



# Telling Your FIP's Success Story

A Toolkit for Fishery Improvement Project Implementers

springboard  
partners

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## Why stories?

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There are plenty of ways to tell a story. You're already telling the story of your fishery improvement project (FIP) every time you talk about it. However, how you develop and tell your story can be the difference between failure and success; if your story does not compel key stakeholders to take action and engage in your FIP, you're missing an opportunity to make real progress.

Those working directly in fisheries are in a critical position to capture the essence of the fishery and the surrounding community. You are uniquely positioned to illustrate the changes that are happening – both in terms of how the practice of harvesting and processing seafood is changing and how those changes are making a difference in the fishery's health.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation worked with Springboard Partners to develop this toolkit in response to feedback from nonprofit partners, industry representatives, and foundation program officers. These stakeholders and other FIP supporters found a need for easy-to-understand and compelling stories about FIPs' impact. The aim of this toolkit is to accelerate the development of stories that show the impact and potential of FIPs.

*"You couldn't run a FIP without an assessment or a workplan – you would never get buy-in without a way to describe the problem and the change you seek. Clear, accessible, compelling stories are no less important. Good stories earn buy-in by showing how your FIP is making a difference." – Sarah Hogan, Program Officer, David and Lucile Packard Foundation*

## How to Use the Toolkit

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This toolkit is designed to help those who work on FIPs to identify the storylines and details about their FIPs that are the most compelling and develop them into a story.

The toolkit starts with stories – the stories of three FIPs that have made a difference. Each illustrates the clarity, accessibility, and persuasion every FIP success story should convey. These samples also illustrate the critical difference between success and perfection. They are stories of progress – specific and meaningful improvement – that the relevant FIPs can and should claim as successes. The fact that all of the FIPs profiled in those samples still have important work to do in no way diminishes those successes; none of these fisheries is perfect, but that fact simply makes the success stories realistic.

The toolkit also includes a video featuring a FIP implementer who used this technique to build a great FIP success story. It also offers ideas to help you explore creative ways to use your own story to reach and motivate your key audiences.

With concrete examples in mind, the toolkit offers guidance and an easy-to-use worksheet designed to help you develop a great story about your FIP. As you work through the toolkit and the accompanying worksheet, you'll identify the accomplishments of your FIP and connect them with your audiences' values and interests.

The toolkit includes:

- Sample FIP Success Stories
- Video: Using the FIP Success Stories Toolkit
- Developing Your Story: A Guide for Creating Impactful FIP Success Stories
- Improving Your Story: Ways to Take a Story From Good to Great
- Packaging Your Story



## Sample FIP Success Stories

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The following are some sample FIP success stories. We've annotated the first story to draw attention to key best practices that we recommend including in your own success story. As you read through the other stories, try to identify those best practices yourself.

### Ocean Outcomes Western Kamchatka Salmon November 2016

Natasha Novikova is passionate about helping people, and that passion has shaped her commitment to sustainable communities. As the former Russia program manager for Ocean Outcomes, Natasha knows from experience that improving the sustainability of one of Russia's largest salmon fisheries is all about relationships.

Personalize your story by introducing key contributors, and anchor your story on a central character.

Directly across the Bering Sea from Alaska, Kamchatka, Russia, has a rugged natural beauty. Home to brown bears, the expansive landscape includes some of the world's largest geyser fields, more than 30 active volcanoes, and so many rivers and streams that there is no reliable count. Though the hunting, fishing, and trekking opportunities bring visitors from all over the world, Kamchatka has a very small permanent population. As Natasha observed, "It's a peninsula, but it kind of feels like an island."

Set the stage, helping your reader to picture the place where you work.

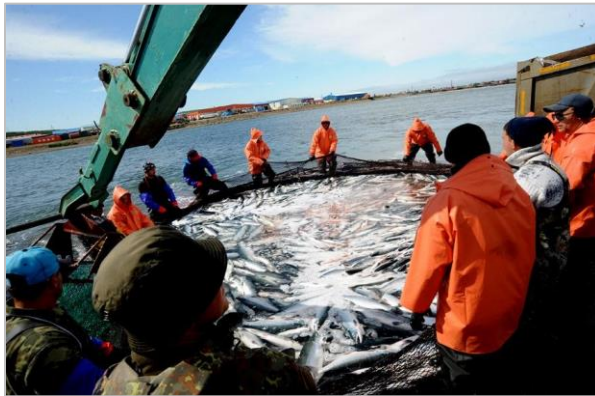
Commercial salmon fishing is an anchor of the region's economy. The fishing season usually begins in late June and lasts just a few months. But during that short window, Kamchatka salmon fishing operations yield about 140,000 metric tons of salmon.

Use visual language to "show" your reader the place.

Help your audience see why the fishery's health is important.

It's likely that you have eaten some of Kamchatka's yield. Most of the fishery's product is sent for processing in Japan, Korea, and China. From there, it is sold throughout the world, including to buyers in the United States and Canadian markets, reaching consumers through restaurants, hotels, and retailers like Whole Foods.

And how the fishery is relevant to them.



Salmon fishing in Kamchatka. Credit: Tomasz Raczynski.

Ocean Outcomes launched the Western Kamchatka Salmon fishery improvement project (FIP) with a 2014 assessment of the fishery's environmental sustainability. However, the organization's work in the region began much earlier. The Ocean Outcomes team, while still a program of the Wild Salmon Center, began working on the ground with Kamchatka's leading fishing companies as early as 2008 in a project that ultimately led to the successful certification of the Ozernaya sockeye fishery. Those relationships continue to serve as the foundation for the FIP's ongoing work.

The 2014 assessment was a critical first step, because a major obstacle to effective sustainability efforts was a lack of consistent data. During the Soviet era, the environmental health of Kamchatka's salmon fishery was closely monitored. But as the Soviet Union collapsed, environmental science quickly lost funding, and data became rarer and much less reliable.

