Russian Pollock
Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Partnership

Overview and Progress Report

Vladivostok

8th - 10th September 2009

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Part 1: Introduction to Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) and the MSC new assessment tree

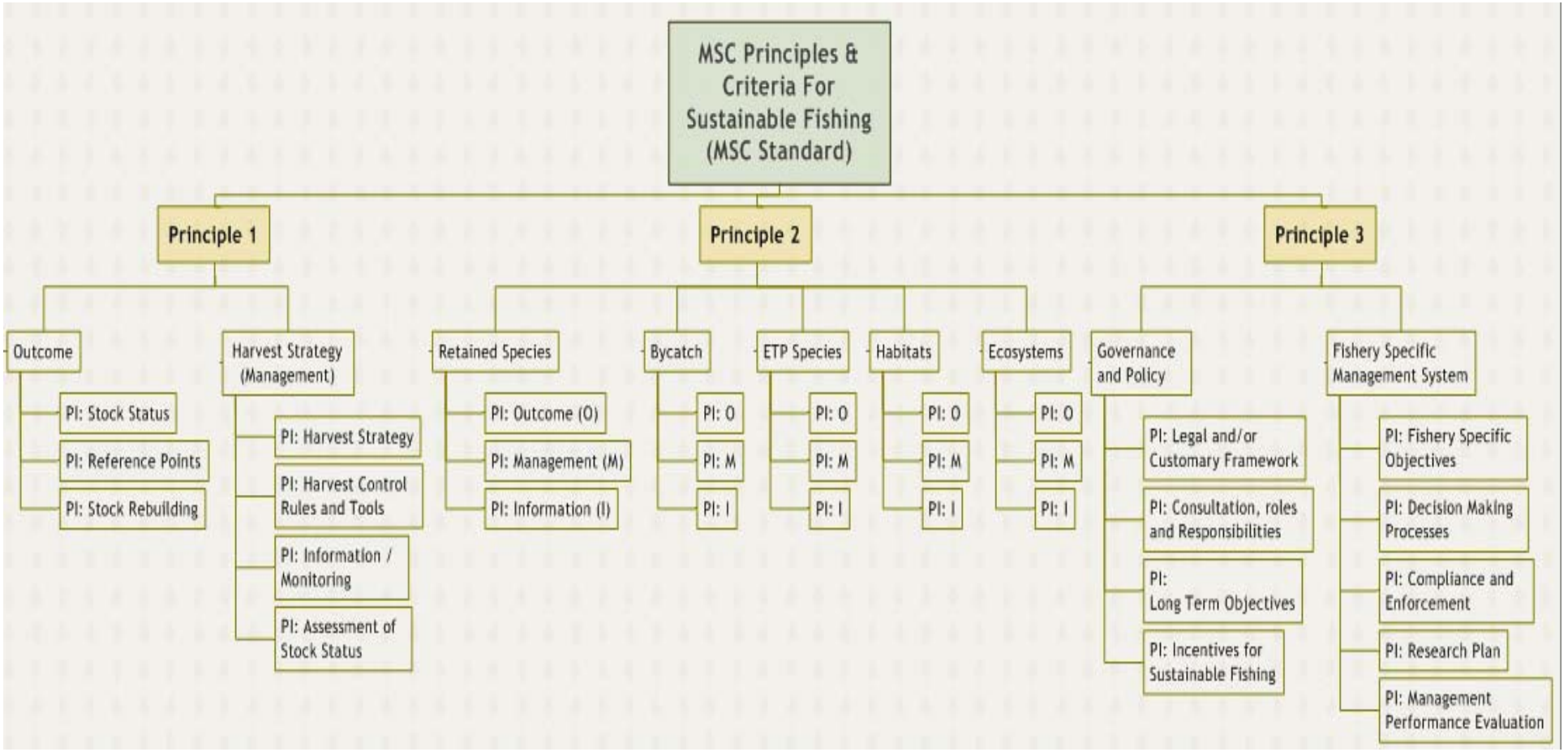
Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP)

- SFP is a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) founded in late 2006; current funding of US$2.5 million from charitable foundations Currently 30 staff and consultants; growing rapidly
- Existing track-record in improving fisheries, in partnership with several “blue-chip” seafood suppliers worldwide
- We educate major buyers and their supply chains about environmental and sustainability problems in the fisheries they source from (through FishSource.org, metrics systems, and advice on improvement needs in specific fisheries, marine conservation issues and sustainability policies and procurement practices)
- We convene suppliers and producers together in fishery improvement projects (FIPs) to agree and implement practical improvement action plans

