

MSC Self-Assessment Public System Report

MSC Public System Report - Standard

Scope

The MSC Fisheries Standard is open to wild capture fisheries globally, including both freshwater and marine fisheries. Exceptions include fisheries targeting amphibians, birds, reptiles and mammals, as well as fisheries using explosives or forced labour (See [FCRV2.0, Clause 7.4](#) for full details). Aquaculture systems are not within scope though some enhancement activities are permitted within the Standard. There are modifications of the Standard and associated certification requirements appropriate to specific fishery types, such as salmon, bivalve, and data-poor fisheries.

The MSC also has a Chain of Custody Standard to ensure traceability of seafood along supply chains.

Sustainability outcomes

Our vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations. Our mission is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

The key sustainability outcomes for the MSC Fisheries Standard are: to ensure target species are harvested from sustainable stocks; to minimise the environmental impact of fisheries; and, to ensure that fisheries have an effective management system to deliver these outcomes.

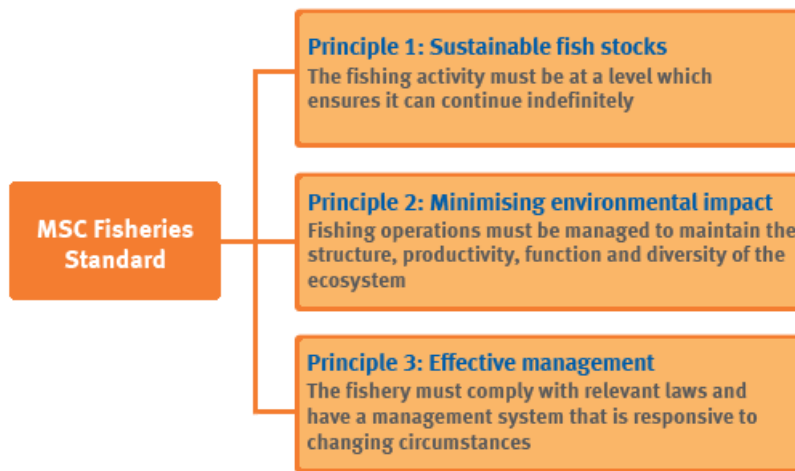
Why it is needed?

Healthy oceans are essential for thriving marine ecosystems, livelihoods and economies around the world. Today our oceans are under more pressure than ever from human and environmental impacts. At the Marine Stewardship Council, we believe that sustainable fishing is essential for healthy oceans. We want to see well-managed fisheries recognised and rewarded, and we want to encourage more fisheries to join them. Through our certification and ecolabelling program we seek to reverse the decline of fish stocks, safeguard livelihoods and deliver improvements in marine conservation worldwide.

- **Changing seas:** Scientists, governments, conservation groups and fishery managers are among those concerned about changes in some fishery resources.
- The **seafood economy** is an essential contributor to global trade, supporting businesses and livelihoods worldwide.
- **Fishing communities** need productive oceans for employment and economic security.
- **Fish as food:** Fish is a healthy, renewable food source, and for some it's essential for survival. As the world's population increases so does pressure on fishery resources.
- **Climate change** brings new uncertainties and global implications that compound the challenges of fishing and marine conservation.

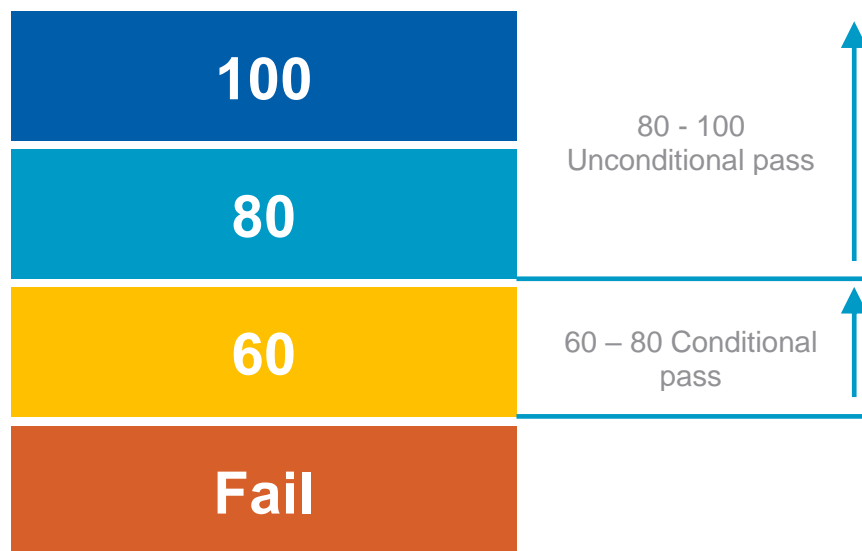
Performance level

To reach the MSC Fisheries Standard there are three core principles that every fishery must meet:



