



for a living planet

WWF-SA's communications surrounding species "Under Improvement" in relation to the WWF-SASSI Participant commitments

One of the objectives of the WWF-SASSI Retailer / Supplier Participation Scheme is to work with the major public-facing seafood vendors in order to create strong market incentives for seafood sustainability their suppliers can support and align with. This is achieved by the Participants making time-bound commitments to sustainable seafood that are publically communicated. One component of these commitments is for participants to actively source sustainable seafood products that are certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for wild-capture species or the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) for farmed species or to source species that are on the WWF-SASSI Green-list. However, if this was the only focus of this work then increasing pressure would be placed on the current sustainable farms and fisheries and once healthy stocks could ultimately become overfished. Therefore, another key component of Participant commitments is to encourage source fisheries / farms that are not currently meeting their seafood sustainability criteria to actively work towards improved sustainability in their operations. There are a number of ways that a source fishery / farm can achieve this in a credible way which will result in Participants recognising them as being "Under Improvement" and thereby also meeting their commitments to sustainable seafood.

It is important to note that some these projects aimed at improvement are sector wide and relevant to a number of Participants whilst other projects may specific to a Participant. Regardless of this differing scale, all Participants should publically communicate which projects they are supporting and how they align with one of the credible approaches noted below:

1) Fishery Improvement Project (FIPs):

Fishery Improvement Projects are focused initiatives with the goal of enabling a fishery to reach the necessary sustainability standards to enter full assessment by credible third party assessment schemes, namely the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). For a comprehensive description of what WWF will consider a credible FIP, please see the WWF Fisheries in Transition position paper here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/working-to-transform-fisheries/>. WWF considers MSC certification to be the gold standard in wild-capture fisheries certification schemes and will continue to drive improvement of the MSC system to reduce negative impacts on our oceans through the processes described at <https://www.msc.org/about-us/program-improvements/program-improvements>.

2) Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIPs):

Aquaculture Improvement Projects are focused initiatives with the goal of enabling a farm to reach the necessary sustainability standards to enter full assessment by a credible third party assessment scheme, namely the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). WWF supports the ASC in its mission to transform global aquaculture toward environmental and social sustainability using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the supply chain. WWF will also continue to drive improvement of the ASC system to reduce negative impacts of aquaculture operations on our environment through the processes described at http://www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASC%20Standard%20Setting%20Procedure_v1.0_including%20forms.pdf. Should equivalent standards be developed that meet WWF's minimum criteria for a credible eco-label, these would also be supported. To date both the MSC and ASC standards have been recognized as the most credible standards within the industry according to independent reviews. WWF will not support standards which do not at least meet or exceed these current standards.

3) Fishery Conservation Project (FCPs):

Fishery Conservation Projects are local initiatives that are less comprehensive in nature and are entered into by WWF South Africa on a case-by-case basis. These projects focus on improvement in the environmental performance of a fishery, which has not yet developed a strategy for improvement against MSC standards or is not seeking MSC certification. These projects are noted on the WWF-SASSI website here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/working-to-transform-fisheries/>. The aim of these projects is to improve a species sustainability status on the WWF-SASSI listing.

4) Procurement Strategy:

A Procurement Strategy is specific to the Participant and is collaboratively developed by the Participant and WWF-SA. It supports the implementation of best available practices within the relevant production sector. These are specific approaches to procuring species for which it is not currently possible to bring an entire sector under improvement. The Participant must therefore adopt specific strategies to ensure that, regardless of the broader sector practices, their own suppliers are implementing best available practices. These strategies will be relevant to the following species groupings: tuna, salmon, prawn and "linefish". WWF-SASSI has developed procurement guidelines for these species groupings and the Participant procurement strategies should align with these guidelines. The WWF-SASSI procurement guidelines are available for download here: <http://wwfsassi.co.za/working-to-transform-fisheries/>.

In order for a fishery / farm to be publically recognized as moving towards sustainability, the following needs to be in place:

- Explicit willingness from participants to make improvements (e.g. signed Memorandum of Understanding, stating a commitment, formal agreement, letter of support or intent etc.)
- A pre-assessment / audit needs to be conducted in order to determine which areas are in need of improvement.
- A list of stakeholders involved in the process that must include, but is not limited to, the majority of fishers / farmers, the relevant government ministry that regulates fisheries / farms and an objective non-governmental organisation (this would either be the relevant WWF office in the country where the project is implemented or an NGO who has relevant experience in working with the MSC/ASC standard)
- A work plan with measureable indicators and milestones along a defined timeline with an associated budget.
- An independent system for tracking progress against the measureable indicators contained in the work plan, such as the MSC Benchmarking Tool, and at least an annual progress review, the result of which must be made publically available.

For additional information, please see the WWF FIP Handbook at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/oB4vsguvqoXUgSTZLTGlib1EzWmM/view> that assists fishery stakeholders develop and implement comprehensive FIPs.

WWF-SA aims to continuously update the information on the WWF-SASSI website regarding fisheries / farms under improvement as new developments occur, however, please contact us should you wish to find out more.