



Fisheries Standard Review
Ensuring ecosystem performance indicators are clear
and consistently applied

Impact Assessment Report

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The views and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Marine Stewardship Council. This is a working paper, it represents work in progress and is part of ongoing policy development. The language used in draft scoring requirements is intended to be illustrative only, and may undergo considerable refinement in later stages.

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1. Impact Assessment Report - Overview

1.1. Impact Assessment Framework

The aim of impact assessment is to provide clear information on the impacts of the options developed to sort out the policy issues identified in the project inception. It serves as a basis for comparing options against one another and against the business-as-usual scenario, and identify a preferred option if possible. It does not replace decision-making but is used as a tool to support the decision-making process and underpin evidenced based decision-making; increasing transparency, making trade-offs visible and reducing bias.

Impact assessment should help to:

- Specify how proposed options will tackle the identified issues and meet objectives
- Identify direct and indirect impacts, and how they occur
- Assess impacts in both qualitative and quantitative terms.
- Help find perverse or unintended consequences before they occur.
- Where possible, make risks and uncertainties known.

This is achieved by following MSC's Impact Assessment Framework that outlines when and how to undertake Impact Assessment. This ensures an efficient, systematic and consistent approach to policy development to underpin a responsive, robust and credible program. In particular, the Impact Assessment Framework defines the different types of impact (see below) and a suite of methodologies best suited to assessing each type.

The impact types used in the Impact Assessment are defined as follows:

1. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the change is deemed likely to be successful in producing the desired results and resolving the issue(s) originally identified.
2. **Acceptability:** The extent that the change is considered tolerable or allowable, such that the MSC program is perceived as credible and legitimate by stakeholders.
3. **Feasibility:** The practicality of a proposed change and the extent to which a change is likely to be successfully implemented by fisheries within a given setting and time period.
4. **Accessibility & Retention:** The extent to which the change affects the ability of fisheries (both currently certified and those potentially entering assessment in the future) to achieve and maintain certification (i.e. changes in scores, conditions and pass rates).
5. **Simplification:** The extent to which the change simplifies and does not further complicate the Standard such that it can be easily and consistently understood and applied.
6. **Auditability:** The extent to which the change can objectively be assessed by Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) and Accreditation Services International (ASI) to determine whether the specified requirements are fulfilled, and CABs can provide scores.

The Impact Assessment report presents the results of this process, whereby each of the options for proposed changes to the Fisheries Standard are tested to understand their potential effects across the six defined impact types.

1.2. Problem statement

The intent of the Fisheries Standard ecosystem component is to ensure that a Unit of Assessment (UoA) does not cause serious or irreversible harm to the key elements of ecosystem structure and function. To achieve this, the component evaluates evidence related to the ecosystem status, the management in place and the level of knowledge available on the impacts of the UoA on the ecosystem. Although, this component may use scores from other components of Principle 2 (impact on primary and secondary species, endangered, threatened or protected (ETP) species, or habitats) to evaluate the UoA impact; it is expected that the assessment focuses on ecosystem impacts that may not have been addressed or monitored previously. Such impacts can occur on trophic structure, community diversity/distribution, and/or the natural productivity of the ecosystem.

However, there are concerns from the MSC team, assessors, and stakeholders that the component is outdated, redundant, and that it may have been applied inconsistently across fisheries. In response, the Ecosystem component became part of Fisheries Standard Review, with the objective to ensure the component reflects best practice performance for outcome, information and management, and investigate options for possible refinement¹. The review focussed on two questions: (1) Do the ecosystem component requirements reflect science and management best practice? And (2) is there ambiguity and redundancy in the ecosystem requirements?

In December 2019, TAB decided to move this project from the ‘Evolution’ to the ‘Effectiveness’ FSR workstream. This decision resulted in a change of scope of the project. The review will focus on the application of the current ecosystem requirements (2), and no longer on whether our intent reflects best practice for outcome, information and management (1).

2. Objectives

Strengthen the ecosystem requirements to improve consistent and efficient application of the ecosystem Performance Indicators (PIs), by

1. clarifying how to define the ecosystem of assessment and choice of key elements; and
2. clarifying the required information and information adequacy – depending on preferred option of evidence requirements work;

Following objectives are covered by the FSR Risk-Based Framework project, but are strongly dependant or linked to the ecosystem requirements and therefore this project.

