

MarinTrust
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Call for proposals

What are we trying to achieve?

MarinTrust is initiating a long-term impact evaluation programme to investigate the attributable positive impacts and potential negative impacts of the MarinTrust standard system. The aim is to investigate the following hypothesis:

‘MarinTrust activities lead to improved or protected environmental parameters.’

We are calling for proposals to help us identify key questions, develop a research methodology, investigate attribution of impacts and identify any unintended effects¹, with the hope of building on the findings over time. It is anticipated that the project will test the Theory of Change (ToC) and associated assumptions as well as investigate other potential routes acting in tandem with the main ToC drivers (i.e. market access).

To better understand the impacts of the MarinTrust Factory Standard and whether these impacts can be attributed to the standard system as well as ensure it is credible, we are commissioning an environmental impact evaluation as part of a series of projects over the next few years. As the MarinTrust Standard unit of certification is the marine ingredients (i.e. fishmeal and fish oil) production factory, the focus of this initial work will be on the factories. In future evaluations MarinTrust intends to include the fisheries supplying whole fish to these factories. The aim is that this initial project will provide a strong foundation for commissioning future impact reports and also demonstrate to stakeholders that we are committed to transparency and improving the MarinTrust Programme.

The following objectives are set for this project:

- a) Identify if (and the extent to which) the MarinTrust Factory Standard is producing the desired positive intended environmental outcomes and impacts.
- b) Identify to what extent is it possible to attribute observed effects to the activity or intervention of the standard system.
- c) Identify what factors could have influenced the results (factors within the control of the standard system and other external factors).
- d) Identify what unintended effects (positive or negative) have resulted from the activities or interventions assessed in a to c above (a list of potential unintended effects¹ is currently included in the MarinTrust MEL system).

Background

MarinTrust is the leading independent business to business certification programme for the production of marine ingredients. More information on the Programme can be found on our website [here](#), and our Theory of Change can be found [here](#). The MarinTrust Programme was

¹ Annex 1 provides a list of some possible unintended effects identified by MarinTrust.



launched in 2009 with the first site certified in 2010. The Programme includes; the MarinTrust Factory Standard, the MarinTrust Chain of Custody Standard and the MarinTrust Improver Programme.

At present the MarinTrust Standard (V2.0, see Annex 2) includes environmental accountability clauses, but in version 3 (due to be launched later in 2023) we will be incorporating environmental metrics (to allow performance data collection) which we aim to help facilitate future impact projects.

The problem

Although MarinTrust aims to have positive environmental impacts, there are currently no independent studies to demonstrate that this is the case or to attribute positive impacts to the MarinTrust standard system. We understand that attribution of positive impacts is a very challenging task. Nonetheless, it is hoped that through this project a better understanding is gained of the impacts (both positive and potential negative), as well as unintended effects, that the standard drives.

The potential solution

MarinTrust intends to commission a fully independent study that works with and collects data from a representative selection of MarinTrust certified factories and non-certified factories² to inform an evaluation of attribution of any impacts.

Consultants are free to propose alternative approaches that meet the objectives. However, the potential scope of tasks to be performed may include:

- Work with MarinTrust certified and non-certified factories to research the drivers to improve and/or maintain good environmental performance and the extent to which to the MarinTrust standard system plays a part.
- Focus on interviews to gather detailed insights on motivations of MarinTrust certified and non-certified factories.
 - Gather information about what is causing potential improvements.
 - Why did they get MarinTrust certified, and remain certified, or fail to get or remain certified?
 - Did they have systems in place before becoming MarinTrust certified?
 - If companies have multiple sites do they have the same procedures at all of them – are there any differences identified and what motivates them?
- For both MarinTrust certified and non-certified factories researched, identify their geographic locations and any relevant features (i.e. by a river) to provide context to any environmental and motivation data collection.
- Identify legal requirements for the country regarding environmental parameters for comparisons.
 - Are they doing more than the legal requirements?
 - What are their motivations for this?

² Within the working agreement of our MOU, we will work with IFFO to open communications with non-certified sites that are IFFO members and also use contacts with other industry actors.

- Identify what unintended effects the requirements (clauses) of the MarinTrust Standard may have.

Once the key countries/ companies have been identified, MarinTrust can facilitate initial communication with the relevant stakeholders (this will generally be the Quality Manager or similar staff responsible for factory audits). Communication with non-certified factories will be made through other industry contacts (MarinTrust can help facilitate these contacts²).