The FIP's 2014 assessment confirmed that the fishery had generally been well managed. But a number of concerning indicators served as guideposts for the FIP's work. Two that jumped out were the fishery's lack of escapement goals and illegal fishing.

"Escapement" is exactly what it sounds like – a measure of the number of salmon that escape fishing to reach their upriver spawning grounds. Below-target escapement is a sustainability risk for the most basic of reasons – it means there just aren't enough fish returning to spawn to replace the ones caught by fishing operations. Ocean Outcomes' 2014 assessment identified the need for the FIP to prioritize strengthening management to improve escapement goals. While the fishery-wide data was not concerning, river-specific escapement information was often unavailable. Because salmon return to the river where they were born to spawn, stocks are river-specific, so attention to each river's specific escapement rates was essential to ensuring the fishery's sustainability overall.

Avoid jargon, or at least explain it.

Set the stage by clearly defining specific sustainability problems.

Poaching was a different story. While some rivers had been spared the worst effects of poaching due to their remote location, many salmon populations were still being hammered by illegal fishing. Types of illegal fishing ran the gamut from out-of-season fishing to operations that

employed unsanctioned gear to teams of in-river caviar poachers stripping females in the spawning grounds.

Ocean Outcomes' approach to these issues is characteristic of an effective FIP, cultivating trusted relationships with fishing companies and pursuing reforms in partnership with industry. The Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP has consistently worked with two key fishing industry partners: Vityaz-Avto Ltd. and Delta Ltd., the two major players in the region, which both have prominent brands accounting for a significant share of Kamchatka's typical annual salmon yield.

River-specific escapement goals were more logistically complicated, but both firms understood the importance of this change. Because Vityaz-Avto Ltd. and Delta Ltd. each fished specific rivers, region-wide escapement information was a poor indicator of the long-term viability of their individual salmon supplies, so the FIP was able to demonstrate a clear business interest in securing river-specific data. Delta and Vityaz-Avto both worked with the FIP to urge KamchatNIRO, the regional research agency, for an assessment of salmon escapements into individual rivers. That assessment led to Kamchatka's first-ever river-specific escapement goals for chum, pink, and coho salmon.

Describe the actions your FIP and its partners took, and their outcomes.

With this critical step in place, the FIP and fishing companies were able to effectively monitor progress toward the escapement goals. In order to reach the goals, companies now routinely add more "passing days" (literally a day during salmon season when salmon are purposely allowed to pass to improve escapement rates). As a result of these and other practice improvements, the fishery has a clear picture of how efforts in each river contribute to the attainment of fishery-wide goals.

The fishery's assessment showed concerning evidence of illegal fishing by both commercial fishermen and in-river poachers, with horror stories of rotting carcasses, discarded buckets of caviar, and illegal Chinese-made gillnets. For the FIP's fishing company partners, this was a sensitive and concerning topic. But because Ocean Outcomes had established trusted relationships with industry partners, the FIP participants were able to get past any initial defensiveness and finger-pointing and begin earnest conversations about a coordinated poaching prevention effort. Today, Vityaz-Avto and Delta lead a joint effort to organize, fund, and dispatch anti-poaching brigades in the region. These patrols are now a well-known fixture along the Western Kamchatka coastline, with teams traveling up and down Kamchatka's rivers in search of poaching activity. Today, the FIP efforts have produced the desired result: making poaching more difficult and less prevalent.

Efforts to address escapement, poaching, and other priorities are also bolstered by the contributions of independent monitors. Because the FIP has developed effective working relationships with Vityaz-Avto and Delta, independent monitors now routinely accompany both companies in the field to observe fishing operations. Since both companies are vertically integrated, these relationships also grant independent monitors access to both companies' processing facilities, to assess the progress of sustainability efforts after the catch, as well. Monitors also record what they observe, entering data that helps to promote traceability and deter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Independent monitors are not police, but they are always watching, making notes, and asking questions. They ask about the gear used to bring in the day's catch, the handling of non-target species, and dozens of other issues. And, because the FIP has built productive relationships with industry and works hard to maintain them, they get answers.

Ask Natasha Novikova what gives her the greatest pride, and you'll hear her talk about the people involved with the sustainability effort. The FIP's closest industry relationships are with Vityaz-Avto's and Delta's managers, but they still get to work regularly with line workers on the rivers and in processing facilities. These professionals, Natasha says, are always running at full speed, often doing more than one job and constantly being pulled in different directions. Yet Natasha sees their commitment to sustainability every day, as they are willing to take on more work and more complex work to protect the future of the resource on which they and their families depend. "We don't care who you are," she recalls one manager saying. "We see that you're here to protect the fish, so we know you're on our side, and you're helping us do a better job."

Together, they are doing a better job, and their work is delivering real results. Three Kamchatka salmon fisheries were recently certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). Observers have documented significant reductions in illegal fishing, and MSC cited stronger regulatory enforcement and improved traceability while certifying these fisheries. While MSC pointed to the need for even more progress on escapement rate monitoring, certification is an important indicator of meaningful progress.



Showcase tangible improvements.

Ocean Outcomes' experience with the Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP shows that commercial fishermen can be an effective partner in driving real change on the water. In fact, to deliver real change on the water, industry *has* to be at the table. The Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP shows that industry has a business interest in making fisheries more sustainable.



Share your lessons learned.

"Sustainability is a growing, worldwide phenomenon," says Andrei Bokov, chief technologist for Vityaz-Avto and Delta. "More and more seafood companies are looking for new sources of sustainable seafood, and Russia can meet this demand."

If conservation advocates and fishing companies are able to identify shared interests and forge effective working relationships to address them, FIPs can deliver real and meaningful sustainability improvements.

## WWF Ecuador Mahi Mahi

February 2017

Fishing for mahi mahi in Ecuador may look much like the artisanal craft it has been for decades, but practices on the water are very different than just a few years ago.



An Ecuadoran dorado Fisherman and his prize onboard a “fibra” fishing boat. Photo credit: Under Secretariat of Fishing Resources, Ecuador.