- a. Ensure that the triggering requirements for using the RBF are auditable – covered by RBF work package 3.
 - i. Clarify what are the information gaps that trigger the use of SICA when assessing PI2.5.1.
- b. Clarify what defines stakeholder engagement in the SICA and the wider RBF methodologies – covered by RBF work package 4

3. Options

3.1. Initial Impact Assessment

The following options were considered in the initial Impact Assessment.

Option #	Option title	Description	
0	Status quo / business as usual		
1	No change in the Ecosystem PIs	A: Tightening the fishery team qualification and competency criteria	A: Tighten Table PC3 – 3.a in the FCP and no change in the actual ecosystem requirements in the Fisheries Standard
		B: Develop additional training materials and/or calibration workshops	B: Develop for assessors who score the ecosystem requirements to promote consistent scoring among assessors
2	Change in the Ecosystem PIs: clarify existing language and definitions	Clarification is given for the definitions on ‘ecosystem’ and ‘key (ecosystem) elements’. Changes include that key elements on which the UoA has an impact should be identified and scored separately.	
3	Remove Ecosystem PIs from the Fisheries Standard	Removal of PI2.5.1, 2.5.2 and 2.5.3, meaning impacts of the UoA on the key elements of the ecosystem structure and function will not be considered in the Fisheries Standard.	

4. Summary of impacts

4.1. Impacts of the business-as-usual scenario

Some of the requirement language in the ecosystem Performance Indicators (PIs) 2.5.1, 2.5.2, and 2.5.3 is not very clear and has been the subject of inconsistent application. A review of fisheries assessment reports showed a wide range of detail when scoring the ecosystem PIs. The work highlighted that definitions for ‘ecosystem’ and ‘key (ecosystem) elements’ have been applied inconsistently between assessment reports. Confusion also exists around how an ecosystem and its structure and function is defined, including how the underlying key elements are to be considered within an assessment.

The business as usual will result in assessment being assessed inconsistently. Assessment teams apply the ecosystem requirements differently, pick and choosing what aspects of the ecosystem to assess which potentially means that fisheries get different treatment.

4.2. Impacts of the proposed changes – Option 1

Current language and definitions in the ecosystem PIs are unclear and open for interpretation and therefore heavily rely on expert judgement. Additional training for assessors on how to score the ecosystem requirements could improve consistency in scoring and improve alignment with MSC intent. In addition, requiring more experienced assessors for scoring the ecosystem PIs, could result in more consistent scoring. Current assessor qualification and competency criteria (FCP v2.2 Table PC3 – 3.a), do not require assessment team members to have experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of ecosystem interactions.

Option specifics

- This option would not include any changes to the existing language of the ecosystem requirements for PI2.5.1, 2.5.2, or 2.5.3 and therefore not give any clarification on the definitions.
- This option would include creating additional training on how to score the ecosystem PIs.
- This option would include a change in assessor qualification and competency criteria to require at least one assessor with experience in ecosystem interaction.

Considerations

While no improvements would be made to the current language or definitions and therefore remains open for different interpretation by assessment teams, more consistent application of the ecosystem PIs and therefore scoring of fishery assessments would be expected.

If the assessor qualification and competency criteria are refined in line with the proposal CABs may struggle contracting assessors. For example, the Peer Review College has 36 reviewers (31% of total) with high level of experience on ecosystem interactions, based the competency criteria of Table PC3, and are able to lead the peer review for this topic (November 2020). If only a limited number of ecosystem experts exist, assessment costs could increase for fishery clients as there are no experts available in the region of this fishery.

4.3. Impacts of the proposed changes – Option 2

This option will clarify the definitions on 'ecosystem' and 'key (ecosystem) elements' with the aim of improving consistency and application of Ecosystem PIs. This option also includes a clarification of information PI (2.5.3). Revisions have been informed through review of application of PIs 2.5.1, 2.5.3, and 2.5.3 by a consultant in 2016.

