

Only one path to sustainability? Understanding the role of MSC certification in RFMOs

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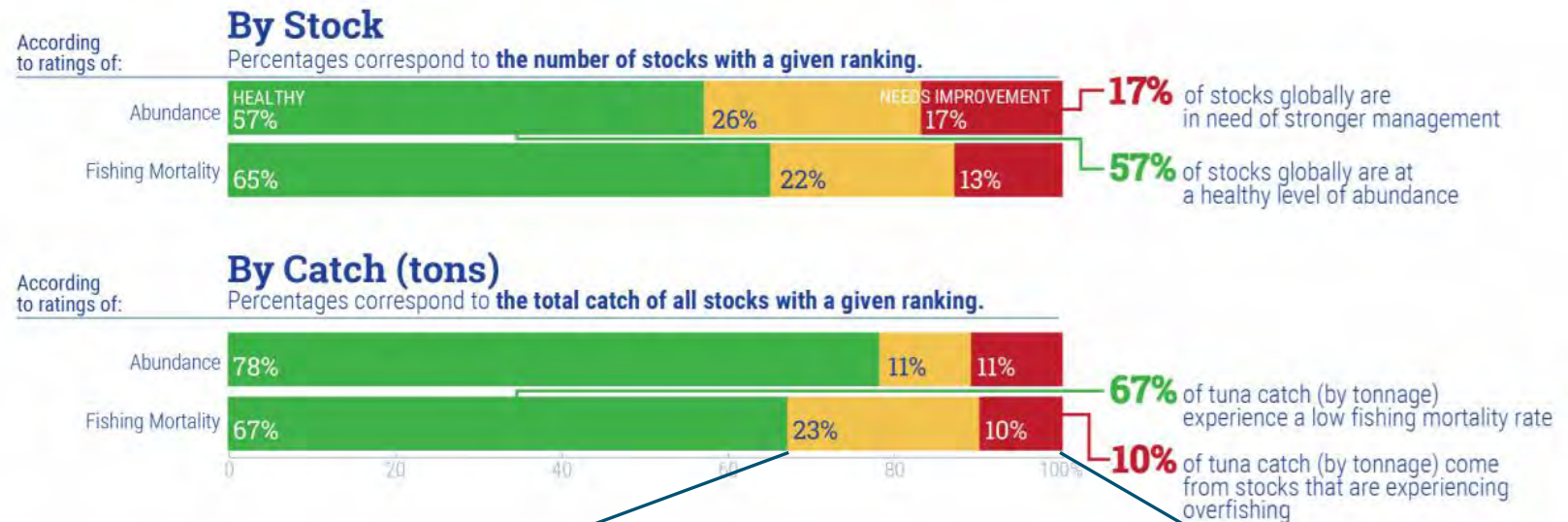
Understanding Changes in Transitional Areas of the Pacific, PICES International Symposium, La Paz Mexico 24-26th



Status of tuna

Distribution of Stocks of Major Commercial Tunas (As reported 2011-2017)

According to abundance ratings and fishing mortality ratings



- 33% of tuna catch is not being managed to avoid overfishing and restore depleted stocks.

RFMO's slow progress ...

1. Consensus driven

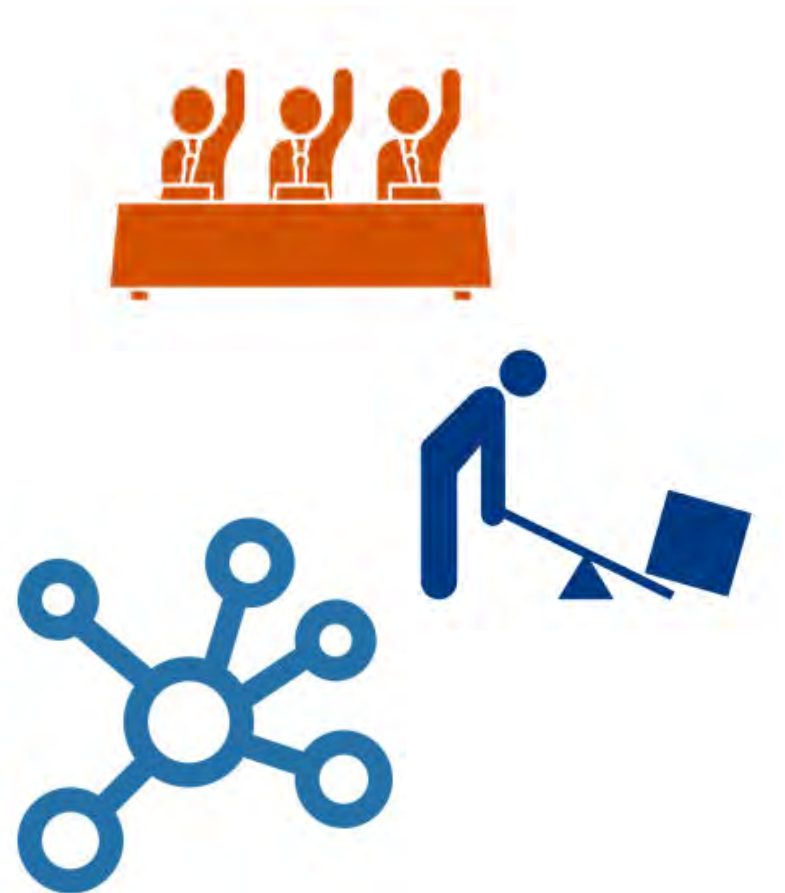
Favours the 'law of least ambitious program'

