

# CSI FAQs for Buyers

Global Recognition. Credible Assurance. Transparency & Value.



## CSI was built to deliver choice and competition in wild-capture seafood certification.

Until now, global options have been limited. CSI breaks that bottleneck—reducing risk, lowering costs, and giving you sourcing flexibility. Just as aquaculture benefits from choice in certification, so will wild-capture.

### At-a-Glance FAQs



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## What Does CSI Certify?

CSI certifies wild-capture fisheries that meet rigorous, science-based criteria for **environmentally responsible management**.

Our Fishery Standard is grounded in the **FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries** and the **Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products**. Certification Bodies approved by CSI conduct independent assessments to verify compliance.

Fisheries that meet the standard earn CSI certification—providing credible assurance to buyers, brands, and consumers.

## How Is CSI Different From Other Certification Programs?

### What's Similar:

CSI is a voluntary, third-party program, benchmarked by the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI). We utilize accredited Certification Bodies, certify full chain of custody, and offer a consumer-facing ecolabel for packaging and point of sale.

### What Sets CSI Apart:

- **Grounded in UN FAO guidance**, CSI verifies environmentally responsible fishery management using widely accepted international guidelines that are not subject to arbitrary or ill-considered change.
- Our ecolabel **provides the option to include harvest origin**, giving buyers and consumers added transparency.
- We complement fisheries and brands—**we don't compete** with them.
- **Affordability is a core CSI value**—we are committed to keeping program fees low and putting money back in the pockets of seafood harvesters, buyers and consumers.
- CSI prioritizes streamlined operations to keep certification **cost-effective**.
- Certification is issued at the **fishery level**, and **certificate sharing is required**, eliminating duplicate audits, ensuring equitable treatment of fishery participants, and driving down costs.

### Backed by Experience: The RFM Legacy

CSI is a proud global program that builds on the strengths and experiences of successful regional initiatives. Most significantly, the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) program has rolled into CSI, meaning:

- CSI launched in April 2025 with 10 active certified fisheries with annual landings totaling 3 million metric tonnes
- We offer a program and standard that have earned and retained GSSI benchmark recognition since 2016
- CSI has a strong foundation for global expansion rooted in regional success

### Certified Fisheries: 3M MT Certified – and We're Just Getting Started

- Alaska Cod, Pollock, Salmon, Halibut, Crab, Flatfish, Rockfish, Atka Mackerel, Sablefish
- Pacific Whiting (Hake)
- U.S. Gulf Shrimp
- Alaska Herring (in assessment)



### Coming soon:

We are actively engaged with numerous additional fishery participants globally about obtaining CSI certification. Our global governing board currently includes representatives from Canada, the Caribbean, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States.

## What Is the Process for Certifying a Fishery?

1. Review the CSI Fishery Standard (current version available on our website).
2. Choose from the [approved list](#) of Certification Bodies.
3. Optional: Request a pre-assessment.
4. Full certification typically takes 8–12 months; valid for 5 years with annual surveillance audits.

Existing RFM fishery certificates remain fully valid under CSI with flexible transition timelines.

## Dual Fishery Certification? No Problem.

CSI supports parallel fishery certification along side other programs and works with Certification Bodies to streamline audits and reduce costs for fisheries that choose to dual certify.

## Chain of Custody: Who Needs It?

Any entity taking ownership of certified seafood—from first handling to packaging—must hold a CSI Chain of Custody certificate in order for the CSI ecolabel or an associated claim to be used on pack or at the point of sale. The Chain of Custody certification process is explained on our website. Certificates are valid for 3 years with annual surveillance audits. Choose from the approved list of [Chain of Custody Certification Bodies](#). CSI also supports Chain of Custody certification alongside other programs if needed. Like dual fishery certification, this process can be very cost effective.

## Ecolabel Usage: You're in Control.

### Complementing Your Brand:

CSI encourages—but doesn't require—use of the ecolabel and associated approved claim language on pack and at point of sale. As brands and retailers seek to comply with increasingly stringent on-pack claim regulations and avoid litigation risk, our intention is to offer credible third-party assurance that can underpin claims in the ways that best serve your needs.



### Providing the Tools to Tell the Story of Your Seafood:

Our program offers the option to include harvest origin on the ecolabel, and although we always encourage use of an origin version of the ecolabel, the choice rests with you. Additionally, our website will provide accessible and informative landing pages for every certified fishery, providing you with information and tools to increase transparency and tell the story of the seafood you are selling directly to your customers where desired.

## Logo Licensing Fees?

**None. We do not charge based on ecolabel usage.** Program membership fees are tiered by sales volume of certified seafood and are at least 70% lower than the published fees of other wild-capture programs. We are committed to sharply reducing the cost of selling certified seafood, and our membership fees are set at a level that covers only the actual operating costs of a streamlined program.





## Cost Overview.

Entity	Type	Typical Cost Range
Fishery	Initial Certification	USD \$50,000 - \$75,000
	Annual Surveillance (remote)	USD \$15,000 - \$22,000
		New fisheries will not be charged a program fee. The fees previously paid by RFM fishery clients are being phased out.
Chain of Custody Holder	Single Site Initial Audit	USD \$1,500 - \$2,500
		Chain of Custody holders can choose to pay a flat USD \$500 annual fee to use the CSI ecolabel and / or reference CSI program participation on non-consumer facing packaging or in public-facing communications (but note this does not allow use of the ecolabel on consumer-facing packaging or at the point of sale).
Packager of Seafood or Seller of Unpackaged Seafood	Annual Fee	USD \$500 - \$100,000
		Ecolabel users are required to join CSI's Partner Program and pay an annual fee based on their total sales volume of certified seafood. Details of the specific fee tiers for ecolabel users are available on our website.

## The CSI Advantage.

- Global credibility backed by GSSI
- Reduced certification costs
- The option to highlight origin and other tools to tell the story of your seafood
- Transparent chain of custody
- Strong stakeholder support, built on the RFM legacy and rapid global engagement
- A certification that supports your brand—not overshadows it

## Ready to learn more or get started?

Visit [csicertified.org](https://csicertified.org) to read more about our program and contact one of our team members

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