Ecuador’s mahi mahi – or “dorado” as it’s known in Ecuador – is hand-caught by longline fishermen. These fishermen work from boats called “fibras” (a reference to their fiberglass hulls). Each of about 300 “nodrizas” – or “mother ships” – tows as many as 10 fibras into place. These mother ships, powered by inboard motors, are capable of traveling hundreds of miles to find the highly migratory fish. They also serve as floating hotels for fishing crews out to sea for days.

Mahi mahi is Ecuador’s largest fishery, landing 22 million pounds in an average year. In addition to its importance to the national economy, Ecuador’s mahi fishery is among the world’s largest. And with most of its product sold to

American buyers, Ecuador mahi is found at U.S. household name grocery stores and hotels such as Kroger, Costco, Harris Teeter, and Hyatt.

But before the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and its partners launched the Ecuador mahi fishery improvement project (FIP), there was good reason to question the health and sustainability of this vast and productive fishery. There was no ongoing science, so neither industry nor government had an understanding of the health of Ecuador’s mahi stocks. There was a minimum capture size regulation in place, but with no meaningful monitoring program, it was, as WWF’s Pablo Guerrero said, “a regulation on paper only.” And even if there had been a reliable monitoring program, there was no management plan to address any sustainability issues monitors might discover.

That all began to change when Pablo walked into Jimmy Martinez’ office. Martinez had been a long-serving administrator in the Ecuadoran Agriculture Ministry’s Undersecretariat of Fisheries Resources. The two men had gone to university together and had known each other for decades by the time Pablo stopped by to update Jimmy on WWF’s work to coordinate fishermen, buyers, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders as partners in a new mahi FIP.

Initial conversations had begun months earlier, with Ecuador’s mahi exporters. These business leaders had seen growing demand among seafood buyers for sustainably harvested product. In partnership with WWF, they had begun to organize the fishing community, and momentum was building for a multisector FIP aimed at improvements that would eventually allow Ecuador’s mahi fishery to earn an unconditional pass of the widely respected Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability standard.

Martinez had worked in industry before joining the marine conservation agency, so he understood that bringing business, conservation advocates, academics, and other key stakeholders together was an opportunity for real progress. He soon began talking with Pablo and others about the possibility of establishing Ecuador's first mahi management plan.

It wasn't a quick process – or an easy one. Both Martinez and Guerrero were committed to a participatory process that brought all the stakeholders to the table. Any resulting policy would only last if it had earned the buy-in of key players. So they began an intensive effort to convene that stakeholder table and earn that buy-in. The result, announced more than a year and a dozen all-stakeholder workshops and bilateral meetings later, is called the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of mahi mahi in Ecuador – or, colloquially, the “Plan Dorado.”

In Ecuador's mahi fishery, the Plan Dorado has been transformational. Where before there was no science at all, today there is an annual line-item in the Agriculture Ministry's budget that funds ongoing science, and studies have been completed to assess fishing's impact on mahi stocks and endangered sea turtles. Before the Plan Dorado, there were a half-dozen monitors taking observations as fishermen landed tons of mahi along Ecuador's 1,200-mile coastline. Today, there are more than 200 monitors that track landed volume, catch location, bycatch, capture size, and other data critical to understanding the fishery and enforcing Ecuadoran law. Monitors also facilitate traceability by issuing certificates linking each shipment of fish to a specific harvester.



Officials hold a sea turtle handling workshop in Anconcito, Ecuador. Photo credit: WWF Ecuador.

Before the Plan Dorado, NGOs used limited resources to help the industry improve fishing practices. Now, regulatory agencies publicize management decisions; government funding supports gear exchanges like an ongoing program to replace “J” hooks with “circle hooks” that reduce turtle bycatch; and government officials train fishing companies on legal obligations and the role of observers, as well as best practices to protect endangered turtles.

Before, conservation standards meant little, because they were rarely and ineffectively enforced. Since the Plan Dorado, the Agriculture Ministry has levied fines, suspended fishing permits, seized fish caught in violation of standards, and taken other enforcement actions.

There is, of course, more work to do. Pablo and his colleagues in Ecuador still have their eyes on the original goal: demonstrating sustainability sufficient to earn an unconditional pass of the MSC standard.

But things have changed for the better in Ecuador's mahi fishery. Since 2012, 10 out of the 21 estimated MSC scores that were previously listed as “likely to fail” or “likely to pass with conditions” in the MSC pre-assessment have improved, according to annual reviews by an independent consultant. Those scores concern critical issues like stock status and the protection of endangered or threatened species, as well as major improvements on governance and policy and compliance and enforcement indicators.

Progress in Ecuador has even inspired increased interest in conservation among neighboring countries. The Plan Dorado is seen as a model for replication by other members of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission. As a result, mahi issues are now routinely on the agenda of this regional fishery management organization's scientific and political meetings.

And Ecuador's progress is also inspiring regional action. In 2016, Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC) scientists developed the first-ever regional stock assessment for mahi mahi in the eastern Pacific Ocean. This constitutes an important step toward improving the management of mahi mahi at a regional level.

WWF's Ecuador mahi mahi FIP demonstrates that, by bringing government, industry, NGOs, and other stakeholders together, FIPs can make a real difference and improve the sustainability of threatened fisheries.

## Anova Indonesia Handline Tuna

May 2017

Handline fishing for yellowfin tuna in Indonesia is hard, long, difficult work. But fishermen like Pak Hayunan can't imagine doing anything else.

He leaves his home alone in the middle of the night, often beginning to fish by 2:00 a.m. – not for tuna, but for the smaller fish that will bait his hook. Around 4:30 a.m., he searches for birds and dolphins – again, not as quarry, but as guides. The yellowfin he seeks often school with these creatures, providing a beacon to focus his search. When the strike finally comes, the tug of war begins. Man struggles against fish, relying on protective gloves to safeguard his hands against injury by the nylon line, a technique learned and perfected by years of experience and raw determination. After as long as two hours, the fish tires and the contest is done. Only then can fishers like Pak Hayunan begin the homeward journey – often as far as 50 miles – to unload their catch and prepare to return to the water the next day.

