



# Celebrating Leadership in Sustainable Fishing

The Marine Stewardship Council  
Annual Report 2023-24



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Our exceptional partners – including fisheries, retailers and processors – have already demonstrated extraordinary commitment to bringing sustainable seafood to millions of consumers around the world. But we need to redouble our efforts, especially in the light of the profound ways in which climate change is affecting our ocean.

**Rupert Howes, Chief Executive**

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**Cover image:** Páll Hreinn Pálsson, fisherman with Vísir, cod and ling, Iceland © MSC James Morgan

**Inside cover image:** Shoal of fish © iStock / naturepics\_li

**Contents image:** Fisher Anna Vesper Gunnarsson fishing pikeperch in Lake Hjälmaren in Sweden © Ulf Berglund

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# Working together for a resilient ocean

## A message from our CEO

In tough times, the sustainable seafood movement continues to show remarkable resilience. Persistently high inflation and cost-of-living pressures made last year a challenging one for the industry and for consumers. But the commitment to sustainable seafood has not weakened.

Thanks to the outstanding leadership of our partners, volumes of MSC certified seafood remained stable and consumers around the world continued to choose it. The results of our latest GlobeScan survey show that consumers care more than ever about the health of the oceans, and many are worried that their favourite seafood will not be available 20 years from now.

They are right to be concerned. The latest figures from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) show that the number of overfished stocks continues to grow to 37.7%. Landings from stocks identified as biologically sustainably fished also accounted for 76.9% of total global landings when weighted by production level, (5.6% down from the FAO's previous figures.) There are encouraging signs that management of some fish stocks has improved – particularly for commercial species like tuna, but there is clearly much more to do. Our exceptional partners – including fisheries, retailers and processors – have already demonstrated extraordinary commitment to bringing sustainable seafood to millions of consumers around the world. But we need to redouble our efforts, especially in the light of the profound ways in which climate change is affecting our ocean. In an era of warming oceans, governments and fisheries managers must step up, not least by agreeing science-based quotas for fish populations that cross national boundaries.

At the MSC, we are determined to work with our partners to support these efforts. MSC certification recognises best practice management that can help to maintain sustainable population levels, reduce impacts on sensitive ecosystems and further drive research and innovation, all of which help increase ocean resilience in the face of accelerating climate change.

During the last year, we know there have been challenges with the practical implementation of our revised Fisheries Standard Version 3.0. Addressing and resolving these issues is a major priority for the coming year. We will be working closely with all our stakeholders to ensure that our Standard remains the global benchmark for sustainable fishing, and that our market-based program continues to reward responsible operators and incentivise real improvements on the water.

Thank you to everybody who has supported us this year. I am particularly grateful to all the MSC staff, who have shown amazing drive and dedication in delivering our mission, to the MSC Board for steering us through a period of change and to the Stakeholder Advisory Council and Technical Advisory Board for providing invaluable advice and insights. Thank you too to all our partners – the achievements we celebrate in this publication are your achievements. We look forward to continuing to work together to celebrate sustainable fishing, help secure seafood supplies for this and future generations, and to ensuring our oceans remain teeming with life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rupert Howes". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Rupert Howes, Chief Executive  
Marine Stewardship Council**



19.3%

of wild marine catch engaged with the MSC

2,362

improvements made by MSC certified fisheries up to 31 March 2024

37.7%

of stocks monitored by FAO were fished at biologically unsustainable levels<sup>1</sup>

77%

of landings by weight coming from stocks considered by the FAO to be sustainably fished<sup>2</sup>

1. When weighted by production level. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024 (UN FAO)

2. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024 (UN FAO)

# A year of achievements



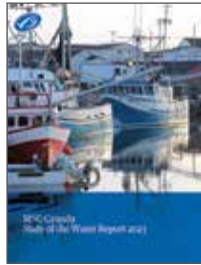
## Spain

Tuna fishing association AGAC achieved a milestone with MSC certification for its skipjack tuna in all four ocean regions (Atlantic, Eastern Pacific, Indian and Western Central Pacific) - a total certified catch of skipjack of over 210,000 tonnes.



Our ambition is to achieve certification for 100% of our capture in the next few years, working collaboratively through RFMOs with all the countries and interested parties in the fishing world.

**Julio Morón, General Manager of AGAC**



## Canada

Our first State of the Water report for Canada analysed the 152 improvements made by MSC certified fisheries in Canada over the last 15 years and the positive

impact of these improvements on fish stocks and the marine environment.

## Papua New Guinea

The PNG Torres Strait tropical rock lobster fishery became the first artisanal fishery in the country to achieve MSC certification in October 2023. Local fishers from Daru Island use traditional methods, diving to harvest the lobsters by hand.



## Jamaica

The Pedro Bank queen conch industrial dive fishery achieved a double first: the first fishery in Jamaica and the first conch fishery in the world to achieve MSC certification. The conch fishery, which currently exports most of its catch to Europe, is one of Jamaica's most valuable fisheries and the fishery hopes that MSC certification will help its efforts to expand to new markets

## China

McDonald's China introduced MSC labelled seafood across all its 5,000 restaurants, with Filet-o-Fish sandwiches, Double Fish burgers and Kids Fish Fillet burgers now carrying the blue MSC ecolabel. It follows similar commitments in Europe, North America and Japan.



## USA

Seafood and sushi restaurant Ahi & Vegetable and premium seafood counter Pier 38 Fish Market became the first sites in Hawaii, USA, to achieve MSC Chain of Custody certification, less than a year after the island's first fishery became certified.



### Australia

Manni Kalisperis, who helped lead John West to become the first brand in Australia to use the MSC ecolabel on its canned tuna, received the 2023 MSC Australia Lifetime Achievement Award. John West offers over 90 products with the MSC ecolabel in Oceania.

“

I have been privileged to work alongside a team of like-minded professionals over the years to improve the John West brand’s sustainability credentials. Hopefully, recognition like this award will instill the same passion in the next generation of seafood professionals.

**Manni Kalisperis,**  
winner of the MSC Australia Lifetime Achievement Award

”

## In focus: 10 years in Poland

The MSC celebrated 10 years in Poland with a special event attended by over 120 representatives from the seafood industry. At the event, we honoured our most dedicated partners with our first ever MSC Awards for Poland & Central Europe, with winners announced by MSC Chief Executive, Rupert Howes. A special 10th anniversary Grand Prix award was given to FRoSTA, which in 2014 became the first company in Poland to introduce MSC certification on 100% of its seafood products.



