



PUBLIC SUMMARY OF A MEETING OF THE MSC STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tuesday 18 – Thursday 20 April 2023, London

The Stakeholder Advisory Council (STAC) meeting was attended by [members of the STAC](#). Apologies were received from STAC Members Ms Carmen Revenga, Mr Rory Crawford and Mr Christian Haller

Dr Werner Kiene (MSC Chair) attended on behalf of the MSC Board of Trustees. Dr Hartwig Schafer, MSC Board Member (and Chair-Elect) attended the meeting

Dr Rebecca Lent (Technical Advisory Board Chair) observed the meeting

The following MSC staff attended; Dr Rohan Currey (Chief Science and Standards Officer), Mr Nicolas Guichoux (Chief Program Officer), Mr Rupert Howes (Chief Executive Officer), Ms Ishbel Matheson (Chief Communications Officer), Ms Tanya van Niekerk (Governance Secretary), Dr Alene Wilton (Chief Operating Officer)

The STAC was also joined by a number of relevant MSC staff on a project-by-project basis.

This summary contributes to the transparency of MSC's governance. Readers should note that recommendations made by the STAC are reviewed by the MSC Executive and only those recommendations that are formally endorsed by the MSC Board of Trustees and Executive will result in changes to the program or MSC's work. The Executive may not always immediately consider the STAC's recommendations, especially in instances where more research or consultation is required. Project pages on [msc.org](https://www.msc.org) will be updated to reflect final decisions, including rationales.

Overview of MSC's Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030

The STAC received an **update on MSC's Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030**.

The MSC has a vital role to play in safeguarding seafood resources through its certification and ecolabelling program for sustainable seafood. The Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030 comes at a crossroads in MSC's 25-year organisational history. According to the 2020 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assessment, over a third of global commercial fish stocks are now fished beyond their limit and are considered overexploited, and the issue of overfishing continues to worsen. MSC has a critical contribution to make in addressing overfishing, and the Integrated Strategic Plan 2023-2030 sets out MSC's ambitions and goals to achieve its vision of seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

The STAC noted an **overview of the Integrated Strategic Plan will be available on the MSC website** in late April 2023.

The STAC will continue to work in close collaboration with the MSC Executive to provide advice to the MSC Board on important projects and areas of work aligned with the MSC's Strategic Plan.

Fisheries Standard v3.0 Roll Out

The STAC received a **general overview and update** on the roll out of the new [MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0](#).

The STAC noted the briefing and engagement activities being undertaken to roll out the new Standard, some of which had been completed, and some still forthcoming. Training on the new Standard and other associated scheme documents was being undertaken, as well as meetings with stakeholders and targeted engagement opportunities, particularly focusing on regions or fisheries impacted by changes in the Standard. To support these activities, the MSC Executive has also produced a suite of written resources to communicate the changes introduced in the new Fisheries Standard, and the new Standard has been translated into five languages - Spanish, French, Mandarin, Japanese, Indonesian (Bahasa).

The STAC was pleased to hear that all training tools (capacity building workshops, online training etc.) were available to all interested parties including, for example, Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), assessors, fishery partner, and any other interested stakeholders.

The STAC **welcomed the update** on the roll out of the Fisheries Standard v3.0 and the activities underway and planned to communicate the new Standard.

In-Transition to the MSC Program

The STAC received a **general overview and update** on the MSC's [In-Transition to the MSC Program \(ITM\)](#). The ITM program is an important step for fisheries that are improving and still need time to reach a level of ecological performance that would allow them to enter into formal assessment, ensuring both their continued engagement with MSC and that verified progress is made towards the certification. Critically, ITM fisheries are more likely to drive credible and time bound improvements in the water and hence contribute to the delivery of MSC's vision of healthy and productive oceans.

The ITM program therefore provides a way of independently verifying the progress of fisheries on their journey towards sustainability and possible MSC certification, through the involvement of CABs at different stages of verification during the Program. At the same time, MSC maintains the integrity and the relevance of its certification program, by not allowing products coming from ITM fisheries to carry the MSC ecolabel.

The MSC has already **increased the accessibility of ITM**, with all fisheries welcome, regardless of size or location, with the only criteria being that the fishery seeks to achieve MSC certification within five years. The MSC has also worked to smooth the process towards **certification for ITM fisheries**, by improving the templates and processes.

The STAC noted that the ITM program was in a pilot phase until the end of 2024, and the MSC may announce further changes and improvements as the work progressed.

The STAC **welcomed the update** on the MSC's In-Transition to the MSC Program.

Capital Markets

The STAC received a **general overview and update** on MSC's ongoing work to explore the evolution of MSC's engagement with financial institutions.

Over recent years, independent verification of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) performance has increasingly become a mainstream tool used in capital markets across sectors. This followed the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris agreement in late-2015. This is also impacting the seafood industry where **fishing and processing companies are increasingly expected to demonstrate ESG performance to their financiers**.

With regard to biodiversity risk, MSC certification is recognised to offer a robust assurance mechanism to enable finance sector actors to verify ESG performance of their clients. Since 2019, MSC has been supporting finance sector actors that use MSC as a proxy in their seafood practice.

This work is therefore increasingly relevant and valuable for MSC certified fisheries and processors, and as a result, MSC is continuing to evolve its engagement and activity in this area.

The STAC **welcomed the update** on MSC's finance sector engagement work.

MSC Regional Activity

The STAC received a **general overview and update** on the **progress of MSC's work in the regions** over the past five years as well as the plans for regional teams for the next three years in relation to fisheries and commercial outreach, and marketing and communication activities.

The STAC also heard how **MSC's marketing and communications** has evolved to support MSC's outreach activity, increasing public awareness and understanding of the MSC as well as improving communications with MSC's stakeholders to maintain and evolve engagement with the MSC program and its mission and vision.

Meeting Close

The STAC thanked the MSC Executive for the informative updates.

ENDS