The handline yellowfin fishery is a small artisanal fishery, accounting for approximately 2 percent of Indonesia's tuna catch in a typical year. But the fish Pak Hayunan and other handline fishermen catch are sold throughout North America. If you've bought yellowfin at Hy-Vee, Safeway, Kroger, or Wal-Mart, there's a good chance you've eaten some.

Handline tuna fishing is designed for sustainability. The nature of the craft means nearly no bycatch – catching one species while fishing for another – so risks to threatened species like sharks or marine turtles are minimal. The fishing line does not reach the seabed, meaning that this one-man, one-line, one-hook, one-fish handline fishing method has no impact on marine habitat.

But demonstrating the sustainability of this fishery was another challenge. When Anova Food's Fishing & Living™ Initiative launched its Indonesia handline tuna fishery improvement project (FIP) in 2011, the government did not have enough data to estimate catch volume, and certainly not the impact on protected



Collecting data at an Indonesia handline yellowfin landing site. Photo credit: Fishing & Living.

species. Anova hired its own staff to collect catch and trip data, seeking out and bringing on applicants with fisheries management training or backgrounds. Within a few years, Anova launched a nonprofit – MDPI, in English, the Fishing and Community Foundation of Indonesia – to coordinate the data collection. The effort started small, collecting data in just one landing site, but has expanded during four years to include 25 landing sites across eastern Indonesia. Today, the FIP's data is of sufficient quality to be considered and to contribute to management decisions.

The Indonesian government developed an overarching tuna management strategy in 2016. In 2017, it is expected to release more specific policies that take into account variations in species and fishing gear.

A second sustainability challenge identified by the FIP's initial assessment was illegal fishing. When most seafood industry observers think of Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, the image that comes to mind is a large mechanized vessel bringing in thousands of fish a day. But technically, many individual Indonesian fishermen were operating illegally because they had not obtained a license required under the country's law.

They were unlicensed because, after generations of fishing in the same area, the fishermen were unaware that a license was required and the Indonesian government lacked the resources to mount an effective awareness-building campaign. For many handline fishermen, awareness alone would not have made a difference. Illiteracy would have prevented fishermen completing the application, an inability to take time away from work would have prevented fishermen submitting the application, and poverty would have prevented fishermen paying the application fee.



An Indonesian handline tuna fisherman and his yellowfin tuna catch. Photo credit: MDPI.

Again, the Fishing & Living FIP focused on the hard work. MDPI staff not only collected data from local fishermen, they also explained licensing requirements. They brought application forms to fishing villages, collected the required information from local fishermen, paid the filing fee, and brought approved licenses back to the fishermen. After 18 months of sustained effort, the FIP had registered 500 handline yellowfin fishermen, dramatically reducing illegal fishing. In fact, this effort has expanded beyond licensing to encompass transparency. Hundreds of fishermen are now voluntarily sharing sustainability data, including licensure and IUU assessments, through an online platform developed by the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation.



The Fair Trade premium goes toward community improvements such as new buildings. Photo credit: MDPI.

While bolstering the sustainability of the handline yellowtail fishery, Anova also works to improve the quality of life for fishermen and their families. A partnership with Fair Trade USA and MDPI has helped to enlist fishermen in activities like the licensure drive. "It's been easier to engage them if we can tie the work the FIP is doing to the potential for a higher

income,” said Helen Packer, coordinator of Anova’s Fishing & Living program.

In just a few years, the Indonesia handline yellowfin FIP secured reliable data where none existed, informed the development of stronger fishery management policy, and made real headway on IUU fishing. The FIP collaborators will seek Marine Stewardship Council certification in 2017, anticipating a decision in late 2018 or early 2019. Whatever the outcome, Anova’s experience with the Indonesian handline tuna FIP shows that a small-scale, data-poor fishery can make meaningful progress toward sustainability on the global scale.



## Video: Making Your Own FIP Video

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Written stories are the best place to start, but translating your FIP’s success to video opens new opportunities to help your audiences see your FIP at work. Video is a new format for many FIP implementers, so we developed a sample video based on the O2 Kamchatka FIP story. We also developed an introductory video summarizing how to turn a written success story into a video script, offering best practices to capture engaging still and motion images, and offering guidance on editing your video. Both videos are available as companions to this guide.



# Developing Your Story: A Guide for Creating Impactful FIP Success Stories

## Key Elements to Include

A good story about your FIP will draw in your audience and inspire them to take action on behalf of the FIP. To increase your story's potential to connect with your audience in a powerful way, your story should have four key qualities:



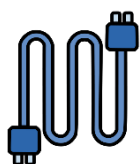
**Specificity.** A powerful success story clearly and specifically conveys what was wrong, what your FIP did to make change, and what has improved as a result of your actions. Your story must be specific enough to highlight particular issues of environmental concern and tangible outcomes from the FIP's work. Rather than keeping your story general or high level, include tangible, specific details about the fishery and the work you've done. This will help people understand the changes that you're making and the true impact you're having.



**Accessibility.** Your story must be accessible enough to hold the interest of someone new to the field. Not everyone you need to engage will have the science or seafood industry background required to understand a FIP's work. By providing context and avoiding jargon, you can help ensure everyone will be able to understand your story and recognize that your FIP is making a difference.



**Personalization.** You are telling the story of your FIP's success, but including a human element is important to help your audience relate. Your story must be personal enough that readers care about the place and the people who depend on the fishery. Make sure that your story includes enough details about the people and place so that your audiences can imagine them.



**Connection.** In order for your audience to care about your story, you have to connect it to what they already care about – progress backed by science, collaboration between industry and NGOs, effective engagement of government, or other priorities. Aligning your story with their interests will help them realize that your FIP's success matters to them.

As you work through the toolkit, keep these elements in mind. The toolkit offers specific guidance to help you focus on each of these critical qualities as you craft your story. A checklist at the end of the toolkit will ask you to review your story to make sure it includes the key elements.