“

We care about the future of our oceans, so MSC is a natural choice. We were proud to be the first company in Poland to introduce the MSC ecolabel on all our products, and we are honoured to receive this award.

**Anna Mongird, Brand Manager Central and Eastern Europe, FRoSTA**

”

# Progress on the water

MSC continues to enjoy strong market momentum, with a growing number of fisheries engaged in the program.

## Number of fisheries engaged in the MSC program

2023-24  
716

2022-23  
674

19.3% of all wild marine catch was engaged with the MSC\*

MSC certified  
16.5%

In assessment  
1.5%

MSC certified but suspended  
1.3%

## MSC engaged catch by weight:

2023-24

15,480,000  
tonnes



2022-23

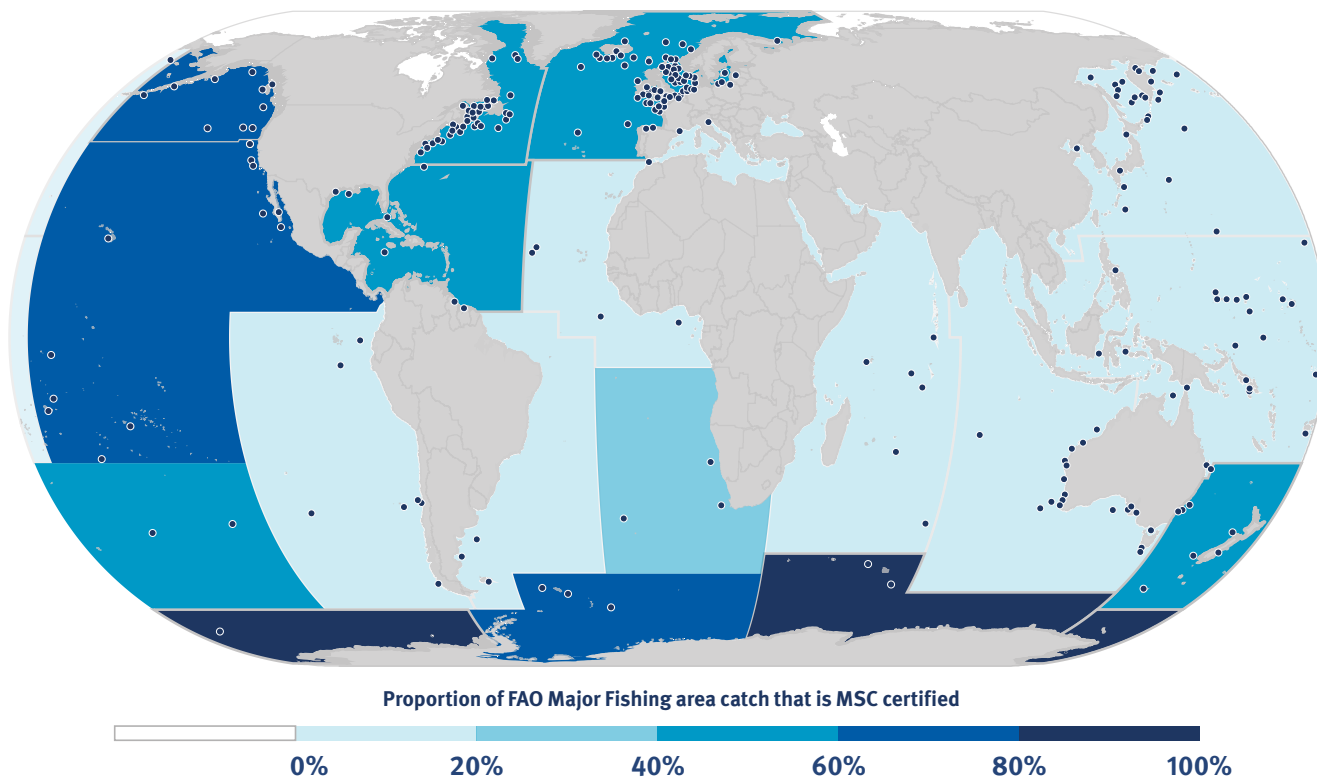
15,020,000  
tonnes



\*MSC certified, in assessment, suspended, and in-transition to MSC marine catch and fishery data as of 31 March 2024, compared with total marine catch for UN FAO Major Fishing Areas in 2022.



## Where MSC certified fisheries operate



● Approximate location of MSC certified fishing activity



**63**  
countries  
engaged

**572**  
fisheries are certified

**85**  
are in assessment

**34**  
fisheries are suspended

**25**  
are in-transition to MSC

# A stable market

Sales of MSC labelled seafood have remained steady this year, suggesting that despite ongoing cost-of-living pressures, retailers, brands and consumers are demanding sustainable seafood.

Seafood consumption has been hit by higher prices. But MSC labelled products have maintained their share of the market, despite the difficult economic conditions. Indeed, in some areas, we have seen continued rapid growth in sales of MSC labelled seafood in the USA, France and Italy as well as Poland and Central Europe, and the UK market is growing strongly. In Asia, sales grew by an impressive 35% in South Korea and 20% in China.



**1.7%**  
growth in the volume  
of MSC labelled  
products sold

**7.7%**  
growth in retail  
value in 2023/24

## The impact of losing certification

MSC labelled herring sales, especially in Germany and Scandinavia, have been impacted by the suspension of the Atlanto-Scandian herring fishery. The fishery is no longer certified due to countries catching more than the agreed science-based quotas. But seafood companies have shown their continued commitment to MSC certification by launching new products using herring from other certified sources in the North Sea and in Iceland. Similarly, while North East Atlantic mackerel fisheries were suspended, 32 MSC labelled mackerel products are now on the market using Chilean jack mackerel.



