

THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE WITH MSC CERTIFICATION

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OUTLINE

I. The hake fishery (in brief)

II. Certification history

III. The positives

IV. The negatives

V. In summary

Perceptions from: industry; government scientists, self

I. THE HAKE FISHERY

- Annual catch of about 150 thousand tons
- Accounts for over 50% of the value of all SA fisheries, and nearly 40% of the direct employees (about 8000)
- About 60% of the product is exported, resulting in annual revenue of approaching US \$ 200 million
- Consists of two species: shallow-water hake (*Merluccius capensis*) and deep-water hake (*M. paradoxus*)

II. CERTIFICATION HISTORY

■ FIRST CERTIFICATION 2004

Two species assessed jointly to be on recovery trajectory

Straightforward

■ RE-CERTIFICATION 2010

1) Species disaggregated assessments – deepwater species at low level

2) Bird kills

3) Habitat impact

1) Manage to recover deepwater species to Bmsy by 2016

2) Tori lines (achieved >90% kill reduction)

3) Studies implemented; existing trawled area ring-fenced

II. CERTIFICATION HISTORY

■ RE-CERTIFICATION IN PROGRESS FOR 2015

Changed export markets since 2008 financial crisis

Without re-certification, thousands of jobs are now at risk

Deepwater species reached Bmsy in 2012 – earlier than projected given good recruitments

Recent poor recruitments: associated TAC reductions planned, but nevertheless short term reduction below Bmsy forecast

Problems with observer programme continuation

A Government matter outside control of industry seeking re-certification

Research vessel conducting surveys on which TAC calculations depend (in part) out of service for > 2 years

A Government matter outside of industry control – industry have provided a commercial vessel but there are calibration difficulties

III. THE POSITIVES

- Bird kill reduction through tori line use
- Some additional market penetration
- **ENHANCED ATTENTION TO SCIENCE**

Assessment analyses are taken more seriously

Implications of loss of certification provides potential stick to “encourage” both Government and industry

“Conscientising” industry to sustainability considerations

Programmes to educate skippers and crew in this regard

Development of a common industry ethos

- though possible only given the limited number of vessel operators (9)

IV. THE NEGATIVES

- STANDARDS
- GOVERNANCE
- LOSING THE PLOT?

IV. THE NEGATIVES

STANDARDS

Earlier requirement: **Move in the right direction**

Subsequently have become more prescriptive:

i) **Now too prescriptive (“Too North Atlantic”)?**

or

ii) **Not prescriptive enough?**

A process issue example

IV. THE NEGATIVES

A PROCESS ISSUE EXAMPLE

Deepwater hake recovered to Bmsy in 2012

Recent poor recruitments, despite concomitant TAC reductions, indicate an abundance drop of about 30% by about 2017 before a recovery to Bmsy by about 2021

Do we target : a) 105% of Bmsy or b) 95% of Bmsy?

Advantages a): 4% better CPUE

b): 5000 tons more catch annually worth US \$ 10 million

300 more jobs in S Africa where job creation is highest priority

If we pick b) will MSC certifiers later tell us to modify or lose re-certification?

Remember Bmsy is poorly determined anyway

MSC must create mechanisms that can provide definitive confirmation on the acceptability status or otherwise amongst a set of harvest plan options BEFORE one is implemented

IV. THE NEGATIVES

GOVERNANCE

MSC Governance requirements relate to
Governments, not to Industry

(Recall SA hake problems over availability of research vessels for surveys and continuation of observer programmes)

Does the MSC need formalised arrangements with governments?

Requirements to meet governance standards must factor in:

- the bureaucratic processes and funding limitations within which governments have to operate
- that this can mean that certain standards cannot always be improved, and further that some will necessarily drop for during certain periods over time
(And does this really matter if sustainability is not seriously compromised?)

More flexibility: eg accept industry running observer programmes

IV. THE NEGATIVES

LOSING THE PLOT?

Is MSC effectively preaching only to the converted?

Furthermore, recognise that the incentive for the converted is not to evangelise, but rather to seek to keep others excluded, to retain economic advantages for themselves

Raising the bar on standards loses leverage – weaker performers come to see no hope of achieving certification, and so lose any related incentive to improve

Is the overall objective of the MSC certification process:

a) effecting marginal improvements in the behaviour of the 10% best managed fisheries in the world; or

b) promoting/achieving sustainable use in the 80-90% of the world's fisheries?

Which is the more important ; if **b**), shouldn't MSC standards be lowered?

V. IN SUMMARY

IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE HAKE CERTIFICATION HAS

a) Enhanced the role of science and the focus on sustainability

but

b) Raised the issue of the extent to which industry should be penalised for the omissions of Government.

MORE BROADLY

a) Is bar-raising on standards in the interests of promoting and achieving fisheries sustainability **globally?**

b) Towards that end, **shouldn't MSC standards be lowered?**

Thank you for your attention