In-Transition to MSC (ITM) Program - Pilot

Marine Stewardship Council

# [Fishery name]

# Fishery Improvement Action Plan

*Introduction to the MSC Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Reporting Template*

*This template details the information required from ITM Project Managers when creating an MSC Fishery Improvement Action Plan. The template is designed to be used by any fisheries engaged in a credible FIP, but in particular fisheries in the In-Transition to MSC (ITM) Program.*

*Many fisheries are making the improvements necessary to move towards sustainability with the goal of achieving MSC Certification. These efforts, often termed Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), use different approaches to identify actions that need to be taken to improve the fishery. One of the most common ways of documenting and reporting the progress that is being made over time against such actions is by developing ‘Work Plans’ or ‘Improvement Action Plans’. Most FIPs involve multiple stakeholders and therefore a consistent method of documenting actions and progress is vital to ensure that the Improvement Action Plan (IAP) delivers a level of performance consistent with meeting the MSC Fisheries Standard. The IAP should capture and report all necessary information in a practical way that is easily understood by all those involved or interested in the FIP.*

*The* ***purpose of this template*** *is to ensure quality and consistency in developing IAPs for fisheries working towards meeting the MSC Fisheries Standard and achieving MSC Certification.*

*The IAP should be developed after the fishery has undergone an MSC Pre-Assessment using the relevant version of the MSC Pre-Assessment Reporting Template, or by a fishery with any MSC Full Assessment Report completed within the last three years, including: Announcement Comment Draft Report (ACDR); Client and Peer Review Draft Report (CPRDR); Public Comment Draft Report (PCDR); Final Draft Report (FDR); Public Certification Report (PCR) and Surveillance Reports.*

*The purpose of the IAP is to detail a series of activities which, when implemented, should improve the score of the fishery against the requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard to the point where it meets certification requirements. To this end, the IAP should include actions which will raise the Scoring Range of any Performance Indicators which did not achieve ≥80 in the Pre-Assessment or Full Assessment Report.*

MSC accepts that some fisheries may have formed Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) and started implementing improvement actions before entering the ITM program. You may include these actions if they do not precede the ITM entry date by more than 12 months and as long as it is clearly indicated when the ITM period starts and which actions have already been completed.

*The IAP helps provide information for completing MSC’s Benchmarking and Tracking Tool (BMT) and ITM Progress Reports.*

*The IAP will be verified by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) prior to entering the ITM Program and at Progress Verifications during the life of the ITM period.*

*Please rename the document so that the file name includes the fishery name and any other relevant information e.g. Fishery Name\_Improvement Action Plan\_Date\_Version Number.*

*Please complete all unshaded fields where information is available. For all instructions, notes and guidance indicated in italics, please delete and replace with your specific information where relevant. E.g. this ‘Introduction’ section.*

*For any queries relating to this template or its use please visit msc.org or contact us at:* [*fisheries@msc.org*](mailto:fisheries@msc.org)

## Improvement Action Plan overview

**Table 1a. Improvement Action Plan Overview**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fishery name (or Unit/s of Assessment): |  | Fishery location: |  |
| Fishing gear type(s): |  | Fishery in ITM program? (Applicant/Yes/No): |  |
| Start date (expected): | | End date (anticipated month/year of entering MSC Full Assessment (or in the case of a suspended MSC certificate, start the reinstatement process)): | |
|  | |  | |
| **Project leaders** (organisation/individual responsible for Action Plan)**:** | | **Action plan and improvements recommended by** (stakeholder groups, organisations, or meetings that supported the development)**:** | |
|  | |  | |
| FIP Coordinator/ ITM Project Manager (name, affiliation, and position if applicable): | | Action Plan developed by (entity, consultant, or person): | |
|  | |  | |
| Date when this Action Plan was created: | | Date/s of updated versions of this Action Plan: | |
|  | |  | |
| Summary of the Action Plan (Provide an overview of the action plan. If the action plan has been updated, highlight key changes here.)  (Add/delete Principles as appropriate and include action IDs): | | | |
| Principle 1  Principle 2  Principle 3  Traceability *optional)* | | | |
| Stakeholder inputs into the Action Plan (Optional. If the action plan has been updated, include here stakeholder updates if relevant). | | | |
| *Stakeholder description – stakeholder input – year* | | | |
| References *(document/s on which the Action Plan was based):* | | | |
| Pre-Assessment Report / Full Assessment Report *(delete/amend as necessary).*  BMT  *Document 1*  *Document 2* | | | |

