



28th Meeting of the MSC Technical Advisory Board

Public Summary

June 11th - 15th, 2018

MSC Offices, London

This summary is to improve transparency of MSC's governance. Readers should note that recommendations made by TAB must be formally endorsed by the MSC Board of Trustees before any changes to the program are made. Where Board outcomes deviate from TAB recommendations, project pages on improvements.msc.org will be updated to reflect final decisions, including rationales.

MSC's Technical Advisory Board (TAB) convened for its 28th meeting to discuss proposals for improvements to the MSC's Fisheries and Chain of Custody Standards and audit requirements. Sub-groups of the TAB also held working group meetings for a number of projects in development.

Dr Simon Jennings (Chair)	Present
Dr Chris Zimmermann	Present
Adam Swan	Present
Dr Tim Essington	Present (Interpretations and Ecosystems sessions only)
Lucia Mayer Massaroth	Present
Dr K Sunil Mohamed	Sent apologies
Dr Keith Sainsbury	Present
Mr Alex Olsen	Present
Dr Victor Restrepo	Present
Dr Juan Carlos Seijo	Present
Ms Michele Stark	Present
Dr Florian Baumann	Sent apologies
Sergey Sennikov	Present

Five external observers were present for the meetings: Dr Jason Combes of Acoura (part of Lloyd's Register group), Dr Antonio Hervas of Accreditation Services International (ASI), Dr Andrew Hough representing the Association of Sustainable Fisheries (ASF) and Mr Chris Spring of MRAG Americas. Mr Tor Bjorkland Larsen was representing MSC Stakeholder Advisory Council, on behalf of the co-Chairs who were unable to observe the meeting.

MSC Fisheries Standard

Fisheries scientists within the TAB reviewed a number of research projects that aim to evaluate the current performance of the MSC Fisheries Standard, to inform an assessment of whether revisions are needed and to develop tools to support application of the current Standard.

TAB supported the project plans developed by the MSC for reviewing the current Standard's efficiency and effectiveness. For plans focusing on Endangered, Threatened and Protected species **(ETP), Ecosystems and Harvest Control Rules and Harvest Strategies** within the MSC Standard, TAB proposed some small revisions and supporting analyses.

TAB reviewed two **interpretations** of the Standard ahead of publication of the MSC Interpretations Log in August 2018. The contents of the log will be made public to ensure there is a consistently accessible information base for all those with an interest in fisheries assessments. Interpretations

have already been reviewed by the MSC to ensure any inconsistencies or factual errors are identified and corrected prior to publication.

Terms of Reference for the upcoming **Fisheries Standard Review** were considered and approved by TAB.

Assessment tools and accessibility

TAB received an update on the **Relative Benthic Status (RBS) Tool** that is being developed by consultants from Bangor University. This tool is intended to help fisheries that interact with seabed habitat to better quantify their impact in the context of MSC assessments. TAB noted good progress and provided responses to requests for advice on technical aspects of tool development. The Executive was encouraged to investigate synergies with the MSC Data Limited Assessment Methods (DLM) project.

TAB received an update on the DLM project and provided advice on proposed scoring of data-limited stocks against P1 Performance Indicators. TAB reviewed proposals for outputs linking probabilities of stock status in relation to reference points to MSC scoring, and to generate reports showing these analyses. TAB provided a range of detailed feedback on the methods and presentation, and commended progress. TAB noted there would be repercussions for P1 auditor competencies if CAB evaluate assessments conducted with DLM tools. TAB suggested that some of these concerns could be ameliorated by capacity building efforts around release of the tool, calibration meetings and related activities.

A proposal to evaluate the MSC's **Risk-based Framework (RBF)** was presented to inform TAB of the intention to evaluate the different risk-based methodologies that are now available and to ensure the RBF continued to reflect best practice.

The MSC proposed to remove the RBF from within the Fisheries Certification Requirements to a "Tools" annex. In future, this Tools annex could also be used to contain other future assessment tools such as the MSC Data-Limited Methods Toolkit (MSC-DLM tool) and the Relative Benthic Status Tool (RBS) that are in development. TAB recommended approval, and noted the proposed approach was consistent with the known and expected emergence of more tools to support assessments and the benefits of not locking opportunities for improvements to these tools into formal Standard reviews.

TAB reviewed the latest proposals for the pilot of the new **In Transition Program (ITM)** to assess fisheries working towards MSC certification. TAB considered mechanisms appropriate for fisheries' entry into the program balancing costs, auditor availability, rigour and independence. Duration of access to the program was also considered, with TAB favouring a five year period, extendable by three years in some circumstances. TAB reviewed and supported a proposal that funding would not be available for extensions, creating an incentive to expedite improvements. TAB also noted that this ITM process would need to be accompanied by rigorous annual monitoring of progress.