MSC Definition of Sustainable

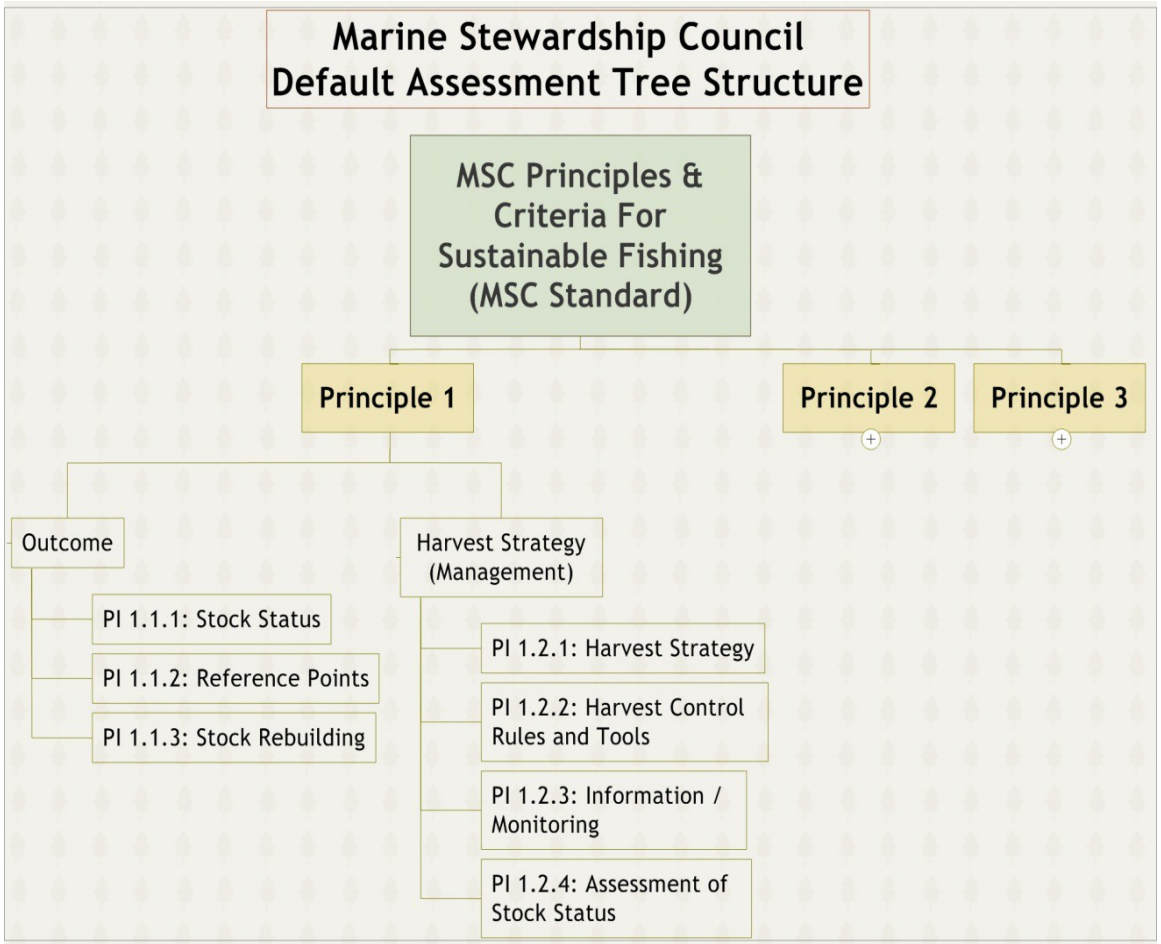
- Principle 1 (P1): Stock status – should be healthy or recovering and reproductive capacity unimpaired
- Principle 2 (P2): Environment / biodiversity – maintain the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem
- Principle 3 (P3): Management quality – effective management system, respecting laws and requiring responsible use of the resource
  - Intent: the management should be able to implement P1 and P2

MSC New "Assessment Tree"