### 1b. Improvement Action Plan Overview by Performance Indicator

*Please delete Performance Indicators (PIs) that do not have any improvement actions associated with them. Please ensure each action has a unique ID, though note that one action could link to multiple PIs. In this case, please ensure that any action that spans multiple PIs has the same ID.*

*This template has two versions of Table 1b below: one for MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 PIs and one for MSC Fisheries Standard 2.01 PIs. Please use the appropriate table and delete the one that is not applicable.*

**Table 1b. Improvement Action Plan Overview by Performance Indicator- – MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 (delete if not applicable)**

| Performance Indicator (PI) | Action ID and Name | Timescale |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1.1.1 Stock status | A1 - Name  A2 - Name  A3 - Name | 1 year  6 months  1 year |
| 1.1.2 Stock rebuilding |  |  |
| 1.2.1 Harvest Strategy |  |  |
| 1.2.2 Harvest control rules and tools |  |  |
| 1.2.3 / 1.2.3R *(delete as appropriate)* Information and monitoring  *1.2.3R is if Risk Based Framework (RBF) used to score this PI.* |  |  |
| 1.2.4 Assessment of stock status |  |  |
| 2.1.1 In-scope species outcome status |  |  |
| 2.1.2 In-scope species management strategy |  |  |
| 2.1.3 / 2.1.3R *(delete as appropriate)* In-scope species information  *2.1.3R is if Risk Based Framework (RBF) used to score this PI.* |  |  |
| 2.2.1 ETP/OOS species outcome status |  |  |
| 2.2.2 ETP/OOS species management strategy |  |  |
| 2.2.3 / 2.2.3R *(delete as appropriate)* ETP/OOS species information  *2.2.3R is if Risk Based Framework (RBF) used to score this PI.* |  |  |
| 2.3.1 Habitats outcome status |  |  |
| 2.3.2 Habitats management strategy |  |  |
| 2.3.3 / 2.3.3R *(delete as appropriate)* Habitats information  *2.3.3R is if Risk Based Framework (RBF) used to score this PI.* |  |  |
| 2.4.1 Ecosystem outcome status |  |  |
| 2.4.2 Ecosystem management strategy |  |  |
| 2.4.3 Ecosystem information |  |  |
| 3.1.1 Legal and/or customary framework |  |  |
| 3.1.2 Consultation, roles & responsibilities |  |  |
| 3.1.3 Long-term objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.1 Fishery-specific objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.2 Decision-making processes |  |  |
| 3.2.3 Compliance & enforcement |  |  |
| 3.2.4 Monitoring and management performance evaluation |  |  |

