

Guidance Document for Buyers: How to Use FisheryProgress

There are different factors to consider when determining when to source from a fishery improvement project (FIP), and whether or not it meets a company's procurement policy. Below are key questions for buyers to consider when making sourcing decisions related to FIPs.

1. What is the status of the FIP?

There are active, inactive, prospective, and completed FIPs listed on FisheryProgress.

Active FIPs are currently working to achieve their objectives.

Inactive FIPs ended before achieving their goals or failed to meet FisheryProgress requirements for progress reporting. This could include failing to submit reports for one year or failing to report changes in fishing practices or fishery management, or improvements on the water, within three years. For inactive FIPs, buyers can contact the FIP lead or their suppliers who were engaged in the FIP to understand why the FIP is inactive, and if relevant, encourage the FIP to become active again.

Prospective FIPs are in stage 0 (FIP identification) or stage 1 (FIP development), and intend to meet the requirements for basic or comprehensive FIPs and complete stage 2 within one year. Prospective FIPs are listed on FisheryProgress in order to increase transparency about new FIPs that are being developed. For prospective FIPs, buyers can contact the FIP lead or their suppliers who are engaged in the FIP and encourage them to become an active FIP.

Completed FIPs have achieved all of their objectives. FisheryProgress does not continue to review FIPs' progress or data once marked as completed on the site.

2. What is the difference between a basic and comprehensive FIP?

FisheryProgress tracks two types of active FIPs – basic and comprehensive. Some companies include requirements about FIP type in their procurement policies. The primary differences between basic and comprehensive fishery improvement projects are the level of scoping to inform development of the workplan, the objectives, and the verification required.

Basic FIPs are a good entry point for fisheries to begin addressing specific environmental challenges to improve their performance against the Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard. Basic FIPs complete a needs assessment to understand the challenges in the fishery.

Examples of basic FIP objectives include:

- Reduce environmental impacts of fishing gear by 2020
- Achieve full compliance with fishery regulations by 2018

Comprehensive FIPs aim to address all of the fishery's environmental challenges necessary to achieve a level of performance consistent with an unconditional pass of the MSC Fisheries Standard. Comprehensive FIPs engage a party experienced with applying the MSC standard to complete an MSC pre-assessment to understand the challenges in the fishery and must have independent, in-person audits of progress against the MSC standard every three years.

Examples of comprehensive FIP objectives include:

- Achieve MSC certification by 2020
- Meet the MSC standard, with no conditions, by 2018

Some FIPs change from basic to comprehensive over time, and when appropriate, seafood business can play an important role in encouraging basic FIPs to transition to comprehensive.

3. Is the FIP making progress?

How a fishery's scores change over time is an indicator of how the fishery is improving.

A summary of how the fishery's scores have changed since the start of the FIP is available on FisheryProgress in the "FIP at a Glance" section on the Overview tab. You can access more detailed information for each FIP on the Improvement Progress tab.

Reviewing the **progress the FIP is making against its workplan** is another indicator of the FIP's progress. On FisheryProgress, a FIP reports all progress against their workplan on the Actions Progress tab. This includes the results of FIP actions (a major activity from the FIP's workplan that must be completed to address the deficiencies identified in the needs assessment) and tasks (tasks break actions down into specific steps that describe how the action will be accomplished). FIP actions are listed as Completed, On Track, or Behind Schedule. Narrative updates are available by clicking on the Action Name.

4. How quickly is the FIP making progress?

The FIP progress rating reflects the **rate of progress** in the FIP against specific time benchmarks. See the [Sustainable Fisheries Partnership \(SFP\) FIP Evaluation Tool](#) for more information about how the progress ratings are derived.

A (Advanced Progress)

- A comprehensive FIP that has achieved a stage 4 or 5 result within the last 12 months.

B (Good Progress)

- A FIP that has achieved a stage 4 or 5 result more than 12 months ago, and stage 3 activity within the last 12 months.
- A basic FIP that has achieved stage 4 or 5 results within the last 12 months.

C (Some Recent Progress)

- A FIP that has achieved a stage 4 or 5 result in more than 12 (but less than 24) months but has not generated a stage 3 result within the last 12 months.
- A FIP younger than one year that has never achieved a stage 4 or 5 result but has completed a stage 3 activity.

D (Some Past Progress)

- A FIP for which the most recent publicly reported stage 4 or 5 result is more than 24 (but less than 30) months.

E (Negligible Progress)

- A FIP older than one year that has not reported a stage 4 or 5 result in more than 30 (but less than 36) months.
- A FIP younger than one year that has not reported a stage 3 activity.

Some FIPs may have a lower rating due to factors outside of their control, so buyers should consider the reasons behind the progress rating when making any decisions about continuing to source or not.

5. What can buyers do to help ensure that FIPs are making progress and achieving their objectives?

Examples of FIPs not making adequate progress include FIPs with a low progress rating, FIPs whose scores aren't improving over time, or FIPs that aren't making progress against their workplan. Buyers can contact FIP leads directly to learn more about why a FIP isn't making progress as expected. If a FIP is not making adequate progress, buyers can:

- Communicate with their suppliers who are engaged in the FIP to let them know progress is important in order for them to keep sourcing;
- Communicate with their suppliers who are not engaged in the FIP to encourage them to become active FIP participants;
- Check the “Engagement Opportunities” section of the FIP profile on FisheryProgress; and
- Ask the FIP lead if there are any actions the buyer can take to help advance the FIP.

Additionally, [supply chain roundtables](#) have been established by SFP for a number of FIPs. The supply chain roundtables are a forum for processors, importers, and others that buy directly from a specific seafood sector to work together in a pre-competitive environment to achieve fisheries improvements. Buyers should encourage their suppliers to join any relevant supply chain roundtables.

6. How can I source from this FIP?

If you are interested in buying product from a FIP, you can contact the FIP lead or participants directly, or utilize [FishChoice.com](#). You can find products from a FIP by looking at the [seafood product page](#) (and selecting the “FIP” search filter) and find suppliers that participate in one or more FIPs by using the [supplier directory](#) (and selecting the “FisheryProgress” filter). FIPs on [FishChoice.com](#) are identified by a single purple “FIP” badge.