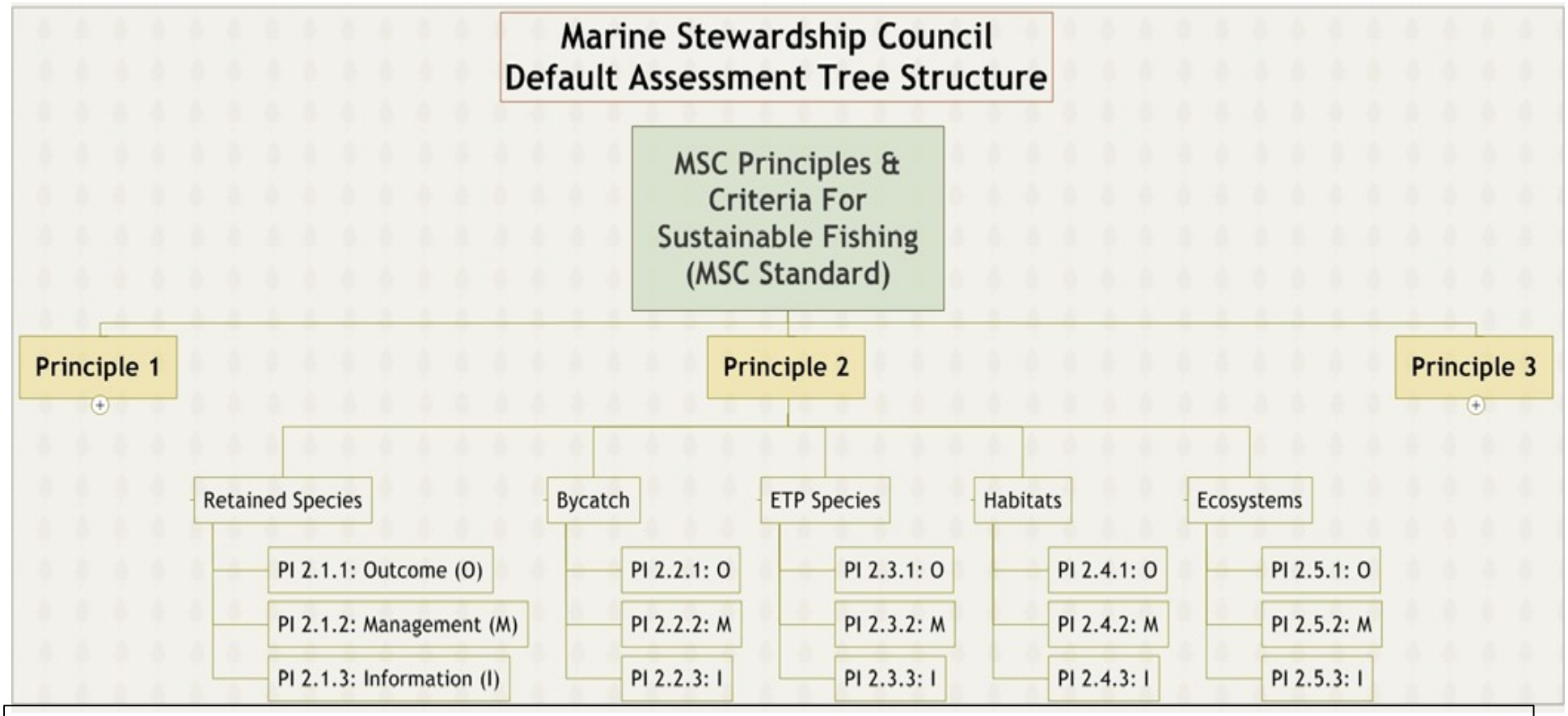
RFE Pollock FIP (Vladivostok Sept 09)

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership



MSC P1: Stock Status

Example issues: stock status unknown, lack of reference points, no clear exploitation strategy, no regular monitoring and stock assessment.