**Table 1b. Improvement Action Plan Overview by Performance Indicator – MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01 (delete if not applicable)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Performance Indicator** | **Action ID and Name** | **Timescale** |
| 1.1.1 – Stock status | A1 - Name  A2 - Name  A3 - Name | 1 year  6 months  1 year |
| 1.1.2 – Stock rebuilding |  |  |
| 1.2.1 – Harvest Strategy |  |  |
| 1.2.2 – Harvest control rules and tools |  |  |
| 1.2.3 – Information and monitoring |  |  |
| 1.2.4 – Assessment of stock status |  |  |
| 2.1.1 – Primary Outcome |  |  |
| 2.1.2 – Primary Management |  |  |
| 2.1.3 – Primary Information |  |  |
| 2.2.1 – Secondary Outcome |  |  |
| 2.2.2 – Secondary Management |  |  |
| 2.2.3 – Secondary Information |  |  |
| 2.3.1 – ETP Outcome |  |  |
| 2.3.2 – ETP Management |  |  |
| 2.3.3 – ETP Information |  |  |
| 2.4.1 – Habitats Outcome |  |  |
| 2.4.2 – Habitats Management |  |  |
| 2.4.3 – Habitats Information |  |  |
| 2.5.1 – Ecosystems Outcome |  |  |
| 2.5.2 – Ecosystems Management |  |  |
| 2.5.3 – Ecosystems Information |  |  |
| 3.1.1 – Legal and customary framework |  |  |
| 3.1.2 – Consultation, roles and responsibilities |  |  |
| 3.1.3 – Long term objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.1 – Fishery specific objectives |  |  |
| 3.2.2 – Decision making processes |  |  |
| 3.2.3 – Compliance and enforcement |  |  |
| 3.2.4 – Management performance evaluation |  |  |

## Actions at Performance Indicator and/or Scoring Issue level

*Complete a separate copy of Table 2 for each Action.*

**Table 2. Performance Indicator Action Plan table for Action XX (Replace with Action ID no.)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Action ID no | [Insert action ID no. e.g. A1] | | | | | |
| Action name | [Insert action name] | | | | | |
| Action summary | [This should be a summary of the overall goal of achieving this Action and the Tasks that are listed below] | | | | | |
| Performance Indicator(s) and/or Scoring Issue(s) | [Insert relevant PI and SI number(s) and text that action is aiming to improve e.g., PI 1.1.1(a) Stock status relative to recruitment | | | | | |
| Date of completion | [Insert date that the final task that makes up an action will be completed] | | | | | |
| Task No. | Responsible – Action lead | Responsible – Action partners | Resources – Cost | Resources - Time | Date of completion | Evidence of completion |
| [Insert a list of tasks that need to be undertaken to complete an action in order of priority. Add more rows as necessary]  e.g.  A1-1 | [Insert stakeholder(s) that are responsible for undertaking the specific task] |  | [Insert resources that are required to complete task, including total budget and items with cost breakdown and currency. This may be budget or resources in terms of people days – see next column] | [Time: XX days of staff time where applicable] | [Insert the date that the task will be completed] | [Insert the means of evidence or metrics used to determine whether or not task has been completed] |
| A1-2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| A1-3  Etc. |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## Action Timescales Summary

**Table 3. Action Timescales Summary**

| Action ID and Name | Date of completion expected | Revised date of completion  *(only to be completed if a revised IAP is produced and action completion dates change)* | Justification for revised date of completion  *(only to be completed if date of completion has been revised. If exceptional circumstances apply, please note these here)* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

## Progress Verification Schedule

*This table should be completed to summarise the anticipated verification schedule. An ITM fishery must undergo regular progress verification. Verification dates should be based on the date of completion of actions and should occur regularly such that the duration between consecutive Progress Verification reports being uploaded to the MSC database by the CAB is no longer than 2 years.*

*For each progress verification, please provide a list of the Actions which are planned to be completed by that date and a list of the Performance Indicators which are projected to have improved Scoring Ranges as a result of the completed Actions. Some progress verifications may not involve any change in score and in these cases this column should be left blank.*

*It is recommended that for fisheries with an IAP longer than 2 years, at least one onsite verification should be conducted around the midway mark of the full ITM period. This table should propose whether an onsite or offsite progress verification is needed and the CAB will make the final decision on which type of verification is most appropriate.*

**Table 4. Progress Verification Schedule**

| Progress verification | Expected year and quarter  *(e.g. YYYY, Q1)* | Onsite or offsite? | Completed Actions to be verified  (*List action IDs)* | Performance Indicators with improved Scoring Range |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |

