

# MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL – TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

## TAB DIRECTIVE SERIES

TAB Directive Number	Title	Date of Issue
TAB D-015 v2.1	Harmonised Fishery Assessments	1 May 2010
Decision Date: July 2006 Effective Date: July 2006		

### Documents Supplemented or Modified by this Directive

MSC Scheme Document	Status Change
TAB Directive 015 v2	Superseded

### Background

At its November 2006 meeting MSC's Technical Advisory Board (TAB) reviewed D-010 and reemphasised MSC's policy intent to encourage 'certificate sharing' amongst fishery participants in the same fishery as widely as possible. The TAB continued to underscore that 'free riders' in the system or excluding new participants from a certificate, who are willing to pay a reasonable share of the costs of original assessment and ongoing requirements of certification, are both undesirable outcomes. TAB Directive 010 seeks to promote, at the beginning of the assessment process, the establishment of clear and fair arrangements that would provide for new entrants to join a certified fishery. By doing so the directive seeks to remove one of the many possible motivations that could otherwise drive different client groups to initiate separate assessments on overlapping fisheries<sup>1</sup>.

The MSC wishes to discourage overlapping assessments to avoid potential financial, consistency and credibility costs, including:

- fisheries managers, scientists and stakeholders receiving duplicate requests for information;
- duplication of costs for a fishery's certification, including that expense incurred by fishery management agencies pre- and post-certification; and
- the possibility of different assessments placing different conditions upon the same fisheries managers and upon different fishery clients.

In July 2007 the TAB released Directive 015 to provide guidance on the processes that certification bodies (CBs) were to undertake in the case of overlapping assessments. The guidance specifically addressed harmonisation between two fisheries starting the assessment process at about the same time. The TAB has now reviewed and revised Directive 015 to provide guidance for harmonisation where a fishery in assessment overlaps with an already certified fishery.

Directive TAB D-015 V2 now replaces Directive TAB D-015.

### Intent

CBs assessing fisheries that have areas of overlap are required to ensure consistency of outcomes so as not to undermine the integrity of MSC fishery assessments.

### Direction

#### 1. Overlapping assessments:

1.1 Where overlapping assessments occur CBs shall coordinate their assessments to ensure that harmonisation of important steps in the assessment and subsequent surveillance audits take place. To achieve harmonisation, CBs shall undertake the following key activities:

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<sup>1</sup> Overlapping fisheries are defined as two or more fisheries assessing some, or all, of the same aspects of MSC Principles 1, 2 and/or 3 within their respective units of certification.

- mediation where appropriate;
- coordination meetings between CBs;
- coordinated assessment planning and conduct, including coordinated process steps and publications of assessment products;
- the use of common fishery assessment trees; and
- the sharing of fishery information.

1.2 As the critical outcome required of this harmonisation policy, the above steps shall ensure that consistent conclusions are achieved by the two (or more) fisheries, with respect to evaluation, scoring and particularly conditions.

1.3 CBs shall use the same assessment trees in the case of overlapping assessments unless sufficient justification is provided for the MSC to grant a variation. Sufficient justification shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, demonstration that all performance indicators and scoring guideposts have been set at equivalent levels and, where performance indicators and scoring guideposts differ, such differences are clearly identified and evidence provided that where an indicator is missing the topic it covers is adequately covered elsewhere in the assessment tree.

1.4 If MSC determines that sufficient justification has not been provided, variation will not be granted and the same assessment tree shall be used<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Fisheries in assessment that overlap with certified fisheries:

2.1 Where a fishery under assessment overlaps with a certified fishery, CBs shall coordinate their assessments to ensure that key assessment products and outcomes are harmonised with the earlier assessment of overlapping certified fisheries. In this case, harmonisation would be evidenced by the following key activities and outcomes including:

- the use of complimentary assessment trees;
- the sharing of fishery information; and
- the achievement of consistent conclusions with respect to evaluation, scoring and particularly conditions.

2.2 If CBs use an assessment tree that differs from the original/s, they must ensure that key aspects of previous trees are included in their own tree and that key issues raised in the previous assessment are explicitly considered in scoring the tree. Sufficient justification for using a different assessment tree shall be provided to the MSC. Sufficient justification shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, demonstration that all performance indicators and scoring guideposts have been set at equivalent levels and, where performance indicators and scoring guideposts differ, such differences are clearly identified and evidence provided that where an indicator is missing the topic it covers is adequately covered elsewhere in the assessment tree.

2.3 If MSC determines that sufficient justification has not been provided, variation will not be granted and the same assessment tree shall be used<sup>3</sup>.

2.4 Where a fishery assessment overlaps with a certified fishery or fishery in assessment that has already been scored, the assessment team shall base their assessment on the rationale and scores detailed for the previously scored fishery. Any difference in the scores shall be clearly detailed and justified in the scoring rationale for all relevant performance indicators.

2.5 The assessment team responsible for the new assessment shall explicitly consider the findings of the most recent surveillance report(s) produced for the overlapping certified fishery. Similarly, the CB responsible for the surveillance of the overlapping certified fishery shall explicitly consider the findings of

<sup>2</sup> Paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 do not apply if the CB undertaking the new assessment is using the standardised assessment tree as set out in the MSC Fishery Assessment Methodology.

<sup>3</sup> Paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 do not apply if the CB undertaking the new assessment is using the standardised assessment tree as set out in the MSC Fishery Assessment Methodology.

the assessment team responsible for the overlapping fishery in assessment when conducting annual surveillance audits.

2.6 The MSC will use the tools at its disposal to ensure that such efforts to harmonise assessments take place successfully, such as facilitating joint communications and meetings between CBs, requiring peer review of final assessment products by a member or members of the assessment team assessing the overlapping fishery and only posting final products of various assessments steps (e.g., final assessment trees, surveillance reports) when CBs have demonstrated harmonised outcomes

### **Guidance**

3. MSC expects that the outcome of the assessment report, particularly the overall result that is achieved (whether a pass or a fail) and the setting of conditions, will be consistent between overlapping fisheries in assessment and certified fisheries.

4. These requirements will remain in place until modified by further TAB or MSC directive.