Quality Management System (QMS)

Certified Seafood International (CSI) Certification Program

Fully Aligned to ISO 17065

Quality Management System Version 5.3, April 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This manual details the Quality Management System (QMS) for the Certified Seafood International (CSI) Certification Program. This manual outlines the Policies and Controls for the auditing, evaluating, certifying, and accrediting processes of the Program.

1.2. This Program is owned and managed by Certified Seafood International (CSI). The structure of the operating, certification, and control procedures are described herein.

1.3. Standards

The Program maintains two standards:

a) RFM Fisheries Standard V2.2, which defines the process and fishery management requirements of responsible fishery management of the Certification Program and;

b) Unified Chain of Custody Standard V2.5, which defines the process and traceability requirements for certified products throughout the market chain.

The current Standards and the Quality Management System (QMS) procedures are available on the CSI website.[1]

1.4. CSI makes information about the Program's governance structure, ownership, standards and standard-setting procedures, and the composition, operating procedures, and responsibilities of its governance bodies, freely and publicly available. This information may be found on the CSI website .

2. POLICY STATEMENTS

2.1. General Policy Statement

The purpose of the CSI Program is to provide the seafood supply chain fishing industry with a Certification of Responsible Fisheries Management at the highest level of market acceptance. Certification to requirements under the Program will demonstrate to customers and consumer's fisheries management is conducted in accordance with internationally agreed standards and guidance of the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organization.*

The Program is founded on a commitment by seafood stakeholders to support responsible fisheries management and certification for wild-caught seafood that meets customer and market expectations and ISO accreditation standards

2.2. Program Objectives

The Program is committed to provide and facilitate cost effective, practical, and responsible certification standards and services, by which both large and small businesses can supply the marketplace with certified products.

The Program is committed to the following objectives:

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[1] https://csicertified.org/

a) To be recognized as a leader in Responsible Fisheries Management certification;

b) To facilitate and maintain the Standards Program under ISO 17065 accreditation;

c) To facilitate and maintain GSSI benchmark approval for the Certification Program;

d) To provide open, effective communication with seafood customers, interested parties, and committees;

e) To provide systematic validation and control of quality processes; and

f) Certified clients are to meet the criteria including objectives detailed in the publicly available CSI standards that aim for responsible use of the resource; and

g) To provide a system for assessing fisheries that voluntarily submit to certification, through positive engagement with the key bodies responsible for fisheries management, research, trade and industry, and the environment; and

h) To provide a system for assessing the supply chain traceability and product integrity that voluntary submit to a Chain of Custody Audit in advance of any claim being made on the origin of seafood product that is traceable back to certificated fishery.

2.3 Management and Control

The Program has established, and will maintain, an independent effective certification assessment system based on ISO 17065, to ensure that the Certification Bodies operate in a consistent and controlled manner so that participants manage their businesses and market their products in full conformity with the criteria defined in the Standards.

In support of its polices and through this Quality Management System and supporting procedures, the Program has established and will maintain a system of documentation and control procedures, coupled with regular reviews, to ensure that it facilitates an efficient and cost-effective certification service to the industry it serves. The below list of procedures and documents are available on the CSI website and will be referenced in this document.

Procedure 1: CB Approval for Fisheries Standard
Procedure 2: Application to Certification Procedures for the Fisheries Standard
Procedure 3: CB Approval for Unified Chain of Custody Standard
Procedure 4: Application to Certification Procedures for the Unified Chain of Custody Standard
Procedure 5: Program Administration – Annual Review, Document Control/Management, and Program of Work
Procedure 6: Logo Management and Market Surveillance
Procedure 7: Complaints and Appeals Process
Procedure 8: Appointment and Control of Assessors
Procedure 9: Extraordinary Event and Remote Assessment or Audit Procedure
Procedure 10: Standard Development Procedure
Logo Guidelines
Logo Claims and Terms and Conditions

3. PROGRAM STATUS, STRUCTURE AND FINANANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1   History

In 2010, The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) created the Alaska RFM Program in response to market requests for a high integrity, ISO model for the certification of Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) based on UN FAO Fisheries Management models and guidance documents.

