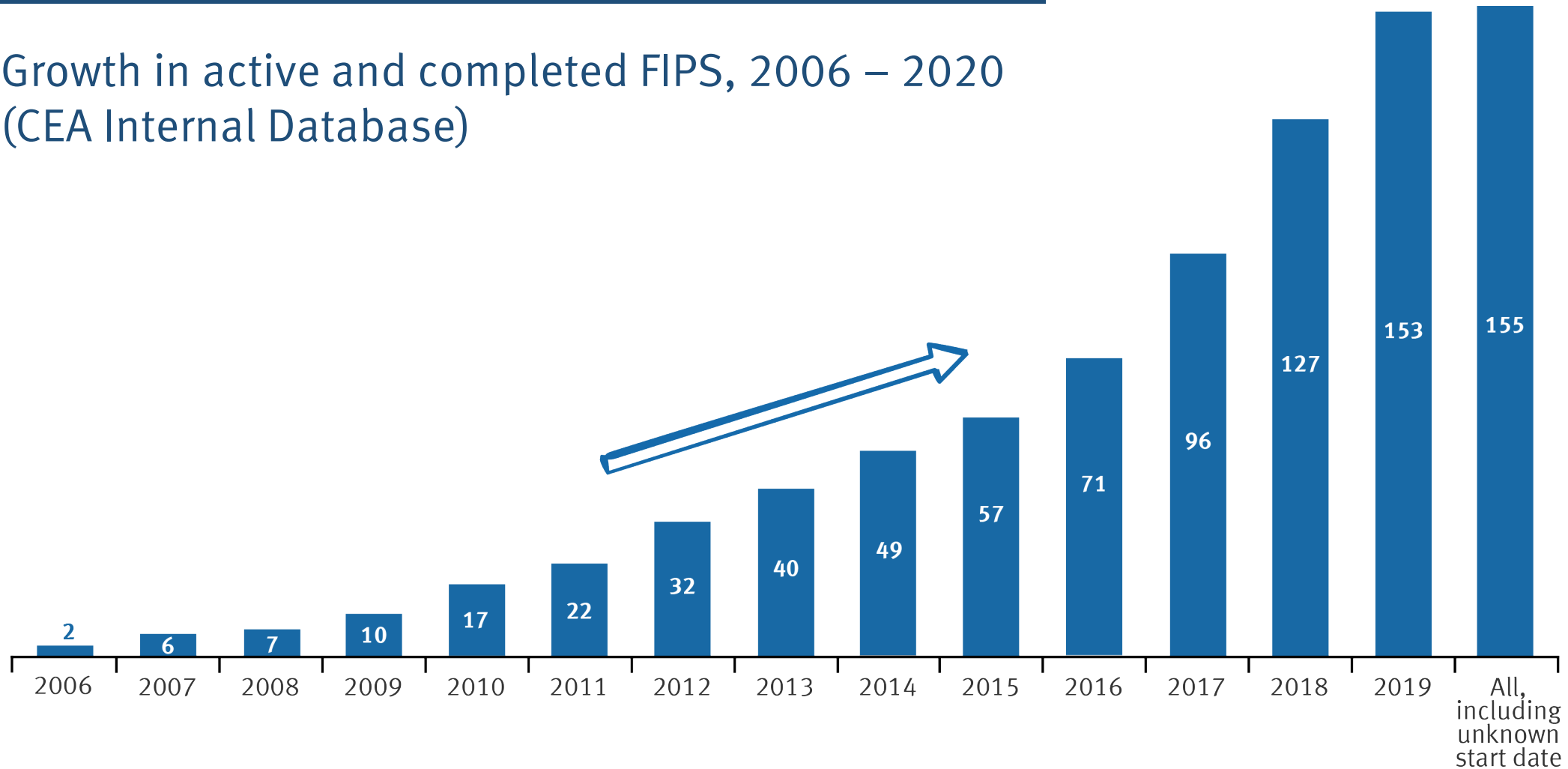
**+2%**  
overfished stocks



# The sustainability challenge: Fishery improvement projects



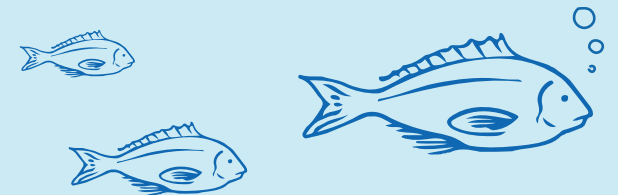
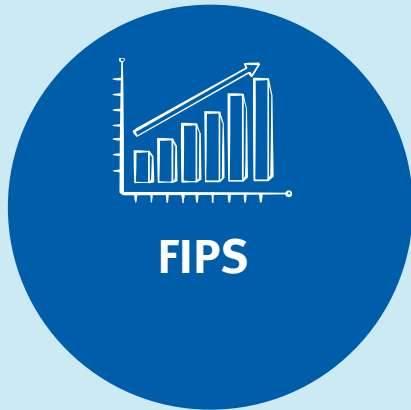
Growth in active and completed FIPS, 2006 – 2020  
(CEA Internal Database)