Tinned Chilean mackerel at the processing factory © MSC Ernie Enkelaar

## MSC labelled products available to consumers

2013/14

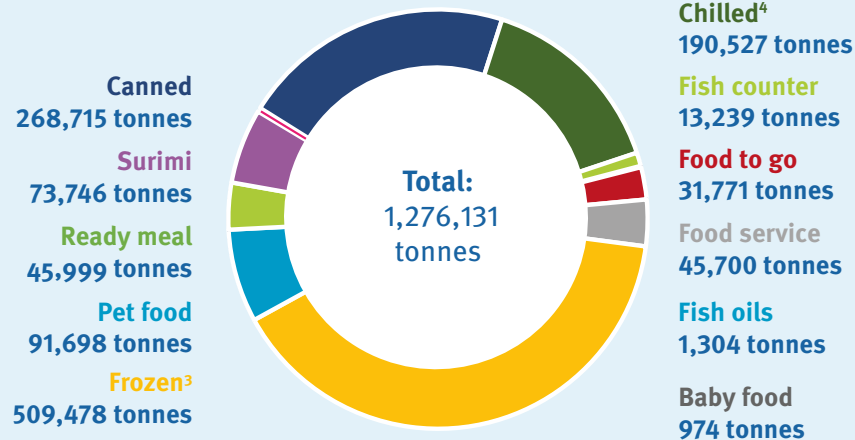
2023/24

**8,583**  
MSC labelled products

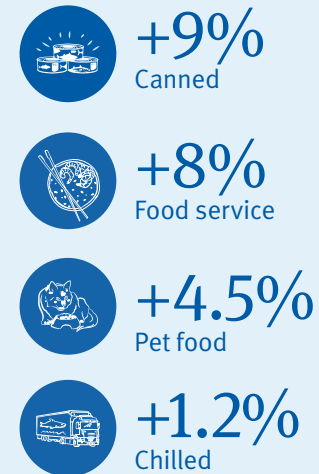
**20,910**  
MSC labelled products

**US \$13.4 billion**  
retail sales value

## MSC labelled product sales by product type 2023/24



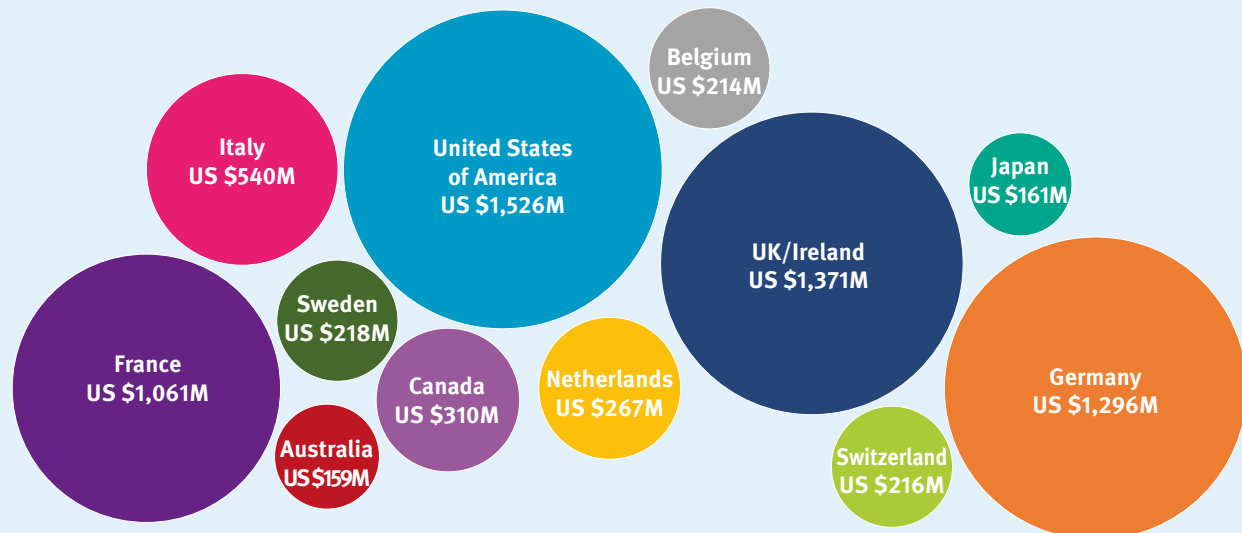
## Largest increases %



3. Frozen combines the categories of frozen plain and frozen prep.

4. Chilled combines the categories of chilled plain and chilled prep.

## MSC labelled wholesale by country 2023/24



There is a further USD \$ 1,976,516,158 from other countries around the globe.

# Delivering impact

Many fisheries will make significant improvements in their fishing practices before they enter full assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard. But some fisheries need to make specific improvements in order to stay in the program. These can range from modifying gear to improving their knowledge of possible impacts on marine habitats.

**417** improvements over the last three years



**146** improvements

benefitting endangered, threatened and protected species, and reducing bycatch



**118** improvements

benefitting stock status and harvest strategies



**74** improvements

benefitting fishery management, governance and policy



**79** improvements

benefitting ecosystems and habitats

## Ocean Stewardship Fund (OSF)

The Ocean Stewardship Fund was established by the MSC in 2018, to help fisheries on their pathway to sustainability and to maintain sustainable fishing practices. The OSF funds research, and projects which support these objectives. We commit 5% of annual royalties from MSC labelled product sales to the fund and hope to grow by securing third party funding.

### Monitoring post-release survival of sandpaper skates to support bycatch reduction and mitigation measures:

Colette Appert, a PhD student studying skate bycatch survival rates in the Heard Island and McDonald Island toothfish and icefish fishery, received a grant to support collaboration and knowledge sharing with skate bycatch experts in Paris.

Over 90% of sandpaper skates caught on longlines in the fishery are released back into the sea alive, however it is unknown how many survive the capture and release process. Colette, who is based at the University of Tasmania, is carrying out research to help answer this question. This includes studying skates' blood for signs of capture-related stress, and tagging and tracking them via satellite to gather data on how many survive and for how long.



Colette Appert tagging Skates © Colette Appert

**US \$1.67 million**

awarded in 2023-24 across 40 grants

**US \$6.43 million**

since inception in 2018

**40%**

to fisheries in developing economies

## In-Transition to MSC (ITM)

Fisheries in our In-Transition to MSC pilot program are committed to entering MSC full assessment within a five-year timeframe, with their progress independently verified to demonstrate the improvements made. This year we provided financial support to a record number of these fisheries through our Transition Assistance Fund (part of the Ocean Stewardship Fund) and seven new fisheries joined this year bringing the total to 24. The In-Transition to MSC pilot will end in 2024 and the program will be relaunched under a new name and format.



### From ITM to assessment

In December 2023, a South African pole and-line albacore tuna fishery became the first to enter full assessment following participation in the In-Transition to MSC program. The fishery was initially part of the four-year Fish for Good project, funded by the Dutch Postcode Lottery. ICV Africa, made significant improvements in order to meet the requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard. This included appointing an on-board observer team and crew training to ensure any endangered, threatened or protected species with which the fishery interacts – particularly seabirds – are handled safely to reduce harm.

