

Marine Stewardship Council – FIRMS Steering Committee meeting (FSC11) 13-14 May 2019

Background

The MSC is an international non-profit organisation. We recognise and reward efforts to protect oceans and safeguard seafood supplies for the future. The sustainability of a fishery can be assessed regardless of its size, geography or the fishing method used. Our Fisheries Standard is a science-based way to measure that sustainability.

In defining a fishery, third-party assessors will separate the entity into individual Units of Certification – The target stock(s) combined with the fishing method/gear and practice (including vessel/s) pursuing that stock. This broadly aligns with the direction of the Global Record of Stocks and Fisheries (GRSF) and MSC has been engaged with the BlueBridge¹ project for several years, with representatives on both the Technical Working Group and Board.

Key Interest

As a third-party Standard, MSC does not directly engage with fisheries but receives information and data on assessments. MSC defines the structure, format and resolution of this data and where appropriate will use globally recognised lists (e.g. ASFIS, FAO Area Code), etc. Adoption of these lists allows MSC to;

- monitor program uptake against external baselines,
- identify potential overlap of fishery assessments,
- share data more efficiently.

The GRSF and the globally unique Fishery ID would allow MSC to improve the existing data proposition for internal and external partners, for instance, it could allow for more insight into global stock performance, fishery assessment overlap and ultimately increase interoperability. This would;

- create opportunity for new collaborations and research,
- create connectivity with new data for setting baselines, monitoring and evaluation,
- further ease the burden of data sharing.

Other areas of interest

As a market-based program, every company that takes ownership of MSC certified seafood and sells it as certified, is independently audited and certified against the MSC Chain of Custody Standard. Companies that add our ecolabel to pack must also apply for an ecolabel licence and complete product approval forms that include information on provenance to the fishery.

MSC is always considering ways to enhance the assurance model. Incorporation of the GRSF record has the potential to benefit our commercial partners, for instance, through efficient movement of data in seafood supply chains or through a consistent approach to referencing provenance against a product.

While MSC is currently a data consumer, this initiative could also allow MSC to become a data provider for verified certification information.

¹ MSC participated in two of three Technical Working Group meetings of the GRSF (Feb. 2016 and Feb. 2018).