Whilst the requirement language of the ecosystem PIs is not very clear and open to interpretation, the intent that ecosystem should be identified, and all key ecosystem elements should be identified and assessed separately is clear. However, review of scoring text of PI2.5.1 showed that assessment teams not always define what ecosystem or which key elements were considered. This option looks into clarifying this intent by changes in the ecosystems requirements, and corresponding changes to the reporting template to facilitate this clarification on scoring to improve consistency in how key ecosystems elements are scored and improve alignment with MSC intent

Option specifics

This option would include the clarification in the requirements and change in the reporting template specifying that key ecosystem elements are identified and scored separately in the context of PI 2.5.1 and PI 2.5.3.

Considerations

An exploratory review was done on the used definitions and language for 'Ecosystem' from a range of organisations, governments, and policies. The review showed that there is no global recognised ecosystem typology (e.g. Large Marine Ecosystems, ecoregions, or FAO region) and therefore no prescribed list of ecosystems can be given by the MSC. The Fisheries Standard should allow flexibility when defining the ecosystem so that fisheries can be assessed based on data and its spatial scale collected by their management agency or scientific research in their region. The ecosystem requirements should be broadly applicable and provide a consistent framework in which ecosystem structure and function is assessed on the appropriate scale.

MSC's definition of 'ecosystem' focusses on the ecological state of the key ecosystem elements on which the fishing activity has an indirect impact. MSC's intent of the ecosystem PIs, is that the UoA should not cause serious or irreversible harm to the key elements underlying the ecosystem structure and function.

5. Impacts

The impact assessment presented in Table 1 below is based on feedback from STAC and TAB, feedback provided by outreach co-readers, pilot testing, and ASI auditability review.

5.1. Overview of impacts

Table 1. Impact assessment reporting table

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: More experience assessors		Option 2: Clarify language & definition
			1A – tighten competence criteria	1B – additional training	
Effectiveness	<i>Is the change effective at meeting the MSC's intent?</i>	-Review showed wide variety of detail in justification in scoring ecosystem PIs. -Review showed fisheries consistently scoring high and a low number of raised conditions on PI2.5.X.	-Language and definitions remain open for interpretation, but ecosystem PIs would be scored by a smaller group of experienced assessors. This may improve consistent scoring and meeting MSC's intent.	-Language and definitions remain open for interpretation. +Additional training may improve consistent scoring and meeting MSC's intent. -Additional training on unclear requirements (therefore unclear MSC's intent) could seem not to be effective in resolving inconsistent scoring. However, this Option is considered to be effective when MSC's intent is clear (through e.g. clarifications).	+More prescriptive requirements aiming in more consistent scoring and less need of interpretation/ expert judgement.
	<i>The option seems effective at resolving the issue(s) consistently and reliably</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>
Acceptability	<i>Is the change acceptable to stakeholders?</i>	-MSC has made public statement on delivering changes to the ecosystem PIs as part of the FSR. + Common agreement among P2 assessors that there is no urgent fix needed as other areas are more pressing to be improved in the Standard.	-Stakeholders might feel this option will not resolve the issue. Expectation of a more significant change to the Standard. -CABs might have difficulties contracting the required personnel. +The intended effect of the option would be more consistent applied ecosystem requirements.	-Stakeholders might feel this option will not resolve the issue. Expectation of a more significant change to the Standard. -Assessor will need to follow additional training which is an extra burden on them. +No foreseen impact on fishery clients.	-Stakeholders might feel this option will not resolve the issue. Expectation of a more significant change to the Standard. +The intended effect of the option would be more consistent applied ecosystem requirements and appropriate scoring.
	<i>The option seems acceptable to stakeholders</i>	<i>2 = Disagree</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>	<i>3 = Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>
Feasibility	<i>Is the change feasible to fishery partners?</i>	+No risk. The status quo will not affect retention of fisheries in the program, accessibility is expected to remain high given the low number of set condition in current fisheries.	- Limited number of assessors with required ecosystem interactions experience could lead to increase of cost for the fishery client in future assessments. This could affect accessibility to the MSC program, risk is potentially bigger for fisheries in global South.	+No risk in terms of retention or accessibility is expected.	+Clarifying the language and definition would be technical feasible for fishery partners as it is not aimed to change the performance bar for fisheries. +No increase in cost is foreseen for fishery partners.
	<i>The option seems technically feasible for fishery partners</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>
	<i>The option seems affordable for fishery partners</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>1 = Completely disagree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>
	<i>The option seems possible given the management contexts of fishery partners</i>	<i>4 = Agree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>	<i>5 = Completely agree</i>