2. Asymmetrical

DWFNs over coastal states – income, aid, and market access

3. Multi-level and polycentric

Decisions are subject to national, sub-regional, and regional influence



Variation between RFMOs



Est. 2004 (post UNFSA)

Precautionary approach

**Scientific advisory
and commission;
Builds on PNA and FFA**

Est. 1996 under FAO

No precautionary
approach, instead
'optimal utilisation'

**Scientific advisory
and commission**

**Est. 1970 through
FAO**

No precautionary
approach, instead
'maximum biomass'

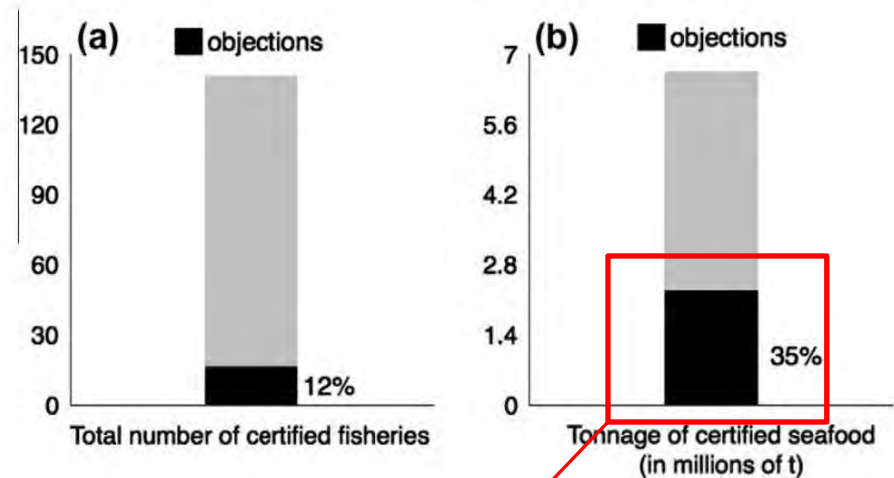
**Organisation by
stocks and region**

Marine Stewardship Council

- Market incentives for improved stock status and management
- 12% of global catch certified; certified landings of tuna = 20% total catch
- Fishery Methodology Assessment (FAM) applied by third party auditing by CABs
- Key critique: Objections never disqualify fisheries – certifies stocks at 'safe' levels, but with no recovery

