

Committed to all stakeholders

The following statement was released by the board of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The latest MSC Board meeting took place on 23rd and 24th February 2004. At this, their quarterly meeting, MSC trustees had the opportunity to review and discuss two recent evaluation reports on the organization compiled by the Bridgespan Group and Wildhavens Consultancy on behalf of several conservation funders.

The Board invited authors of both reports to join part of their deliberations, not least because MSC board members and staff had actively participated in the reviews.

The MSC Board welcomes these evaluations. The recommendations provide constructive and helpful advice on how the organization can continue to build its global credibility as the organization grows and as more fisheries, processors and retailers embrace the MSC programme. The MSC is a fast developing organization and many of the recommendations tabled by the evaluators reflect the new challenges that MSC faces as it grows. Particularly, this is important in ensuring consistency of approach in certifications, better oversight of corrective actions in certified fisheries, and strengthening the involvement of stakeholders in the MSC's governance. Indeed, many of the changes put forward had already been proposed within the organization and are in stages of review and implementation by its key governing and technical bodies.

Having discussed in some detail the contents of both reports, the MSC Board grouped the many recommendations into categories and also assigned priority to examining further the following issues:

1. The Board and Chief Executive will work actively with the TAB, Stakeholder Council and key

stakeholders outside the MSC's formal structure to address some of the detailed technical recommendations relating to the Principles and Criteria (MSC standard) and certification process. In particular, this work will focus on scoring indicators, the tracking of specific progress on corrective actions and ensuring that tangible environmental improvements arise from fishery certifications in a manner which can be measured and communicated.

2. The MSC will give added impetus and attention to its existing projects designed to ensure quality and consistency of fishery assessments and the enforcement of corrective actions.
3. The MSC will examine, through its formal governance structure and beyond, some of the detailed proposed amendments to the MSC standard, particularly on Principle 3.
4. The MSC will engage in discussions on how better to involve key stakeholders in the organization. Specifically, a working panel will be created to look at how engagement between the Board and Stakeholder Council can be improved.
5. The MSC will produce a workplan outlining proposed efficient and consultative action on the key recommendations made by the evaluators. This plan will be published at the end of March. The MSC will also seek input on the detail of the work proposals when they emerge. This project will not



be cost-neutral, and the MSC will need to secure funding in order to implement this programme of action.

Broad spectrum

The MSC includes a very broad spectrum of global opinion across the industry, governmental and NGO sectors. In the interests of transparency, the MSC will ensure that any changes which are made as the programme continues to evolve are the subject of due scrutiny by all those with a stake in the continued success of the organization. The Chairman and Chief Executive are absolutely committed to working with those who have asked for further changes to the organization and its programme and with the entire MSC board hereby commit themselves to working with all stakeholders to consider these matters in a serious and timely fashion.



The MSC Board of Trustees issued this communication on 24 February 2004