Albacore Pole and Line Tuna - South Africa © MSC

## Pathway Projects

Each of the 11 Pathway Projects brings together partners and fisheries from a particular region (sometimes involving multiple countries) to collectively improve sustainability practices. One area of focus is the Mediterranean Sea, a biodiversity hotspot which faces significant challenges with fishing pressure at twice the level considered sustainable.

Project MedPath has engaged 34 fisheries, seven scientific institutions, local governments and NGOs. 14 countries are now involved in Pathways projects: Australia, UK, Senegal, Mauritania, Gambia, India, Italy, Spain, France, Greece, Portugal, South Africa, Tonga and Palau.



Deep-water rose shrimp fishery - BluFish project in the Med © Christian Mantuano

# Raising awareness

We're working with partners to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of sustainable fishing and building demand for MSC certified seafood.

## Seafood Futures Forum

At Seafood Expo Global, the world's largest seafood trade fair, we hosted an event on the role of sustainable wild seafood in the food systems of the future. Our keynote speaker was Professor Manuel Barange, Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture for the FAO, who outlined the FAO's aquatic food 'Blue Transformation' strategy.



Seafood Futures Forum 2023 © MSC

## World Ocean Day

For World Ocean Day in June we ran events in 26 countries. More partners than ever before took part and the campaign resulted in nearly 1,300 media stories worldwide. Amongst the 203 partners participating was the Saint-Malo Fishing Company which posted about its commitments to sustainable fishing on social media, and Nomad Foods which organised a staff webinar about sustainable seafood with around 300 staff attending. New collaborations were launched with Ripley's Aquarium of Canada in Toronto and more than 100 schools in Spain took part through the local Teachers for Future program.

**26 countries**  
ran World Ocean Day events in June

**1,300**  
media stories worldwide



Campaign poster for World Ocean Day 2023 © MSC



## Think Fish Weeks

### 1 Consumer awareness in the USA

In-store campaigns helped raise consumer awareness of MSC certified seafood across the United States. Along the Pacific coast of California, Oregon and Washington, we promoted MSC certified seafood in 250 Kroger stores, including Fred Meyer, QFC, Food4Less and Ralphs. In Philadelphia and New York City metro areas, we ran a similar promotion in 176 Stop & Shop stores.

### 2 Sustainable Seafood September, UK

In the UK Sustainable Seafood Week grew to cover an entire month of media stories, advertisements and other sustainable seafood content. More than one in 10 seafood consumers in the UK saw the campaign and 72% said it made them more likely to buy MSC labelled fish and seafood.

### 3 Check Your Fish, Germany, Austria & Switzerland

For our Check Your Fish fortnight, we worked with 38 partners across Germany, Austria and Switzerland to promote sustainable seafood choices, reaching more consumers than ever before. Highlights included in-person events in Berlin and Zurich, a pro bono outdoor advertising campaign reaching 47 million people and a campaign video shown in 680 McDonald's restaurants.

### 4 Sustainable Seafood in France

In France, we promoted our annual MSC-ASC sustainable seafood campaign with 132 advertisements on the Paris Métro and a roundtable discussion at the Aquarium de Paris. 58 MSC certified partners got involved with marketing and social media activities, generating 8.6 million views of our campaign video.

### 5 Super Seafood, Australia

Super Seafood week, in partnership with the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), highlighted how Australians can make healthy, affordable and sustainable seafood choices. The week launched with simultaneous live TV segments on The Morning Show and Today Show Extra featuring leading influencers Dr Jo McMillan and Leah Itsines.

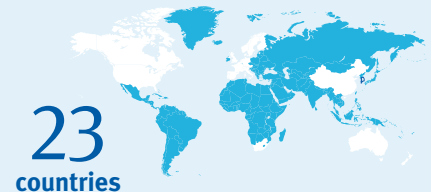
# Tracking consumer attitudes

The MSC 2024 seafood consumer survey allows us and our partners to understand the latest consumer attitudes to ocean health, seafood consumption and ecolabels. The 2024 survey has polled over 27,000 consumers (of which over 20,000 are seafood consumers) across 23 countries.

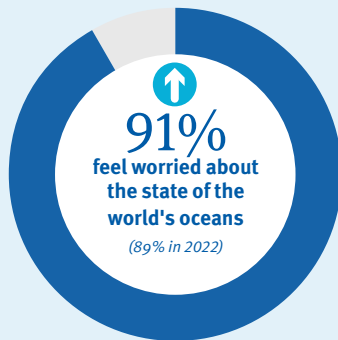
The MSC and GlobeScan partnered to conduct the largest global survey of seafood consumers.



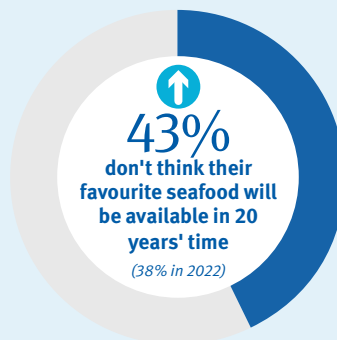
20,308  
seafood consumers



23  
countries



Perceptions of ocean health 'agree'



Perceptions of fish availability  
'describes opinion well'

48% of consumers listed overfishing as one of the top three most concerning threats to the ocean

The results show that consumers are more concerned than ever about the health of the ocean, less optimistic about its future and are increasingly concerned about overfishing. Almost half are worried their favourite seafood won't be available in 20 years.

And whilst the cost of living crisis has increasingly focused consumers on price, **both health and sustainability are still high on consumers list of motivations when purchasing seafood.** Consumers are re-appraising their dietary choices, with significant numbers reducing their red meat consumption and moving to healthier protein or vegetables. As well as cost and health reasons, consumers consistently state that environmental reasons are driving changes to their diets.



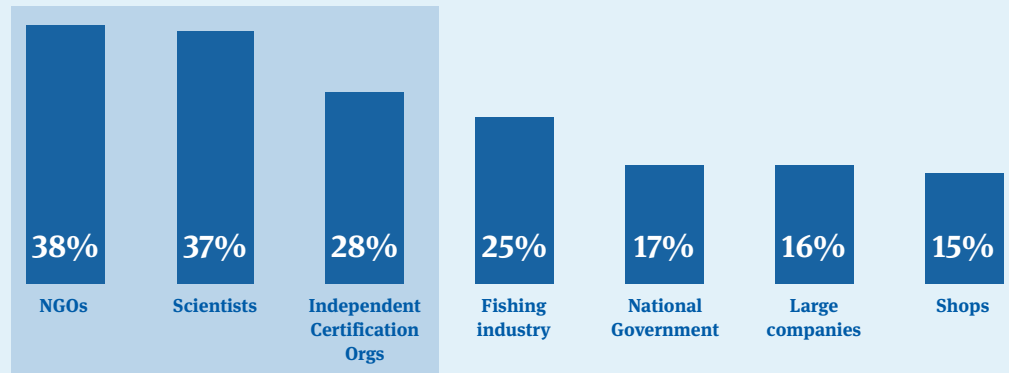
4 in 10  
consumers are making  
dietary changes for  
environmental reasons<sup>5</sup>

5. The 4 in 10 consumers making dietary changes for environmental reasons are part of a group of 22,000 consumers who said they had made a dietary change in the last two years.