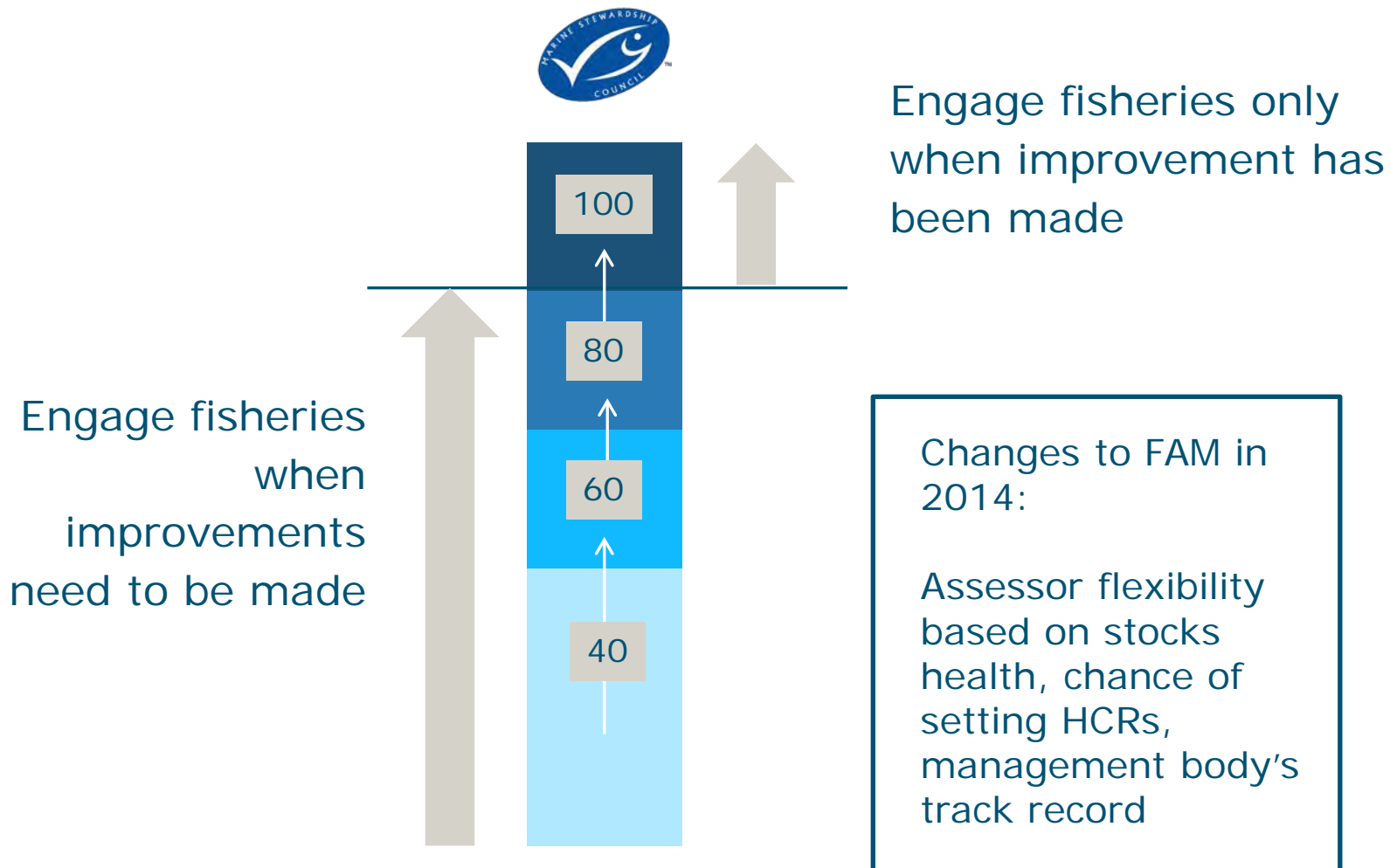


C. Christian et al./Biological Conservation 161 (2013) 10–17



High volume fisheries are most contentious

MSC theory of change



Smart mixes

An RFMO-MSA 'smart mix' for developing HCRs?

Smart mixes bring private rule making institutions together norms, oversight, and market-logics to influence and coordinate public regulatory goals (Gunningham and Grabosky 1998)

