



Benefits of government transparency in marine fisheries according to the FiTI Standard for eco-certification of fisheries

Date: 31 August 2023

Report by: José Peiró Crespo and Carlos Sonderblohm (Naunet Fisheries Consultants)

Contacts:

- Carlos Sonderblohm (c.sonderblohm@gmail.com)

- José Peiró Crespo (josepeirocrespo@naunetconsultants.com)

Every effort has been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. All information was believed to be correct as of June 2023. Nevertheless, Naunet Fisheries Consultants cannot accept responsibility for the consequences resulting from the use of this report or its contents by others.

We would like to thank all the individuals and institutions who contributed to the various stages of research and preparation of this report.



Commissioned by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (SwAM), financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Disclaimer:

The ideas, opinions and comments contained in this study are the sole responsibility of Naunet Consultants. The content of the study does not imply any position on the part of SwAM or Sida.

3	ABBREVIATIONS
5	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
9	STUDY OUTLINE
10	I. INTRODUCTION
10	The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) and the FiTI Standard
11	Sustainable certification programs the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friends of the Sea (FoS) Certification Programs)
16	II. METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT
17	III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS IN THE FISHERIES ECO-CERTIFICATION PROCESS (MSC AND FOS)
17	Section Summary
18	Section A: Roles and Responsibility
23	Section B: The Certification Process
24	<i>The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification process</i>
38	<i>Friends of the Sea (FoS) Certification Programs) certification process</i>
41	IV. ANALYSIS OF THE FITI STANDARD IN REGARD TO THE MSC AND FOS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS
41	Transparency requirements
55	V. CASE STUDY: ONGOING MSC CERTIFICATION PROCESSES IN SEYCHELLES
59	VI. KEY OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS
68	VII. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPACT OF THE FITI IN REGARD TO THE MSC AND THE FOS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS
70	VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS
72	ANNEX I: REFERENCES
75	ANNEX II: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED DURING THE PROJECT
75	ANNEX III. MSC CLIENT DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

ABBREVIATIONS

ACAP	Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels
ACDR	Announcement Comment Draft Report
ASI	Accreditation Services International
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CB	Certification Body
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CMS	Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention)
CO	Company (Friend of the Sea's name for a client)
CTTF	Coalition for Transparent Tuna Fisheries
DMM	Mauritanian Directorate of the Merchant Navy
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ERF	Evidence-Based Framework
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FIP	Fisheries Improvement Project
FiTI	Fisheries Transparency Initiative
FMP	Fishery Management Plan
FoS	Friend of the Sea
GTA	Global Tuna Alliance
IE	Independent Expert
IMROP	Mauritanian Institute of Oceanographic Research and Fisheries
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ISSF	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation
IUU	Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated
ISSF	International Seafood Sustainability Foundation

ABBREVIATIONS

MFBE	Seychelles' Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy
MCS	Monitoring, Control and Surveillance
MPEM	Mauritanian Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Economy
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
NMSG	FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group
NC	Non-conformities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCDR	Public Comment Draft Report
PI	Performance Indicator
RBF	Risk-Based Framework
RFMO	Regional Fishery Management Organization
SFA	Seychelles Fishing Authority
SG	Scoring Goal
SI	Scoring Issue
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SFP	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership
UoA	Unit of Assessment
UoC	Unit of Certification
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Marine fisheries play a critical role for livelihoods, government revenues and cultures of many coastal states around the world. Fish and shellfish, as well as other aquatic foods, are also a primary source of protein and essential nutrients, ensuring food and nutrition security for more than 3 billion people worldwide.

However, in its latest report, [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2022](#), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), warns that more than 35 per cent of global fish stocks are already being fished at biologically unsustainable levels. This number has tripled in the last 40 years. But the same report also shows that effective fisheries management has been proven to rebuild stocks and increase catches within ecosystem boundaries successfully. Improving global fisheries management is crucial to restoring ecosystems to a healthy and productive state and protecting the long-term supply of aquatic foods. This is also reflected by the [Committee on World Food Security](#), which concluded in 2020 that sustainable fisheries and aquaculture are “a fundamental condition for food security and nutrition”.

In the late 1990s, voluntary **third-party certifications of fish and seafood products** (ecolabels) were developed as a market-based incentive to promote sustainable capture fisheries, responding to concerns about inadequate fishery management practices, unsustainable depletion of stocks and ecological degradation. In simple terms, certification programs assess if a fishery meets specific sustainability requirements (notably the ecological impact of the underlying fishing operations on the stock and its ecosystem). Compliance with the sustainability principles of the standard by the fishery is communicated to consumers through an ecolabel on the product.

The demand for sustainable seafood has increased over time, especially in the major seafood importing markets, e.g. the EU and the United States, and many retailers have pledged only to sell or use certified seafood. Certification of a fishery might therefore help in gaining and maintaining market access. It is argued that ecolabels may give fisheries a premium price, resulting in economic benefits. . It is therefore no surprise that ecolabels for marine fisheries have expanded rapidly in terms of numbers and criteria.

At the same time, it is now commonly agreed that public availability of credible information is paramount to achieving sustainable management of fisheries. Without reliable information the capacity of national authorities to make decisions based on the best available data is diminished. So is the ability of non-governmental stakeholders to exercise effective oversight, demand accountability and engage in public dialogue. Yet, many governments of coastal states many still not disclosing even basic management information on their fisheries sector, such as permits, fishing agreements, stock assessments, financial contributions, catch data and subsidies. Also, the limited data that is publicly available is too often incomplete, outdated, unverified or not readily accessible.

The **Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)** was created as a global, voluntary initiative to address the lack of government information in marine fisheries management by increasing the accessibility, credibility and usability of national fisheries management information. [Mauritania](#) and [Seychelles](#), have as of today, presented full FiTI Reports, which resulted in a range of previously unpublished information being made publicly available by their national authorities for the very first time. Similar reports from Madagascar, Cabo Verde and Ecuador are expected within the next 6 months.

However, 'good governance' approaches alone may not emphasise the importance (and political priority) that needs to be given to transparency to strengthen sustainable marine fisheries. Consequently, transparency in marine fisheries management must also be positioned as a value-adding approach for countries, in particular by clearly demonstrating socio-economic benefits.

The **purpose of this report** is therefore to start analysing the impact of improving government transparency in fisheries on eco certification efforts, and whether existing certification efforts incentivise national authorities to improve transparency of fisheries management.

This report is the result of a twofold approach:

- First, a **desk-based research** explored the linkages between two major fisheries certification standards, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friend of the Sea (FoS), with the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) Standard.
- Second, **expert consultations** with relevant certification stakeholders, such as Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), MSC experts and participants of Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs) were conducted in the form of a survey as well as direct interviews.

The report shows that each effort possesses its unique set of criteria and processes, from guiding fisheries management bodies towards improved governance to evaluating stock status and certifying sustainable practices in seafood products. Strengthening these linkages can enhance their collective contribution to improving the sustainable management of marine fisheries worldwide.

The main findings of the desk-based research showed that:

- All three standards (MSC, FoS, FiTI) share a common **goal of promoting sustainable marine fisheries**, but they differ in their approaches and purposes, in particular in their **interpretation of the term 'sustainability'**. The FiTI Standard places a strong emphasis on public access to information for fisheries management and governance (including transparency requirements on all three sustainability aspects, i.e. ecological, economical and social); the MSC Standards prioritises ecological sustainability; FoS assesses an extensive range of criteria (ecological, social, etc).

- The analysis showed that countries implementing the FiTI Standard could benefit from **improving evaluations on the following elements:**
 - Principles 1 (Stock status) and Principle 3 (Management system) for the **MSC Fisheries Standard (V2.01/V.3)**
 - at least four requirements of the **FoS Wild Standard (v.4)**, i.e. stock status, legal conformity, fishery management, and social accountability.
- Evidence gathered in the **case study of the Seychelles** – a leading FiTI implementing country and currently undergoing MSC certification efforts – showed an increasing utilisation of annual FiTI Reports, particularly in the scoring of MSC Principle 3 (P3), specifically Scoring Issues (SI) 3.1.2 and 3.2.3. As part of these certification efforts, FiTI Reports have been frequently cited to support the scoring rationale, demonstrating a direct influence on the scoring process.
- In other cases, Seychelles' FiTI Reports are recognised as strengthening the country's overall national fisheries management system. This indicates that the FiTI implementation is already beginning to demonstrate measurable impacts on the MSC assessments, at least in the justifications of the indicated scores and the overall enabling environment for certification.

In addition, the outcomes of the stakeholder consultations showed that:

- 94% of the interviewed/surveyed stakeholders viewed a more transparent fishing management body as beneficial for eco-certification initiatives.
- 70% of the interviewed/surveyed stakeholders indicated that they consider the level of transparency of the management body when calculating the cost of the fisheries assessment process.
- 100% of the interviewed/surveyed stakeholders agreed that the lack of data would increase the budget for a Fisheries Improvement Project.
- Knowledge about the FiTI Standard among relevant certification stakeholders, such as Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), MSC experts and FIP participants, is still limited.

Following this analyses, this report has identified several **recommendations** for where the current standards for eco-certification of fisheries, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friend of the Sea (FoS), can be further linked to the Fishery Transparency Initiative (FiTI) to strengthen their collective contributions. These include, inter alia:

- Seeking to integrate the FiTI's transparency requirements into certification processes and FIPs, so that stakeholders can have access to more comprehensive and reliable information on fisheries management. This is quite timely due to the inclusion of the Evidence Requirements Framework (ERF) of the MSC Fisheries Standard 3.0. This new framework was developed to assess the accuracy and quality of information for various performance indicators. Initiatives like the FiTI could therefore clearly strengthen the certification process by supporting national authorities and other related stakeholders in ensuring the timely provision of accurate, comprehensive, and accessible data.

- Ensuring that the FiTI Standard explicitly requires national authorities to publish international legislation pertaining to migratory resources managed at the regional level, e.g. for species like tuna. Again, this is very timely, given that the FiTI Standard is currently undergoing its first major review process.
- Utilising multi-stakeholder structures, particularly between the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Groups and multi-stakeholder mechanisms of Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs). During the scoping phase of FIP planning, it is common to identify a need to access more complete information on the performance of the fishery. By aligning their objectives and procedures, both initiatives can enhance their efficacy in tandem and make significant contributions to improved fisheries management.
- Strengthening capacity-building efforts to raise awareness among fisheries management bodies (national and regional), certification auditors and scheme managers, the seafood industry and other relevant stakeholders on the principles and requirements of both eco-certification standards and the FiTI Standard. It is considered that this knowledge exchange could help stakeholders to understand the relationships between transparency and sustainability and would encourage the adoption of more effective approaches to fisheries management.

This report aims to underscore the crucial interplay between transparency, effective fisheries governance, and ecolabels. It emphasizes how collaborative efforts between governments and the fisheries sector enhance their management practices and transparency not only foster environmental sustainability but also unlock promising market prospects through eco-certifications. By highlighting these connections, we seek to underscore the pivotal role that transparent and well-governed fisheries play in shaping a more sustainable and economically viable future for the industry.

REPORT OUTLINE

To address the report's objective, a theoretical assessment was conducted drawing from the MCS and FOS certification documents, case studies and the Naunet team's own experiences. Following a concise overview of the FiTI, MSC, and FoS standards and their notable development and expansion in recent times (Section I), the report's methodology is elucidated in Section II. After introducing the report's objectives and methodological approach, Section III delves into an analysis of the certification standards of MSC and FoS. The focus is on understanding the involvement of public authorities, NGOs, and the fishing sector in the certification process, particularly regarding the accessibility and availability of the information necessary for assessment.

Section IV focuses on an analysis of the 12 transparency requirements and their validation indicators outlined in the FiTI Standard. Data from FiTI Reports and FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Groups in Seychelles and Mauritania were reviewed to explore their potential use as information sources for MSC and FoS certification assessments and identify associated benefits.

A consultation process with key stakeholders was also conducted to understand how the certification schemes stimulate fishery management transparency. Questionnaires were designed for three different stakeholder groups: Conformity Assessments Bodies (CABs), Independent Experts (IE) on MSC and FoS and Fishery Improvements Project participants (FIP). Moreover, interviews were conducted to gather insights (Annex II). The results of this exercise are shown in Section V.

Finally, Section VI provides conclusions and Section VII recommendations to understand if the FiTI Standard might facilitate improvements in MSC/FoS fisheries certification processes. Also, this report explores how collaboration between those standards might augment their overall sustainability impact on fisheries management.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) and the FiTI Standard

Public access to information is a prerequisite to manage fisheries efficiently and sustainably, as well as the ability for effective oversight, accountability and public dialogue. Yet, in many countries, information on the fisheries sector is either not available at all, or not shared widely. Moreover, dissemination of information is often not timely, of insufficient quality or objectivity, or presented in ways that make it inaccessible to citizens. FiTI was started to help countries overcome these challenges. FiTI provides internationally recognised procedures in order to achieve and maintain high levels of transparency on the management of the marine fisheries sector.

The FiTI is a global multi-stakeholder partnership that seeks to increase transparency and participation in marine fisheries management, promoting informed public debates on fisheries policies and supporting the long-term contribution of the sector to national economies and the well-being of citizens and businesses that depend on a healthy marine environment. The [FiTI Standard](#) is the outcome of extensive discussions, by members of the FiTI International Advisory Group, including representatives from governments, large-scale and small-scale fishing sector organisations, multinational and regional fisheries organisations and civil society groups working on fisheries and marine conservation; and sets out the requirements on what is expected from countries which are part of the FiTI regarding transparency and multi-stakeholder participation in fisheries management. Overall, the FiTI Standard is divided in two main parts: Part I is intended for countries, Part II outlines the provisions for the international governance of the initiative (for further details see: [FiTI Standard 2017](#)).

The FiTI Standard defines what information on fisheries should be published online by public authorities based on 12 thematic areas which are shown in the figure below.

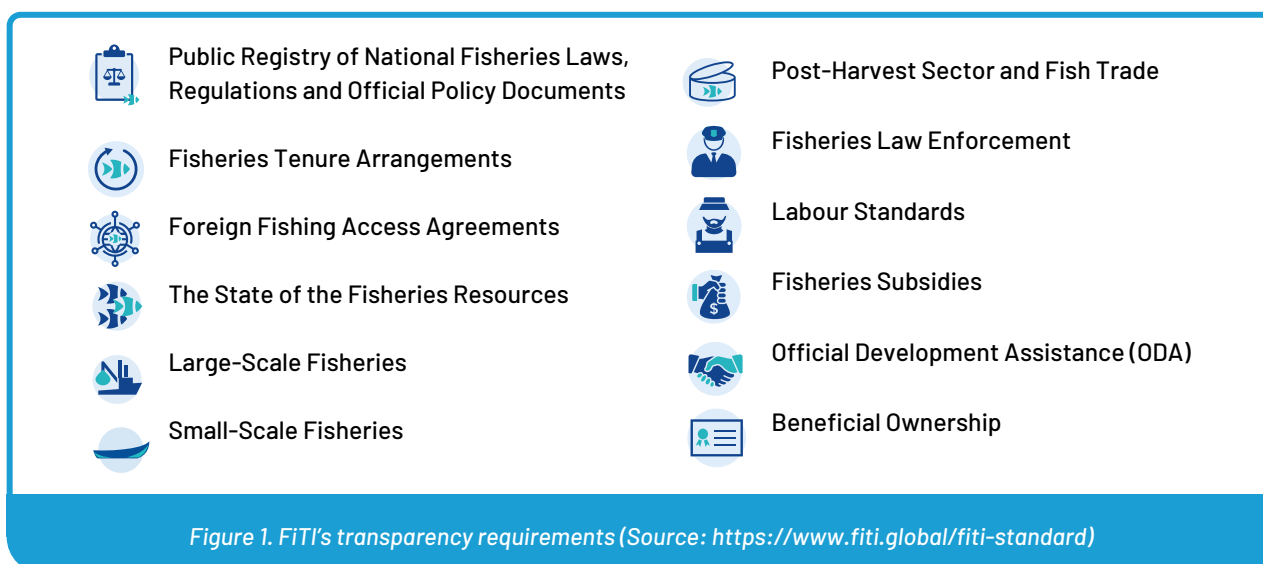


Figure 1. FiTI's transparency requirements (Source: <https://www.fiti.global/fiti-standard>)

The objective of the FiTI Standard is to contribute to the sustainability of marine fisheries by increasing the accessibility, credibility and usability of national fisheries management information. The above-shown 12 thematic areas of the FiTI Standard outline that the term 'sustainability of marine fisheries' is understood as addressing economic, social and environmental aspects.

Countries which are part of the FiTI must establish a National Multi-Stakeholder Group, tasked with, inter alia, publishing annual FiTI Reports that deliver three key results: an assessment of publicly available information on those transparency requirements to highlight whether information is collated, accessible, complete and represents the 'best available'; a summary of published information for each transparency requirement to support public understanding and debate; and recommendations on what steps can be taken by national authorities to improve publicly available information on the fisheries sector over time (FiTI 2019).

Sustainable certification programmes: the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friends of the Sea (FoS) Certification Programmes

Seafood ratings, performed by assessment organisations, offer guidance on which seafood to purchase, allowing consumers to identify which seafood products are the most sustainably sourced and produced. Some of these ratings are rigorously assessed, undergo peer review and regular consultations in order to ensure that up to date sustainability information is verifiable and publicly available. There are many different actors when it comes to seafood ratings and certifications (the most reputable seafood eco-certification organisation being the [MSC](#)). The MSC is an international non-profit organisation which, since 1997, has provided a third-party standard against which fisheries can be assessed. The MSC Fisheries Standard includes three attributes: target stock health (Principle 1), impacts on the ecosystem (Principle 2) and management effectiveness (Principle 3). In each of those principles, several performance indicators are assessed by fisheries experts to assess compliance with the MSC Fisheries Standard.