Fisheries Certification Requirements v2.1

TAB approved the revised FCR with the main exception of the Product Eligibility component which will not be included in the release of FCR v2.1. A small number of amendments were also identified that would need further refinement and TAB review prior to approval to publish FCR v2.1.

TAB discussed the Product Eligibility project (formerly UoA) proposals. These were developed in response to concerns raised by some stakeholders who are opposed to within trip compartmentalisation of fisheries within the MSC system. TAB recognised and accepted the significant practical challenges associated with effectively implementing option 5a that were identified by the great majority of stakeholders during the spring 2018 consultation and by the Executive in its analysis of stakeholder responses. TAB supported the view of the Executive that, based on the consultation responses, very significant additional work would be needed to operationalise 5a and agreed with the recommendation that product eligibility should not be addressed in FCR v2.1.

TAB also proposed the Executive undertake a parallel work stream to look more widely at alternate policy options to address cases where compartmentalisation can serve to undermine rather than support the MSC theory of change and how such cases may be addressed.

TAB recommended that the proposals to improve **Fishery Traceability** should not be delayed to align with outcomes of any further investigation into compartmentalisation of fisheries. TAB recommended if some additional stakeholder feedback could be addressed quickly, the FCR draft presented should be revised to include the Fishery Traceability improvements for final approval in time for the August release. The new **Fisheries CoC Standard**, currently in development, will support assessment of traceability systems where risks to integrity are high. An update was provided on the draft Standard and TAB supported public consultation on this in August, prior to a final version being presented to TAB in December.

Amendments to the draft FCR language and the self-disclosure template resulting from stakeholder feedback on Phase 1 of the **Labour Practices** project were supported by TAB. TAB advised that adoption of the self-disclosure template should be supported by an effective communications strategy to emphasise this was only a first step towards addressing issues related to forced and child labour.

The draft FCR resulting from the **Streamlining** project was considered by TAB. TAB noted and supported the objectives to reduce complexity, and uncertainty while maintaining credibility. TAB supported the remaining elements presented for decision with the exception of the facilitation (formerly mediation) process where further analyses were recommended to provide evidence that the proposed process would deliver a streamlining. TAB will review the outcomes of these analyses.

The revised harmonisation process was approved by TAB, who noted the revisions that followed the recent consultation. TAB emphasised the need to evaluate the implementation of the revised process to ensure it was being used appropriately.

General Certification Requirements

Small changes to the GCR to ensure conditions placed on variations became mandatory were approved by TAB. A recommendation that certificate extensions be more closely managed by the Executive was approved by TAB as opposed to introducing more complex requirements to manage certificate extensions within the GCR. Regarding the proposed delayed implementation of auditor training for fishery team leaders and CoC auditors, the TAB reaffirmed their recommendation from TAB 27. The Executive was advised to implement the requirements as soon as possible to manage risk. TAB rejected an unspecified delay for the introduction of ISO 19011 requirement for CoC auditors, noting this should be implemented as soon as possible.

Assurance Review

The TAB received an update on the outcomes of the Assurance Roundtable stakeholder meeting held in April. An update was also provided on the development of the **Peer Review College** and suggestions to improve reporting of how peer review comments are taken into consideration by CABs. Finally, a **Review of Conditions** recently completed by Accreditation Services International was considered. Recommendations from the report were briefly discussed but no proposals for change have yet been considered by the Executive. TAB advice will be sought on any formal proposals that result from these recommendations.

CoC Standards

An update on the **Product Provenance Project (formerly KDE)** was provided ahead of a stakeholder meeting in Barcelona 18-19 June.

Labour Practices (on-shore)

The labour practices working group discussed the most recent iteration of proposals to introduce risk based social audits for MSC CoC applicants and certificate holders. The Executive sought TAB approval to proceed to a final public consultation on these proposals. TAB voiced concerns around the country-based risk assessment tool and directed the Executive to review this further before

consultation. TAB supported the development of a reduced SEDEX SMETA audit to improve accessibility of the 3rd party audit options for high risk entities.

What happens next?

FCR v2.1 - Subject to Board approval, final modifications to the draft FCR will be made and returned to the TAB and Board for final approval. The documents will then be prepared for publication at the end of August 2018. The new requirements will be used for assessment processes that begin from February 2019.

CoC Standards - Public consultation on the new Fisheries CoC Standard and the proposals for risk-based social audits in the CoC program will open in August this year.

TAB will meet again in London in December to review progress on Product Eligibility, Fisheries Standard evaluations and to make final recommendations on changes resulting from the CoC Program Review, including on-shore labour practices and the Fisheries CoC Standard. These are scheduled for release in February 2019.