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Three-Year Evaluation Guidelines

Revised November 2022

Introduction

Every three years from the date a FIP profile is published on [FisheryProgress.org](https://fisheryprogress.org), comprehensive FIPs are required to complete an independent evaluation of environmental action results and performance against the MSC Standard. The evaluation must be completed by someone who is both experienced with the MSC Standard (e.g., is a [registered MSC technical or associate technical consultant](#) or [accredited conformity assessment body](#) or has [other demonstrated qualifications approved by the reviewer](#)) and independent from the organization implementing the FIP. The purpose of the three-year evaluation is to assess the current environmental performance of the fishery, verify the FIP's reported environmental progress, and potentially provide the FIP with recommendations for improvement.

The independent evaluation requirement is outlined in the [Guidelines for Supporting Fishery Improvement Projects](#) developed by the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (CASS).

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are frequently asked questions about meeting the three-year evaluation requirement.

When is my evaluation due?

Independent evaluation reports must be completed at least every three years. The FIP's first evaluation is due within three years of the publication of the active FIP profile on FisheryProgress. Each following evaluation must be completed within three years of the most recently completed evaluation.

What is meant by "independent"?

The evaluation must be completed by an entity or individual that is not a FIP participant or FIP lead. It is acceptable for the entity or individual to have been previously engaged in the FIP (e.g., MSC consultants or CABs who developed pre-assessments or workplans for the FIP), but they must not have been employed by one of the FIP leads or FIP participants within the past three years.

What is required for the three-year evaluation?

The FIP must use the three-year evaluation report template, and must upload the completed evaluation to the FIP's profile by the evaluation report deadline to fulfill the evaluation requirements. The template must also be completed in English. The evaluation template can be downloaded [here](#).

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Do I have to complete an environmental annual progress update as well as the three-year evaluation?

Yes, FIPs will still need to update all 28 MSC performance indicators using current information and provide a full update on environmental action progress on FisheryProgress. FIPs should use information from the evaluation to inform the annual progress report updates. This includes:

- Updating MSC performance indicator scores
- Adding or changing actions and tasks in the FIP's environmental workplan as recommended by the evaluation (if applicable)

Three-year evaluation report due dates are aligned with an annual progress report due date for this purpose.

How will FisheryProgress review the three-year evaluation report?

Upon submission of the evaluation, FisheryProgress will:

- **Verify that the evaluation report is filled out correctly and completely.** The reviewer will confirm that the report was completed by someone who is experienced with the MSC Standard and is independent from the organization implementing the FIP. The reviewer will also confirm the FIP used the three-year evaluation template, and that the template is completed correctly. This includes a review of the Workplan Results section to verify that the stated results meet our requirements. FisheryProgress defines a result as:
 - A regulatory policy change or regulatory action to improve the fishery (e.g., a new bycatch provision), or fishing practice change (e.g., a change in fishing gear developed voluntarily and implemented by the FIP) to improve the fishery
 - A publicly verifiable positive change in the water (e.g., an increase in biomass of target stock, an increase in population of impacted protected species, a decrease in habitat or ecosystem impacted)
 - An activity that led to an MSC performance indicator score change in the fisheryFIP participants must have directly worked on or contributed to the workplan result through one or more actions/tasks in the FIP's environmental workplan, and an accompanying explanation must describe how the FIP's work played a role in delivering the reported result. During the review process, if attribution/contribution is not clear, FisheryProgress may ask that workplan results be modified or removed from the three-year evaluation report or for the FIP profile to be modified accordingly.
- **Confirm the evaluation is submitted properly.** The reviewer will confirm the evaluation is posted on FisheryProgress under the "Independent Evaluation" section in the Documentstab.

What happens if the evaluation is incomplete?

If the reviewer finds the evaluation to be incomplete and/or the deadline has passed, the FIP profile will become inactive on FisheryProgress until the evaluation has been submitted, reviewed, and published to the profile.

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How do I submit my evaluation?

FIPs can submit their evaluations by:

- Uploading the evaluation document to the “Documents” tab of its FisheryProgress profile in the Independent Evaluation section. The evaluation will be public and available for download once approved by the reviewer.
- Email the FisheryProgress team (contact@fisheryprogress.org) to let them know that the evaluation document is ready to review.

When should I start planning?

FisheryProgress **strongly** recommends that you seek approval for your FIP's selected consultant(s) **as soon as possible**. Obtain approval by contacting FisheryProgress at contact@fisheryprogress.org.

Also, we recommend FIPs begin the evaluation process **at least 3 months before the evaluation due date**.

What if my FIP has transitioned from basic to comprehensive?

Basic FIPs that transition to comprehensive must complete this evaluation requirement three years after the change to the FIP type is made. For example, if a FIP transitions from basic to comprehensive in January 2022, the three year evaluation would be due in January 2025.

Costs and timing for evaluations

We received survey feedback from several FIPs that have already completed their evaluation reports. From those FIPs, it took assessors (n=12) an average of 4 days to conduct the three-year evaluation. FIP leads (n=16) spent an average of 10 days preparing for and managing the three-year evaluation process.

Other survey data that can be used for reference includes:

- 78% of FIPs felt that it was worth the cost to have the evaluation completed
- Evaluation costs can vary greatly across FIPs, with consultant costs (not including travel) ranging from US\$1,300 – 18,400 per FIP (US\$6,300 average)
- The average cost of an in-person evaluation was US\$11,535
- The average cost of working with a CAB was US\$10,267, while the average cost of working with an independent consultant was US\$5,241
- 44% of FIPs reported that there was some level of cost-sharing among FIP stakeholders to pay for the evaluation
- 69% of FIPs reported that industry covered the evaluation cost
- The three-year evaluation report can take between 1 – 10 days (4 days average) to complete over the course of several weeks

Tips for saving on evaluation costs

- FIPs can work together within a region to harmonize timelines and pool resources for a region-wide, multiple-FIP evaluation. The FIP Community of Practice (CoP) can be a useful

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platform to connect and coordinate with other FIPs. To learn more about the FIP CoP, reach out to jesse@fipcop.org.

- FIPs can take advantage of existing regional consultant capacity. A list of [qualified consultants](#) in each region can be found on FisheryProgress.
- Evaluation reports can be completed by a single individual as long as they meet the consultant criteria; a team is not required.
- When evaluating consultant proposals, please note that the evaluation report template was developed to be as short and concise as possible; it includes all the necessary information for the three-year evaluation report requirement. Additional documentation is not required unless requested by FisheryProgress..