The Default Assessment Tree of the MSC Fisheries Standard

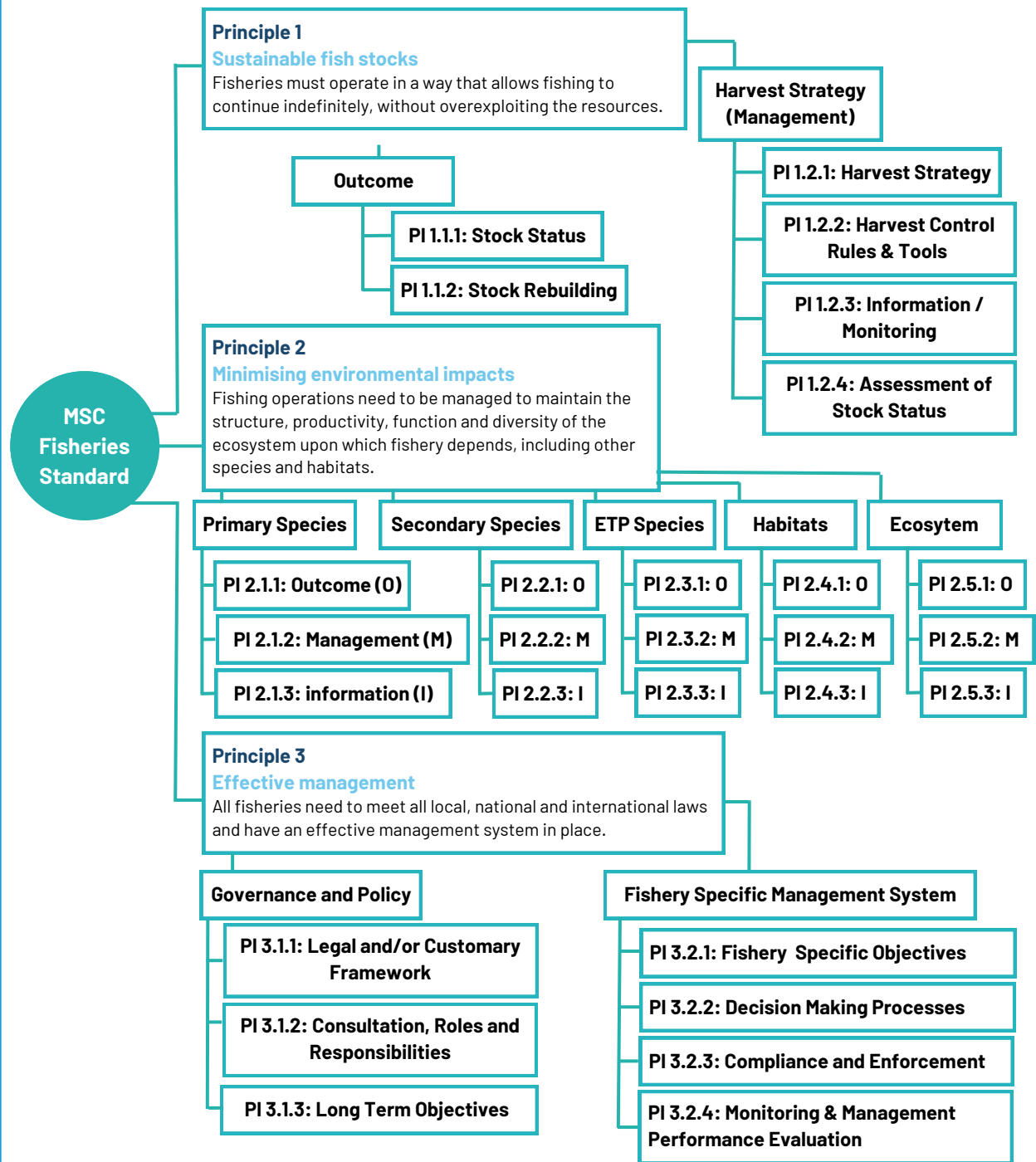


Figure 2. The MSC default assessment tree (Source: MSC 2016)

Fisheries that comply with the MSC Fisheries Standard can make a claim that they meet best practice for sustainability standards and are eligible to carry the MSC's blue ecolabel after obtaining the MSC chain of custody certification.

Also, the FoS, founded by the NGO Earth Island Institute in 2008, is a major player when it

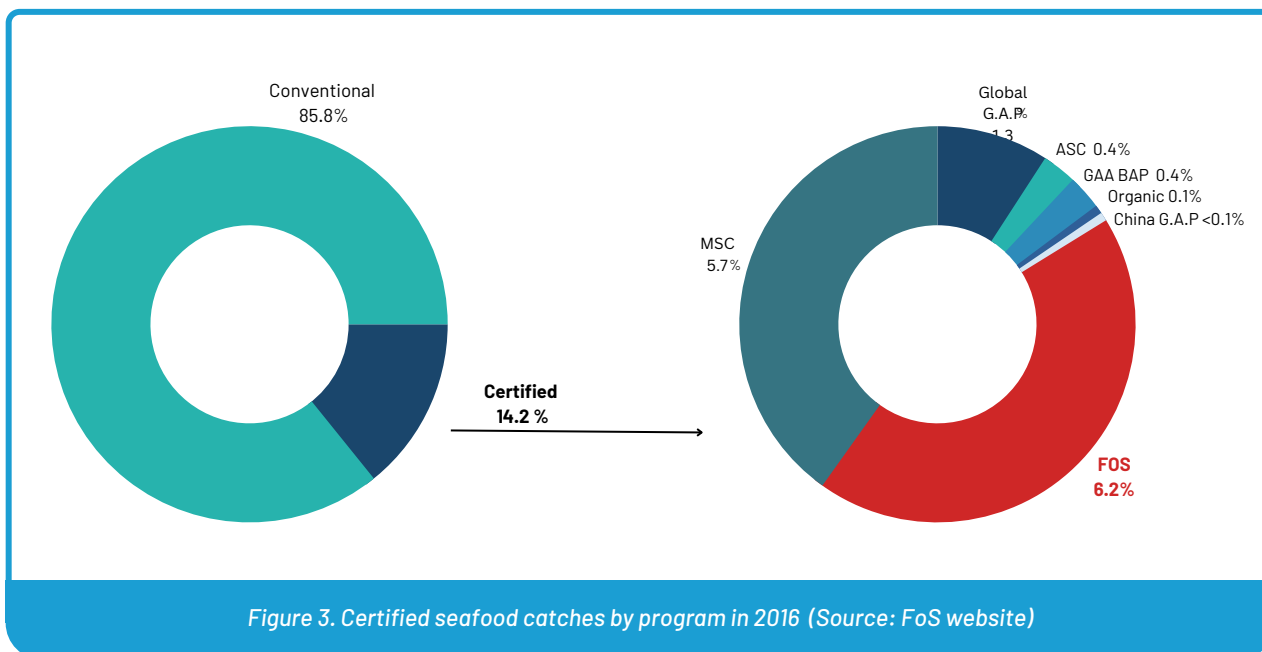
comes to seafood eco-certification. Although the origins of the FoS programme are traced to the protection of dolphins in tuna fishing fleets, FOS now operates as one of the world's most diversified seafood labelling initiatives. It has developed a set of standards for certification of fisheries and aquaculture products, providing a tool for fisheries and the fish farming industry to minimise impact on the marine environment, thus preserving natural resources for the future. The FOS certification offers a lower cost structure and a more streamline approach to certification than the MSC certification program. The FoS certification provides lower barriers to entry for more marginalised producers and lower-value species which has resulted in the growth of the programme in developing countries, whose markets are generally untouched or under-represented in other global schemes (Wijen & Chiroleu-Assouline, 2019).

The FoS criteria for sustainable fishing are based on eight requirements. Firstly, the target stock must not be overexploited according to the FAO. Second, there should be coherence between regional fishery bodies and national fishery authorities in managing the stock. Third, there should be no significant impact on the seabed. Fourth, the fishery must use selective fishing gear, with a maximum discard rate of 8 percent. Fifth, there should be no bycatch species listed as 'vulnerable' or worse on the IUCN Red List. Sixth, compliance with management rules is necessary, including Total Allowable Catch (TAC), no Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, minimum mesh size, and minimum landing size. Seventh, a waste and energy management plan should be in place. Lastly, adherence to social responsibility standards is required.

However, it should be noted that compliance with these requirements does not align with the same steps involved in the MSC certification process, particularly the peer-review and external consultation processes. For more detailed information, please refer to Section III of this report.

It is important to highlight that certified seafood has seen a highly significant growth over recent years, both in certified wild catch and aquaculture, through a variety of different certification programmes. According to the report "State of Sustainability Initiatives Review: Standards and the Blue Economy", conducted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (Potts et al., 2016), FoS was the single largest source of certified wild catch on the global market in 2015, reaching 9.3 million metric tons (6.2% of total wild catch)(see figure 3 below). Its advantage lies mainly in obtaining certification for the entire production of Peruvian and Chilean anchovy, which happens to be one of the world's fishery resources with the largest biomass.

However, the MSC seafood catch has kept increasing to reach 12 million tonnes or 15% of all wild marine catch (fisheries engaged in the MSC program in 2021-2022 were 628) (MSC 2022). More recent information about the total volume of FoS certified seafood does not seem to be available, although more than 1,000 companies in 72 countries are now certified under the FoS from farmed and wild sources (FoS 2021).



In parallel with the eco-certifications, [Fisheries Improvement Projects](#) (FIPs) are multi-stakeholder efforts to improve fisheries practices and management so that species, habitats, and people can prosper. FIPs use the power of the private sector to incentivise positive changes toward sustainability in fisheries and seek to make these changes last by setting new government policies. Increasing market demand for sustainable seafood has led to considerable growth in the number of FIPs in recent years. Between 2014 and 2019, the annual number of FIPs in active operation grew from 83 to 136 and is still growing (CEA 2020). The FIP is normally considered a first step for fisheries to improve before seeking certification, although this is not necessarily the objective of all FIPs. Among FIPs most common reported achievements include dialogues with policy stakeholders, data collection, development of management plans and/or a management body, and rules for limiting entry and increasing compliance (Crona et al. 2019).

Both eco-certification processes and initiatives for increased government transparency in fisheries share a common goal of enhancing the sustainability of fisheries. Eco-certifications and FIPs have emerged as influential models of private fishing governance, playing a crucial role in promoting transparency and improving fisheries management worldwide. Collaboration between governments, their fisheries management bodies, and eco-certification projects can lead to the alignment of public investment with certified sustainable production, facilitating access to international markets.

Simultaneously, non-commercial standards like the FiTI's offer a valuable tool to facilitate coherence between sustainable certification standards and government frameworks for responsible fisheries governance. By joining the FiTI and demonstrating transparency in their fisheries management practices, governments can access better certification opportunities and collaborative partnerships, thereby enhancing the market value and reputation of their fisheries and marine resources (Oloruntuji et al., 2023). This is

particularly important for developing countries and small island developing states (SIDS), where support from transparency initiatives in seafood certification can significantly contribute to improving environmental sustainability and fisheries governance.

At the same time, there are also differences between eco-labels, FIPs and the FiTI. Market-based incentives, such as eco-labels, seek to increase information within fisheries supply chains to strengthen consumer confidence. Within eco-labels, emphasis is given in particular to environmental as well as increasingly also social aspects. On the other hand, the FiTI seeks to increase public availability and credibility of basic information on a country's fisheries sector to support participatory governance and focuses on all three aspects of sustainability (environmental, social and economic).

This report explores the potential opportunities for further linking the two major fisheries certification standards to the FiTI. Strengthening these linkages can enhance their collective contribution to improving the sustainable management of marine fisheries worldwide. While all three initiatives share a common goal of promoting sustainable fisheries and transparency, they differ in their approaches and specific areas of focus. FiTI places a strong emphasis on transparency and governance, MSC prioritizes ecological sustainability, and FoS assesses an extensive range of criteria for both fishing and aquaculture operations. Each initiative possesses its unique set of standards and processes, from guiding fishery management bodies towards improved governance to evaluating, certifying and ensuring sustainable practices in fisheries and seafood products.

II. METHODOLOGY OF THE REPORT

With the purpose of responding to the main objective of the report, and as the FiTI is still in the early years of its implementation, a theoretical assessment based on two tasks, a desktop research and expert consultation phase, was conducted.

During the desktop research, the consultants reviewed the MSC and FoS certification standards documents (MSC V2.01/V.3 and FoS Wild Standard v.4) in order to describe in detail the information on the roles and responsibilities of public authorities, non-governmental actors (NGOs), and the fishing sector (companies, associations, etc.) during the certification process. They also reviewed the 12 transparency requirements included in the FiTI Standard (and the data included in the FiTI Reports published in Seychelles and Mauritania) to understand how that data could potentially be used as a source of information for a certification assessment process conducted by the two main certification programmes. The results of those two activities are shown in Sections III and IV respectively.

The second activity undertaken in the assessment process involved consultations with key stakeholders to verify and supplement the information gathered during the previous activities. This was achieved through the creation and calibration of questionnaires targeting different stakeholder groups, including Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), MSC experts, and FIP participants. Additionally, interviews were conducted with experts with knowledge both in eco-certifications and transparency issues in fisheries to further refine questionnaire results and gather additional insights on the FiTI, MSC, and FoS certification programmes. Sixteen (16) questionnaires were completed, and ten (10) key informants were interviewed, fostering open discussions on strengths, weaknesses, concerns, and recommendations for further linking the FiTI and eco-certifications. The stakeholders represented a diverse range of backgrounds, including independent MSC experts, FIP and FoS coordinators, NGOs involved in certification schemes, and fisheries industry representatives. These interviews focused on various aspects, such as stakeholder knowledge, participation in the initiatives, public access to information, strengths and weaknesses of the processes, and recommendations for enhancing public debates and impact. Notably, stakeholders with specific experience in countries where the FiTI was being implemented were selected to provide country-specific insights alongside those with broader international perspectives.

Based on the results of those exercises, the team of consultants developed this report identifying the potential impacts of the FiTI transparency requirements on eco-certification processes and giving recommendations for further strengthening that impact.

III. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS IN THE FISHERIES ECO-CERTIFICATION PROCESS (MSC AND FOS)

Section Summary

- After careful review of the documents and considering the team's experience, it has become apparent there are certain disparities between the MSC certification guidelines and their practical implementation in pre-assessments, full assessments, and FIPs. These disparities mainly concern the roles and responsibilities associated with data collection and information analysis. The clients, as the primary stakeholders, are responsible for providing the necessary information to the authorised certification bodies (CABs) conducting the assessments. Clients typically must complete a checklist, enabling CABs to plan the evaluation process and select the appropriate team of experts.
- A significant portion of data collection required for conducting the assessments falls under the responsibility of the management bodies in the Unit of Assessment (UoA). Unfortunately, these managing bodies often lack financial resources necessary to collect and manage the required information effectively, especially in developing countries.
- Consequently, technical experts, despite not being responsible for the collection of information for assessments, often rely on their research skills and personal networks to fulfil their roles as auditors and fill in data gaps.
- These findings highlight the need for enhanced collaboration between clients, state managing authorities, and certification bodies to ensure the timely provision of accurate and comprehensive data. Furthermore, supporting initiatives like FiTI can contribute to improving transparency and data availability, thereby strengthening the certification process and promoting more sustainable fisheries management.
- This is especially relevant for the implementation of the new MSC Fisheries Standard 3.0, where the innovative tool called the Evidence-Based Framework (ERF) has been incorporated to assess the accuracy and quality of information to various performance

indicators. In this MSC update, assessment teams must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a fishery’s monitoring system to determine the accuracy of the provided information. This includes consideration of how the information is collected, the extent of the fishery’s activity that is being monitored and how the information has been reported and provided to the assessment team.

Section A: Roles and Responsibilities

There are multiple actors, roles and responsibilities in the fisheries certification processes for the two standards described here, which may differ from case to case. Many of these roles are also present in fishery pre-assessments and Fisheries Improvement Projects (FIPs), with some variations. To facilitate understanding of the description of the certification processes and their different stages, we first present a list that summarises the most common actors and roles relating to the MSC Fisheries Standard and FoS certification processes.

MSC certification process: stakeholders, roles and responsibilities

The certification process for the MSC Fisheries Standard typically involves between ten to twelve key actors. The following table presents the most common actors in this process.

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
<p>The client: An individual, organisation or group representing the fishery seeking to become certified. Previous fishery clients have included government agencies, fishing industry associations, fisheries cooperatives, local management authorities and collaborations between fishing industry associations, and conservation and community groups. The client will act as the certificate holder if the certification is granted.</p>	<p>The client has the leverage to affect change in the fishery as needed. The relationship the client has with the fishery, and the level of control over its activities, is more important than the type of organisation. The client contracts a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) to perform the assessment and works directly with the CAB throughout the assessment process. The client’s main responsibilities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bearing the cost of the evaluation; • Communicating who should be involved and represented in the fishery assessment; • Collecting and providing relevant data to the assessment team, such as catch records, stock assessments, and environmental impacts, etc.; • Ensuring that the assessment team has unrestricted access to data and information about the fishery, including all favourable and unfavourable information
<p>Co-Client: A partner, typically an NGO, to help the client navigate the complexities of the MSC certification process. The co-client can help facilitate and coordinate the project.</p>	<p>Some NGOs may serve as co-clients in the pre-or full assessment along with a representative from the fishery who will be the certificate-holder if/when an MSC certificate is awarded. The co-client relationship provides NGOs access to the process and certifier, allowing them to guide the process</p>

and provide technical support efficiently and effectively. Part of the NGO's co-client role typically entails helping to fundraise for the assessment and then contracting the CAB directly for the work. Examples of co-clients include organisations such as WWF, Sustainable Fisheries Partnerships (SFP), International Seafood Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), etc.

The Conformity Assessment Body (CAB): An independent body approved by Assurance Services International to conduct MSC assessments and make a final determination on whether the fishery meets the MSC. CABs may contract independent consultants (e.g., scientists or former fishery managers) to serve on an assessment team.

- Responsible for hiring the team of experts for the fishing assessment;
- Carries out a pre-assessment or full fishery assessment against the MSC Fisheries Standard;
- Carries out surveillance audits and evaluations during the validity of the fishing certificate;
- It is important to note that this certification body is not required to conduct new research or population assessments to assess a fishery (it does not take samples or implement research programs).
- Lack of data or documentation on a fishery can result in increased uncertainty about the performance of the fishery, which can result in lower scores and generally increase the cost of the assessment.

Fishery assessment team: Fishery scientists with specialised knowledge selected by the certification body and accredited by MSC as technical experts to conduct MSC assessments. They are commonly self-employed independent consultants (e.g. fisheries scientists, marine biologists/ecologists, fishery management experts, etc.). A pre-assessment team generally comprises one or two technical expert members, while a full-assessment team comprises two to four experts. Assessment team members are registered in the MSC database and receive regular training and are regularly monitored to ensure they are meeting MSC requirements.

Assess fisheries against the MSC Fisheries Standard by analysing fishery-related information provided by the client, management agencies and stakeholder groups to reach a judgement on each scoring issue. It is essential to highlight that the assessment team will use existing information and reports to make a precautionary determination. Among their tasks, they commonly:

- Conduct a gap analysis of fishery performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard;
- Develop and assist in the implementation of a fisheries improvement action plan
- Manage MSC assessments or liaise between the fishery and certification body.

Individuals in the register are listed as either a technical consultant or associate technical consultant. Technical consultants have greater practical experience in applying the MSC Fisheries Standard from participating in MSC assessments or surveillance audits. Associate technical consultants have completed comprehensive training in the MSC Fisheries Standard but have not been part of an assessment team.

Peer Reviewers: As part of the MSC fishery certification process, independent experts are carefully selected to serve as peer reviewers. These reviewers play a critical role in evaluating the assessment report, providing qualified, professional, and experienced insights. Their expertise

Peer review the draft assessment report and provide their qualified, professional, experienced conclusions on its results. Provide specific comments on the reached conditions that raised each performance indicator's score and provide rationale observations and comments.

ensures the credibility and rigor of the certification, contributing to the recognition of sustainable and well-managed fisheries by the Marine Stewardship Council.

The MSC: The MSC serves as the standard holder. It ensures that the programme keeps up with best practice guidelines and the best available science and that CABs are applying the standard appropriately.

The MSC does not certify the fisheries themselves. Accreditation Services International (ASI) accredits independent CABs to conduct assessments against the MSC Fisheries Standard. This third-party approach ensures the programme is robust and credible and meets best practice guidelines.

Government management bodies: Most fisheries are managed according to laws administered by the government, so the support and cooperation of relevant government management agencies, staff and decision-makers are critical to the assessment, especially if changes to improve fishery management require cooperation between government agencies and industry.

- Provide support and cooperation in implementing fishery improvement actions in the scope of the certification project (FIP);
- Government agencies also commonly hold much of the information the assessment team requires to undertake the assessment; thus it is essential access is guaranteed in a transparent and democratic way during the certification process.

Fishery Stakeholders: Any individuals or organisations that are interested in or affected by the fishery assessment. Participants in an MSC pre/full assessment will vary depending on the nature of the fishery and the extent of local interest, but fishery stakeholders often include:

- producers;
- other members of the fishery's supply chain;
- fishery managers;
- government officials;
- academics;
- environmental NGOs.