Sequencing



Experimentation

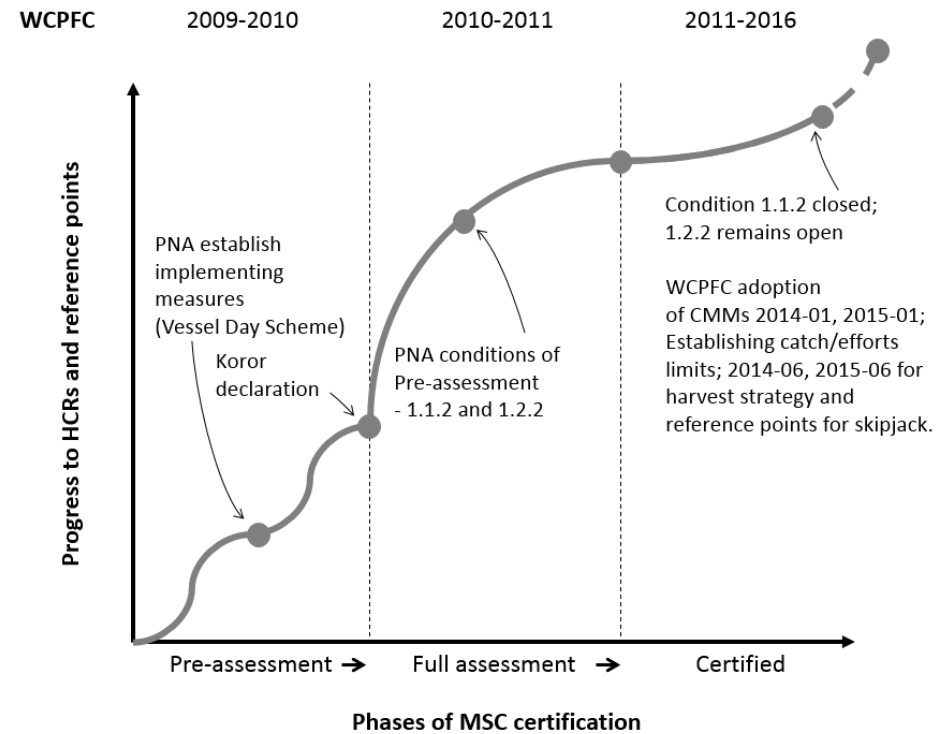


Improvement pathways



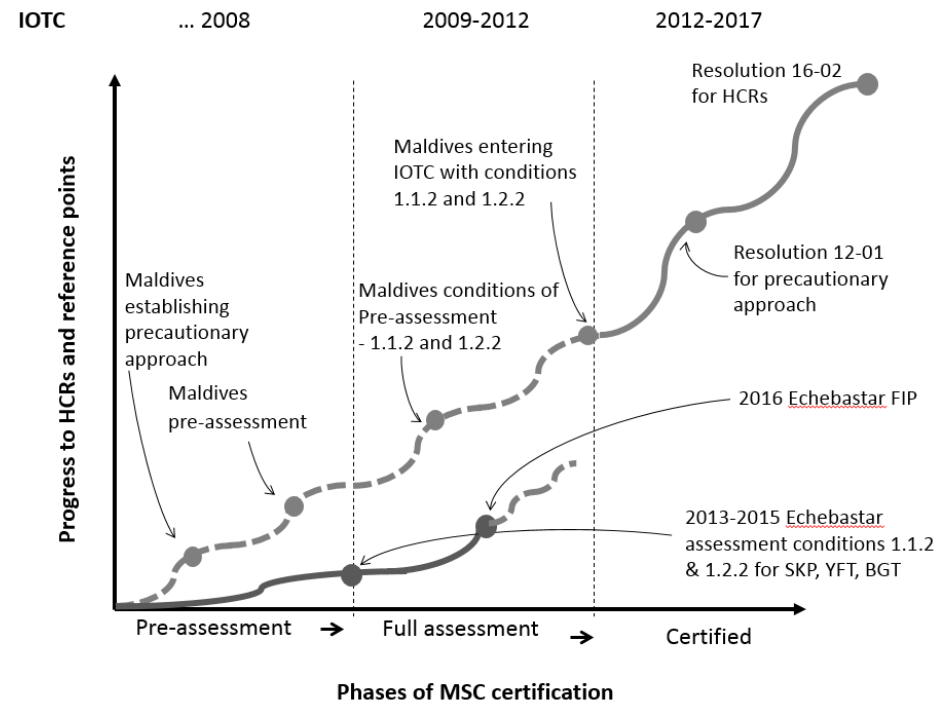
WCPFC: 'Multi-level' pathway

- 2010 Kokor Declaration - cooperation for MSC certification
- Pre-assessment phase involved 3rd implementing measures
- Six conditions set - challenge was to elevate IMs to WCPFC as CMMs
- CMM and interim target reference points introduced, harvest strategy still pending



