

Marine Stewardship Council

MSC Chain of Custody Standard



Version 3.0 – 15 August 2011

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The official language of this standard is English. The definitive version is maintained on the MSC website www.msc.org. Any discrepancy between copies, versions or translations shall be resolved by reference to the definitive English version.

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About the Marine Stewardship Council

Vision

Our vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

Mission

Our mission is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification programme to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practises, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

Objective

The objective of chain of custody certification is to provide an assurance that only products originating from an MSC-certified fishery are labelled as MSC.

Focus

We will:

- Collaborate with fishers, retailers, processors, consumers and others to drive change forward
- Never compromise on the environmental standard we set, nor on our independence
- Continue to lead the world in wild capture fishery certification, with the most trusted, recognised and credible seafood ecolabel.

MSC standards and certification requirements

With experts, the MSC has developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. They ensure that MSC-labelled seafood comes from, and can be traced back to, a certified sustainable fishery.

MSC standards and certification requirements meet global best practice guidelines for certification and ecolabelling programs.

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A. Foreword

This standard is intended to be used for certification of the chain of custody for fish and fish products originating from fisheries certified to the MSC Principles and Criteria for sustainable fishing and other applications as determined by the MSC. Conformity with this standard is mandatory for all organisations seeking MSC chain of custody certification.

To achieve the objective of chain of custody, a traceability and segregation system is required so products can be traced from their suppliers and tracked to their buyers.

MSC encourages all organisations to implement and maintain the appropriate food safety and quality programmes based on international models.

Responsibility for these Requirements

The MSC Board of Trustees is the Body responsible for these Requirements.

This is a living document and is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Anyone wishing to comment on this document or any other MSC scheme document is encouraged to do so by sending an email to standards@msc.org.

Amendments Issued		
Version No.	Issue date	Description Of Amendment
1	August 2000	First publication
2	August 2005	Major review of requirements
2.1	1 May 2010	Change to file name, insertion of copyright and document management information
3	15 August 2011	Major review of requirements

Effective dates:

Applicant organisations seeking MSC chain of custody certification shall be assessed against this standard from 14 November 2011 onwards.

MSC chain of custody certified organisations shall be in conformity with this standard from 14 November 2012 onwards.

This document is to be cited as:

MSC Chain of Custody Standard Version 3

B. Scope

This standard establishes a system for maintaining the chain of custody in the supply chain of products from fisheries certified to the MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing or to other standards as approved by the MSC. It does not cover issues such as food safety or quality.

This standard is applicable to all organisations wishing to make a claim about certified products.

This standard is for the certification of the process of chain of custody subject to the MSC Certification Requirements.

C. Vocabulary

This vocabulary defines terms and abbreviations used in this standard.

Term	Definition
Board of Trustees	The MSC's governance group.
Certification	Procedure by which a third party gives written or equivalent assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.
Certification Requirements	Mandatory requirements to be used by certifier in assessing clients against the MSC Standards, and the location of some requirements for clients.
Certified	Certificate of conformity to an MSC standard granted by an accredited certification body.
Chain of Custody	The procedures implemented by a fishery and subsequent entities handling fish and fish products to ensure that products from a certified fishery are not mixed with products from any other fishery and remain fully traceable during processing, storage, distribution and sale.
Chain of Custody Standard	The MSC Standard applied for all Chain of Custody audits.
Conformity	Fulfilment of a need or expectation that is stated, generally implied or obligatory.
Criterion (Criteria)	A sub-division of an MSC Principle.
Ecolabel	A label that conforms to the principles described in ISO 14020:2000 <i>Environmental labels and declarations: General Principles</i> .
Fish and Fish Products	Whole fish or products that are, or are derived from, any aquatic organism.