Ideally, a diverse group of stakeholders should be part of the process so that all fishery sectors are represented and can provide as much information about the fishery as possible during the assessment process, ensuring an accurate and robust analysis by the assessment team.

- During the pre/full assessment, stakeholders are invited to:
- provide feedback about nominations for assessment team members;
 - provide feedback about the performance indicators to be used in the assessment;
 - analyse the performance of the fishery against the MSC Fisheries Standard;
 - actively participate in the voting process for the selection of report peer reviewers. This includes reviewing and providing input on the public comment draft report, the final report, and determining whether a fishery should be certified.
 - engage in the decision-making process to identify and appoint qualified report peer reviewers. Your involvement will be crucial in ensuring the credibility and accuracy of assessments, leading to well-informed determinations on fishery certifications.

Project Facilitator: The project management aspect of the MSC certification process can be time-

The role of the project facilitator is to guide the strategic planning and execution of the project and to ensure the project stays on track and delivers the desired results

consuming, and many fisheries do not have the time or resources to coordinate an MSC assessment themselves. A project facilitator can help ensure a smooth and thorough assessment process.

managing the project by:

- helping to fundraise;
- serving as a co-client;
- contracting a CAB;
- serving as liaison between the fishery, CAB, and MSC;
- providing technical guidance;
- reviewing reports;
- assisting with communications.

Project Coordinator: The project coordinator serves as the local, day-to-day manager of the certification project. The project coordinator should be based in the same region as the fishery and can come from an environmental NGO, from within the fishing industry, or from another stakeholder group such as a government agency.

Project coordinators help to:

- Gather all information about the fishery to be used in the pre/assessment/FIP, manage stakeholder relations, and provide technical and logistical support to the CAB;
- Conducting outreach to key stakeholders;
- Organising the site visit;
- Reviewing the draft report.

Private sector: Many MSC certifications and FIPs are driven by market demand for products that are MSC certified or sourced from fisheries engaged in FIPs. This market demand for more sustainable sourcing makes the private sector (retailers, food service providers, suppliers, and exporters) a key stakeholder in an MSC project, with much to be gained by contributing to efforts to expand available sources of sustainable seafood.

Private sector companies can communicate to their supply chain the importance of an MSC pre-assessment or full assessment for the fishery

Table 1. Roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the MSC fishery certification process (Sources: MSC 2011, 2019, 2020; WWF 2015)

FoS certification process: stakeholders, roles and responsibilities

Like the MSC certification standard, the responsibility for providing the information necessary for assessment rests primarily with the fishery seeking certification. The fishery is required to complete a self-assessment questionnaire that provides basic information about their fishing practices and management systems. This questionnaire covers topics such as fishing methods, bycatch reduction, endangered species protection, ecosystem impact, social responsibility, and legal compliance. In addition to the self-assessment questionnaire, the fishery is also required to provide additional documentation, including

catch data, management plans, and any other relevant information requested by the auditor to complete the certification checklist. The auditor collects and then verifies all the information provided by the fishery through on-site inspections and interviews with fishery staff. Contrary to the MSC, the assessment results do not undergo an external peer review process. Instead, the fishery's expert-led audit internally evaluates its compliance with the standard. Roles and responsibilities in the FoS certification process are explained in the table below.

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
<p>Certification Body (CB): A private company accredited under the EA 1/22 (EA Procedure and Criteria for the Evaluation of Conformity Assessment Schemes) by accredia (www.accredia.it) and registered with Friends of the Sea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce the audit report within 15 working days; • Non-conformities (NCs) detected during the audit shall be reported by the auditor to the CO and to FOS; • CBs are responsible for the communication of the NCs, for their implementation within the appropriate timeframe, and for their verification and approval; • CBs are responsible for verifying the existence of subcontractor's contracts before starting the certification process.
<p>Company (CO): An owner or manager requesting the certification (i.e. a client). The fishery seeking certification is the primary stakeholder in the process. Its role is to provide information to the Certification Body, including data on its fishing practices, management systems, and social responsibility policies. The fishery is responsible for implementing any necessary changes to meet the certification criteria.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for addressing and solving all NCs detected during the audit before the issue of the certification; • The company requesting the certification shall be 100% compliant with essential requirements to be recommended for certification by the certification body; • Elaborate a corrective action plan for the fishery to come into compliance with all important requirements. • Resolve all minor NCs reported in the corrective action plan which are verified in the surveillance audit; • Responsible for the compliance of all subcontracting company to FOS standards; • The CO shall plan and implement corrective actions (CAs) in the appropriate timeframe.
<p>Auditors: The auditor conducts on-site audits, document reviews, and interviews with fishery staff to determine whether the fishery meets the certification criteria. The auditor provides a report to the certification body, which uses it to determine whether to grant certification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The independent, third-party auditor is responsible for conducting an assessment of the fishery's practices and procedures against the FoS Wild Standard criteria • Audit the documentation of the CO management system; • Assess the CO site location and characteristics and exchange information with the CO's staff in order to assess whether the audit implementation phase aligns with the established Friend of the Sea wild standard criteria; • Review the CO's understanding of the regulations' requirements, particularly related to the identification of key aspects, processes, objectives and functioning of the management system; • Gather the necessary information about areas interest of the management system, processes, and location(s) of the CO,

	<p>including related legal aspects and compliance to the regulation (e.g. regarding quality, environment, legal aspects related to the CO's activity, associated risks, etc.);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the allocation of resources for the assessment and develop a plan with the CO; • Plan the assessment, create a detailed document of the CO's management system, activities, and sites; • Check if the implementation of the management system indicates the CO is ready for the assessment audit; • Non-conformities (NCs) detected during the audit shall be reported by the auditor to the CO and to FOS.
<p>Subcontractors and suppliers and sub-contracted producers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcontracted producers (i.e. fish farms, fishing vessels and processors) working on behalf of the CO and responsible for the production of the product to be certified, shall be included in the scope of certification; • Suppliers do not need to be included in the scope of certification of a processor seeking FOS CoC certification when they own a valid FOS certification.

Table 2. Roles and responsibilities of the different actors in the Friend of the Sea Fishery Certification Process (Authors: prepared by the team)

Section B: The Certification Process

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification process

The MSC fishery certification standard is the result of a multi-step process carried out by an independent organisation known as the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB). Through a CAB, an individual, organisation, or group representing a fishery known as the 'client' may apply for certification. Previous fishery clients have included government agencies, fishing industry associations, fisheries cooperatives, local management authorities and collaborations between fishing industry associations, and conservation and community groups. Many fishery clients have found it useful to designate a member of staff or hire a project manager to monitor the assessment process and act as a focal point during the certification process (e.g. to deal with communication between the CAB and its assessment team). The role of the CAB is to provide an independent, third-party assessment of the fishery against the MSC Fisheries Standard. The CAB has a responsibility to consult with the client and other stakeholders to establish the facts of the assessment.



Box 1. Some fisheries find it helpful to have a co-client as a partner to help navigate the complexities of the MSC certification process. It is common for NGOs and international organisations, including the FAO, to actively assist fisheries and management authorities in pursuing the Marine Stewardship Certification (MSC) by funding pre-assessments and other initiatives.¹ Another very important NGO that actively supports MSC certifications is WWF, which, [being involved in the birth of this standard](#), has developed a comprehensive three-step process to support entities interested in achieving MSC certification (see figure 4). Another prominent advocate for MSC certification is the [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership \(SFP\)](#), which collaborates with global seafood supply chains to work toward reducing the environmental impacts of fishing by adhering to the MSC Fisheries Standard and Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs).

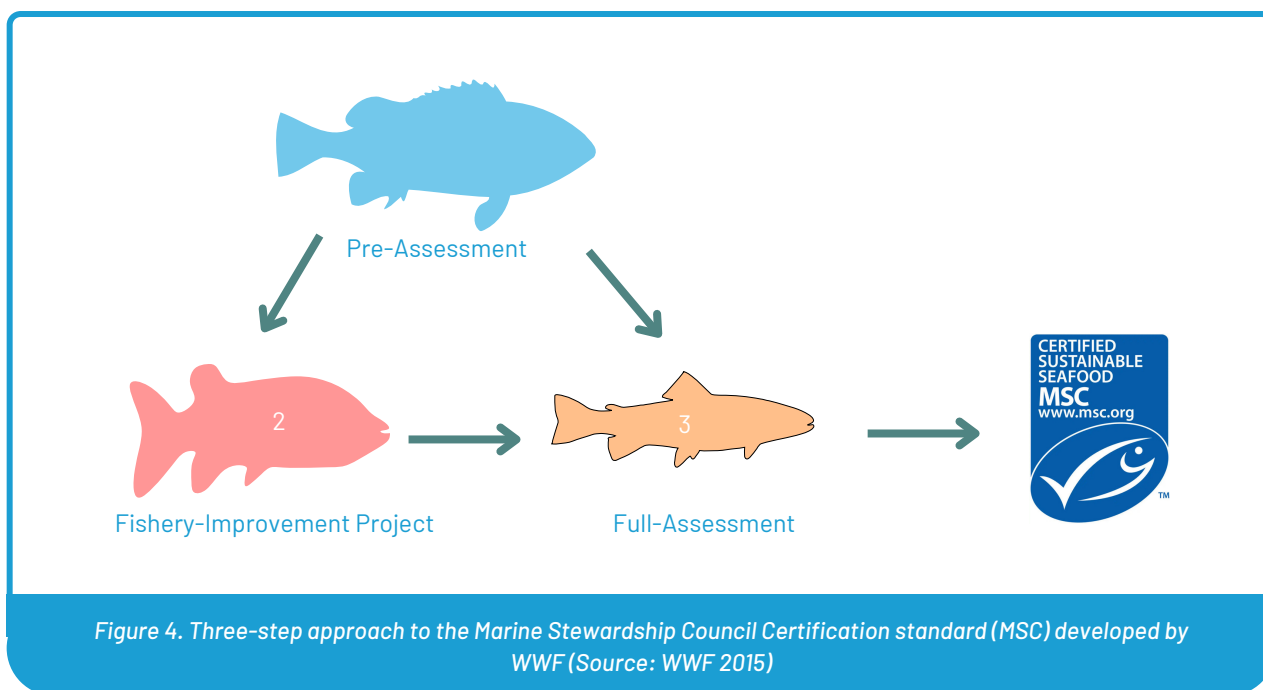


Figure 4. Three-step approach to the Marine Stewardship Council Certification standard (MSC) developed by WWF (Source: WWF 2015)

¹ For more information visit the link: [Incentivizing sustainable fisheries through certification](#)

At the beginning of the assessment process, the client and the CAB discuss and decide on the Unit of Assessment (UoA) and the Unit of Certification (UoC) (See example in box nº2). The UoA defines what is being assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standard and includes:

1. The target stock(s);
2. The fishing gear;
3. The fleets, vessels, individual fishing operators and other eligible fishers pursuing that stock.



Box 2. The UoC is the UoA minus other eligible fishers or a sub-component of a fishery that undergoes evaluation against the MSC's standards (see Figure 5). For example, the Ecuador Mahi-mahi longline fishery has recently entered into a MSC certification process. Its UoC it's the client group whose fleet operates in FAO Fishing Area 87 (Pacific, Southeast). At the same time, the UoA is all authorised fishing vessels from Ecuador targeting dolphinfish using the thin surface longline utilising two different types of boats and a well-defined metier within that area.

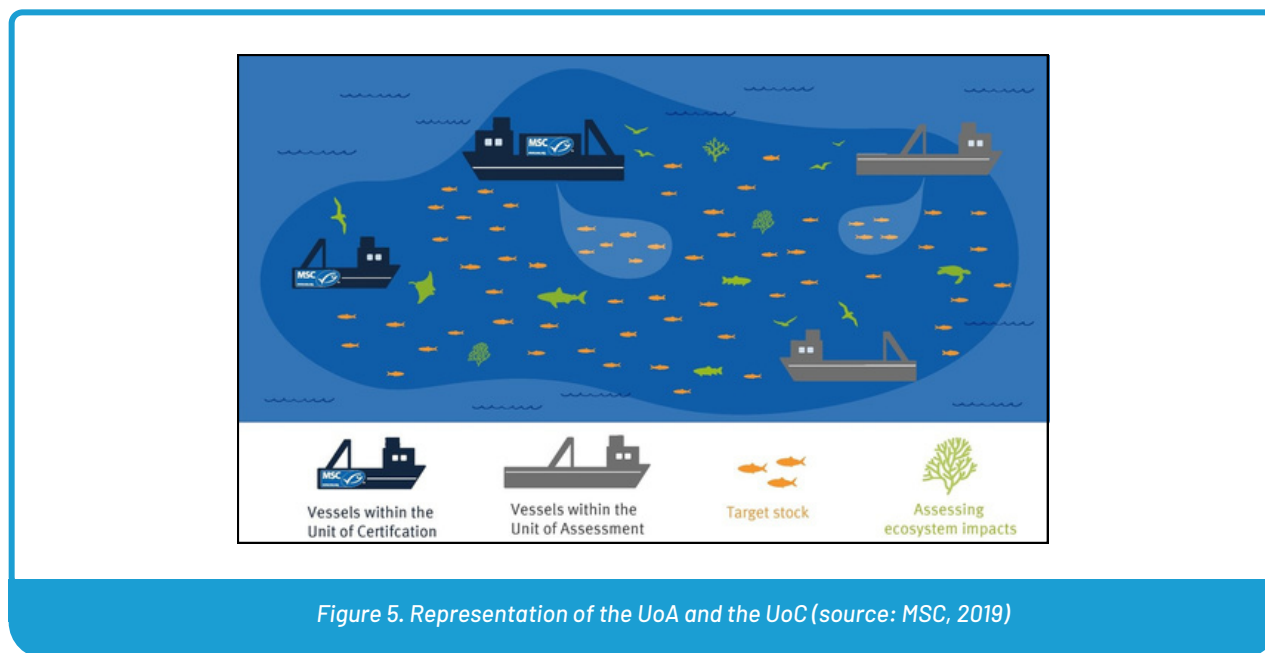


Figure 5. Representation of the UoA and the UoC (source: MSC, 2019)

In essence, the MSC certification process can be divided into two distinct, but sequential components (table 3).

MSC Certification Process	
Option 1	Option 2
Pre-assessment (PA)	Full assessment
Information gathering	Formation of assessment team
Site visit	Building the assessment tree
Client draft report	Information gathering
Final PA report	Site visit
Decision about whether to proceed to full assessment	Scoring
	Client draft report
	Peer review draft report
	Public comment draft report
	Final assessment report and determination
	Public certification report
	Certificate issued

Table 3. Marine Stewardship Council fishery certification process options and main steps (Source: prepared by the team)

MSC Pre-assessment

Duration: On average, a pre-assessment can take several weeks to a few months to complete depending on various factors such as the size and complexity of the fishery, the availability of data, and the resources allocated to the assessment process.

The pre-assessment serves as an initial phase within the MSC certification process, involving a preliminary review and gap analysis against the MSC Fisheries Standard. Typically carried out by technical experts accredited by MSC authorities, this evaluation can also be conducted by a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB). The objective of a pre-assessment is to broadly identify which areas might require improvement for a fishery to be eligible for MSC certification. During the pre-assessment, issues in a fishery's performance are identified, and a report is prepared, allowing the fishery to know if it is ready for a full assessment. While the pre-assessment process and report are typically kept confidential, remaining accessible only to the client, there are situations where they may be made publicly available. This allows stakeholders to openly discuss the findings and work together to find a path forward. This transparency becomes particularly significant when the client plans to utilise the pre-assessment report in the development of a Fishery

Improvement Project (FIP). In such cases, it is common for the pre-assessment report to be accessible to the public on the fishery progress website.



Box 3. The Pre-assessment and Scoping Document of [CAPSEN S.A.'s Atlantic tuna purse seine fishery](#) evaluated against the Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard (currently under assessment), which encompasses several vessels operating in eight different UoA. These UoAs include FiTI implementing countries such as Senegal, Mauritania, Cape Verde and Guinea. Results of the initial assessment in the Announcement Comment Draft Report (ACDR) identified two specific performance indicators: PI 3.1.1 - Legal and customary framework, and 3.2.3 - Compliance and enforcement, where scoring falls below Scoring Goal (SG) 80² due to the lack of a transparent mechanism for resolving legal disputes. The pre-assessment and scoping documents extensively discuss the lack of information, as well as concerns regarding transparency and effectiveness. The assessment team has made several recommendations to address and improve these situations.

The pre-assessment includes several steps:

1. Meeting between the fishery client, the co-client (if applicable) and the certification body;
2. A site visit, in-situ or remote . Since the global COVID-19 pandemic, most PAs have been conducted remotely;
3. A review of available data (carried out by the assessment team or individual technical expert);
4. Identification of any stakeholder issues or interests;
5. A pre-assessment report outlining the extent to which your fishery meets the MSC Fisheries Standard;
6. A description of potential obstacles that need to be addressed before your fishery meets the requirements of the MSC Fisheries Standard.

² SG80 represents a crucial threshold in the assessment process, indicating a minimum level of sustainability required for compliance with the MSC Fisheries Standard

Based on the preassessment results, the next steps include:

- If the pre-assessment finds the fishery likely to meet the MSC Standard, the technical experts/CAB will recommend that it proceed to a full assessment;
- If the technical experts/CAB identifies actions that should be undertaken by the client prior to proceeding to a full assessment, the client may wish to work with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive FIP.

According to the MSC support guidelines, it is the responsibility of the technical expert or CAB to communicate to the client the specific types and extent of data and information that will be required for a full assessment. Typically, this arrangement is established through a mutual agreement between the client and the CAB. In practice, the assessment team is introduced to the client by a co-client and asks for their collaboration to provide them all the relevant information to conduct the assessment. Normally, the pre-assessment involves less stakeholder involvement than a full assessment: the CAB coordinator (if s/he exists), the technical expert, the client group, and sometimes a funding partner or supporting NGO who is promoting the certification. During the desktop research for scoring the MSC performance indicators, the assessment team will conduct interviews with different stakeholders (either remotely or in situ), such as fishery researchers, management bodies, fishers' groups, NGOs etc to gather and validate available information³ to score the fishery. When information is absent or not available (e.g. because the national authorities have not had the technical, financial or personnel capacity to collate such data), the MSC Fisheries Standard requires the use of a risk-based framework approach (RBF) for some performance indicators to estimate aspects such as stock status of the target species, impacts of the fishery on bycatch species, habitats and ecosystem, etc.

³ Available information refers to the entirety of data required for the assessment, both publicly accessible and confidential, provided to the evaluation team by the CAB for scoring the various performance indicators. This encompasses a wide range of information, including national datasets, online references, and unpublished data.



Box 4. During the pre-assessment of the artisanal jumbo flying squid fishery in Chile (not published online), the authors of this study acted as technical experts (i.e. the Assessment team) without the participation of a CAB. The Sustainable Fishery Partnership (SFP), serving as a co-client, supported the Guayacan fishing cooperative, our client, in organising their efforts to pursue certification. The SFP facilitated our introduction to the client and other key stakeholders, whose voluntary collaboration was crucial in providing us with all the necessary information for the evaluation. The pre-assessment was conducted as a desk study over three months, utilising various methods to compile documents. These methods included web searches on portals of relevant organisations associated with the fishery (IFOP, SUBPESCA, SERNAPESCA, etc.), consultation of scientific literature, exploration of non-conventional sources (such as newspapers), and engagement with stakeholders such as fishers' associations, scientists, and administrators. To address any uncertainties regarding the fishery, multiple video calls were conducted with the aforementioned organisations, as well as representatives from the SFP and our client.