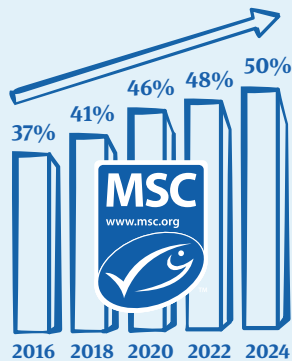
## How well do consumers think the following groups are contributing to protection of the ocean.

**Ecolabels continue to be used by consumers to help navigate seafood purchases.** Seafood consumers trust independent certification organisations (as well as scientists and NGOs) the most to help protect the ocean – and shops, large companies and governments the least.



## MSC and the role of certification.

**50%<sup>6</sup> of all consumers now recognise the MSC ecolabel**



**Global recognition of the MSC ecolabel continues to increase across the countries surveyed.** Trust remains high, with 74% of consumers trusting the claims of the MSC ecolabel when they see it. Most importantly, 58% of seafood consumers say that seeing the MSC ecolabel would make them more likely to purchase that product.

**58%**  
say seeing the  
MSC ecolabel would  
make them more likely to  
purchase a product

**40%**  
of seafood consumers  
understand the MSC  
ecolabel (unprompted)

**3 in 4**  
seafood consumers trust  
the MSC ecolabel - higher  
than most other  
ecolabels tested

“

Consumers are weighing up many considerations when buying seafood, including planet, price and health – and the MSC ecolabel is as important as ever in helping them navigate the choices they make.

**Ishbel Matheson, Chief Communications Officer, Marine Stewardship Council**

”



# Species focus

Fisheries engaged in the MSC program target 203 different species. Some species, like pollock and skipjack tuna, support huge fisheries with over a million tonnes harvested every year, providing livelihoods for thousands of people and sustainable healthy protein for millions of others. Other species might be caught by only a handful of fishers in a single location, but are just as critical to people's livelihoods.

On the following pages, we focus on priority commercial species groups where MSC certification plays an important role in bringing sustainable seafood to consumers around the world.



**203**  
certified species

**75%**  
of the commercial whitefish  
catch is MSC engaged

**53%**  
of the commercial tuna  
catch is MSC engaged

**91%**  
of the commercial salmon  
catch is MSC engaged<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Annual salmon catches can fluctuate significantly, so this figure may vary from year to year.

## Whitefish

Every day, millions of seafood consumers around the world eat whitefish products displaying the MSC ecolabel. Whitefish fisheries are amongst the most longstanding certified fisheries, many have been engaged with the MSC program for more than two decades. These pollock, cod, hake, haddock and other significant whitefish fisheries have created the basis upon which the global market for sustainably sourced seafood has been built. The collective impact of the commitment that the harvesters and producers have made to sustainable fishing cannot be understated. In the last three years alone, certified whitefish fisheries have made 136 improvements to the way they fish, benefitting ecosystems and habitats, endangered, threatened and protected species and reducing bycatch.

The result of all this is that a total of 6,303,000 tonnes of whitefish now comes from the 187 certified fisheries. We are proud to partner with some of the best managed whitefish fisheries in the world.



59  
media stories

### The perfect sandwich

MSC teamed up with UK frozen food brand Birds Eye and retailer Iceland to find the recipe for the perfect fishfinger sandwich. More than 2,000 consumers were asked and the results revealed that the ultimate version of this much-loved classic must contain: four breaded fishfingers, a dollop of ketchup, lettuce, and classic white sliced bread spread with real butter. Three quarters of those surveyed also wanted their fishfingers to be sustainably caught. The survey generated 59 media stories in the UK, helping to remind consumers to look for the blue MSC ecolabel when they shop.





# +35%

increase in the total volume of certified catch

“

Being sustainable is a decision. You can decide to do it, or you can decide not to do it... but to do it is the only way.

Kepa Echevarria, CEO, Echebatar

”

## Tuna

This year saw another big increase in MSC certified tuna, with the total volume of certified catch increasing by 35%. Eight tuna fisheries were certified for the first time, including the Kyowa-Meiho Japan skipjack and yellowfin purse seine fishery, which became Japan's 20th certified fishery. We also saw progress in fishery management in the Western Central Pacific Ocean, where the regional fisheries management organisation adopted harvest strategies for skipjack.

### “The Decision: A Tuna Fishery's Quest for Sustainability”:

Our short documentary, released in November 2023, told the story of how Spanish family company, Echebatar, became the first large-scale tuna fishery which uses fish aggregating devices (FADs) to achieve MSC certification.

In 2024 the film came to the attention of film festival jurors and audiences around the world. It was voted FINALIST in the Smiley Charity Film Awards (UK), SEMI FINALIST in the Hungry Minds Film Festival (Italy), FINALIST in the Geographical Better World Video Awards (UK), and was selected for a SPECIAL SCREENING and panel discussion at the Korean International Ocean Film Festival (KIOFF).



Salmon Purse seine fishing boat © Media Bakery Stock Library

## Salmon

With the iconic Alaska salmon fishery currently undergoing its fourth reassessment, the USA continues to be the leading market for MSC certified wild-caught salmon fisheries, landings, volume and market uptake of MSC labelled salmon products.

Costco added the MSC ecolabel to its own-brand frozen sockeye salmon fillets, which in 2022-23 accounted for nearly 5% of MSC labelled salmon sold in the USA by value. Other partners leading the growth of MSC certified salmon sales in the USA over the last year include Aldi, Whole Foods Market, and Thai Union.



### USA volume triples

The volume of salmon sold with the MSC ecolabel in the USA has tripled over the last five years.



Sockeye salmon fillets © Anthony J Rayburn/MSC

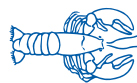


Normandy and Jersey lobster fishery © Frédéric Briois

## Lobster

The Normandy and Jersey lobster fishery, which has been MSC certified since 2011, was recertified again in November 2023. This cross-border fishery is made up of around 190 small fishing boats, which catch 215 tonnes of lobster each year using pots.