[Click to view our video: MSC Fisheries Standard explained](#)

To determine if each principle is met, the MSC Fisheries Standard uses 28 performance indicators. These are used by independent Conformity Assessment Bodies to score the fishery. Scores between 60 and 80 on individual performance indicators are considered conditional passes with improvement to an 80 score required within the timeframe of one certification cycle (up to five years). Fisheries must attain a score of at least 80 against each of the three principles to become certified. A score of 100 is possible for a 'near perfect' fishery.



Adaptations

The MSC Standard does not have regional adaptations. It does however provide modifications of the Standard to improve accessibility for specific fishery types. Our Risk-Based Framework allows data-poor fisheries access to our program, while the modifications to the Default Assessment Tree for salmon and enhanced bivalve fisheries amend performance indicators to more applicable requirements.

MSC Public System Report – Standard Setting and Revision Process

When MSC Standard was first written and by whom?

The MSC first developed its certification system between 1997 and 1999 in consultation with over 200 scientists, environmentalists, and other stakeholders to establish a worldwide certification system for fisheries using environmentally sustainable practices. In 2000, the MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing were published. These Principles and Criteria were later used to develop a logical framework 'Fisheries Assessment Methodology' that includes the Default Assessment Tree to allow a consistent approach to assessing fisheries against the Standard. The Default Assessment Tree has now become the MSC Fisheries Standard, which works alongside our Fisheries Certification Requirements and Guidance.

Stakeholder categorisation and geography

Our main stakeholders within the commercial and public sectors are: fishers; processors; suppliers; retailers; food service sectors; academics; scientists; fisheries and marine and aquatic managers; and the marine conservation community. Some of these stakeholders are represented by associations. Others are disparate and require more involved engagement strategies recognising language and cultural barriers.

Summary of the development and revision process

The MSC is open to fisheries around the world. The MSC operates a continuing dialogue with its stakeholders using annual meetings of its Stakeholder Council, online consultations on all policy developments, a website dedicated to program improvements, webinars, and regular policy workshops around the world.

Comments on the MSC Standards are welcomed at any time. Additionally, at the start of any program improvement activity, an official email alert (from standards@msc.org) is sent to known stakeholders to direct their interest to the MSC's [Program Improvements website](#) for details of consultations and how to get involved. As an established standard setter, we benefit from strong staff presence in many regions improving our ability to identify and engage under-represented stakeholders. Regional staff contact their local stakeholders specifically for those topics that will be of most interest and relevance. The MSC also issues industry media alerts and press releases to reach out to potential interested stakeholders, advertisements/promotions through industry groups via Social Media channels (i.e. Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter), and distribution of standard development flyers.

At the outset of a standard-setting development or review process, a Terms of Reference document is posted online, and comments are actively sought from overlapping organisations and key stakeholders. We then conduct online consultation periods during which the standards development staff and regional staff hold webinars to improve access to consultation materials. In-person workshops are conducted in regions relevant to the specific policies being developed or reviewed. This allows us to improve feedback from under-represented regions, obtain more focussed information, and helps us to facilitate discussion around policy options. The first full public consultation will consult on draft options for revising the Standard, usually split into discrete policy topics.

When standard revisions have been developed they are discussed in stakeholder workshops. The applicability of the Standard is tested through thorough impact assessments and revisions are considered by assessors working with the MSC program. This is our way of 'field-testing' the new Standard to ensure we are aware of any unforeseen impacts. Public consultation will again seek input from stakeholders on the revisions to the full draft Standard resulting from the initial consultation. Additional consultations will be completed and further amendments made where necessary. Finally, the new Standard will be presented to our governance bodies for decision and implementation begins.