	Description	Option 0: Business as usual	Option 1: More experience assessors		Option 2: Clarify language & definition
			1A – tighten competence criteria	1B – additional training	
	<i>The option seems doable within 5 years for fishery partners</i>	5 = Completely agree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree	5 = Completely agree	5 = Completely agree
Accessibility & Retention	<i>Does the change affect the accessibility and retention of fisheries in the MSC Program?</i>	+No risk. The status quo will not affect retention of fisheries in the program, accessibility is expected to remain high given the low number of set condition in current fisheries.	-Limited number of assessors with required ecosystem interactions experience could lead to increase of cost for the fishery client in future assessments. This could affect accessibility to the MSC program, risk is potentially bigger for fisheries in global South.	+No risk in terms of retention or accessibility is expected.	+No risk in terms of retention or accessibility is expected. This option would clarify the intent on how to score the PIs and should not change the performance bar. -Some assessments scored ecosystem elements on which the fishery did not have an impact on, boosting the score. Impact is unknown at this stage, but is not expected to lead to major changes in final P2 score. More impact testing is needed. -Combining some of the information SIs to reduce confusion might lead to minor score changes. Impact is unknown at this stage, but is not expected to lead to major changes in final P2 score. More impact testing is needed.
	<i>The option seems accessible to fisheries seeking certification in the future</i>	5 = Completely agree	1 = Completely disagree	5 = Completely agree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree
	<i>The option seems accessible to currently certified fisheries</i>	5 = Completely agree	2 = Disagree	5 = Completely agree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree
Simplification	<i>Does the change simplify the Standard?</i>	-The status quo will result in ambiguous and redundant PIs within the Fisheries Standard.	-No changes to language or definitions in the Standard and therefore no simplification of the Standard.	-No changes to language or definitions in the Standard and therefore no simplification of the Standard.	+Clarification of the language and definitions may simplify the requirements by avoiding confusion.
	<i>The option seems to simplify the Standard</i>	1 = Completely disagree	1 = Completely disagree	1 = Completely disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree
Auditability	<i>Is the change auditable by CABs?</i>	-Used language and definitions are open for interpretation and therefore difficult to audit by CABs.	- No changes will be made to the language or definitions and therefore are still open for interpretation by CABs. +As the current language rely heavily on expert judgement, having a smaller group of experienced ecosystem assessors may lead to more consistent scoring and to an improved selection of scored key elements.	- No changes will be made to the language or definitions and therefore are still open for interpretation by CABs.	+Requirement language and used definitions are not yet finalised in this option, but it is not anticipated that the proposed revisions would create auditability issues.
	<i>The option seems to be auditable by CABs</i>	2 = Disagree	2 = Disagree	2 = Disagree	3 = Neither agree nor disagree

5.2. Pilot testing

5.2. Pilot testing

The Ecosystems project went through initial pilot testing in July 2021 as part of the larger Fisheries Standard pilot testing process. The main findings of the first round of testing were:

- “Identify and assess all relevant key ecosystem elements” may involve significant extra work
- No difference in scoring despite changes to the SAs (not aligned with the new intent for the ecosystem component)

Table 2 lists the feedback received during pilot testing and a response to why it was/was not incorporated into the Master Draft.