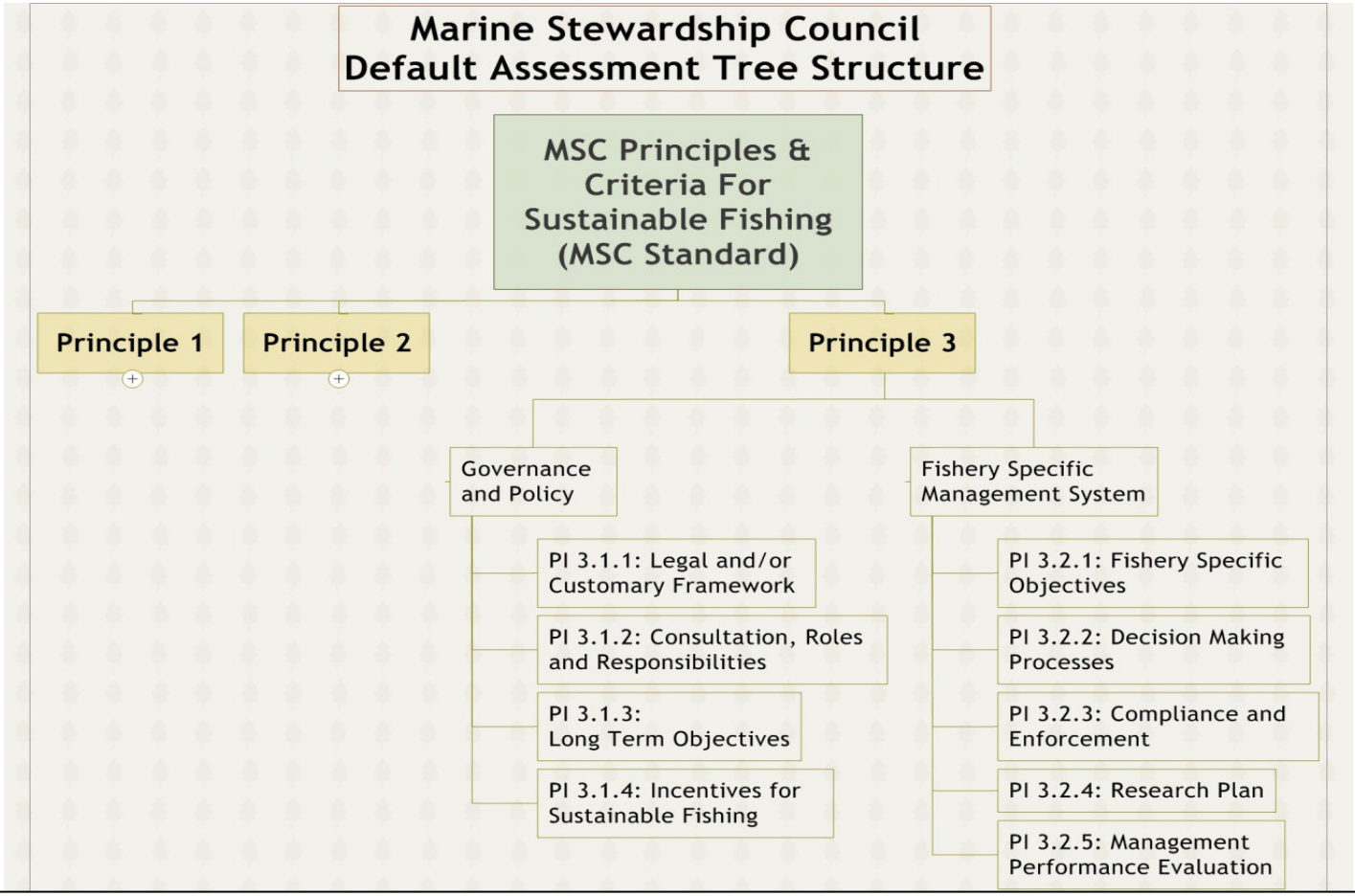


MSC P2: Environment and Biodiversity

Example issues: lack of knowledge about bycatch and environmental impacts of fishing gear, unacceptable impacts of fishery on non target species, lack of management of fishing impacts, lack of mechanisms for evaluating and measuring impacts and effects of management

RFE Pollock FIP (Vladivostok Sept 09)

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership



MSC P3: Management Quality

Examples issues: lack of laws, regulations and management, incentives for unsustainable practices (e.g. subsidies for excess fishing capacity), lack of Monitoring, Control and Surveillance, no mechanism for directing research, no mechanism for evaluating the performance of management.

Part 2: History and Overview of the Russian Pollock Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP)

FIP History: 2006

- April 2006 – Brussels Seafood Show. SFP hosts first meeting of Russian Pollock Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP) Roundtable. McDonald's, Walmart and Unilever convene suppliers and producers. Four recommendations emerge:
  - (1) producers should form association to represent their interests;
  - (2) engage regulator on fishery improvements;
  - (3) verify legality;
  - (4) explore sustainability certification
- May 2006 – Russian companies meet to discuss sustainability
- August 2006 – Pollock Catchers Association (PCA) launch announced.
- August 2006 - International Fishery Congress. SFP has further dialogue catchers and suppliers.
- December 2006 / January 2007 – PCA explores MSC pre-assessment. SFP and WWF provide advice.

FIP History: 2007

- April 2007 – PCA announce MSC pre-assessment contract signed with certifier
- April 2007 – SFP hosts second FIP Roundtable meeting at the Brussels Seafood Show. Constructive dialogue, Russian producers are central.
- June to August 2007 - various meetings
- September 2007 – International Fisheries Congress
  - SFP presents FIP during plenary
  - PCA announces improvement measures - 4.5% roe recovery, A and B seasons

FIP History: Jan to Sept 2008

- April 2008 – SFP hosts third FIP Roundtable at the Brussels Seafood Show, reviews:
  - Status of fisheries, improvements progress, and MSC certification
  - Development of private sector legal verification schemes
- September 2008 – International Fisheries Congress
  - PCA announces MSC full assessment
  - FIP Roundtable participants announce more formal Partnership to:
  - 1. Systematically review results of MSC pre-assessment
  - 2. Identify any potential or known weaknesses that may hinder certification
  - 3. Develop projects to: (a) clarify whether weaknesses exist, or are due to incomplete information; and (b) strengthen weaknesses where confirmed
  - The FIP supports the work of the PCA in engaging the Russian government. The FIP provides the PCA with advice and examples based on international best practices, for use in their dialog with the government.
  - The Partnership enables FIP participants to contribute funds to support an agreed work plan.