The RFM Program is an independent, third-party certification of 'Responsible Fisheries Management' according to the UN FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries 1995 and the UN FAO Eco-labelling Guidelines 2005 and 2009. These FAO documents are available from the FAO website[2].

The RFM Certification Program uses two current RFM Program Standards:

1. RFM Fishery Standard V2.2 and;*

2. Unified RFM Chain of Custody Standard V2.5

On July 1, 2020, the Certified Seafood Collaborative (CSC), a 501c3 non-profit led by a diverse board of seafood and sustainability industry experts, became the owner of the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification program, a third-party sustainable seafood certification program for wild capture fisheries. The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute officially handed over ownership after a six-month period of transition following over ten years of dedication to developing the robust and independent certification for the industry. The transfer of RFM to the CSC presented a new opportunity for cost savings, increased efficiencies, and growth outside of Alaska fisheries.

In April 2025, the RFM program transferred its name and assets to Certified Seafood International (CSI), a U.S. based non-profit. The transition supported and facilitated the efforts of the RFM Program to expand its scope to all eligible fisheries around the globe. The global Board and nature of the program creates additional opportunities to grow beyond North America and offer real choice for harvesters and the market in wild-capture seafood certification.

As part of the FAO-based concept of the RFM Standard, the CSC RFM Fishery Standard V2.2 will be reviewed every 5 years and, where relevant and appropriate; the standard will be updated, in consideration of changes to FAO key reference documents.

The RFM Chain of Custody Standard V 2.4 in 2021 was unified with the Icelandic Chain of Custody standard to create a Unified RFM Chain of Custody Standard V 2.5 which was approved by the CSC Management Board and came into effect January 1, 2022.

3.2   Program Development

CSI was formed in 2024 and is now the owner of the Program and will follow the same standard development protocols that were adopted by prior programs

CSI commits to following best practice in standard setting and review, in accordance with international guidelines. See Procedure 10 the Standard Development Procedure document located on the CSI website.

3.3   Program Governance Structure and Involved Parties

The FAO Guidance requires the governance structure of certification schemes to be transparent, credible and robust, and to have clear written rules and procedures for decision-making processes and scheme oversight.

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[2] http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/v9878e/v9878e00.HTM

*See change Amendment Record

The governance structure comprises:

Board of Directors

Advisory committees.

- The Fisheries Standard Committee
- The Unified Technical Advisory Committee

3.3.1 CSI Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall have the power to supervise, control, and direct the affairs of the Organization; determine its policies within the limits of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws; collect, administer, and disburse the Organization's funds; approve projects; and otherwise actively pursue and promote the purposes of the Organization. The Board of Directors shall oversee and provide strategic direction to the Certified Seafood International program. The Board of Directors is responsible for the management of all Certified Seafood International Standards and Quality Management System procedures used to implement and operate the Organization's certification program. . Biographies of Board members can be found on the CSI website. The CSI Bylaws further define the functions, powers and composition of the Board.

The CSI Board relies upon advisory Committees to support the Program.

3.3.2 Standards Committees

The Fisheries Standard Committee members are appointed by the CSI Board and may be nominated by the Board, other members of the respective committee, or any member of the public. The Fisheries Standard Committee role, constitution, and rules of procedure are detailed in its Terms of Reference.

The members of the Unified Technical Advisory Committee are appointed by the CSI Board. They, along with the Icelandic representatives appointed by IRFF, oversee the ongoing review and development of the Unified RFM Chain of Custody Standard. * The Unified Technical Advisory Committee's roles, constitution, and rules of procedure are detailed in the Terms of Reference.