In Western Australia, nearly 400 schoolchildren participated in a competition to design new artwork for a special lobster transport truck with the Geraldton Fishermen's Co-operative's Brolos lobster brand to celebrate the local industry and 'the clean, blue ocean we love'. The Western rock lobster fishery was the first in the world to be MSC certified in 2000 and we were proud to support the student's creativity with ocean-themed materials from our Saltwater Schools education program, demonstrating our commitment to ocean literacy and the local industry.



**40% of the total global wild lobster catch** now comes from fisheries engaged with the MSC.

## Small Pelagics

We continued our efforts to break the deadlock around overexploitation of Atlantic mackerel, blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring in the North-East Atlantic. These fisheries – which are among Europe's largest in terms of biomass – had their MSC certification suspended in 2019 and 2020 because individual country quotas added up to more than the agreed science-based Total Allowable Catch (TAC).

In June 2023, the MSC convened a stakeholder-led symposium bringing together experts from science, industry, and others to examine options for quota allocation solutions for these internationally shared fisheries. The findings of the symposium were published in an independent report commissioned by the MSC. Given quota share solutions in line with science are contingent on political agreement, it is critical that stakeholders continue to apply pressure to the relevant governments to secure lasting stock-sharing solutions for Europe's largest ocean biomass, critical to secure the future health of this nutrient rich protein.

School of small pelagic fish © Andrea Izzotti / Alamy Stock Photo



“

Sustainability defines our industry in unique ways. We are grateful to be recognised for our dedication to sustainability with the MSC certification.

Timothy Hawkes, Great Salt Lake Brine Shrimp Cooperative

”

## Prawn, shrimp and crab

In May 2023, the brine shrimp fishery in Utah’s Great Salt Lake became the first inland fishery in the USA to achieve MSC certification. Brine shrimp, which live in hypersaline environments, are an important part of the lake’s ecosystem and a food source for millions of migratory birds.

In Argentina, the coastal red shrimp fishery based out of the port of Chubut, entered full assessment this year, after being in an improvement program since 2014. Argentine red shrimp exports have grown rapidly in recent years and it’s now one of the world’s most highly traded wild shrimp species, with a total catch of over 200,000 tonnes in 2023.



The Louisiana blue crab fishery was recertified for a second time in March 2024. The fishery supports around 3,000 fishers in the Gulf of Mexico who catch crabs in baited traps.

## Bivalves and seaweed



Japan’s Hokkaido scallop fisheries – which produce the world’s largest wild scallop harvest – achieved recertification for a second time. It’s the first time any fishery in Japan has achieved this milestone.

Seaweed from Sinan Dadohae – a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of 1,004 islands off the west coast of South Korea – is the first to carry both the MSC and ASC ecolabels. Eco-conscious food brand Pulmuone Food Co sells certified laver products grown by Sinan Bada corporation and certified under our joint standard. Sinan Bada’s seaweed is eligible for both labels as it’s cultivated at sea using seed from wild stocks.

“

Laver is extremely important to the local economy, with indigenous production methods passed down the generations. This agreement aims to preserve that heritage.

Mark Seo, MSC Program Director,  
South Korea

”

## Octopus and squid

California market squid achieved MSC certification for the first time in July 2023, with two certificates covering the operations of different companies in waters off the coast of California.

The fisheries use lights to attract squid to the surface at night, a technique that minimises bycatch and other impacts on the marine ecosystem. The certifications reflect a growing demand for certified squid, which is now also being exported to Europe.

“

We are proud that US fisheries are leading the way on sustainable squid with the world's only MSC certified squid fisheries. The first was certified in 2018 on the East Coast, and the California fishing industry is now more than doubling the volume of certified squid on the market.

**Nicole Condon, MSC Program Director, USA**

”



California Market Squid fishery © Kort Havens / MSC



## Octopus improvements

The red and common octopus fishery in Yucatán, Mexico was awarded an Ocean Stewardship Fund grant to strengthen governance and research impacts on crab species used as bait and the effect on the wider ecosystem. The fishery, one of the largest producers of octopus globally, is making improvements to its performance through the In-Transition to MSC program and aims to enter assessment in 2025.

In the Mediterranean, octopus harvesters, fisheries managers and scientists in the Mediterranean and the Iberian Peninsula are testing a new user-friendly app to help conduct stock assessments with support from our MedPath Project.

Octopus fishery on the ITM program in Merida © MSC and Arturo López

## Species focus in numbers

	Tonnes MSC engaged catch*	MSC engaged fisheries^	% of global wild catch from MSC engaged fisheries	Improvements over the last three years...					Volume of MSC labelled sales (tonnes)
				...by certified fisheries	...to ecosystems and habitats	...to endangered, threatened and protected species and bycatch	...to stock status and harvest strategy	...to fishery management, governance and policy	
 <b>Whitefish</b>	6,244,244	203	74.7	136	47	73	10	6	553,646
 <b>Tuna</b>	2,799,497	192	53.3 <sup>8</sup>	59	12	20	2	25	235,805
 <b>Salmon</b>	629,443	45	91.4	57	2	5	42	8	63,930
 <b>Small pelagics</b>	4,031,166	45	15.3	54	7	9	24	14	79,494
 <b>Lobster</b>	119,033	18	40.5	12	0	10	2	0	3,120


\*Engaged means certified, in assessment, in-transition to MSC, or suspended

^ There are a further 65 MSC engaged fisheries that target species that fall outside of these species groups landing 154,600 tonnes

8. 53.3% of tuna from major commercial stocks

9. 39 engaged seaweed farms



	Tonnes MSC engaged catch*	MSC engaged fisheries^	% of global wild catch from MSC engaged fisheries	Improvements over the last three years...					Volume of MSC labelled sales (tonnes)
				...by certified fisheries	...to ecosystems and habitats	...to endangered, threatened and protected species and bycatch	...to stock status and harvest strategy	...to fishery management, governance and policy	
 <b>Prawn &amp; shrimp</b>	497,498	51	16.3	20	8	5	4	3	41,803
 <b>Crab</b>	140,481	40	8.4	12	1	2	5	4	1,680
 <b>Bivalves</b>	748,104	48	36.3	24	0	11	8	5	44,835
 <b>Seaweed</b>	N/A	39 <sup>9</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	15,754
 <b>Octopus</b>	4,124	4	1.1	2	0	0	1	1	172
 <b>Squid</b>	108,317	5	3.4	0	0	0	0	0	2,119

# Our finances 2023-24

## Report by the Trustees on the summarised financial statements

The summarised financial information is extracted from the full statutory trustees' annual report and financial statements which were approved by the trustees on 30 July 2024.