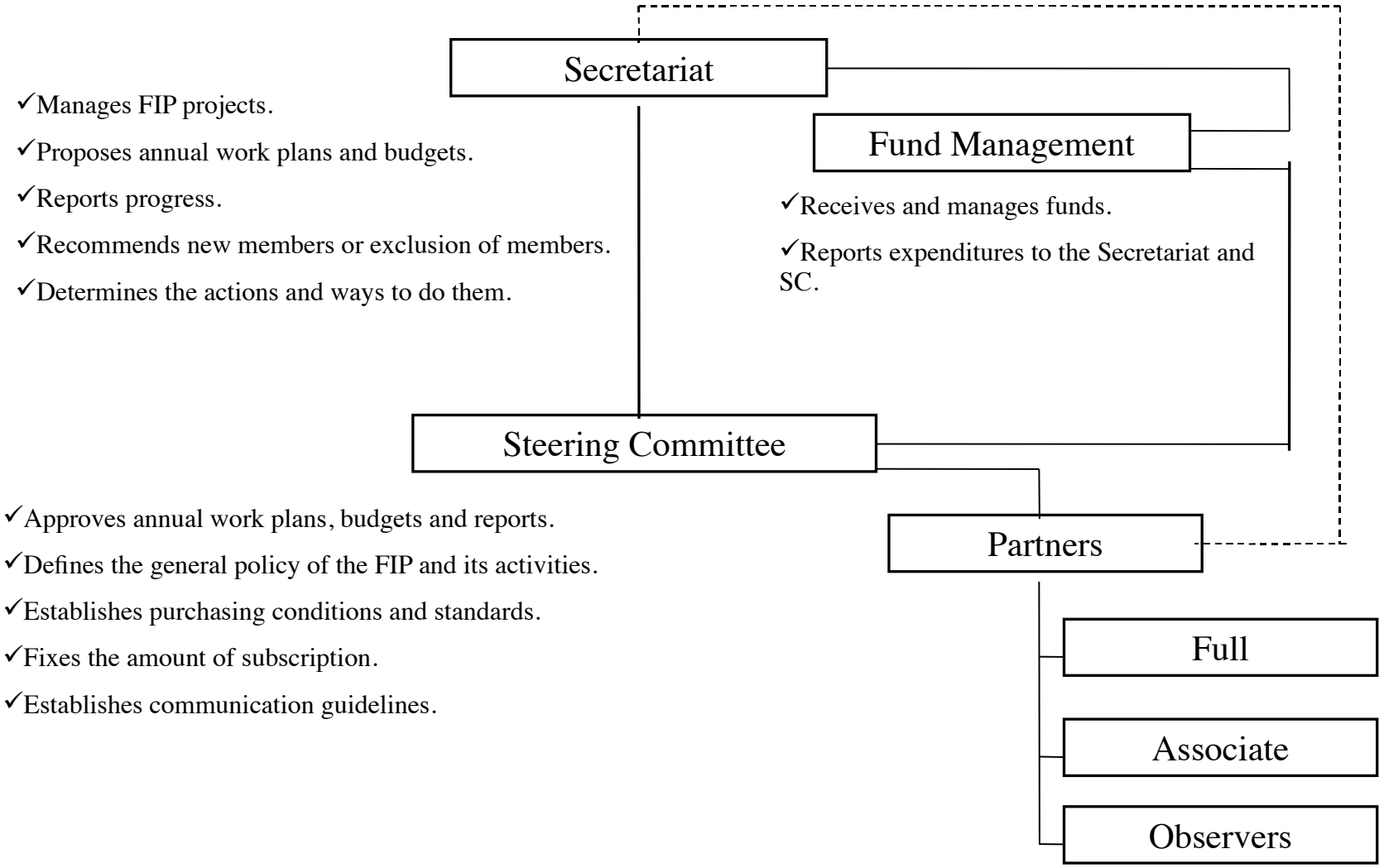
FIP History: Oct to Dec 2008

- October 2008 - SFP hosts fourth meeting of FIP (1st meeting as more formal "partnership") during Groundfish Forum (Prague)
  - FIP approves work plan. Initial focus on:
  - 1. ***Science, data and methods:*** (a) assess current availability of information; (b) provide information and advice to PCA on improving transparency of stock assessment science and TAC advice; (c) publish FishSource.org profiles, to assist suppliers in explaining sustainability status of Russian pollock to buyers.
    - Rationale for priotizing these projects: publicly available information is a fundamental requirement of the market place, and the MSC certification. If this could not be achieved, then there was little point in implementing other improvement projects.
  - 2. ***Monitoring, control and surveillance:*** assessing current government system, and private sector legal verification schemes
    - Rationale: confirming legality of supplies is an urgent requirement in the EU market.