* See Change Amendment Record for Change from V5.1

Standards are maintained in an auditable and practical format. Standards are subject to the CSI Board's approval, after open public comment and recommendation of the Fisheries Standard Committee or Unified Technical Advisory Committee. Once approved by the CSIBoard, Standards are delivered to the relevant accreditation body for accreditation conformance review.

More information about the Committees is available on the CSI website[3]

3.3.3 CSI Staff

CSI staff, which is made up of employed or contracted staff ,and contracted experts, provide administrative support to the Program and facilitate:

- Implementation of the policies, procedures and controls of the Program as approved by the Board, and
- Meetings of the Fisheries Standard Committee, and the Unified Technical Advisory Committee, and the

communication of the recommendations of these committees to the Board for consideration.

The current members of CSI staff and further detail on roles can be found on the CSI website.

3.3.4   Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies are approved, independent entities engaged in assessing and certifying that Fisheries and Chain of Custody Applicants satisfy the applicable Standards. Procedures 1 and 3 describe the process and requirements for Certification Bodies to be approved to conduct CSI Fisheries Standard Assessments and Unified Chain of Custody audits and issue certificates to those in compliance with the respective standard.

3.3.5   Accreditation Bodies

Accreditation Bodies are formal, recognized accreditation entities that are members of the International Accreditation Forum engaged in assessing and accrediting Certification Bodies to the ISO 17065 criteria. Procedures 1 and 3 describe the Accreditation related requirements for Certification Bodies to be approved to conduct CSI Fisheries Standard Assessments and Unified Chain of Custody audits and issue certificates to those in compliance with the respective standard.

CSI liaises with the Accreditation Bodies to ensure consistent interpretation and training on its Standards and process.

The contracts for accreditation are between the Certification Body and the Accreditation Body.

CSI has contracts in place with approved Certification Bodies and a working MOU with each Accreditation Body

3.3.6   Fishery Applicants and Clients

Fishery Applicants are organizations representing all the relevant parties in a fishery applying for CSI assessment and certification to the Fisheries Management Standard.

The Fishery Applicant acts as a facilitator for all parties during the application and assessment. The Fishery Applicant engages directly with approved Certification Bodies. The process to apply for assessment of a fishery for certification is detailed in Procedure 2.

Upon approval of a fishery for certification, the applicable Fishery Applicant becomes a Fishery Client.

3.3.7   Chain of Custody Applicants

Chain of Custody Applicants are companies applying for assessment and certification to the Unified Chain of Custody Standard. The Chain of Custody Applicant engages directly with the Certification Body. The process to apply for chain of custody certification is detailed in Procedure 4.