Table 2. Pilot testing feedback

PI/SI	CAB Notes/Feedback	Response
2.5.1.a	“Identify and assess all relevant key ecosystem elements” (SA 3.16.3) may involve significant extra work unless assess is based on published information and then perhaps “score against guildposts may be more appropriate.	Thank you for the comment. We have decided to keep this clause as this is a necessary step for CABs to sufficiently score this PI/SI. In addition, it is hoped that the lag time between release and effective date for use would allow for CABs and fisheries to sort out issues such as these.
2.5.1.a	The updated standard should reflect the need for addressing pollution from vessels – the assessment team should check how waste from vessels is dealt with; how old are the vessels – rustpots or latest technology – as this impacts air pollution; the update should also reflect the growing understanding of the importance of marine sediments as carbon sinks and how this is disturbed and the consequences, by dredging/ trawling. Fishing vessels impact the ecosystem in more ways than by fishing. That needs to be recognised and evaluated too.	Thank you for the comment. Unfortunately, this issue falls outside of the scope of the Ecosystems project. Therefore, the issue has been noted, but put on hold.
2.5.1.a	As noted in previous rounds of the FSR, the ecosystem component was assessed in line with the new intent for the Ecosystem component (so not a regurgitation of primary, secondary, etp and habitats, but a look at wider ecosystem processes affected by the fishery). There would be no difference in scoring here despite the changes to the SAs.	Thank you for the comment. The scope of this project has changed, and it was determined that the focus would be on developing additional training materials and/or calibration workshops for assessors and clarifying the definitions of “ecosystem” and “key (ecosystem) elements,” which we hope we’ve done with the proposed changes.

It also went through an auditability review simultaneously.

5.3. Consultations

The Ecosystems project has undergone several consultations.

Table 3. Ecosystems project consultancies

Dec. 2019	Consultancy report	<p>Overall recommendations:</p> <p>1st recommendation: Establishment of the MSC Ecosystems Evaluation General Framework (MSC EEGF) with selected Operational Objectives (MSC OO) and candidate indicators that encompass different levels of data needs, applicability, uncertainty, and resource intensity. The MSC EEGF and MSC OO should be common to all Ecosystems evaluations.</p> <p>2nd recommendation: Adapt the proposed general indicator’ framework in meaningful regional contexts taking into account the ecological, legal and management context of each region. It is advisable that this is perform with assistance or involvement of the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and other national and regional management and policy bodies. The candidate indicators can be then selected to fit the regional contexts.</p> <p>3rd recommendation: Test the selected indicators per region in specific and well-known case studies that allow MSC to learn from the process and improve the MSC EEGF application procedure and selection of indicators within the regional context. Specific case studies could be located in different regional seas and incorporate local expertise to evaluate the Ecosystems Component status.</p> <p>Fourth recommendation: Several ongoing initiatives seem to follow a similar philosophy and strategy to what is proposed in this study. This is for example the case of the Benchmarks for Ecosystem Assessment by Lenfest Ocean Program, the Integrated Ecosystem Assessments by NOAA (NOAA, 2019) or previous work developed under IndiSeas project and its follow ups. 11To</p>
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		develop the proposed MSS EEGF, MSCOO and apply the general indicator's framework in tandem with these initiatives seems a rational way to proceed.																								
April 2019	P2 workshop with auditors																									
April 2016	Consultancy report	<p>Discussion and Recommendations: Recommendations from this report fall under two themes.</p> <p><i>Theme 1: Develop the ecosystem PIs</i> The first theme is intended to provide suggestions for how to improve the consistency of scoring for the ecosystem PIs between assessment reports, and to help stakeholders determine that fisheries are scored appropriately.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 1)Assessment teams should be reminded of the requirement to identify the P2 scoring elements in Table 4.3 of the assessment report (Table 3 in the Full Assessment Reporting template v2.0). A check of compliance with this requirement could be part of the standard review process undertaken by MSC staff at the PCDR consultation stage. 2) 2)Guidance could be provided for PI 2.5.3 SIa SG60 (“Information is adequate to identify the key elements of the ecosystem” to the effect that assessment teams need to actually identify the key ecosystem elements in the scoring text in order to meet the SG60 requirement. 3) 3)There is almost no practical difference between the requirements of PI 2.5.3 SIb, SIc and SId, and two of these SIs could almost certainly be removed without limiting the range of information that assessment teams would be required or able to present in order to score. In addition, PI 2.5.3 SIc and SId focus on information on Components (i.e., target, retained, bycatch and ETP species, and habitats), which confuses the approach to scoring the ecosystem PIs. 4) 4)Productivity patterns (e.g., upwelling or spring bloom, etc) should not be considered key ecosystem elements in the context of a fisheries assessment, as there is no feasible way for a fishery to disrupt these major processes to a point where there would be serious or irreversible harm. As such, any assessment team that identifies a productivity pattern as a key ecosystem element is effectively guaranteeing their fishery a scoring boost. 5) 5)MSC guidance should be updated to include a definition of ‘ecosystem’, and the instructions in the reporting template should include a requirement to identify the ecosystem in which the fishery operates. 6) 6)A default list of potential ecosystem elements should be provided, with assessment teams required to indicate which ones were ‘key’ ecosystem elements for the fisheries under assessment. Fisheries could then score 80 if no ecosystem elements were considered to be ‘key’ or key ones were not impacted in any significant way, but all would need to be considered to meet the SG100 level. This would also encourage assessment teams to provide a more rounded picture of the ecosystem in which the fishery operates than is necessarily the case at present. <p>Theme 2: Remove the ecosystem PIs</p> <p>The second theme focuses on the more radical idea that because the ecosystem PIs are almost never scored below 80 (as shown below, only PI 2.5.3 was scored below 80, but then only on a single occasion for 15694 Cornish hake gillnet), they provide no added value to the assessment process. Essentially, the ecosystem PIs could be discarded from the assessment process, and there would be no apparent loss to the MSC in terms of rewarding good practice and encouraging improvement in fishery performance.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Scores <80 for 52 CRv1.3 fisheries</th> <th>Retained species</th> <th>Bycatch species</th> <th>ETP species</th> <th>Habitats</th> <th>Ecosystem</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Outcome</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Management</td> <td>7</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>5</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Information</td> <td>3</td> <td>11</td> <td>10</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>There would, however, be a considerable gain for assessment teams (and clients, presumably) in terms of reducing the time burden for producing assessment reports. As such, the single recommendation for the second theme is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Remove the ecosystem PIs from the assessment tree. 	Scores <80 for 52 CRv1.3 fisheries	Retained species	Bycatch species	ETP species	Habitats	Ecosystem	Outcome	5	2	6	9	0	Management	7	2	3	5	0	Information	3	11	10	5	1
Scores <80 for 52 CRv1.3 fisheries	Retained species	Bycatch species	ETP species	Habitats	Ecosystem																					
Outcome	5	2	6	9	0																					
Management	7	2	3	5	0																					
Information	3	11	10	5	1																					

