

Harmonisation Database – Manual

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Introduction

As per Fisheries Certification Requirements, Conformity Assessment Bodies are required to harmonise overlapping Units of Assessments. Identifying which components overlap can often be a complex process. To facilitate locating where there are overlaps across UoAs the Marine Stewardship Council has produced a Harmonisation Database.

The harmonisation database can be accessed via <https://www.msc.org/for-business/certification-bodies/harmonisation-database>. The harmonisation database is an optional tool to help CABs conform to the FCP harmonisation requirements (FCP v2.3 & v3.0 Annex PB). It is updated regularly by the MSC from published Public Certification Reports, Scope extensions and expedited audit reports.

Table PB1 – Harmonisation requirements per PI (FCP v2.3 & v3.0)

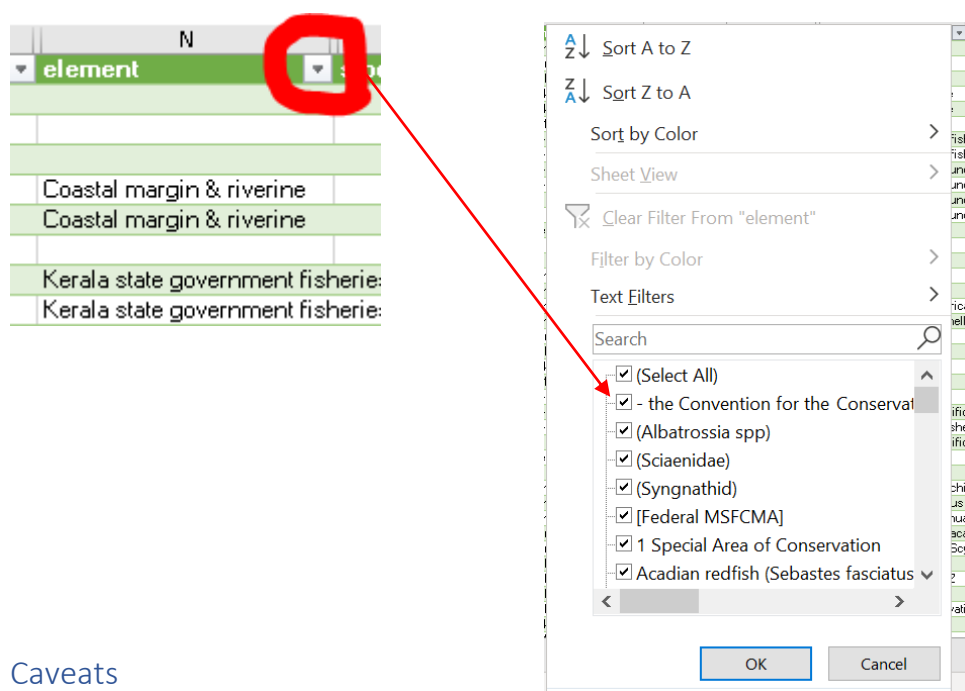
PI / Scoring Issue (SI)	Required to harmonise	
All P1 PIs	Yes	Teams shall harmonise P1 assessment outcomes for any UoA that has the same P1 stock.
PI 2.1.1.a (MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 and v2.01/v1.3)	Partially	For stocks that are “main” in both UoAs, teams shall harmonise status relative to PRI (at SG60, 80, and 100), and if below PRI, harmonise cumulative impacts at SG80 (not at SG60).
PI 2.2.1.a (for UoAs assessed against the MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0 only)	Partially	Harmonise selection of Endangered, Threatened, or Protected (ETP) and Out-of-Scope (OOS) units unless UoAs have demonstrably different footprints or the organisations responsible for assessing impact of ETP/OOS species in different UoAs have identified different ETP/OOS species. Where the same ETP/OOS unit is selected, teams shall harmonise status relative to favourable conservation status.
PI 2.4.1.b (MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01) PI 2.3.1.b (MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0)	Partially	Teams shall harmonise identification of more sensitive habitats (v3.0) / vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs) (v2.01) where both UoAs operate in the same “managed area(s)” (see the relevant Guidance to the MSC Fisheries Standard).
PI 2.4.2.a, c (MSC Fisheries Standard v2.01) PI 2.3.2.a, c (MSC Fisheries Standard v3.0)	Partially	Teams shall harmonise scoring with consideration of cumulative impacts at SG100 as all UoA impacts are considered (not at SG60 or SG80).
All P2 PIs	Situation dependent	If UoAs are identical in scope (FCP 7.5.2), even if the Units of Certification (UoCs) are different (e.g. separate clients), teams shall harmonise P2 assessment outcomes.
PIs 3.1.1–3.1.3	Situation dependent	If overlapping UoAs are part of the same larger fishery or fleet or have stocks in either P1 or P2 that are at least partially managed by the same jurisdiction(s) (nation states, Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), or others) or under the same agreements, teams shall harmonise assessment outcomes for PIs 3.1.1–3.1.3 where management arrangements apply to overlapping UoAs.