# MSC Improvement Program: supporting improvement on the water



A complementary tool to drive progress on the water



# The sustainability challenge: incentivising certified, sustainable seafood




**19%**  
Marine wild catch

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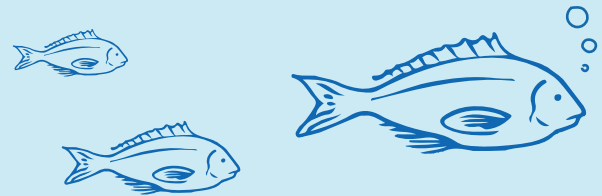
**700**  
Fisheries engaged  
with MSC\*



**MSC Improvement  
Program incentivises  
progress to  
certification**



**Over 1/3**  
Marine wild catch  
engaged with MSC



Engaged means certified, in assessment, suspended, in the Improvement Program

# MSC Improvement Program: Driver for Progress





# Evolving the Improvement Program



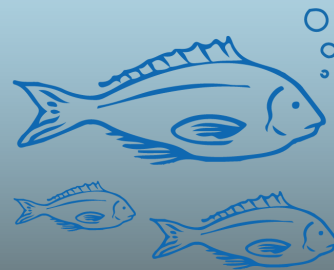
2019

Pilot program 'In Transition to MSC' (ITM) begins



December 2023

First ITM fishery enters assessment



August 2024

Fishery gains MSC certification



October 2024

Pilot ITM program becomes permanent as MSC Improvement Program



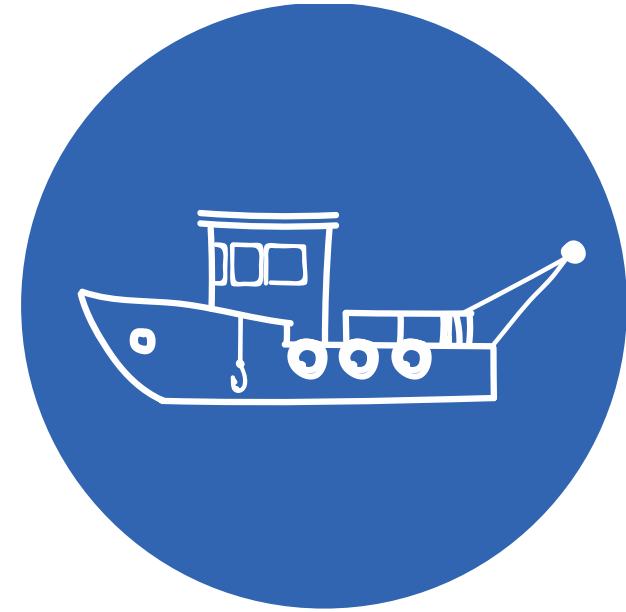
# How does the program work?



**The MSC Improvement Program supports fisheries to make progress towards MSC certification.**

Pre-existing features

- Independent verification
- Time-bound (five years)
- Access to MSC tools and expertise
- A fast-track to sustainability



## **New benefit:**

**Potential access to certified supply chains;  
no ecolabel use but back of pack claim**

**75%**  
of revenue to Ocean Stewardship Fund to support  
development of sustainable fisheries

# Accessing supply chain benefits



Fisheries in the Improvement Program must meet independently assessed, prescribed environmental performance levels



Must be able to segregate MSC Improvement catch from the rest of the catch in the supply chain



Access to certified supply chains



Back of pack sentence signalling inclusion in MSC Improvement Program

# Join the MSC Improvement Program



## The MSC Improvement Program supports fisheries to make progress towards MSC certification

- Added credibility
- Access to MSC tools and expertise
- Public listing on Track a Fishery

## Possibility of

- Financial support
- Back-of-pack statement
- Access to certified supply chains



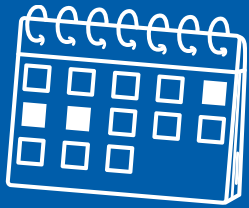
Products from MSC Improvement fisheries cannot use the MSC ecolabel.

At certain performance levels, products can display a sustainability statement on the back of their packaging.