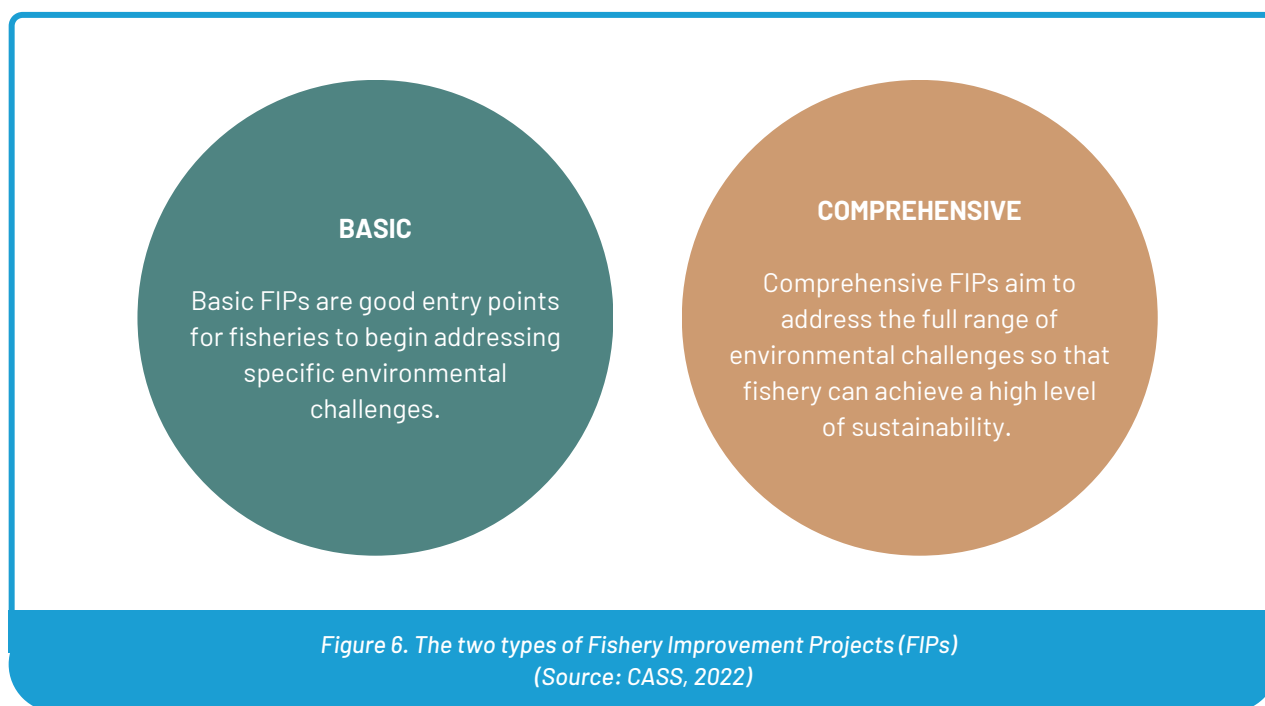
During this experience, we requested data from the Chilean fishing authority, SERNAPESCA, in order to evaluate several performance indicators and better determine the Unit of Assessment. The data was obtained by submitting an electronic form online via the SERNAPESCA website, and we received the requested information within one working week. This process of accessing public information is supported in Chile by Law No. 20,285, which regulates the principles of transparency and the right to access public information held by government agencies. Also, to evaluate several Performance Indicators⁴ (PI) of principle 3, specifically PI 3.2.2, it was possible to have online access to the meeting minutes of the Jumbo Squid management committee, which facilitated their scoring.

⁴ Performance indicators serve as benchmark criteria to evaluate fisheries, and they are divided into three primary categories: sustainable stocks, ecosystem impacts, and effective management.

Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)

Duration: As with the pre-assessment, the average time needed to develop a FIP depends on the scope and complexity of the fishery, level of stakeholder participation, and the ability and willingness of government entities to make management improvements. For example, a comprehensive FIP can extend up to five years.

If a fishery is determined to be unready for a full assessment by MSC, it may choose to participate in a FIP. A FIP is a collaborative effort among multiple stakeholders aimed at helping fisheries progress towards sustainability. There are two types of FIPs: basic and comprehensive. The primary distinction between them lies in the level of scoping involved in developing the work plan, objectives, and verification requirements (refer to Figure 6). Typically, comprehensive FIPs specifically target MSC certification.



FIPs play a crucial role in demonstrating improvements in fisheries through an objective and credible process. They encompass five stages of environmental progress (refer to Table 4). While the journey towards improvement may not always follow a linear path, the stages and statuses assist groups and companies in evaluating improvement projects and making decisions about their involvement and sourcing strategies.

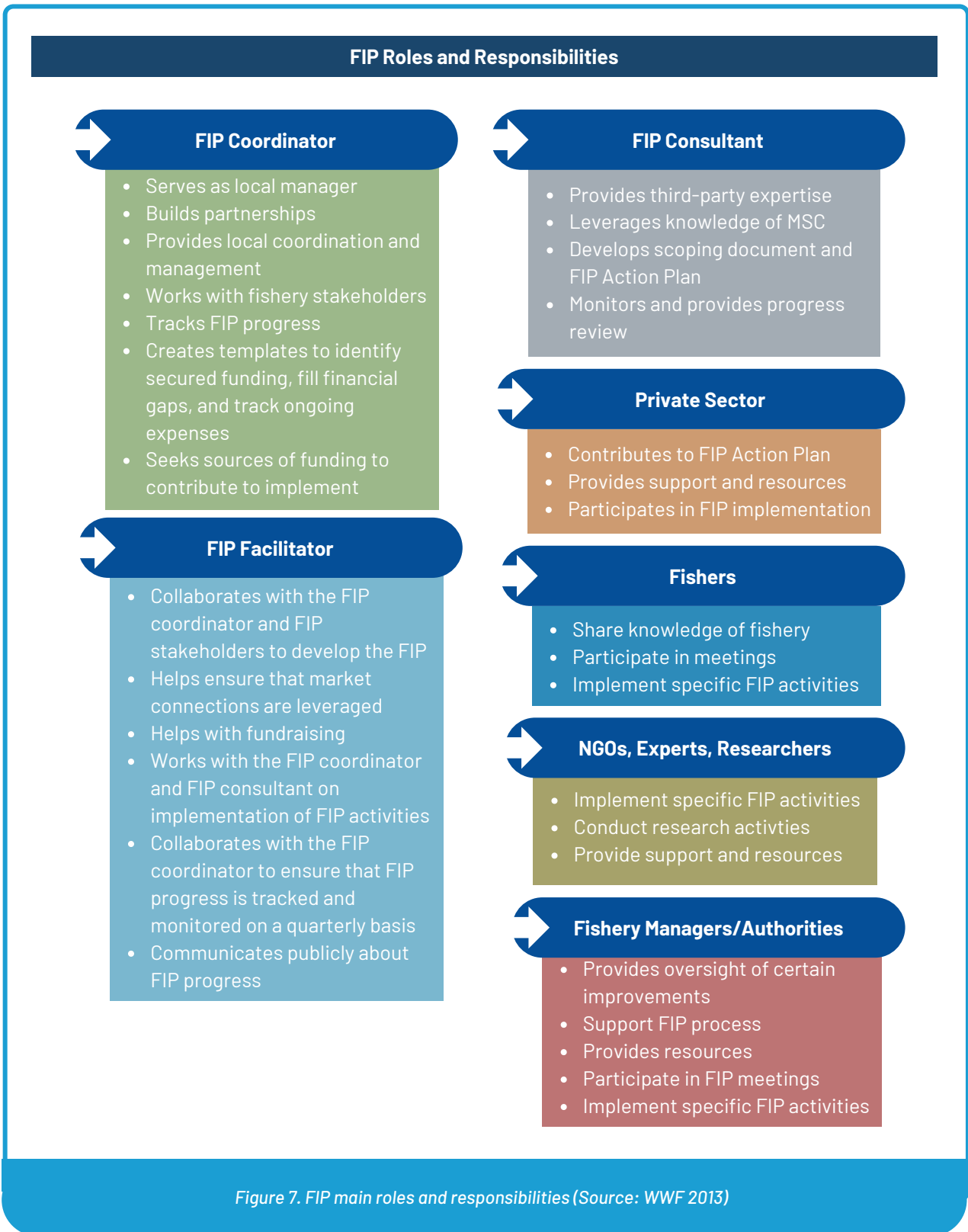
Stage 1: FIP Development		Stage 2: FIP Launch	Stage 3: Implementation	Stage 4: Improvements in Fishing Practices or Fishery Management	Stage 5: Improvements on the water
Basic: conduct a needs assessment at least of one PI from the MSC Fisheries Standard.	Comprehensive: conduct an MSC pre-assessment.	The project participants, objectives, and workplan are finalised and publicised.	Implementing the actions in the workplan and tracking its progress.	FIPs document any demonstrated improvements based on their implementation of the Workplan.	FIPs document any demonstrated improvements on the water.
Output: i) scoping document for addressing the fishery's challenges (optional); and ii) a stakeholder map to identify the most relevant parties.		Output: The FIP participant list is posted publicly, and a memorandum of understanding is signed. A working plan is developed, including a budget	Output: publicly report their progress with supporting documentation (every 6 months) and scoring (every 12 months). Independent evaluation every 3 years (for comprehensive FIPs only).	Outputs: Improvements in policy, management, or fishing practices. Increases in scores for MSC performance indicators focused on management or Information.	Outputs: Increases in scores for MSC performance indicators by verifiable change on the water.

Table 4: Description of FIP Stages (Source: adapted from Cass, 2022)

Note: Stages 4 and 5 are not necessarily sequential. These stages evaluate the FIP on two different sets of results. Both stages may not be required with every FIP.

The results from an MSC pre-assessment often serve as the foundation for a fishery's engagement in a FIP (Stage 1). FIPs typically involve the collaboration of various fishery stakeholders, including fishers, researchers, funders, managers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The objective is to advance the sustainability of the fishery, often achieved through a series of stakeholder meetings across stages 2-5. Regular tracking and reporting of progress is essential for FIPs, including public reporting of actions and results every six months, supported by documentation. Indicator scores must be updated, and supporting evidence for score changes provided annually. To ensure credibility, FIP data must undergo third-party review. [FisheryProgress](#) provides a centralised platform for FIPs to update project data every six months.

The following figure 7 outlines the roles and responsibilities of key players involved in a FIP. It is important to note that these roles and responsibilities may vary for each FIP, depending on its unique circumstances.





Box 5. The Mauritanian Small Pelagic Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) is a collaborative effort between the Mauritanian Fishery Authority, the Mauritanian Oceanographic and Fisheries Research Institute (IMROP), local businesses, and international fishmeal and oil buyers. The fishery primarily targets sardine and other small pelagic species using artisanal and coastal purse seine and pelagic trawl vessels in Mauritanian waters. The FIP's objective is to support the government in achieving robust management and long-term sustainability of the resource, as well as improving added value and food security. Initially benchmarked against the MarineTrust Standard, the FIP underwent a MSC pre-assessment in 2021, leading to the inclusion of both standards in its work plan. Recently, this FIP has progressed to The Global Standard for Responsible Supply (IFFO RS). One key focus of the FIP is redirecting the fishery towards the human consumption market. This involves increasing the proportion of small pelagic landings entering human consumption supply chains instead of fishmeal and fish oil supply chains. The FIP supports vessels and factories in enhancing their systems, including quality control, handling, sanitary processes, traceability, and certifications. It also works with the Ministry of Fisheries and the Maritime Economy (MPEM) to prioritise infrastructure improvements in the port and factory areas of Nouadhibou. The FIP has several objectives, including improving data collection on catch, effort, and biomass, supporting the implementation of a Small Pelagic Management Plan, ensuring ecosystem-based management, fostering collaboration with Morocco and Senegal for shared stock management, enhancing monitoring and enforcement, evaluating bycatch and habitat interactions, and improving stock assessments.

MSC Full Assessment

Duration: Full assessment usually takes 12 to 18 months to complete.

The full assessment is a rigorous, transparent, and independent process conducted by a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB), wherein a fishery is evaluated against the comprehensive MSC Fisheries Standard. This process is public and incorporates stakeholder participation at various stages. Similar to the pre-assessment, the full assessment examines both the fishery's management practices and its impact on the target stock and the environment. Importantly, full assessments are accessible to fisheries of all sizes and locations, irrespective of their available information. Outlined in table 5 below are the key steps involved in a full assessment.

Step	Description	Comments
Information gathering and initial scoring	<p>The client has the responsibility to thoroughly review all relevant information regarding the fishery and provide it to the CAB. This process can be facilitated by utilising a structured Document Checklist, which can be found in Annex III of this report.</p> <p>Available information encompasses both publicly accessible data obtained through online consultations and restricted or private information collected by various entities such as management authorities, research institutes, NGOs, and the client themselves. It is crucial to gather a comprehensive range of information from these sources to ensure a thorough assessment of the fishery.</p>	<p>Often, there is a lack of sufficient information provided by Clients and CABs to the assessment team. This poses significant challenges for technical experts who must complete the process of filling the information gaps, especially considering the considerable variations across countries and regions.</p> <p>On the other hand, the new MSC 3.0 standard has introduced an innovative tool called the Evidence-Based Framework (ERF). The ERF is designed to assess the accuracy and quality of information by applying it to various performance indicators. The ERF method primarily focuses on evaluating the adequacy of available information and determining whether it provides an accurate understanding of different aspects of a fishery's performance. It aims to assess the level of accuracy with a certain degree of precision. The ERF is specifically utilised for the following performance indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishery impacts in P2, which encompass the impacts on species within the scope, endangered, threatened, or protected (ETP/OOS) species, and habitats. • Compliance with management regulations, assessed in both P2 and P3. • Scoring issues related to shark finning. <p>By incorporating the ERF, the MSC 3.0 standard aims to enhance the assessment process by ensuring that information accuracy and quality are thoroughly evaluated in relation to these specific performance indicators.</p>

<p>CABs assign an assessment team</p>	<p>The assessment team analyses all relevant information provided and look for technical papers, reports and data about the fishery. They use this information to complete an initial scoring of the fishery's performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard. The initial scoring includes draft scoring rationales and supporting information. Any gaps in the information are highlighted for the CAB to address during the site visit. If the CAB expects to use the MSC's Risk-Based Framework for data-deficient fisheries, the client needs to coordinate a meeting (or multiple meetings, depending on stakeholder dynamics) in order for the CAB to ask questions of stakeholders as part of the risk-based approach. The certification body compiles this in the Announcement Comment Draft Report.</p>	<p>Typically, the technical experts selected by the CABs possess relevant experience either with the target species(s), the fishery under analysis, or the specific country/region where the assessment unit is located. This expertise proves invaluable as it significantly facilitates the work of the assessment team and the CABs, particularly in terms of information collection and analysis. In this regard, consultants can play a pivotal role, leveraging their knowledge and skills to enhance the assessment process.</p> <p>The combination of these factors mentioned above oftendetermines the willingness of CABs and technical experts to participate in an evaluation. The transparency of managing authorities and the availability of data are critical considerations that influence their decision. When these factors are favourable, it fosters a conducive environment for effective collaboration and successful assessments.</p>
<p>Announce full assessment</p>	<p>When the client is ready to proceed to full assessment, the certification body announces to stakeholders that the fishery is undergoing full assessment and publishes the Announcement Comment Draft Report (ACDR) on the MSC Track a Fishery website, and the fisheries update newsletter. The average time taken for a full assessment is 12-18 months. The length depends to some extent on the information available as well as the nature and complexity of the fishery.</p>	<p>The ACDR encompasses an initial assessment of the MSC Fisheries Standard. It introduces the composition of the assessment team and outlines their relevant working experience. Moreover, it provides the client with an opportunity to review the assessment team's score rationales and the information utilised during the assessment.</p> <p>To conduct the evaluation, the assessment team relies on information from the client's document checklist as well as data from public sources. During this stage, any information gaps necessary for scoring the fishery will be identified. The ACDR serves as a crucial step in the assessment process, ensuring transparency and allowing for a comprehensive examination of the available information.</p>
<p>Stakeholder input</p>	<p>After the announcement, stakeholders can provide written input on the</p>	<p>In many cases, international organisations that represent common interests with the resources under evaluation, such as the International Seafood</p>

	<p>Announcement Comment Draft Report, including any references or information that may be useful for the assessment team to consider. Stakeholders have time to prepare for the site visit where they can discuss the fishery with the assessment team, either in person or remotely. Stakeholders have 60 days to provide their comments on initial assessments, and 30 days for reassessments.</p>	<p>Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), among many others, raise their concerns regarding the results of the initial evaluation. It is very common that these inputs indicate the lack of information in the scores. In this way, during the following phases these issues can be resolved.</p>
Site visit and scoring	<p>The site visit is organised by the certification body. At the site visit, the assessment team interviews the client, the fishery managers and the stakeholders and consider all information and issues. The assessment team then uses all information to revise the draft scores where necessary and score the fishery's performance against the MSC fisheries standard.</p>	<p>There are two primary goals during the site visit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See the fishery in action; 2. To obtain more information about the fishery, it is recommended to conduct stakeholder interviews. <p>Typically, the client arranges these interviews, and the CAB/Assessment team oversees them. It's important to note that the client may not be permitted to attend these meetings, although this decision ultimately rests with the CAB attend.</p> <p>If the CAB/assessment team expects to use the MSC's Risk-Based Framework for data-deficient fisheries, the client will need to coordinate a meeting (or multiple meetings, depending on stakeholder dynamics) in order for the CAB/expert team to ask questions of stakeholders as part of the risk-based approach.</p>
Client and peer review	<p>The certification body compiles a Client and Peer Review Draft Report summarising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fishery's performance against the MSC Fisheries Standard; • The fishery's average score across each of the three core principles; • The proposed certification outcome; • Details of any conditions to improve the fishery's performance. 	<p>Normally, the certification body gives the client time to comment on the draft report and draft an action plan to show how the fishery will address conditions.</p> <p>At the same time, the certification body, through the MSC's Peer Review College, arranges for independent experts known as peer reviewers (typically fisheries scientists) to review the draft report. Third party scientists approve the selection of peer reviewers to ensure they give an independent review of the certification body's report.</p>

<p>Further public review of draft report</p>	<p>Once you and the independent peer reviewers have a completed review of the draft report, the certification body publishes the Public Comment Draft Report on the MSC Track a Fishery website.</p> <p>The report includes a draft determination as to whether the fishery is recommended for certification. Stakeholders who were previously involved at announcement or the site visit have 30 days to provide input on the draft report.</p>	<p>If the fishery has not been recommended for certification, the assessment process should have provided a better understanding of the fishery's strengths and weaknesses. Once the issues preventing certification have been addressed, the client can reapply for assessment anytime.</p>
<p>Final draft report and determination</p>	<p>The Final Draft Report is published on MSC Track a Fishery website and includes the assessment team's final determination of whether the fishery should be certified. It is issued once the assessment team has considered all input during the assessment and have revised the report accordingly.</p>	<p>If stakeholder, objects to the determination, they have 15 working days to submit a Notice of Objection after the Final Draft Report is published.</p>
<p>Public certification report and getting your certificate</p>	<p>If the assessment determination was certification and no objections have been raised, the fishery is successfully certified. Certification lasts for a maximum of five years subject to periodical surveillance audits. The certification body issues and publishes a Public Certification Report on the MSC Track a Fishery website, outlining the assessment process and any improvements the fishery needs to make (also called conditions). Later, the certification body issues the fishery certificate.</p>	<p>If their fishery's clients achieve certification against the MSC Chain of Custody Standard, then the products sourced from their MSC certified fishery will be eligible to carry the MSC label on their packaging or menus.</p>