An unqualified audit report was issued in relation to the full statutory trustees' annual report and financial statements by our auditors Crowe U.K. LLP on 7 August 2024.

The auditors have confirmed to the trustees that, in their opinion, the summarised financial information is consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Signed, on behalf of the Trustees:



**Giles Bolton**  
Chair, MSC Board of Trustees  
7 August 2024

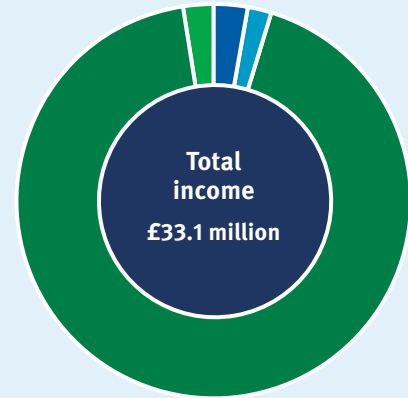
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**£45.3 million**  
**Total funds at 31 March 2024**

Compared with total funds of £42.2 million on 31 March 2023

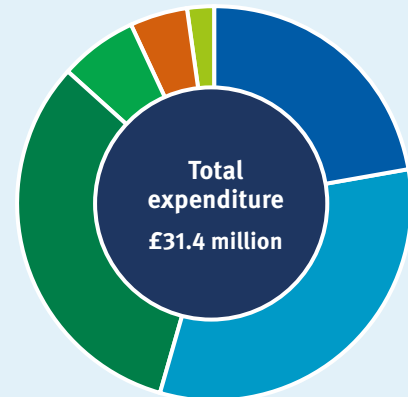
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Other gains and losses in the year not shown under income or expenditure amounted to a gain of £1.4 million



### Where the money comes from

- **2.8%** Donations and legacies
- **2.1%** Other trading activities
- **92.8%** Income from charitable activities (logo licensing)
- **2.3%** Income from investments



### Where the money goes to

- **22.5%** Policy and maintenance of the Standard
- **32.2%** Education and awareness
- **32.2%** Commercial and fisheries servicing and outreach
- **6.4%** Logo licensing
- **4.5%** Ocean Stewardship Fund\*
- **2.2%** Expenditure on raising funds

\*This represents 5% of our royalty income

# Our funding and donors

We would like to thank the many donors, including trusts, foundations and statutory bodies, that have enabled our work to deliver progress in sustainable fishing and made an impact for the ocean. We have received generous core funding from the Dutch Postcode Lottery and are grateful for the years of support it has provided, in particular to our work with fisheries in developing economies. We would also like to thank the Walton Family Foundation for its significant contributions towards various projects; the Adessium Foundation for supporting our work in the Mediterranean; the A.G. Leventis Foundation for work in Greece; and the Remmer Foundation for a grant to work with fisheries in Kenya. We are grateful for financial support from the Global Environment Facility that enables work on strengthening the management of tuna fisheries in the Pacific Ocean under the Common Oceans Tuna Project led by the FAO.

We would like to thank the Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust for supporting MSC UK and Ireland and our ongoing and future work with Project UK. We are also very grateful to the UK retail sector and members of the supply chain for their dedicated and ongoing financial support of Project UK. Finally, we would also like to thank the Triad Foundation and Holzer Family Foundation for their generous contributions.

In addition to the valuable support given to MSC's projects, we continue to receive significant ongoing support from funders towards our Ocean Stewardship Fund. This includes generous grants from the MAVA Fondation Pour la Nature to help fisheries in the Mediterranean and West Africa; from the Walton Family Foundation to establish a loan guarantee facility, enabling fisheries working towards sustainable management practices to access additional financing; and from the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation. We would also like to thank Carrefour Italy and Delicieux for their generous support towards upcoming research projects in 2024-25.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their support:

## **US Foundations**

Walton Family Foundation  
Remmer Family Foundation  
Triad Foundation  
Holzer Family Foundation  
David and Lucile Packard Foundation

## **UK Trusts and Foundations**

A.G. Leventis Foundation  
The Fishmongers' Company's Charitable Trust

## **European Foundations**

Adessium Foundation (Netherlands)  
Dutch Postcode Lottery  
MAVA Fondation Pour la Nature (Switzerland)  
Hans Wilsdorf Foundation (Switzerland)

## **Statutory bodies**

Global Environment Facility via the FAO

## **Corporate**

Project UK (various)  
Project BluFish Italy (various)



The Marine Stewardship Council is an extraordinary organisation. In the absence of much global governance of our oceans, it has played a central role in bringing together conservationists, scientists and responsible seafood businesses to build a common vision of how sustainable fisheries need to operate, and enabled this to be evidenced and monitored. And despite its remarkable success over the years in growing the number of sustainably certified fisheries, the latest data on global fish stocks shows that it is needed more than ever.

After five years as Member of MSC's Board of Trustees, it is a privilege to have been elected as Chair. MSC has a newly diverse and experienced Board, a highly committed management team, and leading expert consultative bodies in the Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Advisory Council. Most important of all, it has a large number of partner businesses, environmentalists and supportive consumers who care passionately about sustainable fishing. Together, the job they do is difficult: finding the right path and requirements to deliver healthier oceans, which can then be sustainably fished by responsible businesses. Sometimes this is hard to get exactly right, as has happened with elements of our revised Fisheries Standard Version 3.0. But the commitment of the Board and team at MSC is that we will ensure that the needed changes are made so that we can build on the MSC's years of success and grow the global share of sustainably fished stocks into the future.

I'd like to say a personal thank you to my predecessor as Chair, Dr Werner Kiene, who stepped down earlier this year. Werner provided calm and thoughtful leadership of MSC's Board for more than a decade and was very generous in providing insight and advice to me during our handover. I am looking forward to building on the efforts of Werner and so many others to ensure that the MSC continues to play a leading role in securing the vitality of our oceans in the years ahead.

**Mr Giles Bolton**  
**MSC Board of Trustees Chair**

# Governance 2023-24

## The MSC Board of Trustees

The MSC Board of Trustees is the MSC's governing body. With advice from the Executive Committee, Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Advisory Council, it sets the strategic direction of the MSC, monitors progress and ensures the MSC meets its objectives.