Fishers	Individuals who take part in fishing conducted from a fishing vessel, a floating or fixed platform, or from shore. Does not include fish processors or traders.
Fishery	A unit determined by an authority or other entity that is engaged in raising and/or harvesting fish. Typically, the unit is defined in terms of some or all of the following: people involved, species or type of fish, area of water or seabed, method of fishing, class of boats and purpose of the activities.
Licence	The “Licence”, which when completed and signed incorporates the Terms & Conditions and its Annexes and which together with the MSC I Standard Pro-Forma Product Approval Form constitutes the Agreement.
Management System	The framework of processes and procedures used to ensure that an organisation can fulfil all tasks required to achieve its objectives.
May	A permitted course of action, within the limits of the standard .
MSC	The Marine Stewardship Council.
MSC Ecolabel	The Type III Environmental Label trademarked by MSC and licensed for use on products and to promote products certified by a certification body accredited to the MSC certification scheme. An ‘ingredient brand’ that reassures customers that independent, third party certification has been carried out to demonstrate the product comes from a sustainable fishery .
MSC Standard	Either the MSC’s Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing or the Chain of Custody Standard .
MSC-certified fish	Whole fish or products that are, or are derived from, any aquatic organism harvested in a certified fishery , as defined in the Unit of Certification of a valid MSC certificate.
MSCI	Marine Stewardship Council International Ltd.
Normative	A prescriptive element; a requirement.
Organisation	An entity applying to the certifier for certification or that holds a valid MSC certificate, sometimes referred to as ‘client’ or ‘user’.
Responsible personnel	Person or persons, employed by the organisation, that have responsibilities and authorities for specific tasks necessary to ensure conformity with the MSC Chain of Custody or Fishery standard. Two examples of specific tasks are handling MSC-certified products or packing products into boxes containing the MSC ecolabel.

Scheme Document	Official documents setting out rules and procedures for accreditation, certification , assessment and audit relevant to the MSC certification scheme.
Scope of Certification	Specific activities and products for which certification is sought or has been granted.
Shall	Denotes a requirement.
Standard	A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context.
Subcontractor	An entity that is contracted to carry out work for a third party or affiliate (includes contract processors, transportation companies, distribution companies and any other storage or processing facilities).
The MSC Claim	MSC approved text which must accompany the MSC ecolabel when displayed on products, menus or catering lists.

D. Normative References

Those seeking chain of custody certification shall conform to the relevant requirements found in the latest version of Annex BD of the MSC Certification Requirements.

Chain of Custody standard's principles and criteria

Principle 1: The organisation shall have a management system

Criteria:

- 1.1 The organisation shall operate a management system which addresses the principles and criteria in this standard.
 - 1.1.2 The extent of the documentation required to support the management system may vary, depending on:
 - a) The size of the organisation and the type of the activities undertaken.
 - b) The complexity of the processes.
 - c) The competency of personnel.
- 1.2 The organisation shall ensure that responsible personnel are trained in order to ensure conformity with this standard.
- 1.3 The organisation shall keep and retain records that demonstrate conformity with this standard for a period that exceeds the shelf life of the certified product if the shelf life is more than three years, otherwise records shall be kept and retained for a minimum of three years.
- 1.4 The organisation shall be able to demonstrate that the requirements of this standard are met by its subcontractors.

Principle 2: The organisation shall operate a traceability system

Criteria:

- 2.1 The organisation shall maintain records that allow any product or batch of products sold by the organisation as certified to be traced from its sales invoice to a certified source and vice versa.
 - 2.1.1 Records shall allow confirmation of volumes of certified inputs and outputs over any given period.
 - 2.1.2 If processing or packing/repacking occurs, records shall allow conversion rates for certified outputs from certified inputs over any given period to be calculated.

- 2.2 The organisation shall only sell as certified the products covered by its scope of certification.

Principle 3: There shall be no substitution of certified products with non-certified products

Criteria:

- 3.1 Certified and non-certified products shall not be mixed if the organisation wishes to make a claim about these certified products, except as in 3.1.1.
- 3.1.1 Non-certified products may be used as an ingredient in accordance with Annex BD of the MSC Certification Requirements.
- 3.2 The organisation shall operate a system for ensuring that packaging materials and other identification materials bearing the MSC ecolabel cannot be used for non-certified products.

Principle 4: There shall be a system to ensure all certified products are identified

Criteria:

- 4.1 The organisation shall ensure that certified products are identifiable as such at all stages of purchasing, storage, processing, packing, labelling, selling and delivery.
- 4.2 The organisation shall ensure that only certified products covered by its scope of certification are identified as such.
- 4.3 The organisation shall only label certified products with the words “Marine Stewardship Council” or use the MSC ecolabel and claim if it has been granted approval to do so by MSCI under the terms of the Ecolabel Licence agreement (ecolabel@msc.org).

ENDS