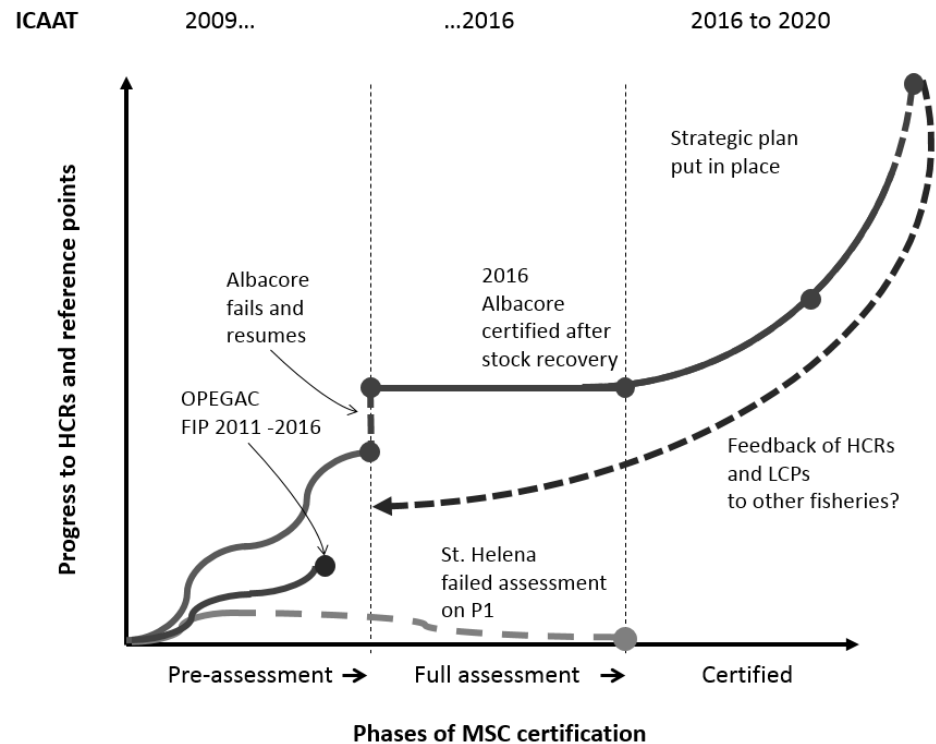
IOTC: 'Agitation' pathway

- Maldives membership of IOTC and adoption of precautionary measures through MSC pre-assessment
- 2012 full assessment led to 8 conditions by 2016 – two on HCRs
- 2015 Echebatar purse seine assessment not successful because no HCRs
- YFT under Maldives certification suspended under surveillance audit; SKJ HCR put in place 2016