	<p>Although, of course, there are no data presented here on whether some fisheries have failed assessments because of the ecosystem PIs being scored down, this outcome would seem unlikely, given that the ecosystem PIs are generally scored higher in the 52 fisheries considered here, and because assessment teams can use expert judgement in scoring the ecosystem PIs, rather than being dependent on the availability of data.</p> <p>In the case that the ecosystem PIs were removed from a future assessment tree, an additional SI could be included in the outcome PIs of the target, primary, secondary and ETP species, scored at SG100 only, to account for their ecosystem roles. This could be mirrored by minor changes to the management SIs. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example Outcome SI(SG100, only): “There is evidence that the UoA is highly unlikely to affect the ecosystem role of the secondary species to a point where there would be serious or irreversible harm.” • Example Management SI(SG100, only): “There is a strategy in place for the UoA for managing main and minor secondary species, including with respect to their role in the ecosystem.” <p>There would be no need to add to or change the information PIs, as they already include a requirement at SG100 that “Information is adequate to support a strategy”. However, a guidance note could be added to indicate that, at SG100, the strategy would need to account for the component’s role in the ecosystem.</p> <p>In the event that this approach was taken, there would also not be a particular need to include an ecosystem aspect to the existing habitat PIs, as the introduction through CR v.2.0 of the VME requirements already accounts for the ecosystem role of habitats to some extent.</p>
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6. Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion, Option 1B (additional training materials and/or calibration workshops) in combination with Option 2 (clarifying language and definitions) are the preferred options and taken forward in the project. This combination of preferred options was approved by the TAB Ecosystem WG in February 2021.