The project should include the following:

- MarinTrust certified factories.
- Non-certified factories.
- Factories that have dropped out of the MarinTrust Certification Programme (either voluntarily or through non-conformance).
- Factories that dropped out of the MarinTrust application process.

Table 1 provides some information on the geographical scope of MarinTrust certified factories.

Representative sample of locations, scale and type of production is expected. MarinTrust would in addition have preference to include Panama and Thailand country in the scope of the study.

Table 1

Country	No. of certified factories	Country	No. of certified factories
Argentina	2	Mauritius	1
Australia	1	Mexico	5
Chile	22	Morocco	10
Côte d'Ivoire	1	Norway	15
Denmark	2	Panama	2
Ecuador	7	Peru	43
El Salvador	1	South Africa	3
Estonia	1	Spain	3
Faroe Islands	1	Thailand	10
Finland	1	UK/Ireland	5
France	2	USA	5
Iceland	10	Vietnam	12
Latvia	1	Total	166

What are we looking for in a consultant?

We are looking for a consultant that has a good understanding of how voluntary standards work, the assurance processes associated with such standards, and is able to develop a project aligned with these. Previous experience producing independent impact evaluation reports is essential as well as experience in interview design and implementation.

Knowledge of ISEAL, specifically the Impacts Code (clauses 8.5.2 and 8.5.3 and 10.2 - [found here](#)) would be a benefit for ensuring this project complies with the Code, and is integrated with MarinTrust systems. Experience working with the seafood or other food supply chains is desirable. Multiple language skills would also be a benefit.

The project will be carried out in line with the MarinTrust [Research Project Policy](#).

If surveys or interviews are carried out as part of the project, sufficient steps must be taken where necessary or requested to ensure responses are kept anonymous and results are reported in a collated way.

Those conducting projects on MarinTrust's behalf should carry out the work in a professional and honest way and ensure the following:

- The work is carried out in an independent and un-biased way.
- An understanding of the MarinTrust Programme, as well as the context of the assessment being made.
- A commitment to make the findings of the project publicly available following the completion of work.

The main point of contact regarding delivery and progress of the project will be the Impacts Manager of MarinTrust.

Who else will be involved?

For this project it is important to work closely with MarinTrust certificate holders that are willing to help with the project in order to collect data related to this project. Also vital will be to work with factories that are not certified, are in process of applying to the MarinTrust Programme or are part of the MarinTrust Improver Programme, as these sites can provide relevant counterfactual data.

It will be important for the chosen consultant to emphasise their independence from MarinTrust and the anonymity of participating companies if required.

What we require out of it?

The outputs of this work should include a **final report**, a **summary report** and a **presentation**. Half way through the project a progress report should also be provided.

The **final report** should be max. 30 pages (including executive summary), plus annexes. This report must:

- Detail the methodology (e.g. what data were collected; specific methods used to gather data; thresholds employed; sampling; data manipulation; how data were analysed and conclusions drawn).
- Present findings in relation to points a-d in the opening section of this document (and as agreed in a Terms of Reference) and any other relevant findings that result from the work.
- Detail the findings of any consultations carried out (if a respondent wishes to remain anonymous then identifying details will be omitted).

- Present the purpose of the evaluation or analysis and the guiding evaluation questions.
- Include the names of people involved in conducting the evaluation, their qualifications, and their connection to the entities or systems being evaluated.
- Present findings and conclusions, including both positive and negative.
- Present any limitations of the evaluation or analysis (including limitations or uncertainties in the data, and assumptions).
- Consider how the context (e.g. internal and external factors) might have affected the results of the intervention.
- Provide recommendations.

It would also be desirable if potential next steps or project suggestions are proposed by the consultant based on this project's findings and in line with the long-term plan of impact projects (this can be discussed during the initiation stage and during the project as relevant). This may include proposals for work related to the incorporation of metric measurements being introduced in version 3 of the Factory Standard.

At a minimum the executive summary of the report will be shared with the relevant stakeholders and uploaded on the MarinTrust website with the opportunity for those interested to request the full document. The **summary report** must be suitable for public release. Confidential data can be redacted before release but the outcomes of the project must be transparent.