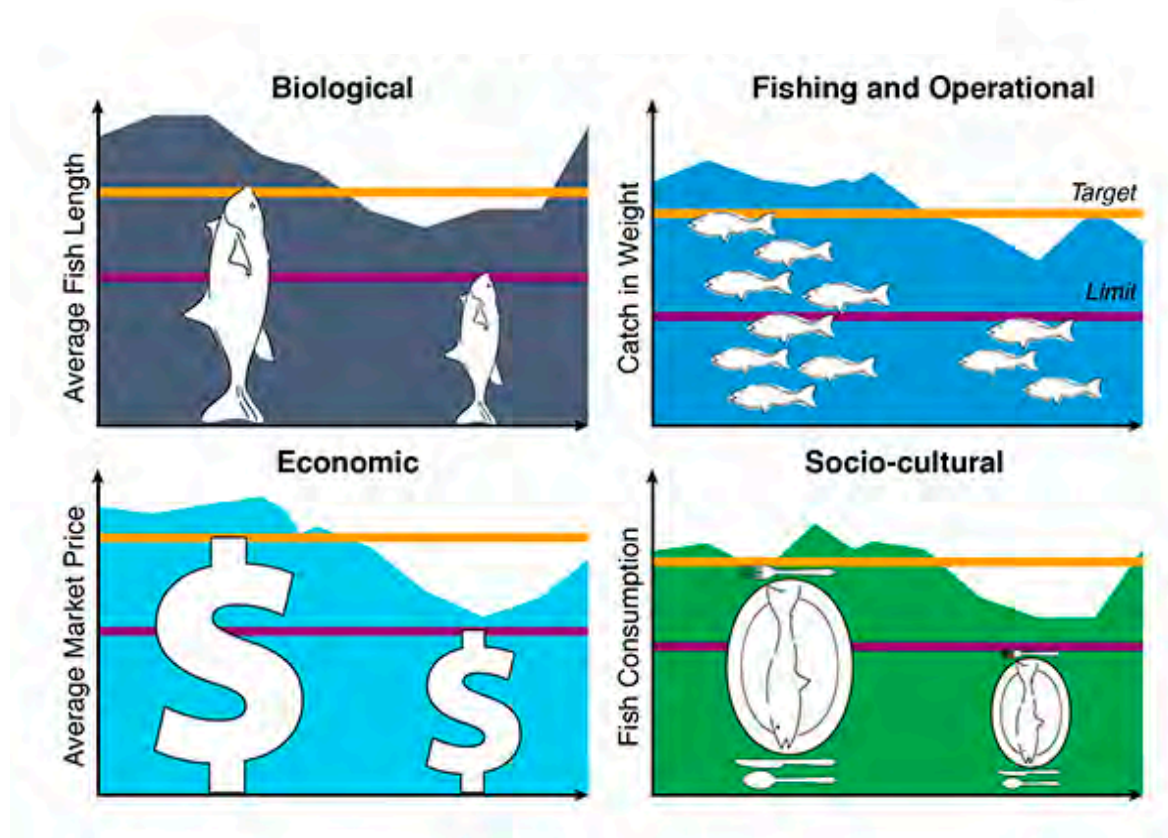
ICCAT: 'Harmonisation' pathway

- Failed certification in 2010: St Helena, due to status of all tunas
- OPEGAC FIP 2016 – management plan for all stocks to recover for MSC assessment
- Nth Atlantic Albacore certified 2015 after recovery;
- Conditions for *improved* HCR because resolution for single stock too poor; leading MSC to run harmonisation pilot to 2020.



HCRs are fundamentally political

**Decisions on limit and reference points
proactive and adaptive**
(But still part of a wider mix of issues)

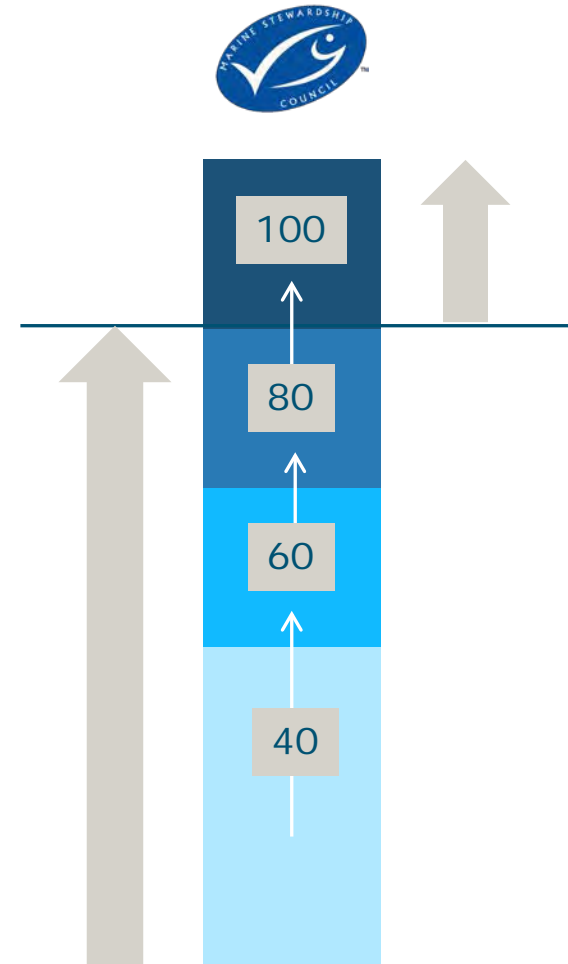


Source: Chris Anderson

RFMO-MSC 'smart mix'