		The MSC accepts that it may be impractical to attempt full harmonisation, due to the large number of fisheries that may be managed under the relevant policy framework, and the differences in application between them.
PIs 3.2.1–3.2.4	Situation dependent	If overlapping UoAs have stocks within either P1 or P2 that are at least partially managed by the same jurisdiction(s) (nation states, RFMOs, or others) or under the same agreements, the teams shall harmonise assessment outcomes for PIs 3.2.1–3.2.4 where management arrangements apply to overlapping UoAs (e.g. at the RFMO level but not the national level in the case of 2 separate national fleets both fishing the same regional stock).

How to use

The Harmonisation Database is housed internally on Microsoft Access, but the public-facing element is a downloadable excel spreadsheet. Using this downloaded file, a CAB or auditor can filter for information on overlapping fisheries based on the under-assessment fishery and harmonisation requirements (see FCP v2.3 & v3.0 Annex PB). The excel spreadsheet columns can be filtered by; the document type (PCR, Scope extension, or Surveillance); fishery name (hyperlinked to the MSC track a fishery webpage); the date of publication; the assessment tree used; the current assessment cycle; the MSC principle component; the element type; if elements are listed; element (e.g., management system or species recorded by Latin and common names); the stock name; any comments the auditor may wish to consider; UoC the information relates to; the UoC listed gear type; the UoC major fishing area (FAO).

The example shown here is filtering the element column. Elements are most used to score PI 2.1.1 (and PI 2.2.1) but can occur in P1 and P3. Use the tick boxes to match species, management, or habitat types to the fishery under assessment, remember to Unclick the (Select All) field first before making your selection. Click OK when you're done and the excel export will be filtered to show fisheries which match the search fields you've filtered.



Caveats

The MSC harmonisation database is updated once a week. The exported excel sheet will include a

tab of fisheries with reports available but with no information in the database yet. Therefore, CABs should still check returned searches on the MSC track a fishery website for new reports published. There could be relevant scoring updates you need to consider.

Surveillance reports are not entered into the harmonisation database but could contain scoring updates and or catch composition changes, CABs should check the most recent surveillance report on the MSC track a fishery webpage for updates.

The MSC excel spreadsheet export does not provide the user with SG scores. CABs and / or auditors still need to generate a table of scores per harmonised PIs in published MSC reports. If elements are harmonised under a PI, it should be clear which fisheries the element harmonisation is relevant to. It is the CABs responsibility to check the information collected from the database.

The MSC harmonisation database can be used at CABs and / or auditors' earliest convenience in an assessment but its use is not mandatory. It is a tool to aid with meeting the harmonisation requirements, the FCP requirements detail the process steps that should be followed and are auditable by ASI.

[Additional support](#)

Contact fisheries@msc.org for further guidance and support.