FIP History: 2009

- February 2009 – Science, data and methods: FIP hosts International Science Meeting
- April 2009 – Fifth FIP meeting during the Brussels Seafood Show
  - Reviews progress on work plan
- June 2009 - FIP consultant on Monitoring, Control, Surveillance and Enforcement (MCSE) visits Vladivostok
- July 2009 - FIP hosts second International Science meeting, with follow up meetings in Vladivostok
- August 2009 – SFP publishes FishSource.org profile for the Sea of Okhostk pollock fishery
- September 2009 – Sixth FIP meeting during International Fisheries Congress

FIP Structure



Part 3: Progress Update on Current FIP Projects

Contents of Part 3: Progress Update on Current FIP Projects

- 3.1: Science, data and methods
- 3.2: FishSource.org profile
- 3.3: Monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement
- 3.4: Other projects

Part 3.1: Stock science, data and methods (MSC P1)

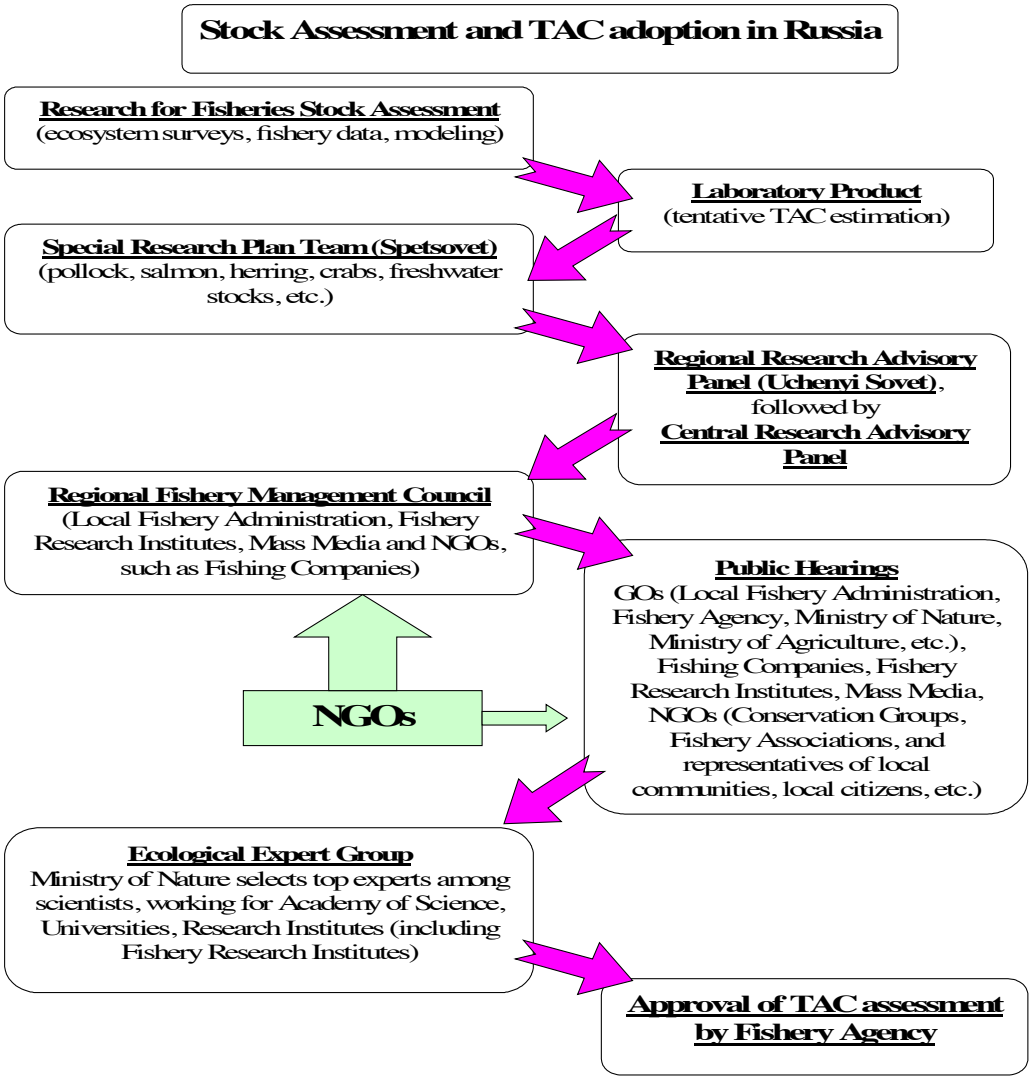
Stock science, data and methods: workplan

- Assess current situation:
  - Describe stock assessment processes and tools
  - Identify which stock surveys are undertaken, how data are statistically gathered and analysed.
  - Review existing stock management processes, compare against international standards.
  - Review level of data / information disclosure – transparency
  - Evaluate science advisory / TAC setting management system (TACs need to follow scientific advice. Full disclosure and transparency in the scientific advice and decision making process is a necessary requirement for the international market and a key MSC performance indicator).
  - Review management reference points
- Develop guidance on data and monitoring requirements

Stock science, data and methods: progress to date

- Sent PCA and TINRO advice on international norms for public disclosure of stock assessment science, advice and TAC setting.
- Convened International Science meetings sponsored by the FIP:
  - Reviewed stock assessment data and methods
  - Reviewed TAC advisory / decision making system
- Independent FIP Research
  - Stock status, TAC and catch information (Nb fragmented)
  - Examine stakeholder involvement / consultation mechanisms
  - Reviewed access to data and information
- Develop fishery profiles on FishSource
  - Compile publicly available, referenced information
  - Good informaiton for SoO. Insufficient information for W Bering