**Mr Giles Bolton, Chair**

**Ms Mikel Durham**

**Mr Kristjan Th. Davidsson**

**Ms Maria Damanaki**

**Dr Darian McBain**

**Mr Eddy Njoroge**

**Dr Kevin Stokes**

**Dr Sergio Espejo Yaksic**

Thank you to departing members:

**Dr Werner Kiene**  
(former Chair)

**Mr David Lock**

**Mr Paul Uys**

## Marine Stewardship Council International Board

The Marine Stewardship Council International (MSCI) Board provides oversight of the MSC's ecolabel licensing and fee structure.

**Ms Mikel Durham**  
MSCI Chair

**Mr Giles Bolton**  
MSC Board of Trustees Chair

**Mr Rupert Howes**  
MSC Chief Executive

**Mr Fernando Lago**

**Ms Valentina Tripp**

Thank you to departing members:

**Dr Werner Kiene**  
(former MSC Board Chair)

**Mr Paul Uys**  
(former MSCI Board Chair)

## The Technical Advisory Board



The Technical Advisory Board works in close collaboration with the MSC Executive Committee to provide advice to the MSC Board of Trustees on technical and scientific matters relating to the MSC

Standards and associated policies, including developing methodologies for certification and accreditation, as well as related scientific and technical research.

**Dr Rebecca Lent** (USA) Chair

**Dr Florian Baumann** (Germany)

**Dr Tim Essington** (USA)

**Mr José Augusto Pinto de Abreu** (Brazil)

**Dr Victor Restrepo** (USA)

**Dr Keith Sainsbury** (Australia)

**Ms Michèle Stark** (Switzerland)

**Mr Adam Swan** (UK)

**Dr Christopher Zimmermann** (Germany)

**Ms Jacqui Dixon** (South Africa) (Co-opted Member)

**Mr Wisdom Akpalu** (Ghana) (Co-opted Member)

**Ms Adriana Fabra** (Spain) (Co-opted Member)

Welcome to new Members:

**Mr Héctor Martín Fernández Álvarez** (Spain)  
(Co-opted Member)

**Ms Celeste Leroux** (USA) (Co-opted Member)

**Mr Rasmus Hedeholm**  
(Denmark) (Co-opted Member)

Membership is correct as of 31 March 2024

# The MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council



The MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council works in close collaboration with the MSC Executive Committee to provide

advice to the MSC Board of Trustees on strategic, policy or operational issues, including input into the MSC's formal Standard review processes. It includes representatives from the seafood industry, conservation community, market sector and academia. Its membership reflects diverse expertise, experiences, geographies and interests in relation to the work of the MSC. The Stakeholder Advisory Council is also a formal channel through which all stakeholders, whether members of the Stakeholder Advisory Council or not, can provide their views to the MSC.

## **Ms Heather Brayford**

Chair, Government of Western Australia, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Australia

## **Mr Damien Bell**

BellBuoy Seafoods Australia

## **Mr Christian Haller**

CR-Manager, ALDI Nord, Germany

## **Mr Marcelo Hidalgo**

Fishery Consultant, PNG Fishing Industry Association, Netherlands

## **Mr Tor Larsen**

Norwegian Fishermen's Association, Norway

## **Dr Ghislaine Llewellyn**

WWF International, Australia

## **Dr María José Espinosa Romero**

Comunidad y Biodiversidad A.C (COBI), Mexico

## **Dr Bryce Stewart**

Senior Research Fellow, Marine Biological Association and Associate Professor, University of Plymouth, UK

## **Ms Mod Talawat**

UN Office for Project Services, Programme Management Specialist (National Coordinator), Thailand

Welcome to new members:

## **Ms Bernadette Butfield**

Senior Marine Policy Officer, UK Marine team, RSPB, UK

## **Ms Susan Jackson**

President, International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF) and International Seafood Sustainability Trade Association (ISSA), USA

## **Mr Madoda Khumalo**

Strategic Services Director, Sea Harvest Corporation (Pty) Ltd, South Africa

## **Ms Sofie Smedegaard Mathiesen**

Biologist, Danish Fishermen's Producer Organization (DFPO), Denmark

## **Dr Tom Pickerell**

Director, Ocean Program – World Resources International, UK

Thank you to departing members:

## **Dr Johann Augustyn**

## **Mr Rory Crawford**

## **Ms Yumie Kawashima**

## **Ms Carmen Revenga**



## MSC Global Headquarters and Regional Office

### Europe, Middle East and Africa

Marine House  
1 Snow Hill  
London EC1A 2DH  
United Kingdom

info@msc.org  
Tel + 44 (0) 20 7246 8900  
Fax + 44 (0) 20 8106 0516

Registered Charity number: 1066806  
Registered Company number: 3322023

### MSC Regional Office Americas

2445 M Street NW  
Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20037  
USA

americasinfo@msc.org

Non profit status: 501 (C) (3)  
Employer Identification number:  
91-2018427

### MSC Regional Office Asia Pacific

6/202 Nicholson Parade  
Cronulla  
New South Wales 2230  
Australia

apinfo@msc.org  
Tel +61 (0)2 9527 6883

Non profit status: Registered with ACNC  
Registered Company number:  
ABN 69 517 984 605,  
ACN: 102 397 839

## Our MSC offices

**Brussels** Belgium and Luxembourg

**Beijing and Qingdao**

Mainland China and Hong Kong

**Berlin** Germany, Switzerland and Austria

**Bogor** Indonesia

**Busan** South Korea

**Cape Town** Southern Africa

**Copenhagen** Denmark

**Helsinki** Finland and Baltic states

**The Hague** Netherlands

**Lima** Peru

**Madrid** Spain

**Milan** Italy

**Oslo** Norway

**Paris** France

**Reykjavik** Iceland, Faroe Islands and Greenland

**Santiago** Chile

**Seattle** USA

**Singapore**

**Stockholm** Sweden

**Tokyo** Japan

**Toronto** Canada

**Warsaw** Poland and Central Europe

## The MSC also has a presence in

**Kerala** India

**Lisbon** Portugal

**Mexico City** Mexico

**Moscow** Russia



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All data in this report is correct as of  
31 March 2024, unless otherwise stated.

The reporting year is 1 April 2023 to  
31 March 2024.



Scan the QR code to read the full digital  
version of the MSC Annual Report 2023-24,  
including supplementary information.

## Find out more

[msc.org/annualreport](https://www.msc.org/annualreport)  
[info@msc.org](mailto:info@msc.org)



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