## Performance Indicator Score Changes (Benchmarking and Tracking Tool)

*Please provide a reference or hyperlink to the completed Benchmarking and Tracking Tool (BMT) for the fishery.*

*Alternatively, you can copy the tables from the BMT into here.*

## Stakeholder Action Plans

*This section is* ***Optional.*** *The Improvement Action Plan report could include an individual action plan for each stakeholder that is responsible for delivery of actions. The report may also include signed agreements from the stakeholders that have been assigned a responsibility for a particular action.*

*Complete a separate stakeholder responsibilities table for each stakeholder group.*

**Table 5. Stakeholder responsibilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Stakeholder | [Insert stakeholder name and contact information here] |
| Actions for which responsible | [Insert the Action IDs for which the stakeholder is responsible] |
| Tasks | [Insert tasks for which the stakeholder is responsible] |
| Date of completion | [Insert date that the tasks should be completed by] |

### Appendix. Stakeholder Agreement or Commitment to Undertake Improvement Actions

*Include any supporting documents such as signed agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in support of commitments made*

## Traceability Improvement Actions

*The use of the Traceability Improvements Action section is* ***optional****.*

*Use Table 6 to describe the fishery traceability system and UoA product movement. Use Table 7 to detail traceability risk factors and the risk mitigation and management. Both sections can be taken from the Pre-Assessment report or Full Assessment/Surveillance report and updated here as necessary.*

*During full assessment of a fishery, it is required to consider the tracking, tracing, and segregation systems within the fishery and how these systems will allow any products sold as MSC certified to be traced back to the individual Unit of Certification (UoC) once the fishery is certified. This includes a description of the factors that may lead to risks of non-certified seafood being mixed with certified seafood prior to entering Chain of Custody as set out in the MSC Fisheries Process (FCP 2.3 7.5.9, FCP 3.0 7.5.10).*

*Although there is no UoC defined during a Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP), it might still be useful to consider the presence of potential traceability risks within the Unit of Assessment (UoA) with other catches handled by the UoA, and what implications it might have for those fishers that are interested in becoming certified.*

*For each risk factor, it should be determined whether / to what degree the risk factor is relevant for the fishery and, if so, provide a description of the relevant actions that could be taken to mitigate the risks identified. Some risk factors may link to actions identified against specific parts of the Fisheries Standard (e.g., P3 – Effective Management).*

**Table 6.Traceability within the fishery**

|  |
| --- |
| Description on the ability of the fishery to track and trace to each Unit of Assessment |
| *What process/ systems are in place to allow the fishery to track and trace any ITM fish or fish products caught back to the individual UoA.* |
| Describe the movement of fish and fish product between **harvest** and **landing**  *An illustration of movement of product between harvest and landing. Include when any of the following happen: Harvesting, At-Sea processing, Translocation, Transhipment, Offloading, Landing.* |
| *Provide this information through a flow diagram. An example is provided below:*  *Fishing vessel → Transhipment → Offloader → Landing* |
| Movement of fish and fish products between **landing** and **the first sale/ change of product legal ownership** if relevant.  *An illustration of movement of product between landing and first sale. Include when any of the following is happening: Transport, Storage, Sorting/ Grading, Processing, Packing, Auction.* |
| *Provide this information through a flow diagram. An example is provided below:*  *Landing → Transport → Storage → Sale by client group company* |
| For the critical tracking events (i.e. where in the product flow product traceability data needs to be transferred) of all fish and fish product handling and sale, describe:   * Process of segregating to each Unit of Assessment * Key data elements (i.e. the data or documents to identify the UoA such as species, catch area, gear) |
| *Detail for all stages covered by the fishery UoA. Include images where this helps to show segregation.* |
| Other relevant information on the systems to track and trace to each UoA |
| *For example: Relevant monitoring, oversight or regulatory controls which assure the traceability to each individual UoA; references to regulation, observer coverage, that can support these systems.* |
| **Improvement action to mitigate traceability gap** *Based on the above review, please describe what actions can be implemented to mitigate or address any identified traceability gaps. Please detail the responsible parties, resource requirements, and improvement action timelines.* |
|  |