Table 5. Main steps of the MSC certification process (Source: Prepared by the team)

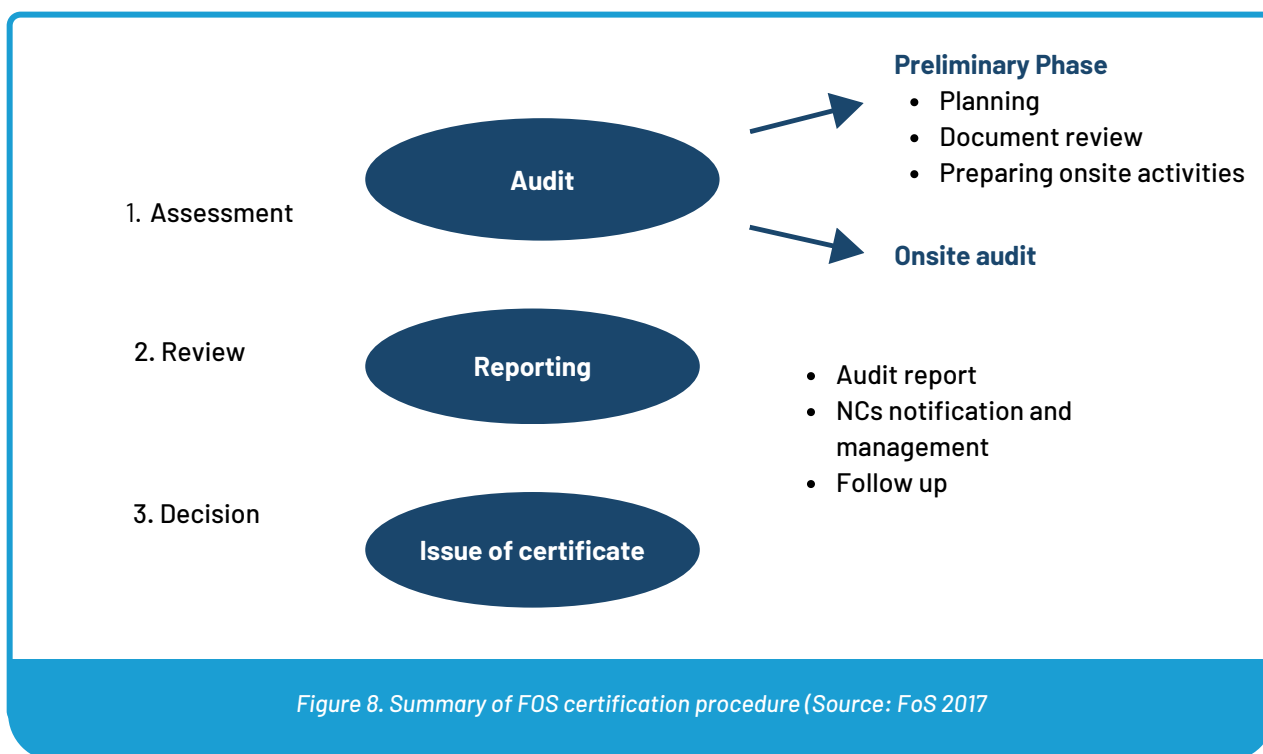


Box 6. In the event that the CAB (Conformity Assessment Body) or expert team intends to utilise the MSC's Risk-Based Framework for data-deficient fisheries, it will be necessary for the client to organise a meeting or series of meetings to facilitate stakeholder engagement. These meetings are essential for the CAB or expert team to gather relevant information and pose inquiries to stakeholders as part of the risk-based approach. The number of meetings required may vary depending on the dynamics and number of stakeholders involved. It is important to note that CABs may calculate additional costs associated with these meetings, taking into consideration factors such as stakeholder size and time availability.

The Friend of the Sea (FoS) fisheries certification process

As in the MSC certification, the FoS fisheries certification process is a voluntary certification program for sustainable fisheries based on the standard FoS Wild Standard. There are several differences between the two standards, mainly regarding the sustainability criteria applied, the certification process and information required, the labelling features and market recognition. The FoS certification process consists of three main stages (figure 8), including:

1. **Assessment:** The Friend of the Sea conducts an assessment of the fishery's practices and procedures to determine whether they meet the certification criteria. It is divided into two phases: a) preliminary (S1) and b) audit implementation phase (S2).
2. **Review:** An independent third-party auditor conducts an on-site audit of the fishery to verify that its practices and procedures are consistent with the certification criteria.
3. **Certification decision:** If the fishery meets the certification criteria, the Friend of the Sea grants it a certification.



Compared with the MSC Fisheries Standard, the FoS standard includes requirements not only related to the stock status, the environmental impact (in the FoS standard subdivided in two components, ecosystem and habitat impact and gear selectivity) and the management of the fishery (in this case, called legal conformity), but also other issues such as energy and waste management and social responsibility, which the MSC has not totally incorporated yet. In total, FoS comprises 8 requirements to be assessed:

- 1. Stock Status:** To ensure sustainability, the fishery must prove that the stock they are considering is not overexploited. Additionally, they should gather data in accordance with relevant international standards.
- 2. Ecosystem and Habitat Impact:** The fishery must take steps to minimise its impact on marine habitats and species. This includes protecting areas of high biodiversity and reducing fishing pressure on vulnerable species.
- 3. Gear Selectivity:** The fishery must use fishing methods that are not harmful to the marine environment or endangered species. This includes avoiding overfishing, bycatch, and habitat destruction.
- 4. Legal Conformity:** All fishing vessels shall be officially registered and comply with national and international regulations.
- 5. Fishery Management:** The fishery management system of which the unit of certification is a part is managed under an effective legal framework according to a regularly updated Fishery Management Plan (FMP), at the appropriate level, and complies with local, national and international laws and regulations.
- 6. Waste Management:** The fishery must minimise its environmental impact by using best practices for waste management, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and conserving energy.

7. Energy Management: The fishery must demonstrate efforts to reduce its energy consumption and carbon footprint, including through the use of renewable energy sources and the adoption of efficient production systems.

8. Social Accountability: The fishery must demonstrate that it operates in a socially responsible manner, with respect for workers' rights, community engagement, and fair labour practices.

In contrast with the MSC certification standard, the responsibility for providing the necessary information for the assessment falls mainly on the fishery that seeks certification. The fishery is required to complete a self-assessment questionnaire that provides information about their fishing practices and management systems. This questionnaire covers topics such as fishing methods, bycatch reduction, endangered species protection, ecosystem impact, social responsibility, and legal compliance. In addition to the self-assessment questionnaire, the fishery is also required to provide additional documentation, including catch data, management plans, and any other relevant information requested by the auditor. The auditor collects and then verifies all the information provided by the fishery through on-site inspections and interviews with fishery staff. Contrary to the MSC, the assessment results do not undergo an external peer review process. Instead, the fishery's expert-led audit internally evaluates its compliance with the standard.

IV. ANALYSIS OF THE FITI STANDARD IN REGARD TO THE MSC AND FOS CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

In this section, the consultants have conducted a review of the 12 transparency requirements (and their respective indicators) outlined in the FiTI Standard (section B.1). In addition, the consultants have reviewed the data presented in the FiTI Reports of Seychelles and Mauritania in order to fulfil the FiTI Standard’s transparency requirements. This is with the aim of understanding how the data FiTI implementing countries are required to publish can be used as a potential source of information for a certification assessment process for the two main certification programs (MSC and FoS), as well as the potential resulting benefits of this.

To enhance the clarity of the FiTI Standard, each of the 12 transparency requirements (referred to as thematic areas) is further broken down into unique indicators, as shown below. Furthermore, concrete examples are given regarding the outcomes of public access to such information, as demonstrated in the Seychelles and Mauritania FiTI Reports, before a brief linkage is described between public access to such information and whether this bears relevance for the MSC and FoS certification processes.

Transparency requirements

B.1.1 Public Registry of National Fisheries Laws, Regulations and Official Policy Documents

Objective: to ensure public access to all aspects of the legal and regulatory framework around which the national fisheries sector is structured, including national legislation as well as fisheries management plans. It is divided into two validator indicators

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.1.1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all national legislation and official policy documents related to the marine fisheries sector.
B.1.1.2	The National MSG must decide on which areas of fisheries this applies to; however, at a minimum, copies of national laws, decrees and policy documents on fisheries management, trade and investment, as well as fisheries management plans must be included.

Table 6. Transparency indicators of B.1.1 of the FiTI Standard

For example, in the case of Seychelles, a consolidated list of national legislation and official policy documents was first published in the 2019 FiTI Report and made publicly accessible on the website of the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE). It covers all relevant fisheries legislation and fisheries-related policies of importance in the country, as well as other relevant documents, such as fisheries plans and strategies (FiTI 2023a). In the case of Mauritania, a consolidated list of national legislation and official policy documents was published in the 2018 FiTI Report and updated and made publicly available during the 2019-20 FiTI reporting process, this list was updated and made publicly accessible on the FiTI-Mauritania website (FiTI 2023b).

Public access to such information is very relevant for both certification standards, as that information on fisheries laws and management plans needs to be collected by the experts. In the case of the MSC Fisheries Standard, this information is used for the management section (Principle 3) In particular P.I. 3.1.1 'Legal and/or customary framework' and 3.2.1 'Fishery-specific objectives' cover that issue, but they are also covered in other areas or the MSC Fisheries Standard (e.g. management plan for P1, legislation to protect species in P2, etc). In the case of the FoS standard, requirement 5.1.1.b requires "the fishery management system of which the unit of certification is a part to be managed under an effective legal framework according to a regularly updated Fishery Management Plan (FMP), at the appropriate level, and complies with local, national and international laws and regulations". This is exactly what is covered by requirement B1.1. of the FiTI Standard.

The consultants deem it to be important to, in that same section of the FiTI Standard (B.1.1), also require countries to publish the main international treaties, policy instruments and best practices to which they are signatory of or adhere to (from RFMOs or international agreements, such as the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), etc), as well as legislation related to the (protected and non-protected) species/habitats which could be impacted by the fishing activity. The inclusion of such information would also help to address some issues in Principle 1 and Principle 2 of the MSC Fisheries Standard and Requirement 1 and 3 of the FoS (for example, for the MSC certification process, it would help to identify ETP species).

B.1.2 Fisheries Tenure Arrangements

Objective: to ensure public access to information about how fishing rights are accessed, used, and managed across marine fisheries.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.2_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of laws and decrees on fisheries tenure arrangements, including information as specified in requirement B.1.2 of the FiTI Standard.
B.1.2_2	In case tenure, access or user rights are not codified, information on the current and planned approaches to securing such rights must be published.

Table 7. Transparency indicators of B.1.2 of the FiTI Standard

As part of Seychelles' FiTI reporting efforts, the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) has published summary descriptions relating to the country's four main fisheries (i.e. commercial, recreational, sport, scientific) including information on fees payable, duration, fishing conditions, transferability and divisibility of such rights (FiTI 2023a). Mauritania's FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (NMSG) has also published summary descriptions relating to the country's five main fisheries (i.e. subsistence, sport, exploratory, scientific, and commercial) via its FiTI Reports. In both cases, it is the first time that such information has been made accessible to the wider public (FiTI 2023 a and b).

Specific references to fishery tenure arrangements are not directly included in either of the MSC or FoS standards, although exploitation policy of the concessions of the rights of use (national regime/foreign regime) and the existence of 'traditional sites' and the respect for rights are covered in the management section of both standards (in the MSC, it is covered by Scoring Issue (S.I.) c) respect for rights in P.I. 3.1.1 Legal and/or customary framework, whereas the FoS refers to "the rights of the small-scale fishing communities" in requirement 5.5.1b). The conditions applicable to fishing rights in relation to fishing effort, landings, ecosystem impacts of fishing, transshipment, catch reporting and other issues must be also considered in the assessment process by the different experts.

B1.3 Foreign Fishing Access Agreements

Objective: to ensure public access to information on the rights and responsibilities assumed by foreign fishing vessels operating in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, as well as the FiTI's country-flagged fishing vessels operating in the waters of third countries.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.3_1	The implementing country must publish the contracts of all foreign fishing access agreements, including their associated protocol(s).
B.1.3_2	The implementing country must publish studies or reports undertaken by national authorities or foreign parties to an agreement providing evaluation or oversight of the agreement, if available.
B.1.3_3	The implementing country must publish documentation derived from any national stakeholder consultation undertaken with respect to the preparation, negotiation or monitoring of the agreements, if available.

Table 8. Transparency indicators of B.1.3 of the FiTI Standard

Due to the FiTI reporting process, both Seychelles and Mauritania have published a number of foreign fishing access agreements. In particular, the agreements published by Seychelles include those allowing the European Union fleet to fish in Seychelles' waters, the agreement allowing Mauritius-flagged vessels to fish in Seychelles' waters and the agreement allowing Seychelles-flagged vessels to fish in Mauritanian waters, as well as private agreements with Taiwanese fishing companies. In the case of Mauritania, the MPEM has released information on all foreign fishing access agreements in force between 2018 and 2020, including international agreements as well as access arrangements for foreign fishing vessels operating under the foreign regime for the exploitation of user rights concessions in waters under Mauritanian jurisdiction (FiTI 2023b).

Generally speaking, the MSC and the FoS standards do not oblige the country whose fishery is being assessed to publish the contracts of foreign fishing access agreements. However, B1.3_2 and B1.3_3 directly request publication of the studies or reports evaluating those agreements and to the stakeholder discussions and consultations prior to negotiation, monitoring and signing of new foreign fishing access agreements (see table 8).

In the MSC Fisheries Standard, monitoring and evaluation for the fishery under assessment is covered by PI 3.2.4 'Monitoring and management performance evaluation' in Principle 3, requiring mechanisms to be in place that evaluate at least key parts of the fishery-specific management system. In the case of the stakeholder consultation process, it is covered by the Performance Indicator PI 3.1.2 'Consultation, roles and responsibilities', scoring issue b) 'Consultation Processes' and c) 'Participation' in Principle 3. It requires the management

system to include consultation processes that regularly seek and accept relevant information, including local knowledge, demonstrating consideration of the information and explaining how it is used or not used.

Similarly, requirements 5.1.2 and 5.2.3 of the FoS standard deal with consultation process and reviews and evaluations of the efficacy of the management measures respectively. Although again not directly related to foreign fishing access agreements, the publication of such information in the FiTI Reports would help to better understand how both processes (stakeholder consultation and evaluation) are conducted by the authorities managing the fishery which could potentially help to speed up the assessment process and reach better scores for the fishery under assessment.

B.1.4 The State of Fisheries Resources

Objective: to enhance public access to information regarding the health of marine fisheries resources. This requirement has three sub requirements, and they refer to the publication of stock assessments for the national resources.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.4_1	The implementing country must publish the contracts of all foreign fishing access agreements, including their associated protocol(s).
B.1.4_2	The implementing country must publish studies or reports undertaken by national authorities or foreign parties to an agreement providing evaluation or oversight of the agreement, if available.
B.1.4_3	The implementing country must publish on ongoing or planned efforts to update and expand fish stock assessments.

Table 9. Transparency indicators of B.1.4 of the FiTI Standard

In Seychelles, all the stock assessments reports prepared by the SFA and the IOTC since 2017 are now published online, including some species of importance in the artisanal fishery (sea cucumber) (FiTI 2023a). In Mauritania, the IMROP already published on its own website the national report as well as various scientific articles on the state of fish stocks. As a result of the FiTI implementation process, the national authorities have also published information from the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF)/FAO Small Pelagic Working Group on the assessment of small pelagic off Northwest Africa organized in 2019 and 2021 (FiTI 2023b).

The information on stock assessments is fundamental for Principle 1 of the MSC Fisheries Standard, and it is used by the P1 expert to assess the status of the target stocks. Although

this information is normally available on the national scientific bodies or RFMO's websites, having all the recent stock assessments published on a single website would facilitate efficient access by the expert. Similarly, under the FoS standard the status of the target resource/s must be assessed in requirement 1.

The FiTI Reports also normally include summary tables on the stock status of the most important national species, using easy-to-understand colour-coding to indicate the health of fish stocks and therefore improve understanding. This could be used directly in the fisheries assessment reports as background information and to improve public understanding, as in many cases the stock status information published by national research bodies and RFMOs is difficult to understand for a non-scientific reader.

B.1.5 Large-Scale Fisheries

Objective: to enhance public access to information regarding the industrial fishing vessels allowed to fish in national jurisdictional waters (and for national-flagged vessels in third country waters/on the High Seas).

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.5_1	The implementing country must provide an online, up-to-date registry of all nationally-flagged and foreign-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, and of all nationally-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in third countries' marine jurisdictional waters and on the High Seas, including information on 14 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard.
B.1.5_2	The implementing country must publish accessible and complete information on payments made by each vessel listed in the vessel registry for their fishing activities, including information on 14 attributes, as listed in section B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard.
B.1.5_3	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by nationally-flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry, including according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type as well as marine jurisdictional waters, High Seas and third country waters, presented for the flag state.
B.1.5_4	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded retained catches by foreign-flagged vessels listed in the vessel registry according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear type, presented for each flag state separately.
B.1.5_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded landings in national ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag state separately.
B.1.5_6	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of annual recorded transshipments at sea or landings in foreign ports according to species or species groups caught in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag state separately.

B.1.5_7	The implementing country must publish information on recorded quantities of discards according to species or species groups, disaggregated by fishing authorisations or gear types, presented for each flag state separately, if available.
B.1.5_8	The implementing country must publish the most recent studies and reports on recorded fishing effort by vessels, disaggregated by fishery or gear type and by flag state, if available.
B.1.5_9	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the large-scale fishing sector, if available.

Table 10. Transparency indicators of B.1.5 of the FiTI Standard

This requirement includes nine indicators which will not be covered here (see instead table 10) However, several of them (B.1.5_3, B.1.5_4, B.1.5_5, B.1.5_6, B.1.5_7 and B.1.5_8) include relevant information which could be used in a certification assessment, such as information on catches, landings, discards, etc. This information is very relevant to build catch profiles and identify which species are being impacted by the assessed fisheries. However, a limitation is that in the MSC and FoS standards, when assessing a fishery, units of certification (UoC)/units of assessment (UoA) are defined. Therefore, the information on catches/discards etc shown in/on the FiTI reports/government website should be detailed enough to allow users to isolate data on for individual vessels/groups of vessels (UoA/UoC). The FiTI Standard does not require implementing countries to publish such granular information in terms of large-scale catch, discard or landing data.

The list of nationally-flagged and foreign-flagged large-scale vessels authorised to fish in the country's marine jurisdictional waters, as required by indicator B.1.5_1 of the FiTI Standard, could also support the MCS and FoS certification processes by helping assessors to crosscheck such a list to identify specific vessels. For example, in the case of Seychelles, the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) compiled and published a spreadsheet with details of all large-scale fishing vessels licenced to fish in Seychelles' waters in 2020, as well as Seychelles-flagged vessels operating in third countries. In the case of Mauritania, the Directorate of the Merchant Navy (DMM) compiled a spreadsheet of large-scale fishing vessels authorised to fish in Mauritanian waters in 2018, and although this data was incomplete (as stated by Mauritania's own FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group although it has since been updated), during a stakeholder interview carried out as part of this report, a fisheries experts with experience in Mauritania noted her use of the list to complete some information required for a FIP update.