Stock science, data and methods: TAC setting



1. Research for Stock Assessment: Jan – Nov;
2. Laboratory Product: Sep – Dec
3. Special Research Plan Team (Spetsovet): Dec – Jan;
4. Regional Research Advisory Panel: Jan;
5. Regional Fishery Mgmt Council: Feb - Apr;
6. Public Hearings: May;
7. Ecological Expert Group: Jun – Oct;
8. Approval of TAC by Fishery Agency: Nov

Stock science, data and methods: TAC Setting Process Comparing EU and RFE science advisory / TAC setting

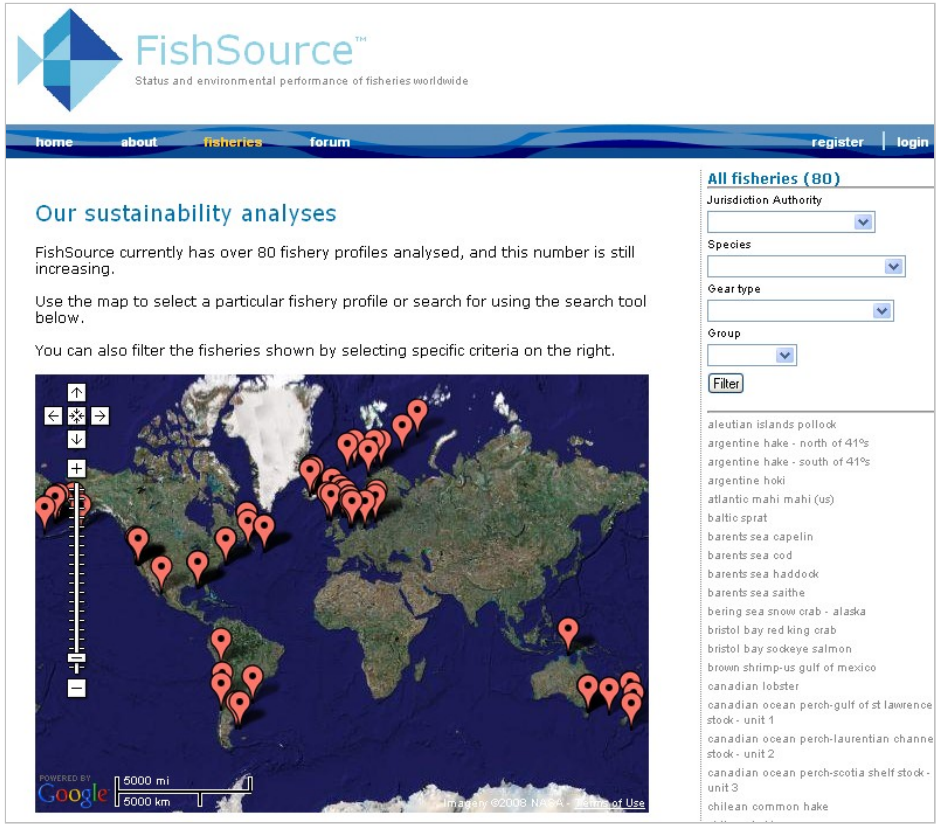
ICES	RFE (FFA)
Data co-ordination	Data collation / compilation
Expert group (assessments)	Assessments
Review Group (peer)	Review Process
Advice drafting group	Stakeholder consultation
Advisory Body	n/a
Science Advice	Ecological Export Group (peer)
Stakeholder consultation	TAC agreed
TAC recommendations	n/a
Council of Ministers	n/a
TAC set	**TAC set**

Stock science, data and methods: what remains to be done

- Sea of Ohkotsk:
  - Reduce uncertainties / bias by clarifying survey and stock assessment assumptions and processes
  - Statistical testing of HCRs to verify long-term strategy and annual TACs are precautionary
  - Ideally a single comprehensive stock assessment, publicly available following international best practices
- West Bering Sea:
  - Significant additional work required on the disclosure of methods, data, results.