3.4. Transparency of Financial Relationships between CSI Bodies

CSI Standards Development & Certification Process

Updated Jan 2025
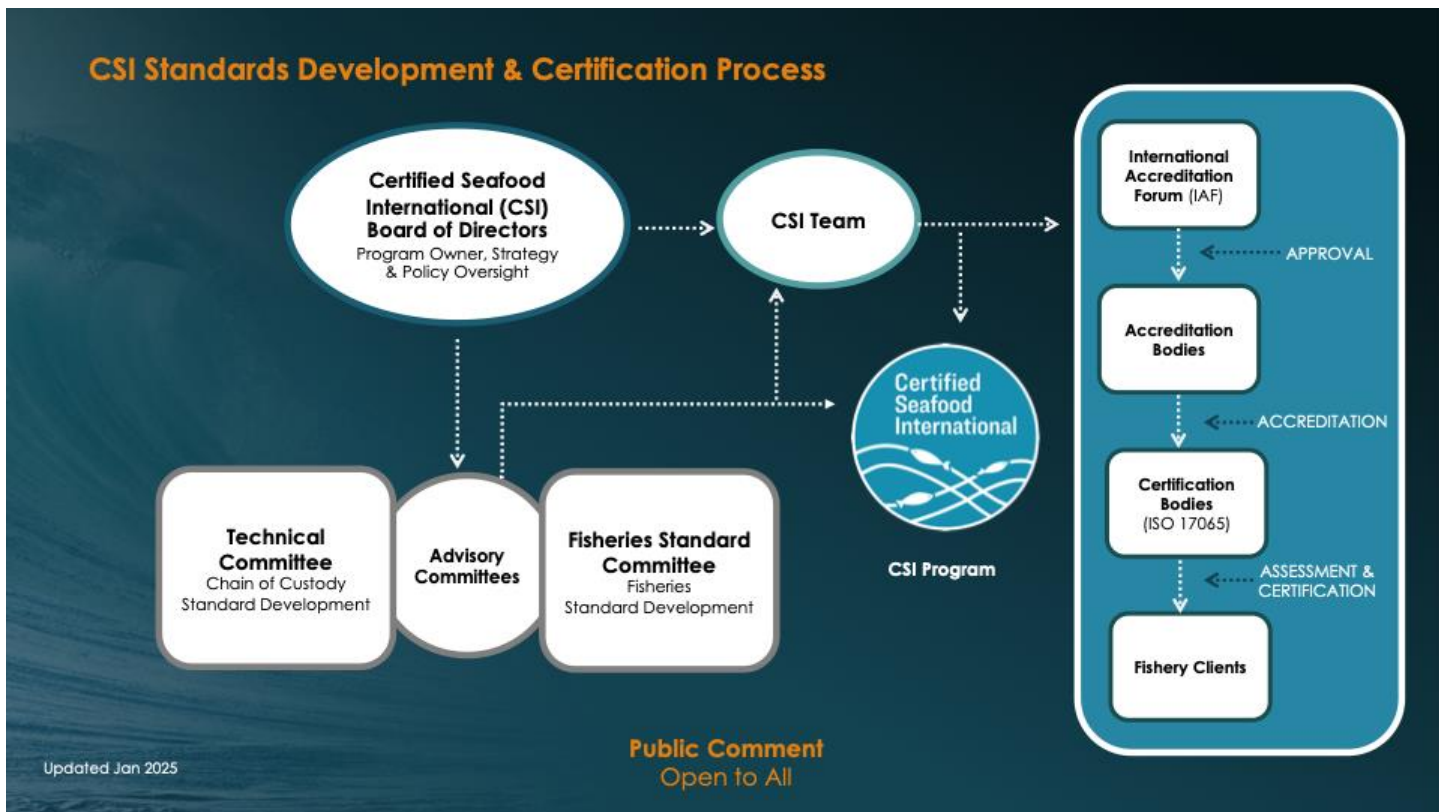
3.4.1 Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies are separate legal entities from CSI, Fishery Applicants, and Chain of Custody Applicants and derive income from the assessment of fisheries and supply chain organizations.

3.4.2 Accreditation Bodies

Accreditation Bodies are separate legal entities from CSI and all other CSI parties and derive income from the accreditation of Certification Bodies.

3.4.3 Fisheries Standard and Technical Committees

Fisheries Standard Committee and Unified Technical Advisory Committee members are individuals with no legal employment or financial ties to CSI but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses incurred for Committee obligations.

3.4.4 Fishery and Chain of Custody Applicants

Fishery and Chain of Custody Applicants and Clients are separate legal entities independent from the Certification Bodies, and Accreditation Bodies and pay for the costs of assessment directly to Certification Bodies.

4. ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

4.1 Fisheries Standard Assessment and Certification

4.1.1   Procedure 2 sets procedure for fishery assessments and the awarding of certificates against the Fisheries Standard. It covers the process from application to certification including required reporting,

surveillance and all relevant requirements for the Fishery Applicant and Certification Body.

4.1.2   Procedure 1 describes the process and requirements for Certification Bodies to be approved to conduct CSI Fisheries Standard Assessments issue certificates to applicants meeting the Fisheries Standard.

4.1.3   Procedure 8 sets the process for the appointment and approval of fishery assessors to ensure they have the competency to conduct fishery assessments.