Flexible sequencing and engagement

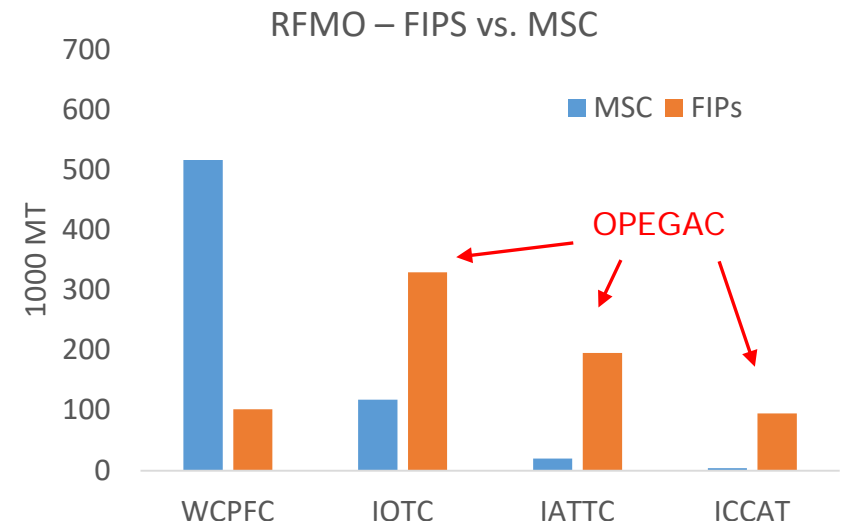
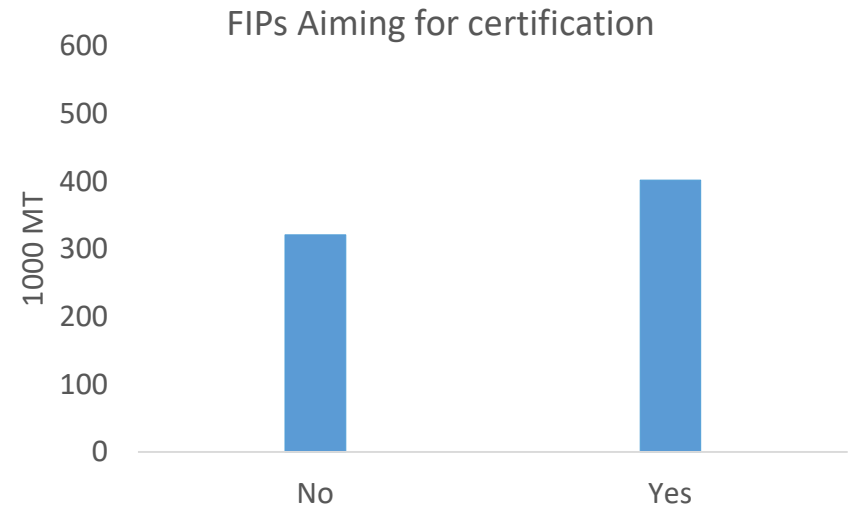
- No single best application of incentives for improvement
- Certify first, improve second an effective option
- MSC plays multiple roles in setting agendas, capacity building, building demand



'Smart mix' dimensions

Conditionality

- Member states forced to close out HCRs development along defined timeline
- Conditionality can occur before (FIPs) and after certification
- Market conditionality remains a key pressure point



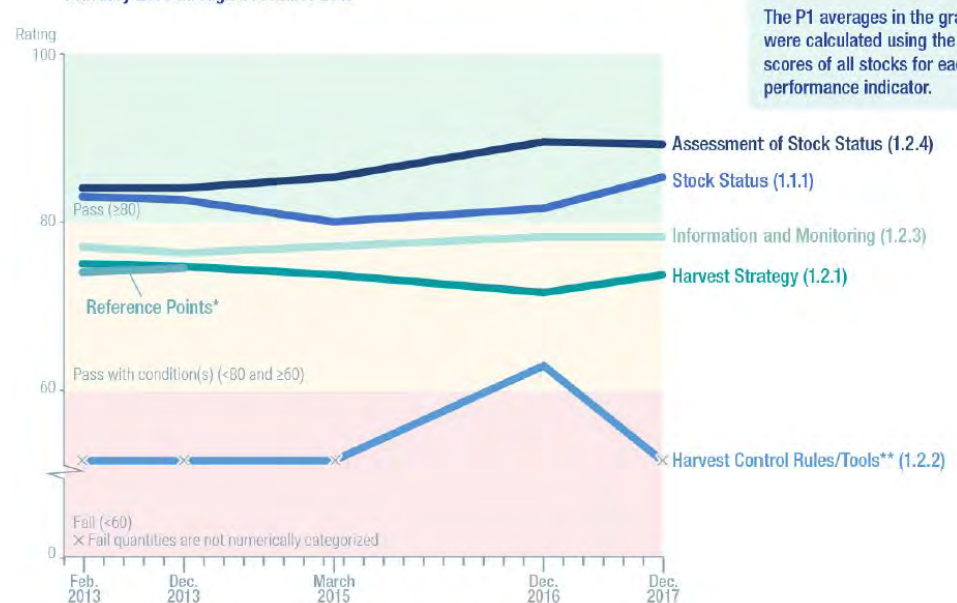
RFMO-MSC 'smart mix'