Part 3.2: FishSource.org Profile

FishSource



- FishSource is an online information resource about the status of fish stocks and the environmental performance of fisheries world wide
- Much of the publicly available information on Sea of Okhotsk pollock is now collected, synthesized and summarized on FishSource

www.fishsource.org

Russian pollock information on FishSource.org

- Sea of Okhotsk
  - FishSource profile complete. Stock and TAC trends tabulated and referenced (some data inconsistencies - "official" catch varies from estimated "real" catch)
    - E.g., TINRO reports that various yield thresholds (10%, 17% and 25%) are applied when different biomass trigger limits are reached and / or the stock demonstrates a declining trend.
- West Bering Sea
  - Outline FishSource profile only. Significant data and information gaps (advice to date indicates fishery-induced regime change)

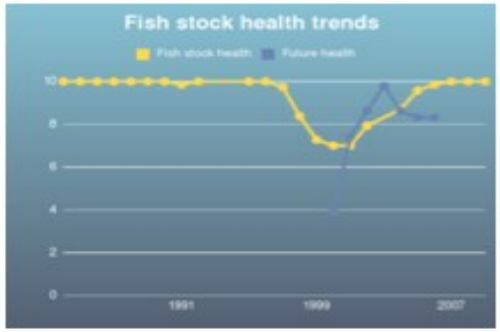
Sea of Okhotsk Scores on FishSource

management quality

Is the management strategy precautionary?	10.0
Do managers follow scientific advice?	10.0
Do fishers comply?	na

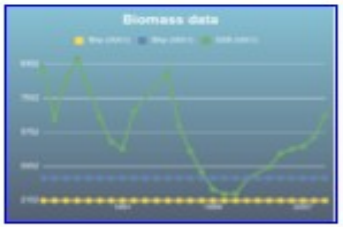
fish stock

Is the fish stock healthy?	10.0
Will the fish stock be healthy in future?	8.3



source data

You can download the original data file used for calculating the indices after logging in if you're registered. If you wish you can register now.



Part 3.3: Monitoring, Control, Surveillance, and Enforcement (MCSE)

MCSE: Workplan

- *Guidance on private monitoring schemes. (including MCSE, as part of getting better information on management, as well as improving management)*
- *Guidance on improvements needed in management procedures (including MCSE, as part of getting better information / improving management).*
- See following presentation by Eugene Sabourenkov

Part 3.4: Other Projects

- These were identified as secondary priorities in initial FIP workplanning, because of the central importance of data transparency and IUU to the markets. The FIP has done limited work to date in these areas.
- Contents:
  - 3.4.1: Monitor and mitigate environmental impacts
  - 3.4.2: Research plan
  - 3.4.3: Recovery plan

Part 3.4.1: Monitor and Mitigate Environmental Impacts (MSC P2)

Environmental Impacts: regulations

- *Review measures and legislation required to monitor and control environmental impacts, and advise PCA on necessary improvements.*
- TINRO states that this improvement need is satisfied in the "Fishing Rules specify closed areas, seasonal closures, limitations of particular gear, minimum mesh sizes, minimum allowable size of catch, and allowable by-catch" (FAO, Russia Profile, 2007)
- "Fishing Rules of the Far Eastern Basin" (Pravila rybolovstva).
- Next steps: Advise PCA to request TINRO make the Fishing Rules public on their website. FIP then to analyse, and provide further guidance to PCA if further improvements are required (i.e., in defining acceptable levels of impact, whether mitigation measures are adequate).

Environmental Impact: measuring and monitoring

- *Assess impact of removal of pollock on other species / habitats, review existing at-sea data collection and review adequacy of data collected and analysis conducted.*
- TINRO report fishery as minimal bycatch / limited impact (i.e. mid-water trawl) with Fishing Rules / Technical Conservation Measures (TCMs) in place
- Next steps:
  - Review legislative status of “Fishing Rules” (e.g.Minimum Landing Size, bycatch)
  - Advise PCA that they request TINRO publish a description of their monitoring programme, the data collected (including observer program data) and an analysis of bycatch and impact data. The system needs to:
    - Clarify absolute levels of impacts
    - Document rules on bycatch, source data, incorporate into legislation, monitor compliance
  - If the existing program may fall short of MSC requirements, consider supplemental private sector code of conduct and independent monitoring (i.e., following New Zealand hoki code of conduct example)

Part 3.4.2: Research Plan (part of MSC P3)

Research Plan

- *A fishery management plan requires a description and verification of routine monitoring and research into a fishery.*
- Discussion and approval of basin fisheries research program for 2010-2014 was held at TINRO Center, July 2009. This resulted in a departmental program of research in the interest of Russian fisheries for 2010-2014.
- Source: www.tinro.ru
- Next step: Advise PCA to request that TINRO publishes an overview of the research they are undertaking, and how it will strengthen the management and environmental performance of the pollock fishery.

Part 3.4.2: Recovery Plan (potentially part of MSC P1)

Recovery plan

- *If stock is at low biomass levels, a fishery management plan should specify steps for increasing the stock to sustainable levels*
- Recovery plan not needed for Sea of Okhotsk, but may be needed for West Bering Sea
- Next steps:
  - Advice PCA that regulators need to develop and publish recovery plan, if one is necessary to meet MSC requirements
  - Advise PCA that TINRO needs to formally document the HCRs they are using, statistically test the HRCs to confirm are precautionary, and publish the results. FIP can assist PCA by providing examples of HCR documentation, statistical testing, and publishing.