4.2   Unified Chain of Custody Audit and Certification

4.2.1   Procedure 4 sets procedure for chain of custody audits and the awarding of certificates against the Unified Chain of Custody Standard. It covers the process from application to certification including required reporting, surveillance and all relevant requirements for the Applicant and Certification Body.

4.2.2   Procedure 2 describes the process and requirements for Certification Bodies to be approved to conduct Unified Chain of Custody audits and issue certificates to applicants meeting the Unified Chain of Custody Standard.

4.2.3   Procedure 8 sets the process for the appointment and approval chain of custody auditors to ensure they have the competency to conduct chain of custody audits.

5. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Procedure 7 covers the handling of all complaints and appeals received by CSI in relation to the operation of its Program, including concerns related to standard setting, scheme governance, quality assurance and misuse of the logo. It describes the actions to be taken by CSI for effective follow-up, monitoring and review of complaints and appeals. The procedure is accessible to certification clients, applicants and the public.

6. LOGO MANAGEMENT

Procedure 6 outlines the policies and processes governing the use of CSI logos and claims by certified CoC clients. The oversight and monitoring of products represented as CSI-certified are intended to instill confidence in purchasers that only certified products will be claimed as having met the requirements of the Certification Program.

7. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Procedure 5 defines the method by which CSI reviews its Program and Quality Management System to ensure that the system continues to support the policies and strategies approved by CSI Board and the requirements of Accreditation, FAO and GSSI Benchmark Standards and other recognized benchmarking templates. The procedure also describes the method by which the controlled copies of the Quality Management System (QMS) documents are changed, approved, issued and maintained. In addition, this procedure maps out a biannual process in which the contents of the Scope of Work is updated and maintained.

Appendix 1

The CSI Program and Standards management review, in general will consider and follow the general best practice criteria and guidance outlined in the following documents (referenced in 2.1):

a) World Trade Organization, Technical Barrier to Trade Agreement, Annex 3 – Code of Good Practice for the Preparation, Adoption and Application of Standards;

b) ISO Guide 59:1994 Code of Good Practice for Standardization;

c) ISO 17067:2013 Conformity Assessment — Fundamentals of Product Certification and Guidelines for Product Certification Programs;

d) ISO 19011:2018 Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems

e) FAO Guidelines on Bycatch Management and Reduction of Discards (2011);

f) FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries (2011);

g) FAO Guidelines on the Management of Deep Sea Fisheries on the High Seas (2008);

h) FAO Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication (2014);

i) ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services;

j) The FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries 1995;

k) The FAO Guidelines for the Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Captured Fisheries; and

l) The GSSI Benchmark Tool for Seafood Certification Programs (Version 2 2021);

m) ISO 17030- Conformity assessment- General requirements for third-party marks of conformity 2003

n) ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

• See Shange Amendment Record for Change

Change Amendment Record for Version 5.3 April 2025

Notified with * in Document and Page Footer inserted

No	Change from last Version	Reason for Change	Approved by
1	**Page 3, 2.1** The North America scope terms have been removed - Previously stated :The RFM Program is founded on a commitment by seafood stakeholders in North America to support responsible fisheries management and certification for North American seafood that meets customer and market expectations and ISO accreditation standards	Change of Geographic scope for Fishery Standard	Jeff Regnart
2	**Page 3.1** Fishery Standard version reference has been updated from V2.1 – now RFM Fishery Standard V2.2	Change of geographic scope	Jeff Regnart
3	**Page 6** Ref CoC Committee Members, removal of North America references	Change of Geographic scope	Jeff Regnart
4	**Page 14 4.3.16** Removal of North America Standard Reference	Change of Geographic Scope	Jeff Regnart
5	**Page 15 Ref (e)** Removal of North American reference	Change of Scope	Jeff Regnart
6	Generally streamline the body of the document and place greater reliance on detailed procedures. Throughout replace CSC with CSI	Reflects change in ownership	Mike Kraft, Jeff Regnart