



How to Support Fishery Improvement Projects: The Transition to Sustainable Fishing

What is a FIP?

A Fishery Improvement Project (FIP) draws together fishers, industry, researchers, government and NGO's to address environmental challenges in a fishery, thereby improving ocean health. Through a transparent and rigorous approach, these projects harness the power of the private sector to incentivize fisheries to increase their level of sustainability. A FIP must have a publicly available workplan, and an associated comprehensive budget, with measurable indicators and milestones along a defined timeline designed to address deficiencies in the fishery.

Why Support a FIP?

By supporting non-certified fisheries to improve their practices and ultimately meet the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard, seafood buyers and suppliers can increase the number of sustainable fisheries and the overall supply of sustainable seafood in the marketplace. The MSC fisheries standard has three core principles that every fishery must meet: sustainable fish stocks, minimizing environmental impact, and effective fisheries management. Comprehensive FIPs develop timebound workplans to reach these criteria of the MSC standard.

What does it mean to be a WWF FIP Participant?

Being a WWF FIP Participant provides a precompetitive space for companies to engage with fisheries in their supply chains and leverage power across multiple companies to drive fishery improvements forward. WWF FIP Participants, are expected to engage in FIP activities (e.g., participating in development of the FIP workplan and implementing activities); participate in FIP meetings; communicate support down the supply chain for the improvement efforts; sign letters to government representatives (WWF to provide drafts); meet milestones identified in the workplan; and provide funding based on market share of the fishery.

By signing on to support a FIP, you are joining forces with other leaders in the industry that seek to help conserve marine ecosystems and advance the livelihoods for millions of people who depend on them. To be considered by WWF-US as a FIP Participant the participating entity must follow the guidelines set out by the [WWF-US FIP Participant Policy](#). To review the guidelines and sign up to become a FIP Participant visit [SeafoodSustainability.org](#) and click the "[Support a FIP](#)" button.

Where can you find a list of FIPs?

A list of FIPs can be found on [FisheryProgress.org](#), a global FIP website that provides valuable information about the fishery and third-party verification of FIP progress against agreed upon milestones within stated timelines as laid out in a FIP workplan. The website lists comprehensive, basic and prospective FIPs. Comprehensive FIPs aim to address all the fishery's environmental challenges necessary to achieve a level of performance consistent with an unconditional pass of the MSC standard. A basic FIP is an entry point for fisheries to begin addressing select environmental challenges to improve their performance against a portion of the MSC standard. Prospective FIPs are in early stages of development and intend to meet the requirements for comprehensive or basic FIP. WWF only acknowledges FIPs that are third-party verified as meeting existing FIP Guidelines and making progress against milestones in the FIP workplan. FisheryProgress.org is the only third party verifier WWF currently acknowledges.

How to start a FIP if one has not yet been established?

If a FIP does not exist, the following resources are available to assist with development of a FIP.

The first step is to conduct an MSC pre-assessment (required for comprehensive FIPs and recommended for basic FIPs). These assessments evaluate the fishery's current level of environmental performance.

- **MSC Pre-assessment:** Reporting template v 2.0 [Marine Stewardship Council Pre-Assessment Template](#)¹

Once the pre-assessment is complete, a scoping document must be completed. A scoping document summarizes the pre-assessment and identifies potential strategies for addressing the fishery's challenges.

- [Basic Fishery Improvement Project Scoping Document Guidelines](#)¹
- [Comprehensive Fishery Improvement Project Scoping Document Guidelines](#)¹

Following the scoping document, a meeting should be held with all FIP stakeholders to review the pre-assessment and scoping document, and develop a FIP workplan noting activities, milestones, timelines and responsible parties.

- [Fishery Improvement Project Workplan Template](#)¹

FIP stakeholders then need to develop a FIP budget outlining costs of the various activities, contributions from various groups, and any funding gaps.

- [Fishery Improvement Project Budget Template](#)¹

Comprehensive FIPs must use a [registered MSC technical consultant](#)² or [accredited conformity assessment body](#)³ to complete the MSC pre-assessment, FIP scoping document and FIP workplan. Though not required for basic FIPs, we strongly recommend they also use these consultants to help develop the necessary documents to assist with accurate, robust set-up of a FIP. These consultants can also be used to help transition from a basic to a comprehensive FIP.

Once the FIP has been developed, the FIP coordinator will be required to publicly report progress on [FisheryProgress.org](#). [Click here](#)⁴ for information on how to create a FIP profile and sign up for an orientation webinar.

WWF FIP Participants are acknowledged on [www.seafoodsustainability.org](#) and can speak to their participation in the FIP on company sustainability materials through copy provided by WWF.

WWF and FisheryProgress.org provide additional resources to assist with FIP development and implementation:

- [Guidelines for Supporting Fishery Improvement Projects](#)⁵ – We abide by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions' basic and comprehensive FIP definitions and requirements.
- [Marine Stewardship Council Handbook](#)¹ – This handbook provides a set of guidelines and an MSC Toolkit to help simplify the MSC pre-assessment and full assessment processes.
- [Fishery Improvement Project Handbook](#)¹ – This handbook provides a set of guidelines and a FIP Toolkit to help simplify the approach to establishing FIPs and improving sustainability. Spanish and Indonesian Bahasa versions available upon request.
- [FisheryProgress.org webinars](#)⁶ – FisheryProgress.org holds webinars on a variety of FIP topics.
- [Fisheries in Transition Financial Toolkit](#)¹

In addition, [WWF](#) and [MSC](#)⁷ offer FIP capacity building training workshops in various geographies.

If you have any questions, please contact fip@seafoodsustainability.org

¹ <https://seafoodsustainability.org/resources/>

² <https://www.msc.org/for-business/fisheries/developing-world-and-small-scale-fisheries/fips>

³ <http://www.asi-assurance.org/s/find-a-cab>

⁴ <https://fisheryprogress.org/how-use-site>

⁵ <https://solutionsforseafood.org/resources/fishery-improvement/>

⁶ <https://fisheryprogress.org/how-use-site/trainings-webinars>

⁷ <https://www.msc.org/for-business/fisheries/developing-world-and-small-scale-fisheries/our-capacity-building-program>