Information on evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the large-scale fishing sector could be also used for the evaluation section in both MSC and FoS standards, already covered in section B1.1.

B.1.6 Small-Scale Fisheries

Objective: to enhance public access to information around the scope as well as the economic, social and food & nutrition contributions of small-scale fisheries.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.6_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing or gear types.
B.1.6_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of fishing licenses issued to small-scale fishing vessels, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations.
B.1.6_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of fishers engaged in the fishing sector, indicating the gender of fishers and the proportion that are engaged in full-time work, seasonal or part time fishing, occasional fishing or recreational fishing.
B.1.6_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total payments made from small-scale fisheries related to fishing authorisations, catches and landings, disaggregated according to categories of fishing authorisations or gear types and indicating the recipient of these payments.
B.1.6_5	The implementing country must publish information on the quantity of catches, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.
B.1.6_6	The implementing country must publish information on the total volumes of discards, disaggregated according to species, categories of fishing authorisations and gear types.
B.1.6_7	The implementing country must publish evaluations or audits of the economic, social and food security contribution of the small-scale fisheries sector, if available.

Table 11. Transparency indicators of B.1.6 of the FITI Standard

This requirement includes seven indicators (see table 11), the most relevant for eco-certification purposes being the one which requests information on catches, landings and discards, among others. As in the previous case, although the data provided in this requirement would hypothetically be very relevant for the assessment of the fishery on bycatch species, which is covered in the MSC Principle 2 and FoS requirement 3, data at the fishery/UoC level would be necessary to be used by the assessors when assessing the fishery.

Data on discards is covered by B.1.6_6. An important aspect regarding discards is that the FoS standard specifically requires in 3.3 “The level of discard in the UoC shall not be over 8% of total catch (in weight)” for a fishery to be certified, whereas the MSC does not indicate a specific level of discard.

In the case of both Seychelles and Mauritania, data on catches (disaggregated by species)

and discards (B.1.6_5 and B.1.6_6) in the small-scale fleet do not seem complete yet (although discards in artisanal fisheries seem to be very low in both countries) (FiTI 2023a and b).

B.1.7 Post-Harvest Sector and Fish Trade

Objective: to enhance public access to key information in the post-harvest value chain, in particular the scope of a country's reliance on fish-related imports and exports.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.7_1	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of fish and fish products produced, disaggregated by species and fish products.
B.1.7_2	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantity of imports of fish and fish products, disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their origin.
B.1.7_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total quantities of exports of fish and fish products, disaggregated by species and fish products, indicating the country of their destination.
B.1.7_4	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in commercial fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.
B.1.7_5	The implementing country must publish information on the total number of people employed in informal fisheries sectors, including the number of men and women working in specific sub-sectors.
B.1.7_6	The implementing country must publish reports or studies on wages in the post-harvest sector, if available.

Table 12. Transparency indicators of B.1.7 of the FiTI Standard

This requirement includes a number of validation indicators related to the volume of fish processed, exports and imports, among other issues (see table 12). The information provided in this requirement could likely be used to support the background section and to crosscheck some information about the fishery/fisheries under assessment in the certification process, but it is not considered very relevant for MSC/FoS assessments.

B.1.8 Fisheries Law Enforcement

Objective: to enhance public access to information around the scale and impact of non-compliance with national fisheries regulations (enforcement and compliance in the country, IUU fishing, etc.)

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.8_1	The implementing country must publish information on the national activities and strategies used for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector with national legislation.
B.1.8_2	The implementing country must publish information on the financial and human resources deployed by the government to ensure compliance with national legislation.
B.1.8_3	The implementing country must publish information on the total numbers of inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports.
B.1.8_4	The implementing country must publish a record of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector for the last five years, indicating the name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed.

Table 13. Transparency indicators of B.1.8 of the FiTI Standard

This requirement includes four validation indicators (see table 13). The two first indicators require the country to publish information on the national activities and strategies, and the financial and human resources used/deployed for ensuring compliance of fishing vessels and the post-harvest sector. Validation indicators B.1.8_3 and B.1.8_4 deal with inspections and sanctions/convictions.

The availability of this information is very important for the management section of the certification assessment processes for both the MSC and the FoS. In the MCS standard, the relevant section is P.I. 3.2.3 'Compliance and enforcement' (under the S.I. (a) MCS implementation, b) Sanctions and c) Compliance). Interestingly, some P3 experts typically complain that this information is not always available, or when it is, is difficult to find. Having such information published through a FiTI implementation process would therefore assist them in this regard (B.1.8_4 of the FiTI Standard specifically requests "the information of convictions for major offences in the fisheries sector to be published indicating the name of the company or vessel owner, the nature of the offence and the penalty imposed"). The availability of this information via FiTI Reports could help assess the assessed fleet's compliance with regulations, although it would need to be sufficiently detailed and specifically linked to that group of vessels. The inclusion of offences other than those considered as 'major' would also be interesting.

In the case of the FoS, compliance with laws is assessed under several requirements of the component 4 - Legal conformity. For example, information on the total numbers of

inspections of fishing vessels at sea and in ports is available to the Seychelles' government (on a quarterly basis), with annual totals published as part of the SFA Annual Report. The 2020 FiTI Report also included a list of offences but only in a limited number of cases was the name of the vessel involved stated (FiTI 2023a). Although that information would help to form a general overview of the number of offences in the country, with no information on the fleet/s involved, it could not be used to assess compliance with laws for a specific fishery.

B.1.9 Labour Standards

Objective: to enhance public access to information around national authorities' strategies and activities to ensure that high labour standards are applied to all parts of a national fisheries sector.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.9_1	The implementing country must publish a summary description of national laws on labour standards applicable for national and foreign workers employed in the fishing sector at sea and in the post-harvest fisheries sector.
B.1.9_2	The implementing country must publish information on the public authorities responsible for monitoring and enforcing laws on labour standards.
B.1.9_3	The implementing country must publish documents, including policy statements and evaluations, regarding a national strategy, if applicable, or related activities for enforcing the laws on labour standards in the fisheries sector, including total figures on the financial and human resources deployed by the government.
B.1.9_4	The implementing country must publish information on the role and legal standing of anybody that has a governmental mandate to receive labour-related complaints from workers in the fishing sector and in the post-harvest sector.
B.1.9_5	The implementing country must publish the total number of offences committed by employers in the fisheries sector that have been resolved by the authorities.

Table 14. Transparency indicators of B.1.9 of the FiTI Standard

Although this transparency requirement is not directly included in the MSC Fisheries Standard, among their roles, CABs must review whether any labour rights issues occur in the fishery subject to assessment. This transparency requirement may therefore help the CAB to assess labour standards in a fishery, it would however be necessary for this information to be made available at the fishery level. Within the FiTI Standard, this transparency requirement seems only to apply to the national level, not a fishery-specific level. Yet if no labour offences are recorded for the fisheries sector as a whole, such as in Seychelles in recent years (FiTI 2023a), it is understood that the fishery being subject to MSC certification would be valid to proceed to a full assessment.

The FoS Standard assesses 'Respect for human rights and compliance with national regulations' and 'ILO on labour issues' under the component 8 – Social accountability of the FoS standard. This also refers to the UoC.

B.1.10 Fisheries Subsidies

Objective: to enhance public access to information around the extent and purpose of government subsidies offered to the fisheries sector.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.10_1	The government must publish information on the type, values and recipients of government financial transfers or subsidies to the fisheries sector.
B.1.10_2	The government must publish information on the average annual value of any fuel subsidies per unit of fuel in nominal and percentage terms.

Table 15. Transparency indicators of B.1.10 of the FiTI Standard

The MSC does not name individual subsidy types as being harmful or not harmful to fishing. However, when considering the effectiveness of a management strategy and its ability to meet P1 and P2 outcomes, CABs should take into account any problems that might be caused by fishing overcapacity, or other issues, that can result from subsidies. Performance indicator 3.2.2. 'Decision-making processes' of the MSC Fisheries Standard specifically indicates that for the P.I. to attain SG60 level, at least a general summary of information on subsidies, allocation, compliance and fisheries management decisions should be made available to stakeholders on request. It is therefore considered that public access to information described by this transparency requirement of the FiTI Standard would help double-check that information.

No references to subsidies (or related issues, such as overcapacity) has been found in the FoS standard.

To date, there is a lack of comprehensive information on subsidies in the fisheries sector both in Seychelles and Mauritania, the two countries which have so far published FiTI Reports (FiTI 2023 b and c).

B.1.11 Official Development Assistance

Objective: to increase public access to information regarding official development assistance (ODA), which can represent an important source of funds and support for a country's fisheries sector.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.11_1	The government must publish information on public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors, including information on the projects' value, purpose and outputs.
B.1.11_2	The government must publish corresponding project evaluations, if applicable.

Table 16. Transparency indicators of B.1.11 of the FITI Standard

This transparency requirement includes two indicators obliging a government to publish information on public sector projects related to fisheries and marine conservation, funded by bilateral, multilateral and private donors; and to publish evaluations conducted for those projects (table 16).

Generally speaking, ODA as such is not directly considered in the MSC Fisheries Standard, although access to this information may improve the information about fisheries-related projects developed by the different organisations in the country where the fishery occurs. This, in turn, may also help to identify relevant stakeholders involved in fisheries/marine conservation projects and to select them as relevant for the site visit. As already indicated in B.1.3, monitoring and evaluation for the fishery under assessment is covered in the MSC Fisheries Standard by PI 3.2.4 'Monitoring and management performance evaluation', although the MSC Fisheries Standard refers to fishery-specific objectives and not to other relevant marine projects.

Similarly, for the FoS certification audit, public access to information in this transparency requirement could help identify relevant stakeholders in the country, which is not always an easy task. The evaluation of the efficacy of management measures is also required by the FoS standard, however it does not cover wider evaluations.

B.1.12 Beneficial Ownership

Objective: to enhance public access to information around the existing legal and procedural framework of who ultimately owns and controls the companies operating in a country's fisheries sector.

ID	Transparency indicator
B.1.12_1	The government must publish the legal basis for beneficial ownership transparency in the country.
B.1.12_2	The government must publish the country's legal definition of beneficial ownership.
B.1.12_3	The government must publish information on the availability of a public register of beneficial owners.
B.1.12_4	The government must publish the rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership in filings by companies to corporate regulators, stock exchanges or agencies regulating the access to fisheries.
B.1.12_5	The government must publish the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries.

Table 17. Transparency indicators of B.1.12 of the FiTI Standard

This transparency requirement includes five indicators, requiring the government to publish legislation on beneficial ownership, the country's legal definition of that term as well as whether they keep a register of beneficial owners and if this register is publicly available (table 17). It also requires the government to publish rules and procedures for incorporating beneficial ownership (for fisheries) and the current status and discussions around beneficial ownership transparency in fisheries. The two countries used as examples here, Seychelles and Mauritania, are considered to be compliant with this requirement (FiTI 2023 a and b). However, no reference is made to this issue in either of the eco-certification standards analysed in this report.

V. CASE STUDY: ONGOING MSC CERTIFICATION PROCESSES IN SEYCHELLES

In Seychelles, a small country heavily dependent on its regional waters for tuna resources, the landscape of MSC certifications and fishing management processes is very dynamic. Currently, three clients are undergoing full assessment for certification, while an additional four comprehensive Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) aim to enhance fisheries practices. These certifications cover a significant portion of both Seychelles' domestic fishing fleet and foreign fleets operating within its waters. Although the management of all fisheries falls under the jurisdiction of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) at the regional level, the certification processes also interact with Seychelles' national fishing management system to evaluate many of the MSC performance indicators.

Evidence gathered in this context reveals an increasing utilisation of FiTI Reports, particularly in the scoring of Principle 3 (P3), specifically Sub-Indicators (SI) 3.1.2 and 3.2.3. FiTI Reports are frequently cited to support the score rationale, demonstrating a direct influence on the scoring process. In other cases, the reports are recognised as a strength of the management system. Therefore, Seychelles is at the forefront of pioneering the use of FiTI in scoring issues related to MSC Principle 3, indicating the initial stages of implementation. These reports also highlight the effective utilisation of information in determining scoring rationale.

The exchange of information and capacity-building among FIP actors and the Seychelles FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) ensures that the perspectives and interests of both standards are considered by the Seychelles Fishing Authority. By sharing expertise and standard concepts, the management authority can enhance overall fisheries management within the country.

However, it is important to note that the number, regularity, and extent of impact evaluations for both standards should be proportional to the maturity, scale, and intensity of activities within a country. In the case of the FiTI implementation process and the MSC certification process, any comprehensive impact assessment must consider not only the maturity of FiTI within Seychelles but also the time frame required by MSC certification, which typically takes 3-5 years to complete a FIP-Certification process.

Case study	Description
<p>Fishery: ANABAC Indian Ocean purse seine skipjack fishery CAB: Bureau Veritas Client: ANABAC MSC status: Fishery in assessment (PCDR) June 2023 Source: https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/anabac-indian-ocean-purse-seine-skipjack-fishery/</p>	<p>Public Comment Draft Report June 2023 (PCDR): Significant strength under principle 3.2.3: “According to the figures provided by the SFA, all Seychelles-flagged industrial tuna purse seiners have VMS. The same applies to the European Union fleet. The SFA’s fisheries inspection activity report for the period 2018–2022 in Seychelles found that 22 reports of alleged infringements were issued to the Spanish fleet using Seychelles as an operational port. Seychelles, as a FiTI implementing country, periodically publishes reports within the framework of this initiative. These reports cover different aspects related to the transparency of fishing activities linked to the country. Among other data, this includes information on fishing activities including information on existing agreements for access of third country vessels to Seychelles’ waters or access of Seychelles’ vessels to third country waters.</p> <p>Therefore, the assessment has been completed and the condition has surpassed the target, which led to its closure. This indicates that the intended improvement has been successful.</p>
<p>Fishery: Echebatar Indian Ocean Purse Seine Skipjack Tuna CAB: Bureau Veritas Client: Pesqueras Echebatar, S.A. (Echebatar) MSC status: Fisheries certified since November 2018 until May 2024. Third surveillance report. Source: https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/echebatar-indian-ocean-purse-seine-skipjack-tuna/@@view</p>	<p>In the third surveillance report (Oct. 2022) it mentioned: “The second annual report covering calendar year 2020 has already been published (FiTI, 2021b). The report highlights the improvements carried out by Seychelles in terms of transparency (including consultations and participation). There are no significant negative remarks addressed to industrial purse seine fishery. It is currently expected that the validation of the Seychelles fisheries management against the FiTI standard will be completed by October 2022.” “Based on the improvements showed by Seychelles in the FiTI report (and its imminent validation with the FiTI standard), the lack of negative comments related to the industrial purse seine tuna fishery (national and foreign fleets), and also considering that score provided to the AGAC fleet in Akroyd et al (2022), the team decided to close condition on PI 3.1.2 and re-score that PI.”</p> <p>In the second surveillance report (ago, 2021) it was mentioned that: “Although it cannot be considered as a modification in the National fisheries management, it is noticeable that in March 2021 Seychelles has become the first country to submit its report to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)”</p> <p>During the FiTI process, SFA published the two agreements with the government of Mauritius, which allowed Seychelles-flagged vessels to fish in Mauritian water and Mauritius-flagged vessel to fish in Seychelles’ waters (the agreement with the EU was already available to the public at the EU website and is also available on the Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy website).</p> <p>However, the FiTI Report highlights several opportunities for improvement. The Seychelles FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder</p>

Group (MSG) determined 34 recommendations on how to further strengthen fisheries transparency in the country. In particular, the FiTI National MSG makes the following recommendations to the Seychelles authorities to improve transparency regarding foreign fishing access agreements: The Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy (MFBE) should publish online all foreign fishing access agreements and associated protocols.- MFBE should publish online all studies or reports related to the evaluation or oversight of these agreements, which have either been undertaken by national authorities or foreign parties. SFA should publish any assessment regarding compliance of fishing vessels with the terms and conditions set forth in their respective access agreement, once available. MFBE should publish information from previous (prior to 2019) and recent national stakeholder consultations undertaken with respect to the preparation, negotiation or monitoring of foreign fishing access agreements. Information related to future national stakeholder consultations should be published in a timely manner.

Fishery: Skipjack Tuna Indian Ocean purse seine fishery (full assessment)
CAB: Control Union
 MSC status: in assessment (ACDR just released April 2023)
Client: Dongwon Industries
Source:
<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/echebatar-indian-ocean-purse-seine-skipjack-tuna/@@view>

Cited in the Country description in the ACDR (April 2023): “The Seychelles committed to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative in 2019 (FiTI) and has just (2023) published its report (detailed and summary sections) for 2021 (Seychelles, 2023). The reports are put together by a National Multi-Stakeholder Group and provide valuable information on key aspects of national fisheries management of large-scale fisheries regarding information and processes at Coastal State (and Port State) levels, such as the number of vessels licensed to fish in their waters, including all vessels in this fishery (2 purse seiners and 1 supply vessel registered in Korea), the catches of foreign-flagged industrial purse seine fishing vessels in 2021 (Mt) in its EEZ and calculated for the High Seas and other EEZs, etc.”

Fishery: Skipjack Tuna Indian Ocean purse seine fishery (FAD Fishery)
CAB: Key Traceability Ltd.
MSC status: FIP: March 2021 - March 2024
Client: Dongwon Industries
Source:
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-tuna-purse-seine-dongwon-industries>

From PA Report (Feb. 2021) PI 3.2.4 - Management performance evaluation
 Seychelles: “There are mechanisms in place to evaluate key parts of the fishery-specific management. Reports are submitted to IOTC regarding the performance of the fishery, implementation of CMMs, catch and effort data. SG60 is met for Sla. According to DeAlteris et al., 2018, “work undertaken by the Blue Economy with the input of independent consultants and the advice from such as the World Bank and FiTI (Standing, 2016) constitutes an **occasional external review of the Seychelles management system**”. SG80 is met for Slb.”

Fishery: AGAC four oceans Integral Purse Seine Tropical Tuna Fishery (Indian Ocean)
CAB: Acoura Marine Ltd. Trading as LRQA.
Status: It was initially a FIP from June 2023 to August 2027, with a final draft report in October

In the PCDR, a comment from the Coalition for Transparent Tuna Fisheries (CTTF) states: “Bilateral agreements have not been made available to stakeholders, only to the audit team. This compromises the transparency of the process, especially as they were used to determine the assessment outcome.” The CABs answer: Those that relate to the Seychelles where there are regional bilateral agreements as well as the new SFPAs with the EU available on: <https://www.sfa.sc/index.php/doc/publications/fishingagreement>”

2021. It is now out of the program.
Client: Association of Large Tuna Freezers (AGAC)
Source:
 (full assessment)
<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/agac-four-oceans-integral-purse-seine-tropical-tuna-fishery/@assessments> ;
 (FIP)
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-yellowfin-bigeye-tuna-purse-seine-agac>

Fishery: Indian Ocean tuna - purse seine (SIOTI)
CAB: Poseidon
MSC status: FIP April 2017- 31 January 2024
Client (pre-assessment): Seychelles Fisheries Authority)
Source:
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/indian-ocean-tuna-purse-seine-sioti>

Fishery: Indian Ocean Longline Tuna Fue Shin Fishery (FIP)
CAB: Ocean Outcomes Co, Ltd.
Status: FIP April 2023-2028
Client: FSF (Fue Shin Fishery) Co, Ltd.
Source:
<https://fisheryprogress.org/fip-profile/pacific-ocean-tuna-longline-fue-shin>

Despite this FIP encompassing important fisheries within the Seychelles EEZ, there has been no mention of FiTI in any discussions.