Experimentation

- Cross learning between fisheries and levels under RFMO through (parallel) certification
- Failed assessments expose issues due to transparency
- Institutional learning within RFMOs – e.g. around MCS activities

SUMMARY OF SUSTAINABLE FISH STOCKS (MSC Principle 1 Averages)

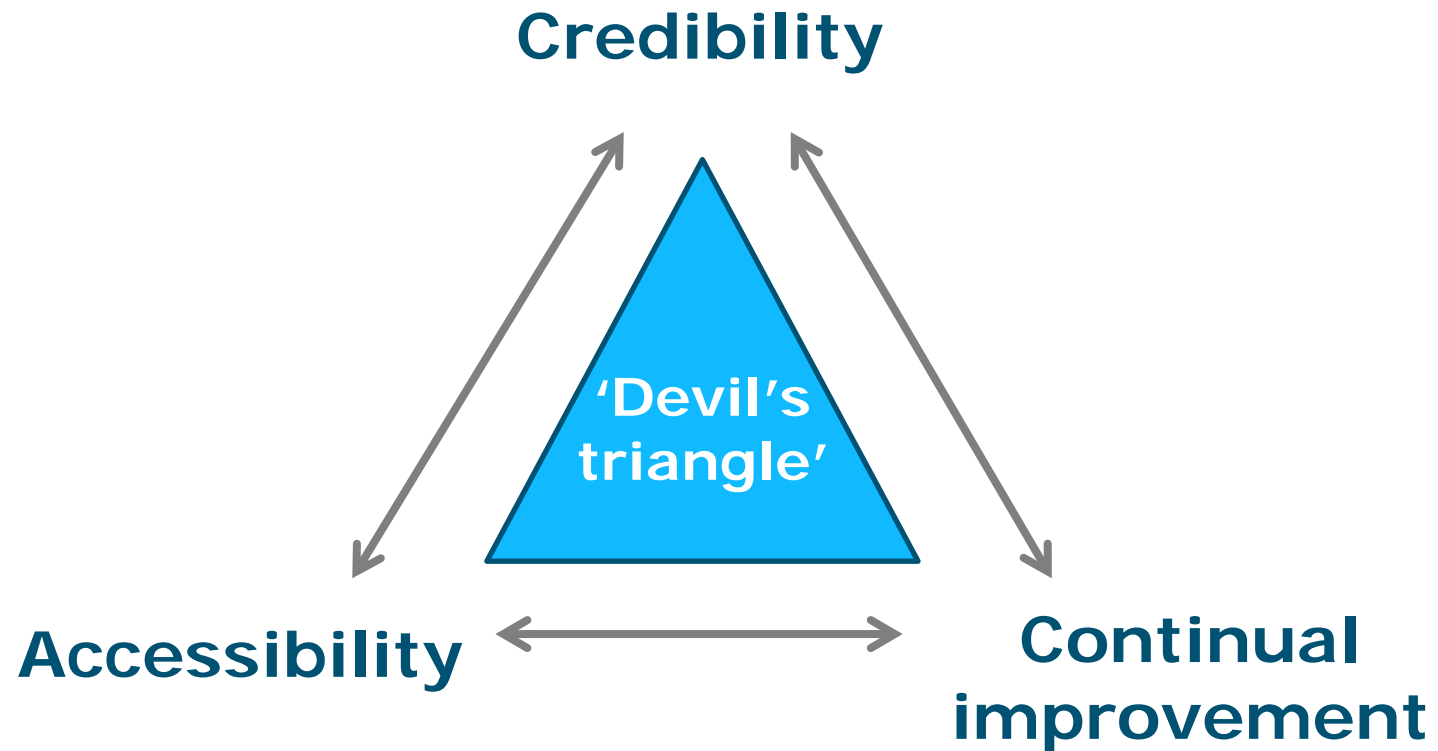
February 2013 through December 2017



The P1 averages in the graph below were calculated using the average scores of all stocks for each performance indicator.

*Some changes are due to consolidation and adjustments to the MSC Standards
**In 2017 MSC issued more clear (and stricter) guidance on how to score HCRs.

MSC's fine line ...



Conclusions

- MSC has played an important and underestimated role in RFMOs
- Dynamic sequencing of MSC-RFMO engagement (certify first, improve second) that allows for experimentation are key 'smart' features
- Ultimately effectiveness comes down to ongoing credibility of the MSC, which comes down to conditionality