## Need Help?

If you need help as you work through the story tool, check out the stories in the “Sample FIP Success Stories” section. We’ve annotated one of those stories to highlight the decisions we and FIP implementers made to incorporate these qualities and develop a strong FIP success story.

## Part 1: Getting Ready

Before you start drafting a story, there are a few critical steps you should take to prepare. The planning questions and steps will help you set up and draft a story about your FIP that will be a powerful tool in your outreach. By doing your research and planning in advance, they will also make the drafting and editing processes easier.

### Successes

Any fishery improvement project is going to have many stories that it can tell about the important work it's doing. However, it's important to narrow your focus down to a few specific successes that delivered big, tangible change. Making your story specific and easy to remember will keep your audience from feeling overwhelmed and will ensure that they remember your key points. Specificity and clarity are critical for a powerful story.

Consider your FIP, and think about its **biggest successes** to date. Are the fishermen using improved fishing practices? Are there tangible environmental benefits? Is there community engagement in the fishery? Have there been governmental management policy changes? The example stories in this toolkit cited accomplishments such as:

- **Kamchatka Salmon:** There is no longer evidence of poaching activities, and they've implemented river-specific escapement goals that inform the fishermen's practices.
- **Ecuador Mahi Mahi:** For the first time ever, Ecuador's government has established a national mahi fishery management policy, backed by sound science, effective monitoring, good-faith industry engagement, and real enforcement.
- **Anova Indonesia Handline Tuna:** The FIP secured reliable sustainability data where none existed, informed the development of stronger fishery management policy, and made real headway on IUU fishing, while helping fishermen raise their standard of living.

<b>Worksheet: List up to five of your biggest successes in section 1a.</b>
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Along with identifying the range of successes, you'll want to think about which of these are most compelling to talk about. The following questions can help you determine which accomplishments to focus on:

- **Problem.** Clarify why the change you have made is important to the fishery, the community, and others. What was wrong before the FIP did this work, and why did it have to change?
- **Actions.** Make sure you're clear about what your FIP has done to make change happen. How did your FIP contribute to each accomplishment? What did the FIP do, and what did partners do to deliver results?
- **Indicators of improvement.** Be sure that you can explain how you know things are better now than they were before the FIP's work started. What tangible improvements did your actions deliver? What evidence do you have that your improvements have had an impact? Note that evidence may be quantifiable outcomes like changes in MSC scoring or demonstrable improvements in fishing practice or fishery management. The example stories employ a powerful mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence to demonstrate improvement.

**Worksheet: Include your responses under each success in section 1a.**

## Key Contributors

Next, consider the people who contributed to the success you noted in section 1a. You don't need to introduce every person involved, but developing the character of a few of them will help humanize your story. Some questions to consider include:

- What was their role(s) (founder, participant, etc.)? Why did they get involved?
- What actions did they take, and why was their active involvement critical to the FIP's success?

**Worksheet: Identify key contributors and details about why they acted in section 1b.**

## Objectives

Before you decide which of your FIP's accomplishments to feature in your story, there are some key questions that you should consider to guide your story development and ensure your time spent working on your story will be a worthwhile investment.

First, think about your **objectives** with this story. What success are you trying to communicate through this story, and why? What is the point of getting your story out? Some possible objectives might include:

- Drawing a new participant to your project.
- Getting a government official to introduce legislation.
- Securing a new buyer for your FIP's product.

You'll likely have more than one objective that you'd like to achieve. However, you'll want to focus on your biggest priority as you work through the tool to ensure that your final product aligns with what you want to do.

**Worksheet: Write your objective in section 1c.**

## Audiences

Next, consider which **audiences** you need to achieve that objective. For each of your audiences, you'll be looking to convince them that your FIP is making a difference. However, the way you communicate with them and what they need to hear about your fishery to be convinced will be different for each. As you might have guessed, your priority audiences will be driven by your objectives. Ask yourself a few questions about these audiences: Who needs to hear about your success – funders, producers, buyers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government officials? What do they care about regarding your fishery – that it benefits the community, is financially viable, or will supply product that they need to meet sustainability commitments?

While every fishery will have a lot of audiences it needs to reach, identify a few (no more than three) that are most relevant to your goal.

**Worksheet: Write your audience(s) in section 1d.**

Finally, clearly define the **action you want the audience to take** for each audience you've prioritized. What do you need them to do related to your FIP? Again, start with your objective, then ask where you might start (asking a prospective FIP participant to meet with you, asking a policymaker to review a draft bill, or asking a buyer to meet with local fishermen, for example).

**Worksheet: Write the actions you want them to take in section 1d.**

## Prioritized Successes

Now that you've answered some strategic questions about what you'd like to achieve with your story, you'll need to focus on what successes you will feature in your story.

In section 1a you identified several possible stories you could tell. Which of these will be most compelling to your audiences? Notice that our Kamchatka salmon sample story features two successes (poaching mitigation and improved science), and our Ecuador mahi story features just one (establishment of a national management policy). That's because focusing on a small number of wins makes it easier to describe each one clearly, concretely, and concisely. You'll need to prioritize the top one or two (but definitely no more than three) successes you want to talk about in your story.

**Worksheet: Review the successes you outlined in section 1a, and prioritize up to three key accomplishments in section 1e.**

## Details

Once you've identified the story you'll tell and the successes you'll highlight, take a survey of what information you have and what you need to develop a concrete, detailed story. These details will allow listeners to get a full understanding of your work and will help bring your story to life and make it personal. Take stock of what you have, including:

- **Personal testimony** from those involved with the project, including quotes and permission to use them. These can help provide the human insight on a story and bring it to life.
- An understanding of the **fishery's history**, to accurately show what it was like before the FIP started.
- A brief overview of the **FIP's work** to show the changes within the context of the fishery.
- **Data about the problem or improvement** to support your claims about what changed. This may be quantitative – such as stock assessments, bycatch reduction, etc. – or qualitative – such as a government passing a bill that impacts fisheries or a business expansion.
- **Descriptive details** to illustrate your story. Remember that many of your audiences are not familiar with the fishery you are describing. Illustrative details – including what the area looks like, how the fishery is set up, who works on the ground, and how the people interact – will help your audience better understand and visualize the fishery you are describing.