From pre-assessment report:
3.2.2.d Accountability and transparency of management system and decision-making process

Seychelles: **“Details of the amount of vessels engaged in the industrial longline fishery are available on the SFA website** (SFA 2021). Elsewhere on the website, the SFA Annual Fisheries Statistic Report gives an excellent picture of the pattern of catches within the EEZ including by the international long-line fleet (SFA 2019). **This excellent level of transparency is driven by Seychelles pioneering involvement in the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI),** although their 2019 report notes that further improvements in transparency are still required, including making fishery access agreements publicly available (FiTI MSG, 2021). SG80 is met.”

PI 3.2.4 Monitoring and management performance evaluation

It is possible the current work being undertaken by the Department of the Blue Economy with the input of independent consultants and the advice from such as the World Bank and FiTI (FiTI MSG, 2021) **constitutes an occasional external review of the Seychelles management system.**

Table 18. Review of ongoing MSC certification processes in Seychelles FiTI implementation process (information updated June 2023)

VI. KEY OUTCOMES OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

Summary

- Responses highlight the impact of data collection on certification costs in fisheries certification processes, specifically for the MSC Fisheries Standard.
- Lack of consensus exists regarding data collection responsibilities during certification, necessitating clarification of the concept itself.
- Auditors often spend significant effort searching for required data instead of conducting on-site sampling, according to one expert.
- Auditors should not be responsible for data collection unless it is publicly available, as stated by two other experts.
- Failure to provide data to the CAB/expert team can negatively affect assessment costs and trigger the implementation of the Risk Based Framework in the MSC certification process.
- FIPs aim to improve data collection for specific aspects of the fishery, relying on multi-stakeholder participation and management authorities.
- The implementation of management measures resulting from FIPs is influenced by industry lobbying to management bodies, particularly fisheries that are regionally managed such as tuna (Schiller & Bailey, 2021).
- Transparency in the management body is crucial for calculating certification costs and participant engagement in the certification process.
- Greater transparency encourages governments to adopt open and accountable management practices, providing more data for assessments.
- 94% of participants view a more transparent fishing management body as beneficial for eco-certification initiatives.
- Limited general knowledge of the FITI exists among CABs and some FIPs participants, despite awareness among independent experts.

Results

As indicated in the methodology section, an online survey was conducted in April 2023 to address the objectives of the project. Prior to the survey launch, several versions of the questionnaires were developed, tested and refined after conducting a series of preliminary interviews with some experts specialised in fisheries certification projects. These interviews included six experts from the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and one expert from Friend of the Sea (FoS)⁵ (see annex II). After the interviews, the experts were also

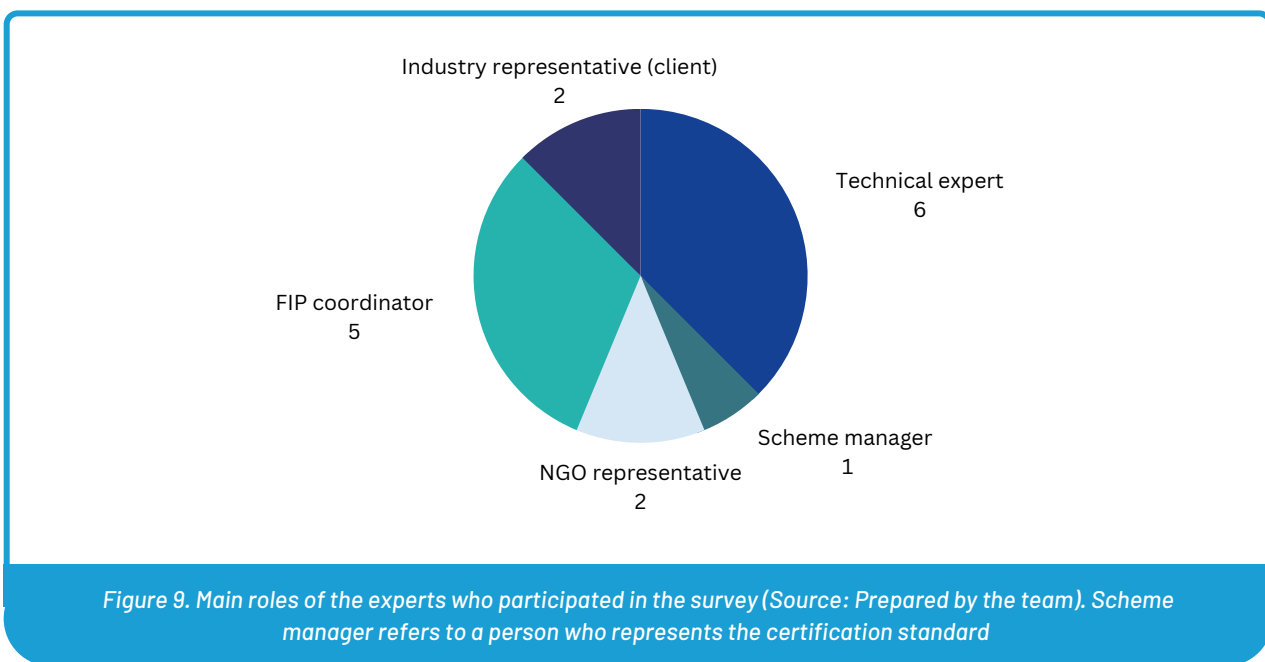
⁵ The limited involvement of experts in the FoS standard can be primarily attributed to the lack of substantial feedback received from the experts contacted.

invited to participate in the online survey. This calibration exercise resulted in the division of the questionnaire into three slightly different templates based on the target groups:

- i) Representatives of Conformity Assessment Bodies [CAB],
- ii) Independent technical experts (auditors) on MSC and FoS [IE], and
- iii) Participants of Fisheries Improvement Projects [FIP].

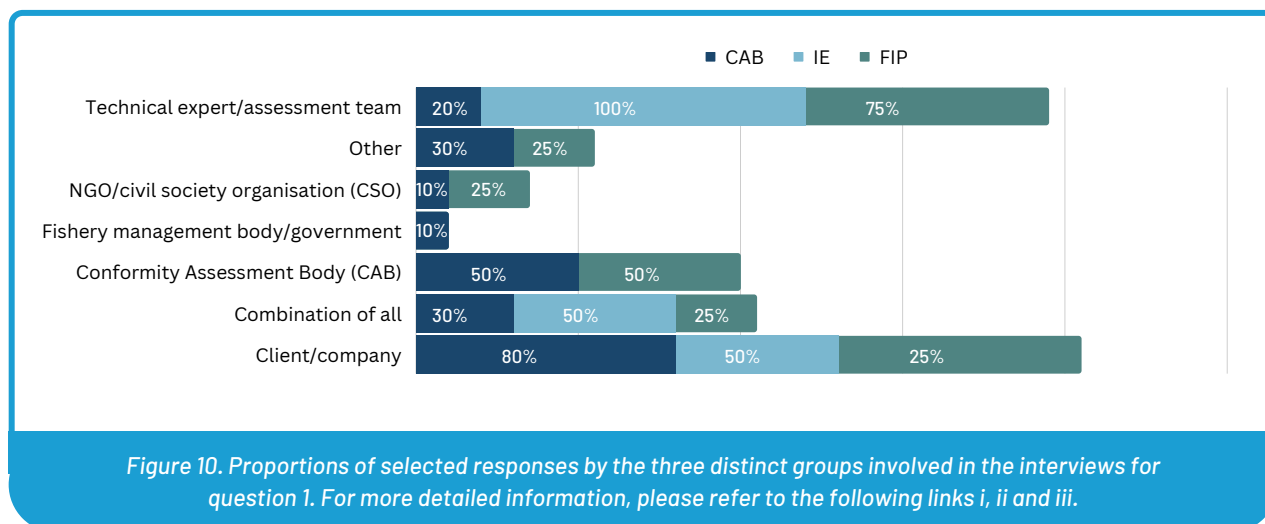
Please click [here](#) to access the survey templates for groups [i](#), [ii](#) and [iii](#).

A total of 16 experts participated in the online survey, with some of them having experience as technical experts/CABs in MSC certification processes (6), while a second group had specific expertise in the coordination of FIPs (5). For further details, refer to Figure 9, which illustrates the sample size of each.



Common questions for all three target groups: CAB, IE, FIP

1. During the certification of a fishery under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Friend of the Sea (FoS) schemes, who is the stakeholder in charge of collecting the data necessary for conducting the audit of the fishery/FIP process?



Interpretation: According to our findings, the majority of the CAB group, specifically 80%, believe that clients should be responsible for gathering the information needed for the evaluation process. Interestingly, only half of this group (50%) take up this responsibility themselves. Meanwhile, a mere 10% of the CABs interviewed (one person) think that data collection duties should fall on the management body. On the other hand, all independent experts we spoke to (100%) identified themselves as the primary actor to undertake this task, and none of them deemed the CAB responsible. As for the FIP group, it appears that opinions are divided between the independent experts and clients.

2. According to your experience/knowledge, in which areas of the fisheries certification process under the MSC/FoS standards is the data more scarce or difficult to find?

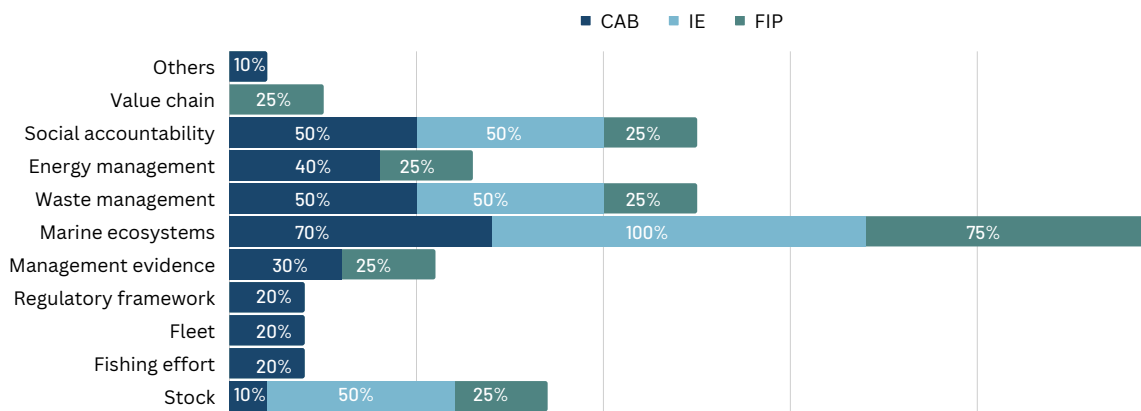


Figure 11. Proportions of selected responses by the three distinct groups involved in the interviews for question 2. For more detailed information, please refer to the following links [i](#), [ii](#) and [iii](#)

Interpretation: The three groups, CAB, IE and FIP, identified data on marine ecosystems as the scarcest and most difficult to find at 70%, 100% and 75% respectively. 50% of the IE indicate data on stocks, waste management and social accountability. CABs also agree that data on waste management and social accountability are hard to find. The regulatory framework, fleet and fishing effort options were chosen by only two representatives of the CABs (20%).

Questions for the CAB group only

3. When calculating the cost of the fisheries assessment process for the MSC/FoS fisheries certification, which circumstances do you take into consideration?



The options provided were:

- Number of Unit of Assessments
- Size of the fishery
- Target species
- Area of operation of the fishery
- Number of auditors involved
- Working language
- All of them
- Others

Figure 12. Proportions of selected responses by the CABs for question 3

Among the “Others” option, several issues were highlighted by the CABs:

- Often, the number of Units of Assessment and auditors involved are taken into consideration, depending on the complexity of the fishery. The working language and location might also influence the calculation of the cost.
- Other information may also be considered such as the present projects in the region, the need for a translator, or the specific target species in cases of a low number of approved auditors.

4. If the necessary data for the MSC/FoS auditing process is not easily available and needs to be collected by the CAB, do you charge an extra fee to the client?

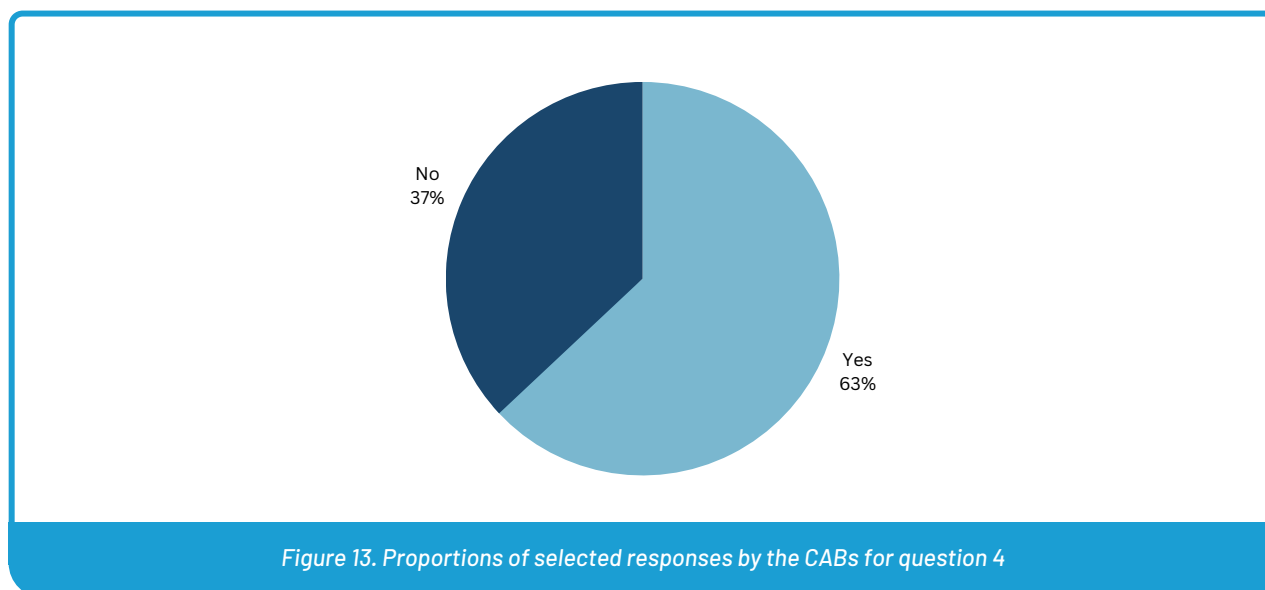


Figure 13. Proportions of selected responses by the CABs for question 4

Some of the clarifications given by the respondents to this question included:

- We reserve the right to charge an extra fee if required (we do not always do it in all instances).
- Looking for data (but not collecting it) is part of the assessment work. Collecting data is not part of an auditing process.
- It depends on the days the assessors need, and the formatting of the information provided/found.
- It depends. We would ask the client to also try to find the data required. And if the search has led to auditors going beyond the estimated days, then we can charge more, with a justification for the extra cost request.
- Auditors should not be collecting data for the client, unless it is publicly available. Depending on the volume of data and the number of enquiries required, this might incur further costs. An extra cost is not automatically charged.
- We do not collect the information ourselves. At least not the information specific on the fishery. We may charge extra if RBF is needed.

5. If you answered yes to the previous question, is that a fixed value?

85.7 % of participants indicated that the extra amount to be charged is not a fixed value. It mainly depends on the amount of time and extra effort needed and is normally charged as a day rate (original estimate of days vs the additional days required).

6. In relation to the previous question, do you also consider the fishery authority's level of transparency in the country where the fishery occurs?

70 % of participants indicated that they take into consideration the level of transparency of the management body when calculating the cost of the fisheries assessment process.

Questions for the IE group only

7. Please select the Performance Indicators that fail the most during a fishery assessment for the Marine Stewardship Council standard v2.01 (For IE).

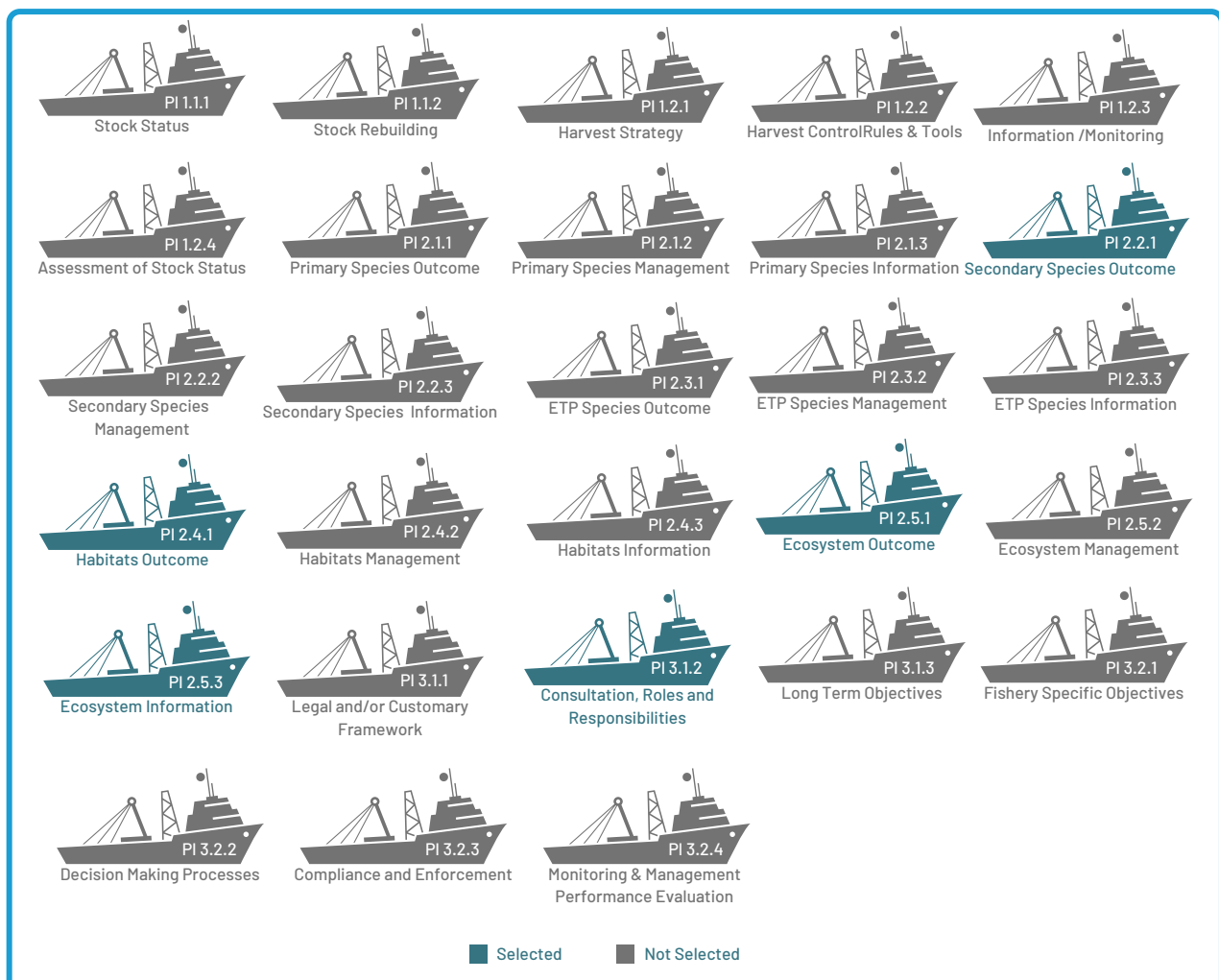


Figure 14. Proportions of selected responses by the IE group for question 7

8. Please select the essential requirements that fail the most due during a fishery assessment for the Friend of the Sea Wild fisheries standard v3.1.