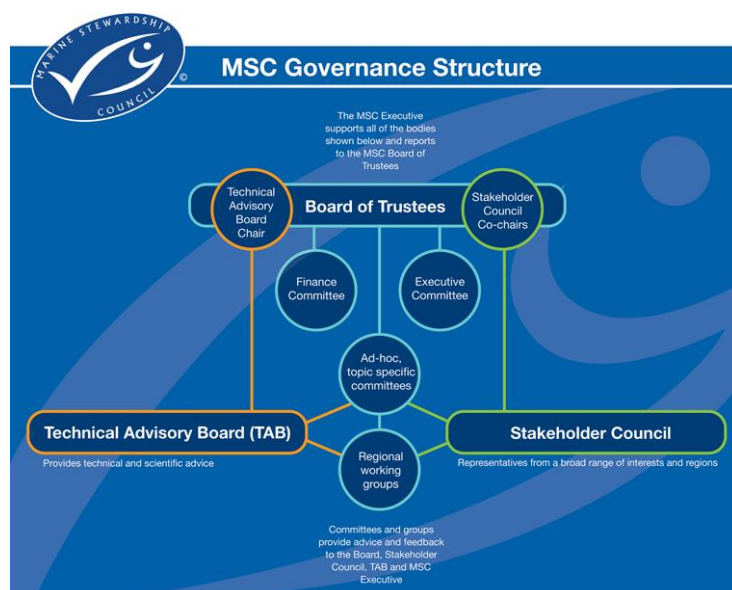
The MSC Fisheries Standard is reviewed every five years. The Chain of Custody Standards are reviewed every three years.

Governance

The options for revising the MSC Standard are considered by both the [Stakeholder Council](#) and the [Technical Advisory Board](#) before a final decision on whether to adopt the new Standard is taken by the [MSC Board of Trustees](#).

The Technical Advisory Board comprises up to 15 individuals representing a wide range of skills, experience and regional expertise. They provide advice and recommendation on all scientific and technical policy. In a standard review they guide policy development and provide a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

The Stakeholder Council provides advice to the Board of Trustees from the informed perspectives of the range of MSC's stakeholders.



There are two "chambers" within the Stakeholder Council, each with up to 20 members.

- The Commercial Chamber is made up of interests from the catch, processing, supply, retail, food service sectors and other relevant commercial interests.
- The Public Interest Chamber is made up of interests from academia, science, management, the marine conservation community and other relevant public interests.

Trustees serving on the Board of Trustees are chosen for their knowledge, expertise and support for the MSC. It is recognised that the Board should be balanced with representatives from different sectors and geographical regions to reflect the broad mix of people who have a stake in the MSC's mission. Additionally, chairs from the Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Council sit on the Board of Trustees.

Decision-making process

Throughout the Standard revision process, we encourage comments from as many stakeholder groups as possible through the MSC policy development and website mailing lists, targeted invites, and hosting a number of workshops in different languages. This included workshops in Seattle, London, Indonesia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru during our last Fisheries Standard Review process.

The membership of our Stakeholder Council and Technical Advisory Board should ensure the balance of interests is maintained during our decision-making processes. As stated in our [Technical Advisory Board Terms of Reference](#), decisions shall be made by agreement of a simple majority of all members, i.e. a quorum. Moreover, Technical Advisory Board members must declare potential or perceived conflicts of interest before discussions.

During Technical Advisory Board and Stakeholder Council decision-making, consensus need not imply unanimity. As stated in our [Standard Setting Procedure](#), if consensus is not reached, a Working Group shall be formed to prepare a report to the Board of Trustees, including a summary of unresolved issues and recommendations of how to address them.

Review and revision process

The MSC Fisheries Standard is reviewed every five years. The date of next review is 2019 and this is published within the [Fisheries Standard](#).

The MSC maintains a [Program Improvements microsite](#). This holds all the details of policy developments past and present. It hosts the online consultations for standard development and revisions and allows stakeholders to provide input between revisions. Policy stakeholders can view the latest opportunities to contribute and sign-up to our mailing list on our ['Get Involved'](#) pages. The ['Have your say' section on msc.org](#) also encourages input from stakeholders at any time. We also have a robust and credible [Complaints Procedure](#) which allows all stakeholders to submit a complaint about activities within the scope of the MSC program.

Contact information

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