**Table 7. Traceability risks and improvements within the fishery**

| **Factor** | **Description of the traceability risk factors and details of the risk mitigation and management**  *Include in each description:*   * *Whether each factor occurs* * *When it occurs and how frequently (e.g. regularly, seasonally, rarely)* * *How any potential traceability risks are mitigated and any risk management* * *If covered by information provided elsewhere in the pre-assessment report, cross reference as needed.* | **Improvement actions to mitigate the risk**  *Please describe what actions can be implemented to mitigate or address this potential traceability risk, including responsible parties, resource requirements, and timelines.*  *If this is covered by relevant regulatory frameworks, you may link to the relevant Principle, Component or Performance Indicator in MSC Fisheries Standard.* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Will the fishery use gears that are not part of the UoA?  If Yes, include in the description:   * If this may occur on the same trip, on the same vessels, or during the same season; * How any risks are mitigated. |  |  |
| Will vessels in the UoA also fish outside the UoA geographic area?  If Yes, include in the description:   * If this may occur on the same trip; * How any risks are mitigated. |  |  |
| Does the fishery (client group members) ever handle ITM (non-certified) with certified and/ or other non-certified products during any of the activities covered by the UoA?  This refers to both at-sea activities and on-land activities and should reflect those listed in product movement in the Pre-Assessment/Assessment. It includes:   * Translocation * Transhipment * Transport * Storage * Processing * Sorting/ grading * Packing * Landing * Auction   If yes please describe how any risks are mitigated. |  |  |
| Does transhipment occur within the fishery?  If Yes, please describe:   * If transhipment takes place at-sea, in port, or both; * If the transhipment vessel may handle product from outside the UoA;   How any risks are mitigated. |  |  |
| Are there any other risks of mixing or substitution between the UoA and other certified and/or non-certified product?  If yes, please describe how any risks are mitigated. |  |  |
| Are there any other risks of mixing between different UoAs?  Please describe how any risks are mitigated. |  |  |

## Template information and copyright

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*Please delete the table below.*

**Table 8. Template Version Control**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date of publication | Document name | Description of amendment |
| 1.0 | 07/10/2009 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-template.xlsx | * N/A – new document |
| 1.0 | 2013 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-overview-template.docx | * N/A – new document |
| 1.0 | 22/11/2013 | Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * N/A – new document |
| 2.0 | 30/09/2019 | ITM Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * Combination of v1.0 overview and reporting templates in single document, specifically for ITM |
| 2.1 | 23/07/2020 | MSC Fisheries Improvement Action Plan Template.docx | * Template updated to be applicable to all FIPs not just ITM. * Contact email changed from [standards@msc.org](mailto:standards@msc.org) to [fisheries@msc.org](mailto:globalaccessibilty@msc.org) * BMT hyperlink updated. * Introduction and Overview updated * Version tracker added. * Added additional scheme document table. |
| 2.2 | 25/02/2021 | msc-fishery-improvement-action-plan-template-v2.2-2021.docx | * Some edits to Introduction and modified guidance below. * Added fields for Date of Action Plan creation and updates. * Moved version tracker and scheme document table to end of document. * Edit to note in Table 2 relating to PI 1.1.1(a) * Added example draft scoring ranges with coloured fill to tables 4a, b, c. * Other minor edits to stakeholder action plan section * Added Traceability action plan section. |
| 3.0 | 01/05/23 | MSC Fishery Improvement Action Plan Reporting Template v3.0.docx | * Updated to align with MSC ITM Program Requirements and Guidance – Pilot v2.0 and Fisheries Certification Process 2.3/3.0. Performance indicators for MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 added. |