The only selected requirement was Stock status.

9. If the necessary data for MSC/FoS pre/full assessment is not easily available or its origin is doubtful and requires validation with other resources (e.g., interviews with experts), does it affect the number of working days?

100% of the experts agreed that if the necessary data for conducting the fishery assessment is not easily available or its origin is doubtful, it would affect the number of working days.

10. If you answered yes to the previous question, does this affect your consulting fees?

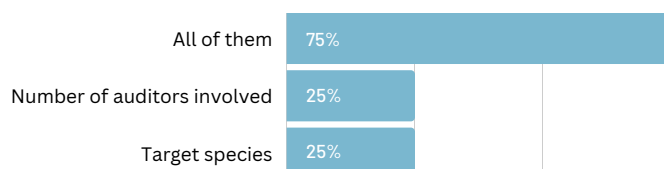
In this case, only half of the participants (50%) considered the lack of data would affect the consulting fees.

11. Generally, is a fishery in a country with more transparency in fisheries governance more likely to pass an eco-certification assessment such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Friend of the Sea (FoS)?

50% of participants agreed. Some of the experts noted that it is difficult to determine but stated that greater transparency would help to complete the audit by providing more data to lean on during the assessment.

Questions for the FIP group only

12. What circumstances do you consider when designing a FIP operational plan?



The options provided were:

- Number of Unit of Assessments
- Size of the fishery
- Target species
- Area of operation of the fishery
- Number of auditors involved
- Working language
- All of them
- Others

Figure 15. Proportions of selected responses by the CABs for question 3

13. If the necessary data for FIP implementation is not easily available and needs to be collected, does it affect the FIP budget? (For FIPs)

100% of participants agreed that the lack of data would increase the FIP budget.

14. If your answer to the previous question was yes, can you give an example? (For FIPs)

- If data and information is not easily available, then the FIP baseline will more likely be wrong as well as the actions planned to address the challenges faced by the fishery. All this work will have to be revisited and amended by a fisheries expert, which costs time and money.
- If there is no information on whatever performance indicator, you might need to consider a higher budget to cover potential costs related to obtaining the data needed.
- E.g., information on secondary species is not always readily available from observer data
- If I understand the question correctly, if a pre-assessment concludes that there is not enough data/information available to determine the status of a fishery stock and needs to be collected, the workplan will need to include activities/tasks that collect fishery independent and dependent data. This data collection will of course have a cost associated with it, which we'd expect to see reflected in a budget.

Common questions for all three target groups: CAB, IE,FIP (final)

15. Would a more transparent fishing management body have an advantage when it comes to the eco-certification of fisheries?

94% of participants considered that a more transparent fishing management body will have advantages for eco-certification of fisheries initiatives.

16. Can you give an example/s (country/fishery) where the publication of government information on fisheries management facilitated or encouraged eco-certification/FIP?

Participants provided insights on various aspects of fisheries management transparency. Denmark was mentioned as an example for its public control reports and sharing of control data with scientists. Also, Iceland was praised for its strong system of transparency. Small, developed governments like the Falklands, Scotland, and Jersey were highlighted as having a more horizontal hierarchy structure and therefore greater freedom for on-the-ground actors. Some countries were noted for publishing annual records of global compliance and infringements, while others lacked transparency, either providing no information or creating doubts about reliability. However, the implementation of the MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 from May 2023 onwards aims to raise the level of evidence

required for fisheries compliance. Moreover, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, and Seychelles were also mentioned in relation to specific fisheries and initiatives facilitating assessment and addressing conditions on certified fisheries. Overall, the survey emphasised the importance of transparent fisheries management systems that are certifiable.

17. What advantages do you think transparency will bring to the seafood eco-certification process?

Responses highlighted several benefits of transparency in fisheries management. It was noted that transparency generates stakeholder confidence, increases trustworthiness, and makes information gathering easier and more reliable. Transparent processes enable better follow-up and evaluation, enhance accountability, and encourage participation of interested parties. Access to data and stakeholder involvement become more accessible and discussions more fruitful. Transparency also strengthens the certification process, making audits more efficient and credible. By revealing failures in fishing regulations and increasing the accountability of entities like RFMOs, transparency supports improved management practices. Furthermore, it facilitates the assessment process by providing auditors with necessary information, reducing timelines and resource requirements. Overall, transparency in fisheries management leads to increased likelihood of certification, an improved evidence base, independent auditing of stock and ecosystem changes, and fosters collaboration and problem-solving among stakeholders.

18. Do you know the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI)?

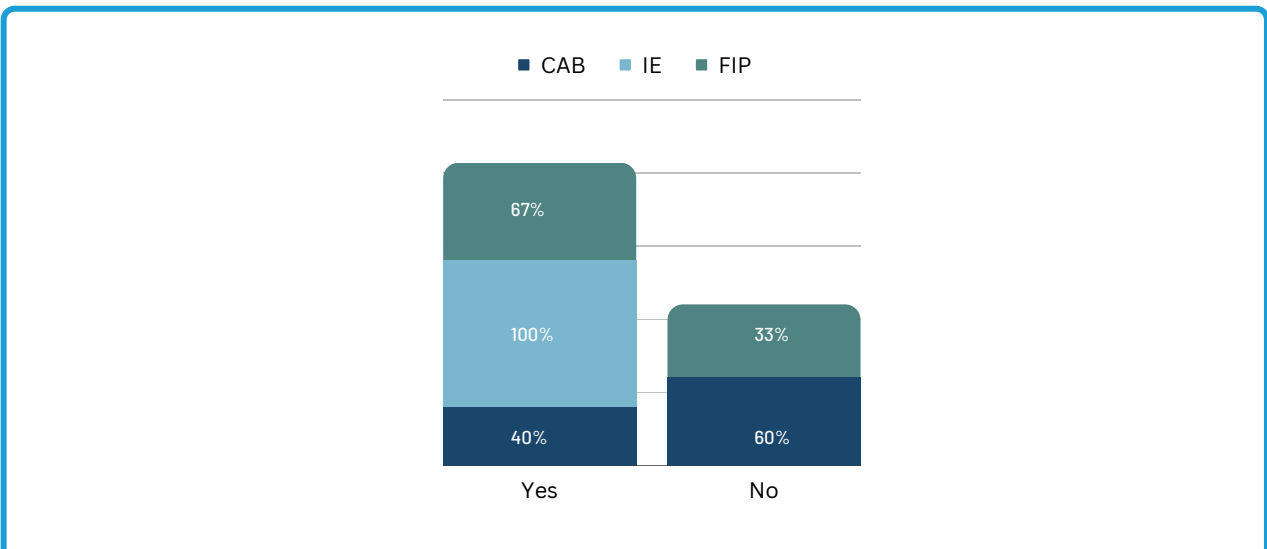


Figure 16. Distribution of responses among the three survey groups. Notably, 67% of FIP respondents demonstrate awareness of FiTI, whereas only 40% of CABs possess knowledge about it.

Interpretation: Out of the 10 CAB members interviewed, only 40% (4 individuals) are familiar with the FiTI. On the other hand, both independent experts who were interviewed are aware of it. It is worth noting that only one of the FIP participants admitted to not knowing about the FiTI.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPACT OF THE FITI IN REGARD TO THE MSC AND THE FOS CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

The findings of this report suggest that the implementation of the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) Standard could facilitate the assessment of specific performance indicators within the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard, particularly those associated with principles 1 (Stock status) and 3 (Management system). Furthermore, the FiTI Standard's transparency requirements appear to have an impact on at least four requirements of Friend of the Sea (FoS): stock status, legal conformity, fishery management, and social accountability. These commonalities between FiTI and fisheries certifications point towards new opportunities to support fisheries management structures worldwide in the complex and costly task of collecting and managing fisheries data, particularly in small island developing states and developing countries. Resources in those countries are scarce and information on fishing activities minimal, and the FiTI could potentially act as platform to draw high quality data from credible sources out into the public domain.

While there is alignment between the different standards in certain areas, it is important to acknowledge that there are still aspects where the FiTI does not appear to have a discernible impact, as indicated by the cases analysed and the opinions gathered in this report. For instance, the implementation of the FiTI does not seem to bear relevance to the performance indicators associated with principle 2 of the MSC Fisheries Standard, which aims to minimise environmental impacts on the ecosystem. Interestingly, these performance indicators were identified during interviews as the most common areas of failure in MSC assessments. Likewise, In the context of the Friend of the Sea (FoS) certification, it is evident that the FiTI Standard has a weaker association with the criteria related to waste and energy management, impact on ecosystems and habitats, and gear selectivity. These results underline that if the FiTI aims to make a greater contribution to eco-labels, it must delve deeper into these particular aspects and give them due consideration.

At the same time, it is acknowledged that the objective of the FiTI is to support the sustainability of marine fisheries by increasing public access to information related to economic, social and environmental aspects. Consequently, it becomes essential to deliberate on the extent to which FiTI's overarching objective of advancing participatory governance in fisheries aligns with the specific objectives of the MSC and FoS ecolabels.

These ecolabels aim to ensure the validation of both seafood products as sustainable from their origin and production, while also facilitating a more transparent approach to fisheries management. Exploring synergies between these objectives is imperative to determine how FiTI and ecolabels can collectively enhance the wider sustainability of fisheries worldwide.

As per the feedback received from numerous interview participants, an open and transparent system for managing fisheries is generally conducive to the certification process and the promotion of sustainable fishing practices. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasise that the information made transparent is only directly useful insofar as it fulfils the ecolabel's certification requirements. Notably, a number of countries mentioned by the interview participants, such as various European countries including Iceland, Denmark and Scotland, as well as the Malvinas, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, and Seychelles, have been recognised for their commendable practice of publishing a significant amount of data in a transparent and easily accessible manner. This data is utilised in the assessments conducted by MSC and FoS.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following our analyses, we have identified several opportunities for where the current standards for eco-certification of fisheries, such as the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Friend of the Sea (FoS), can be further linked to the Fishery Transparency Initiative (FiTI) to strengthen their collective contributions. These include:

1. Data Sharing and Transparency: Enhance the collaboration and data sharing between certification programs like MSC and FiTI implementing countries. By integrating the FiTI's transparency requirements into the certification process and FIPs, stakeholders can have access to more comprehensive and reliable information on fisheries management, leading to improved decision-making and sustainable practices. This seems to be quite timely due to the publication of the new version of the MSC Fisheries Standard 3.0. This standard includes a novel tool known as the Evidence Requirements Framework (ERF). ERF is a tool that provides assessment teams with a comprehensive method to evaluate the quality of evidence used to determine a fishery's impacts and compliance with regulations. In this new standard, independent experts must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a fishery's monitoring system to determine the accuracy and trueness of its information. This includes considering how the information is collected, the extent of the fishery's activity that is monitored and how the information has been reported and provided to the assessment team.

2. Publish International Legislation: An important improvement to the FiTI Standard could be to explicitly require authorities to publish international legislation pertaining to migratory resources managed at the regional level, particularly for species like tuna. Typically, such legislation is developed within regional fisheries management organizations (RFMOs) or through international agreements such as ACAP and CMS. While these international treaties are usually published and recognised in national legislation for species classified as endangered, threatened, or protected (ETP), many countries fail to do so, resulting in delays and increased effort during certification assessments. Moreover, the lists of protected species are frequently updated with additions and removals, which makes it time-consuming to verify their classification. By incorporating this information into the FiTI Standard, it would effectively address challenges related to Principle 1 and Principle 2 of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard, as well as Requirements 1 and 3 of Friend of the Sea (FoS). This inclusion would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the management and conservation efforts surrounding migratory resources, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in the certification process.

3. Extending FiTI Scope at Regional Level: Although the FiTI Standard primarily operates at the national level, its influence can have regional implications, particularly in the management of fisheries that target highly migratory species such as tuna in the high seas. Hence, it is advisable to explore the potential of extending the application of FiTI to the RFMO level. While some RFMOs have an advisory role, many possess management powers to establish catch and effort limits, technical measures, and control obligations. For

instance, recent conflicts regarding the management of tuna resources in the southwestern Indian Ocean highlight the need for greater transparency in their decision-making processes. These RFMOs could potentially benefit from implementing the FiTI Standard to enhance their management procedures.

4. Standards Alignment: Identify shared elements and examine possibilities for aligning performance and transparency indicators and requirements among MSC, FoS, and FiTI. This will guarantee a consistent evaluation of vital sustainability aspects across all standards. Despite variations in their assessment processes and outputs, aligning these indicators can establish a unified framework that prioritises crucial factors like stock status, adherence to legal regulations, ecological impacts, and social responsibility.

5. FiTI and FIPs: Given that the FiTI and FIPs operate through multi-stakeholder working groups, often with overlapping goals in gathering and managing fisheries data, it is highly advisable to investigate the potential advantages of partnerships between these two initiatives. By aligning their objectives and procedures, both initiatives can enhance their efficacy in tandem and make significant contributions to improved fisheries management.

6. Capacity Building and Stakeholder Engagement: foster capacity building initiatives that educate fisheries management bodies, auditors, and certification assessors on the principles and requirements of both the MSC and FoS eco-certification standards, as well as the FiTI Standard. This knowledge exchange can help stakeholders understand the benefits of transparency and sustainable practices, encouraging their adoption and implementation. Additionally, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders involved in eco-certification processes and the FiTI implementation processes, including governments, fishing communities, NGOs, and industry representatives

Annex I: References

ANABAC INDIAN OCEAN PURSE SEINE SKIPJACK TUNA FISHERY. September 2022. Announcement Comment Draft Report. Bureau Veritas.

Atlantic Ocean tropical tuna French purse seine fishery On Behalf of Orthongel. January 2023. Prepared by Control Union (UK) Limited

CEA consulting (2020). 2020 Global Landscape Review of Fishery Improvement Projects. Published March 2020. 221 pp. Available at: <https://oursharedseas.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-Global-Landscape-Review-of-FIPs.pdf>

Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS). 2022. Guidelines for Supporting Fishery Improvement Projects. solutionsforseafood.org. 27p. URL: <https://solutionsforseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FIP-Guidelines-Apr2023.pdf>

Crona, B., Käll, S., & Van Holt, T. (2019). Fishery Improvement Projects as a governance tool for fisheries sustainability: A global comparative analysis. PLoS One, 14(10), e0223054. Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). (2019). Coastal countries: Sustainable Marine Fisheries through transparency and multi-stakeholder participation. Brochure. 12 pp. Available at: https://www.fiti.global/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FiTI_Brochure_CoastalCountries_EN_20190901.pdf

Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). (2023a). Validation of the Republic of Seychelles. Compliance Statement of the FiTI International Board regarding progress in implementing the FiTI Standard (April 2020 – December 2021). Published 15 February 2023. 129 pp. Available at: https://www.fiti.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/FiTI_SEY_ValidationPackage_20230215.pdf

Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). (2023b). Validation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Compliance Statement of the FiTI International Board regarding progress in implementing the FiTI Standard (December 2018 – March 2022). Published 14 April 2023. 127 pp. Available at: https://www.fiti.global/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/FiTI_MRT_ValidationPackage_20230414.pdf

Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI). (2023c). Seychelles' Report to the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) Calendar year: 2021 Detailed Section. Report by the FiTI National Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) Seychelles. Published February 2023. 102 pp. Available at: <https://www.sfa.sc/index.php/fisheries-report-other-document?task=download.send&id=210&catid=33&m=0>

Friend of the Sea (FoS). (2017). Audit Guidance for Friend of the Sea Standards. Version 1, 27th October 2017. Available at: https://friendofthesea.org/wp-content/uploads/Audit-Guidance-for-Friend-of-the-Sea-Standards_v1.pdf

Friends of the Sea (FoS). (2021). World Sustainability Organization. Friends of the Sea/Friends of the Earth. Annual report 2019-2020. 15 pp. Available at: https://friendofthesea.org/wp-content/uploads/WSO-Annual_report-2019-2020_EN-Print-FINAL.pdf

MSC. 2019. Get Certified. Your Guide to the MSC fishery assessment process. 27pp.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). (2011). Get Certified! Fisheries. A practical guide to the Marine Stewardship Council's fishery certification process. Available at: https://www.slideshare.net/MSCecolabel/msc-get-certifiedfisheriespracticalguide2011?from_search=12%3Ffrom_action%3Dsave

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). (2016). Working towards MSC certification: A practical guide for fisheries improving to sustainability. MSC Toolkit 221 pp. Available a: https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/msc_capacity_building_toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=3c080f7a_8

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). (2019). Get Certified. Your guide to the MSC fishery assessment process. Available at: <https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/for-fishery-clients/fisheries-get-certified-2019.pdf>

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). (2020). MSC Fisheries Certification Process version 2.2. Available at: <https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/fisheries-program-documents/msc-fisheries-certification-process-v2-2.pdf>

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). (2022). Celebrating 25 years of certified sustainable seafood. The Marine Stewardship Council. Annual Report 2021-22. 25 pp. Available at: <https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/about-the-msc/msc-annual-report-2021-2022.pdf>

Oloruntuyi O, Barendse J, Marriott M, Gordon AK and Montero-Castaño C (2023) Pathway to sustainability: the Marine Stewardship Council certification standard as an improvement framework for African fisheries. *Front. Mar. Sci.* 10:1042736. doi: 10.3389/fmars.2023.1042736

Potts, J., Wilkings, A., Lynch, M. & McFatrige, S. (2016). State of Sustainability Initiatives Review: Standards And The Blue Economy. International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). 209 pp. Available at: <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/publications/ssi-blue-economy-2016.pdf>

Tuna Alliance Atlantic Albacore Longline fishery. Public Comment Draft Report (PCDR). April 2023. SCS Global Services.

Wijen, F., & Chiroleu-Assouline, M. (2019). Controversy over voluntary environmental standards: A socioeconomic analysis of the Marine Stewardship Council. *Organization & Environment*, 32(2), 98-124.

World Wildlife Fund (WWF). (2013). FIP Handbook. Guidelines for Developing Fishery Improvement Projects. WWF-US Fisheries Program. Available at: https://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/wwf_fip_final_web_version_1.pdf

World Wildlife Fund (WWF). (2015). MSC handbook. Guidelines for Developing MSC Pre-Assessment and Full Assessment Projects. Available at: <https://seafoodsustainability.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/MSC-Handbook-1-12-15.pdf>

Annex II: List of interviewed stakeholders

Name	Role	Organization	Main country/ies of expertise
Dr. Jo Gascoigne	MSC Certification Team Leader	Independent expert	Mauritania, Morocco, Global
Dr. Sophie des Clers	MSC Certification Team Leader	Independent expert/GreenFishers	Mauritania, Global
Andrea Pica	Scientific officer Friend of the Sea	World Sustainability Organization (WSO) S.r.l.	Italy
Dr. Jan Robinson	SWIOFish3 Project Manager	Department of Blue Economy, Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy	Seychelles
Francisco Leotte DoRego	Sustainability Manager	Thai Union Group PCL	Global
Renato Gozzer Wuest	Latin America Fisheries Director	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	Peru
Monika Szynaka	PhD candidate	PhD student in CCMAR. Fisheries, Biodiversity, and Conservation group.	Portugal
Pedro Ferreira	Fisheries & Markets Director	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership	Spain, Global
Tracy Nealon	Global Proposal Manager	Control Union UK Ltd.	Global
Carlos Montero	Senior Fisheries Program Manager	Marine Stewardship Council	West Africa/Global

Annex III. MSC Client Document Checklist

Please use the following link: https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/chain-of-custody-supporting-documents/msc-client-document-checklist.docx?sfvrsn=3f04028_11