**Worksheet: List the details you have in section 1f.**

## Part 2: Outlining Your Story

You've done the strategic thinking, and now it's time to begin building your story. We recommend starting with an outline. For each section of your outline, we've included some guidance about what you need to consider and some questions to get you thinking. Note that these questions are intended to guide your thinking – you do not need to answer every single one in your story, and there may be some additional concepts that are unique to your FIP. The goal is to get you thinking about the information to include in your story that will be compelling to your audiences.

As you work through the questions, remember to refer back to the objective, audiences, and asks (or “calls to action”) that you prioritized to make sure you keep them top of mind.

### Setting the Stage

Like any story's beginning, you must set the stage for your audience so they understand the context for what happens later. Describing the problems facing your fishery is especially critical for FIP success stories, so that your audience understands the issues in the fishery when your FIP started and the barriers you had to overcome.

But remember not just to focus on the bad news – your opening is a great opportunity to show your audience why the fishery matters. By illustrating the natural beauty of the place (as the Kamchatka salmon example does), the earnest work of local fishermen (as the Ecuador mahi sample does), or the fishery's market significance (as all the samples do), you can help your audience “see” why you chose to invest in this fishery and make it more sustainable.

- About the place and the fishery. Illustrate what the fishery is like for your audiences – not just details like species and fishing methods, but also why the fishery had potential and what is unique about it. Some questions to consider include:
  - What is the place like? What does the scenery look like? Who lives there? What is the economy like?
  - What is special about the place where your FIP is located? What is unique about the culture?
  - Why does the fishery matter? What is the FIP's focus (species, gear, volume)? How long has the fishery been around? How much does the fishery produce each year? What does the consumer base look like? Who does the product supply?
- About the sustainability problems. Help your audience understand which things needed to be fixed and what the barriers to progress were. This will help them understand why you chose the improvements you did and, in some cases, why the success you've achieved is so notable. Some questions to consider include:
  - What were the problems in the fishery? What was causing the problems (e.g., lack of data, illegal fishing, etc.)? Had there been past efforts to try and address the problems? Why did they not work?
  - Why was it important to make improvements in the fishery?

For example, consider the Kamchatka salmon story. Without river-specific escapement data, industry didn't know where additional passing days were needed. Making improvements was dependent on data; without it, the data gap made sustainability efforts less effective.

**Worksheet: List responses to the relevant questions, or other details you want to highlight to set the stage for your story, in section 2a.**

## Making Improvements Happen

Now that you've set the stage and introduced your audiences to your fishery, it's time to show your audiences what the FIP is doing to change things on the ground. This is the crux of the story where you illustrate how your FIP is making improvements.

- Discuss what actions the FIP took that resulted in success. Describe what you've done to address the problems you outlined. You'll want to make sure you offer concrete, specific points that show the steps your FIP took and why they were critical in creating the change. Some questions to consider include:
  - What are the most important actions you took in the FIP?
  - What did your FIP do to change each of the problems you identified?
  - How were the key people identified in your story critical to this success? What actions did they take? In what ways were they leaders?
- Describe which obstacles you overcame. Along with showing what you did to address the problems in the fisheries, make sure you demonstrate why they were so significant by illustrating the obstacles you overcame. Illustrating these obstacles can help your audience understand why this was a great achievement and why others have struggled to address the problems. Some questions to consider include:
  - What challenges have you faced through this process, both internal (resources, organization, planning, etc.) and external (cultural pushback, people or organizations working against the fishery's sustainability, attacks from other nonprofits, etc.)?
  - How did you overcome them, or how are you working to address it?

Again, the Kamchatka salmon FIP's story is a useful guide. The FIP team built relationships with industry and made a business case for river-specific escapement data. The FIP's industry partners pushed the governmental science agency to collect the data. The obstacle they overcame together was the post-Soviet absence of investment in regular scientific monitoring. This story shows why it's important to articulate what the FIP did, what partners did, and how they worked together to make improvements that mattered.

**Worksheet: List responses to the relevant questions, or other details you want to highlight to talk about the changes in your FIP, in section 2b.**

## Showcasing Tangible Improvements

Finally, you want to tell your audiences what things look like now, after you've worked on addressing the fishery's problems. This is your chance to show the impact that you've had and make your case for why your audience should engage with you to continue the work.

Describe where you currently stand in relation to the problems you discussed, so your audience can see the meaningful change from when you started your work with the fishery. Some questions to consider include:

- For each of the issues you flagged, where are you now? What was the result of the changes that were made?

- Why does the improvement matter for the environment? What has improved on the water, and why is that important?
- Why does the improvement matter for the industry? What has improved in the fishery's practice and management? How has management changed?
- Why does the improvement matter for the community? Did any longer-term cultural changes result in the local community among producers, buyers, government officials, etc.?

Consider again the Kamchatka salmon example. That story identifies two problems upfront: (1) the lack of river-specific escapement data, and; (2) evidence of poaching. The story returns to both issues at the end, describing concretely what has changed: (1) industry now makes better sustainability choices informed by river-specific data, and; (2) because of active anti-poaching brigades, there is little or no evidence of poaching today. MSC certification is an indicator that those and other improvements have made a measurable environmental difference, but the value of the improvements themselves is self-evident.

**Worksheet: List responses to the relevant questions, or other details you want to highlight to showcase where you are now, in section 2c.**

### Sharing Takeaways

This is where you focus on why your story is important – the “so what?” – and encourage your key audiences to get involved. Here, you'll want to integrate your call to action (see section 1d of the worksheet) for your audiences. Some questions to consider include:

- What did these successes tell you about the FIPs' potential to improve sustainability?
- What did this experience tell you about how FIPs can do more?
- What would you say about your FIP to your most important audience?

