How do I initiate a Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)?

Exactly how a FIP is formed and its structure will vary based on a number of factors, including supply chain characteristics, size of the fishery, key stakeholders of the fishery, how much is known about the fishery and stock, and how much funding is available. This document gives guidance on activities for developing a FIP, references to the templates and further guidance posted on SFP's website, and what components should be in place before implementation starts. The activities are grouped by Stage (See SFP's website for details about Stages) in order to assist you in reporting and tracking progress. It is not critical that the activities are carried out in the order in which they appear below. Each FIP will develop differently. The important part is that each FIP take advantage of resources and opportunities to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out the activities below.

Stage 0: Explore FIP

- **Conduct a supply chain analysis** – Tied to the next bullet below, information gathered here will help FIP leaders know who else is involved in the fishery and where the market leverage is. Information gathered in order to do the analysis typically comes from global trade review (e.g., FAO statistics, Infofish, Eurofish, Globefish), country statistics (e.g., US Foreign Trade Data, Eurostat), market research reports, seafood trade sites (e.g., Urner Barry for US market), and various websites and publications pertaining specifically to the fishery.

- **Identify participants for the FIP** – We suggest conducting a stakeholder mapping exercise to build a pool of potential participants, such as suppliers, importers, exporters, fishers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), researchers, and government representatives, and to identify key players to work with and influence. The supply chain analysis noted above will help inform this exercise. You can reduce the pool of participants by selecting the entities or individuals that will ensure the successful implementation of a FIP and contribute positively. Note that some FIPs can be successfully implemented by a single participant.

  You will likely need to identify/appoint a "secretariat" for the FIP to coordinate the day-today activities. Entities involved with the FIP could fall into one of two categories: formal FIP participant and informal FIP stakeholder. The former is responsible for the FIP (e.g., by providing funds/overall guidance, attending meetings, lobbying government), and the latter may assist the FIP at particular times during the project's life.

At this point it is also important to consider the administrative structure of the FIP. Depending on the number/type of participants and number of fisheries being considered, the FIP could take the shape of a formal partnership or an informal roundtable. If two companies are working together to address improvement needs in a single fishery, a formal partnership might be most appropriate. If companies are sourcing the same suite of fisheries that need improvements, they can form an informal roundtable to work collectively across many FIPs (increasing efficiency).

- **Define the scope of the FIP and name it** – The scope of the FIP (e.g., multiple fisheries, one fishery, part of a fishery, stock level) will depend on the scope of the sustainability deficiencies identified, the social, political, and economic realities associated with the fishery, and the ability of participant to affect change. SFP defines a fishery as a particular fish name (common and Latin), stock unit, country of waters from which the fish was harvested, and gear type (e.g., Atlantic cod – Barents Sea (Norway, bottom trawl)). Fisheries can be further differentiated by management area or jurisdiction. The name of the FIP should reflect the scope.

- **Draft a 'Pre-FIP Plan'** – Often customers, stakeholders, and others wish to know that a company is working to initiate a FIP before it has officially been launched. The pre-FIP plan provides a high-level overview of the fishery in question and a timeline for developing a FIP. Please see the Pre-FIP Plan template for guidance on developing such a document.

<u>Stage 1: Launch FIP</u>

- **Conduct a formal fishery evaluation (if a current one does not exist)** – This does not mean FIP leaders have to conduct evaluations themselves. However, you are responsible for ensuring one is conducted and publicly available. It identifies the environmental sustainability challenges that face a particular fishery. The evaluation should be conducted using a standardized and thorough assessment methodology, such as a Marine Stewardship Council pre-assessment (MSC-PA). However, recognizing that an MSC-PA is not always practical or desirable at the time, other assessment tools can be employed to satisfy the requirements of a FIP. For example, evaluations of fishery and stock environmental performance are available publicly on FishSource.com. These fishery profiles, including scores and written analyses, closely mimic the criteria and measures used by fishery management entities around the world and MSC to assess fisheries. [Note: Please review existing FishSource profiles. If profiles are incorrect or out of date, we encourage you to use the comment feature to point out deficiencies.] Other evaluation systems may also be acceptable. The type of evaluation may depend on the end goal of the FIP (e.g., MSC certification, IFFO Responsible Supply certification), resources available, and how much information is available.

- **Make improvement needs/recommendations public** – This may be done as part of the activity in the bullet above. Ultimately, recommendations to address the deficiencies identified in the sustainability evaluation should be made public. This can be done by making the MSC-PA public, or drawing out the improvement needs and recommendations and making those public. Or, the information can be made public through the completion of a white paper that states problems in the fishery as related to its sustainability and proposes solutions to address the problems identified. Please see the White Paper template for more guidance.

Stage 2: Form FIP

- **Share relevant fishery evaluation and recommendation materials with FIP participants** – Send the MSC pre-assessment, FishSource profile link, third-party evaluation reports, and/or white paper to FIP participants. This may be done electronically and must be done in advance of the next bullet below. We recommend having bilateral (i.e., one-on-one) discussions with participants regarding the issues and potential solutions very early in the process. This will help get early consensus on issues of agreement and also gauge the challenges ahead on issues of disagreement.

- **Hold meeting(s) with participants** – We recommend meeting in person. The purpose is to discuss the issues and recommendations for the fishery, agree on goals of the FIP, and begin development of workplans.

- **Draft a detailed workplan and public workplan** – The level of detail in the workplan is driven by what is known about the stock, the impacts of the fishery, and the requirements of local laws and regulations. For example, a FIP for a fishery that is well understood and thus has clearly identified issues (e.g., via an MSC-PA) will likely have a workplan detailing exactly what needs to be undertaken to achieve sustainability. In contrast, a FIP for a fishery where little is known (e.g., no catch data or stock status information), the workplan will initially focus on addressing fundamental deficiencies of the fishery and will build further as more is learned. The detailed workplan is recommended for internal use by the FIP participants as a project management tool to make sure everyone understands what is expected throughout the project and can measure progress against the plan. In addition, the detailed workplan can be shared with interested stakeholders (e.g., donors, NGOs) who are interested in that level of information. Please see Detailed Workplan for more guidance and a template.

  A required component of a FIP, the public workplan is the minimum needed to keep observers (e.g., retailers, NGOs, funders) informed on plans and progress. It should be a summary of FIP topics/activities taken from the detailed workplan to be addressed/carried out in the next 12 months or so. It will also note the deliverables generated or achieved for each topic/activity as well as an expected due date. Please see Public Workplan for guidance and a template.

- **Adopt a FIP budget** – Budgets will vary depending on the types and extent of improvements required. In addition, funding or in-kind contributions will likely be needed to coordinate and administer the day-to-day activities of the FIP. FIPs can be funded through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., by a single company, across multiple companies, by a foundation, by an NGO, by an international development agency, through creative cost sharing such as self-assessed taxing). Please see *Budget Example* for a template. Contact SFP to learn more about how to fund a FIP.

- **Get explicit commitments from participants** – This applies to FIPs that have more than one formal participant. Explicit written commitments can be made through various mechanisms ranging from formal legal agreements to less formal memoranda of understanding (MOUs). While written commitments are preferred, verbal can also work. The type of agreement will depend on participants involved and any obligations to others (e.g., customers, NGO partners). Please see *FIP Agreements* for various templates that can be used or modified.