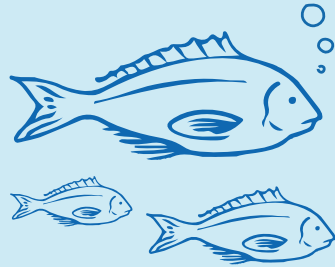
# Eligibility



To be eligible for the MSC Improvement Program, fisheries must:



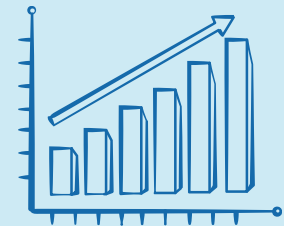
Commit to entering assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard within five years



Be within the scope of the MSC program

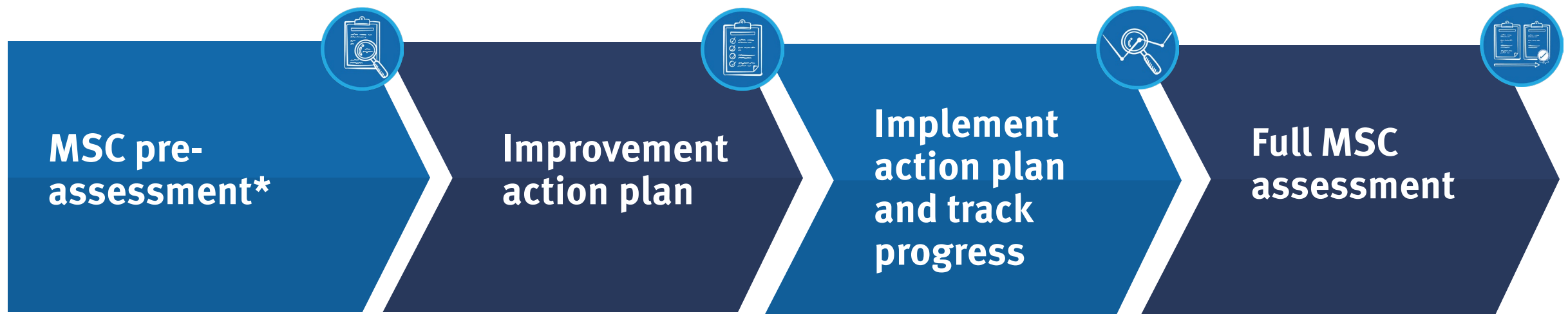


Have a recent MSC pre-assessment or a recent MSC assessment



Have a credible improvement action plan

# What does the program involve?



\*An MSC assessment report is also valid

**Defined MSC tools and templates must be used at each stage**

# Support for different stages of sustainability



## Pathway to Sustainability

## Certification

Pathway tools  
Pathway projects



MSC Improvement  
Program



CERTIFIED  
SUSTAINABLE  
SEAFOOD  
MSC  
[www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)



Ecological performance



# Applying to the Program

- Eligible fisheries can enter the MSC Improvement Program at any time
- Interested fisheries should contact [fisheries@msc.org](mailto:fisheries@msc.org) or their local MSC Outreach representative
- Visit [msc.org/improve](https://msc.org/improve) for more information





# Transition to MSC Fisheries Standard v3



July  
2024



1  
November  
2030

Prospective fisheries enter the Improvement program against v3.1

Flexibility: Prospective fisheries can enter against v2.01

All MSC Improvement fisheries require pre-assessment/assessment against v3.1

All certified fisheries require assessment against v3.1

# Maintaining the value of the ecolabel



- We did **two rounds of consumer testing** in Germany, Japan, Spain, UK, and USA
- Consumers noted that they always prefer seeing the **certification label on the front** of the pack and **only occasionally see a back of pack statement.**



Consumers noted that they see label on the front of the pack

# Supporting ecological improvement



**The MSC Improvement Program supports fisheries to make progress towards MSC certification.**

- Complements MSC certification scheme
- Back-of-pack statement after meeting minimum performance levels
- 0.5% fixed fee
- 75% of revenue to the Ocean Stewardship Fund



Products from MSC Improvement fisheries cannot use the MSC ecolabel.

# Sustainable sourcing

## Contributes to improvements toward stability in sustainable sourcing of seafood

- Added credibility through third-party verification of progress
- Fisheries commit to entering MSC assessment within five years
- Access to certified supply chains
- Back-of-pack statement demonstrates transparency
- Communicate and report on impacts



# Back of pack sentence



Please note that this CoC code and URL is subject to change

# Back of pack sentence



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# NGOs and the MSC Improvement Program



**The MSC Improvement program can support the aims of NGOs engaged in sustainable fisheries**

Ensuring fisheries improve in a defined time-frame

Helping key target fisheries identified by NGOs to become more sustainable

Advising and supporting fisheries through their improvement journey

Working with the fishery to make necessary improvements

Advocating for market benefits for improving fisheries

**Improvement Program fisheries could be eligible for funding from the MSC Ocean Stewardship Fund's Transition Assistance Fund.**

# Support the MSC Improvement Program



## A complementary tool for fishery improvement projects.

- Robust, consistent verification of progress
- Five-year timeframe
- Access to MSC tools, and expertise
- Benefit from the MSC's network
- A bridge to certification for FIPs