Again, consider the Kamchatka salmon example. The key takeaway about the FIPs' potential is that “to deliver real change on the water, industry has to be at the table.” And the story's message to the FIP's primary audience (buyers) is “more and more seafood companies are looking for new sources of sustainable seafood, and Russia can meet this demand.”

**Worksheet: List responses to the relevant questions in section 2d.**

### Reality Check: Does the Story Help You Achieve Your Objective?

Now that you've drafted your story, review the original objective that you outlined in section 1c. Does this story help you achieve that objective? Will the audiences you prioritized connect with the story you drafted? Will your story make your audience want to respond positively to your ask?

If the answer to either of these questions is no, adjust your outline before moving on. Revisit the planning questions and look for places where you can refine some of the points to address your objectives and audiences. In some instances, it may be an easier fix, such as better explaining the problems you set out to address or illustrating some of the leaders' roles on the ground. In other cases, you may need to make more substantial change to make sure your audiences will respond, such as focusing on a different change you made to capture interest or helping them better understand the obstacles you are facing so they see how they could help you create more change.

## Part 3: Going from Outline to Story

Now that you've answered the key questions and outlined your story, you'll need to develop your story. A suggested story length is between about 500 and 650 words – this length gives you space to fully develop your ideas and give details but isn't so long that your audiences lose interest.

Some best practices to keep in mind as you draft your story include:

- **Use conversational language.** Draft your story similarly to how you would tell it when you talk. This will make it easier for your audiences to understand, and it will make it easier for you to translate the written story into talking points. The Kamchatka salmon story illustrates this approach. Rather than describing the extent and consequences of poaching in formal or clinical terms (like “affected negatively”), the story describes salmon populations as “being hammered by illegal fishing” – the choice to represent the sustainability impact of poaching by referring to the physical impact of a hammer is not an accident but a deliberate effort to convey poaching’s violent harm.
- **Show instead of tell.** The questions are intended to help identify details about your FIP and the work that is done. Make sure to include these details in your draft so that your audiences can get a personal feel for the FIP and the people involved. Again, consider the Kamchatka salmon example, which goes beyond “rugged natural beauty” to describe the region using visual language (“brown bears,” “active volcanoes,” “so many rivers and streams they don’t have a reliable count,” etc.).
- **Avoid jargon and acronyms.** Make sure that you’re not using jargon – such as technical terms – or acronyms in your story. While these terms and acronyms may be clear to you, your audiences may not understand them, which could cause confusion or misunderstanding. Rather than using jargon, try to describe the term and give examples to illustrate. Spell out acronyms, and make sure to describe it if needed. The Kamchatka salmon story is a good example. Rather than simply relying on the jargon term “escapement,” it defines the term using clear, nontechnical language (“a measure of the number of salmon that escape fishing to reach their upriver spawning grounds”). It then explains why escapement rates matter, using equally accessible language (“below-target escapement ... means there just aren’t enough fish returning to spawn to replace the ones caught by fishing operations”).
- **Build the drama.** Good stories are dramatic. They have *conflict* – sometimes between characters but often between characters and their circumstances. The drama is accentuated by the *actions* characters take to overcome the obstacles they face. And the end of the story provides a *resolution* for the dramatic conflict. You see those dramatic elements in the Kamchatka FIP story. The FIP’s efforts are defined as in conflict with a status quo that impairs effective sustainability practices and allows poaching to undermine sustainability. The FIP takes actions to overcome each of these obstacles – securing data to improve sustainability efforts and engaging industry leaders in launching anti-poaching brigades. And the conflict is resolved as the FIP’s actions deliver results.

## Checklist

Once you've drafted your story, use the following list to make sure that you checked all the boxes to create a powerful story.

### Key Elements

- ☐ Connects with the interests of key audiences and supports your objectives.
- ☐ Is accessible enough to hold the interest of someone new to the field.
- ☐ Is personal enough that readers care about the place and the people who depend on the fishery.
- ☐ Is specific enough to spotlight particular issues of environmental concern, concrete actions the FIP and partners took to make progress, and tangible improvements from the FIP's work.

### Setting the Stage

- ☐ Clearly identifies and describes the problem the FIP faced.
- ☐ Provides background on the fishery that will allow audiences to visualize the FIP and get a sense of the problems you are working to solve.
- ☐ Introduces a few key people and sufficiently describes them and the impact they had in the FIP.

### Changes in the FIP

- ☐ Clearly explains how the FIP addressed the problems in the fisheries – which actions led to progress and who made them happen.
- ☐ Illustrates where there were obstacles and how the FIP was able to overcome them.

### Showcase Where the FIP is Now

- ☐ Explains the improvements to the fishery.
- ☐ Includes some of your takeaways from the FIP's work.

### Finishing Touches

- ☐ Uses conversational language.
- ☐ Uses illustrative language that helps your audience visualize problems, actions, and improvements.
- ☐ Avoids jargon and acronyms.
- ☐ Informed by colleagues' feedback.
- ☐ Edited for typos and grammatical errors.

## Improving Your Story: Ways to Take a Story From Good to Great

The toolkit will help you develop a good story that can help you connect with your audiences to help reach your objectives. However, if you're willing to invest the time and effort, there are some steps that you can take to take your story from good to great.

- **Get feedback.** Once you've developed your story, get feedback on it to ensure that it will motivate your key audiences. Asking for feedback both from those involved with the FIP and those who are not will help ensure you didn't miss any critical details and that the story is understandable and compelling for those unfamiliar with your work.

- **Gather other assets to strengthen your story.** Review the list of assets you have in section 1d. Is there something else that would help strengthen your story – a quote from a fisherman, recent data about the stock status, or something else? Determine what you need and then think about how you can gather it, such as through research or interviews.
- **Use images.** For those times you're sharing a written version of your story, photos can be an incredible tool to help bring your story to life. Gather high-quality images of the place where the fishery is located, the key people involved with the fishery, and the day-to-day work to help people visualize the key elements of your story.