The summary report must be an accurate summary of the final report and include as a minimum:

- The questions being researched/ reported on.
- The methodology used during the project.
- Any conclusions (both positive and negative).
- Recommendations for future work or actions resulting from the project.

The consultant will also be required to **present** their findings to the MarinTrust team at a closing meeting, either in person at MarinTrust's London office or remotely.

MarinTrust's responsibilities

MarinTrust will provide a training session on the MarinTrust Programme, its systems and assurance processes as well as a history of the environmental accountability aspects of the factory standard. We will also brief the consultant on various stakeholder views and initiate any communication with relevant stakeholders (in line with GDPR requirements). MarinTrust will provide existing data from audit reports regarding compliance against the environmental accountability clauses as well as any research previous carried out. We can also provide a survey platform if that is a useful tool.

Once the draft report is submitted to MarinTrust, the MarinTrust Impacts Manager is in charge of reviewing and validating that the information provided is in line with MarinTrust's requirements as well as ensuring that any claims made are accurate.

Practicalities

How to apply

To apply for this project, please submit:

1. Your proposal and budget for the project.

The proposal should be no more than 10 pages and include an understanding of the project, a proposed methodology and a draft work plan for all stages of the project with the number of days work necessary and with relevant breaks to allow for further discussion based on interim results.

2. CVs and any examples of relevant experience.

To submit a proposal for this project or to request further information please email Nicola Clark, the Impacts Manager at nclark@marin-trust.com (and copy in standards@marin-trust.com). The deadline for questions is 9th June and all answers will be provided on the MarinTrust website [here](#).

How a proposal will be selected

After the submission deadline, all the proposals will be reviewed and three will be shortlisted for the second round. The consultants will be invited to the MarinTrust office or an online call arranged (depending on convenience) in order to present their proposal and answer follow up questions.

Deadlines

- The deadline for submitting initial proposals is **16th June 2023**.
- Second round presentations will be arranged in person for **Thursday 29th June 2023** at the MarinTrust office in London (or remotely if necessary).
- A final decision will be made by **6th July 2023** with an aim to start the project shortly after.

Timelines

It is expected that the project will be completed no later than 29th February 2024. The proposal should include the proposed timeline for the project. This may be extended or a new project initiated depending on the project findings and proposed next steps.

The time taken for this project is negotiable upon receiving proposals and follow up discussions and the fees for the work will be agreed and outlined in the final contract.

Budget

Budget: £12,000 to £15,000

Depending on the questions and final agreed budget, this project may be split into multiple stages (to be agreed with the chosen consultant).

This is a desk-based exercise and no travel is anticipated as part of the work.

Annex 1 - Unintended effects

The following potentially relevant unintended effects have been identified as part of the MarinTrust MEL system or during the review process so will be added in the 2023 version of the document. This is not an exhaustive list.

Indicator No.	Indicator
49	Small-scale or less-developed producers disadvantaged
51	Increased efficiency associated with certification leads to reduction in employment
New in 2023	Increased efficiency associated with certification leads to staff retention/expansion of the business.
New in 2023	The MarinTrust standard leads to a more efficient use of energy and/or water and therefore can create more efficiencies in production and reduce waste.
New in 2023	Production sites attract new potential investment (other than product purchased or price differential) due to the reduced risk associated with MarinTrust certification.

Annex 2 – MarinTrust Standard V2.0

SECTION 6: Environmental Accountability

6.1 The Applicant shall have a documented policy that demonstrates compliance with their national legislation to ensure that their marine ingredients products are manufactured in compliance to all relevant environmental requirements as stated in this section. If no legislation is documented by their national government the applicant will need to have its own polices to comply with all the requirements of this section.

6.2 The Applicant shall provide copy of permits (when applicable) for environmental emissions regulations as the legislation relates to:

- Emissions to air
- Discharge to water
- Release of toxic or hazardous substances
- Noise, smell and dust pollution
- Ground pollution

6.3 The Applicant shall provide documentation in order to demonstrate compliance with the requirement specified in permits from 6.2. In the case of non-compliance, all non-compliance shall be documented, with action plans to address and monitor the non-compliance.

6.4 The Applicant shall have a written assessment that identifies relevant environmental issues and the provisions made to address the associated risks have been conducted.

6.4.1 Management is able to demonstrate awareness of the identified issues and the provisions made to address the associated risks.