## Packaging Your Story

This guide is principally designed to help you craft a written version of your success story. That is always a good place to start, because writing your story out in full challenges you to think through how you will present the information in a way that is clear, concise, and compelling. But a written version may not be the only way you want to present your story to your audiences; this section explores other options.

Start by asking yourself how you work with the audiences whose engagement matters to your work. Which of these describe how you communicate with your key audiences?

Communication channel	Story packaging ideas
One-on-one meetings at the harbor or in busy government offices	Talking points (bullet-formatted guidance you can use to tell your story quickly and easily) with a printed copy of the story as a leave-behind.
Presentations at large-group meetings in corporate offices or at trade shows and conferences	PowerPoint slideshow with pictures to accompany your talk.
Email updates or e-newsletters	Short summary of key points with a link to the full story online.
Blog posts	Series of posts – one summarizing the story itself and linking to the full story, and follow-up posts exploring specific aspects.
YouTube or Facebook Live videos	Brief video focusing on one aspect of the story (central character, gear improvement, economic impact, fishing community or industry profile).
Social media like Facebook and Twitter	Series of mixed-media (text and pictures) posts focusing on elements of the story, with links to the full story.

You may use one or many of these channels to communicate with the audiences you're trying to reach.

Once you've identified what channels you'll use to reach your audiences, you can start repackaging your story. The following section includes some examples of how you can repackage your own FIP success story.



## Repackaging the Example Stories

To show how to repackage your FIP success story, we've included examples of how we repackaged the Kamchatka Salmon story.

### Talking Points

- Natasha Novikova worked for years with Ocean Outcomes' FIP in Russia's remote but beautiful Kamchatka region.
- Salmon fishing is an economic anchor in Kamchatka, and the fishery supplies restaurants and retailers throughout the United States and Canada.
- A 2014 assessment identified two sustainability concerns:
  - A lack of river-specific data on whether enough fish reach spawning grounds to replace the ones caught by fishing operations.
  - Evidence of illegal fishing – from discarded caviar buckets to illegal Chinese gillnets.
- With years of experience working with Kamchatka's fishing industry, Ocean Outcomes FIP reached out to two partner companies: Vityaz-Avto Ltd. and Delta Ltd.
  - Together, they encouraged researchers to produce Kamchatka's first-ever river-specific escapement goals for key species.
  - The fishing companies also created anti-poaching brigades in the region to deter poaching.
- The FIP's efforts are paying off:
  - Illegal fishing reports are down.
  - Better data inform more sustainable fishing practices.
  - Three Kamchatka salmon fisheries have been certified as sustainable by the independent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).
- Ocean Outcomes' Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP shows that when you invest in relationships, commercial fishermen can be effective partners in making fisheries more sustainable.

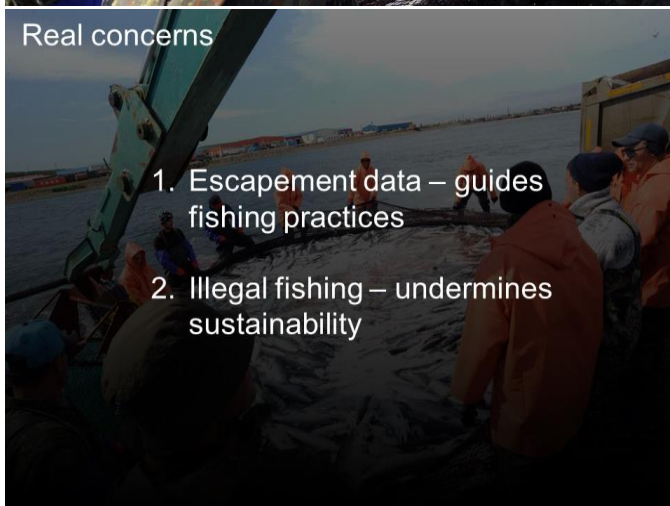
## PowerPoint Slides



- Kamchatka: remote but beautiful



- Critical to region's economy – 140,000 metric tons / year
- Sold all over United States & Canada – to retailers like Whole Foods



- Soviet collapse slowed science
- No river-specific escapement data
- Illegal fishing – caviar buckets, Chinese gillnets



- Years building relationships
- FIP reached out to key companies: Vityaz-Avto Ltd. and Delta Ltd.
- Real results:
  - Worked with FIP to get research institute to provide river-specific data
  - Companies launched anti-poaching patrols like the one you see here



- Science up, illegal fishing down
- Several species certified by MSC in 2016

## Sample Facebook Posts

Ocean Outcomes Western Kamchatka salmon fishery improvement project is delivering real results and proving that when industry, fishermen, and nonprofits work together, we can create real change on the water. Learn more: [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

When a 2014 assessment showed that Western Kamchatka's salmon fishery needed more precise data, Ocean Outcomes partnered with two key fishing industry partners – Vityaz-Avto Ltd. and Delta Ltd. – to get it. Years later, our work is delivering real results. Read more about the partnership and the improvements in the fishery on our website. [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

When a 2014 assessment showed evidence of poaching in Western Kamchatka's salmon fishery, Ocean Outcomes' fishery improvement project (FIP) partnered with industry to deter poachers and prevent harm to a critical resource. Read more in our blog post. [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

Ocean Outcomes' Western Kamchatka Salmon fishery improvement project (FIP) shows that industry has a business interest in making fisheries more sustainable. Read more in our blog post. [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

## Sample Twitter Posts

Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP is delivering results & proving industry & NGOs create real change together. Read more: [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

This salmon fishery faced data needs and poaching threats. But industry partnerships are delivering real results. [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

The Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP shows that fishermen can be partners in driving change on the water. Read more: [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

Western Kamchatka Salmon FIP shows the business interest in making fisheries more sustainable. Read more: [\[Hyperlink\]](#)

## Thanks

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## About Springboard Partners

Springboard Partners works with foundations and nonprofits, using the power of communication to do more good. A full-service communication, strategy, and facilitation partnership based in Washington, D.C., Springboard Partners has more than a decade of experience working with sustainable seafood leaders worldwide.

