



Fishery Standard Committee

Terms of Reference

Overview

As stated in its Bylaws, Certified Seafood International (CSI) was established to provide wild-capture fisheries assurance that is both credible and cost-effective. It seeks to assess whether wild-capture fisheries adhere to internationally accepted fishery management practices, relying upon the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the Ecolabelling Guidelines established by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It seeks to advance recognition of seafood from responsibly managed fisheries by providing buyers with accurate information about the origin of wild-capture seafood products. It seeks to adhere to best practices, including by maintaining alignment with entities such as the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative and the International Organization for Standardization.

In order to achieve these objectives, CSI maintains and implements certain technical documents, including Fisheries Standards against which certified fisheries are assessed. While the Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the integrity of these documents, drawing upon specialized expertise – including from those not serving on the Board of Directors – strengthens program effectiveness.

In this context, the Board of Directors of CSI has established a Fisheries Standard Committee (FSC) to support implementation and review of the program's Fisheries Standards.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the Fisheries Standard Committee are as follows:

- Conduct regular review of the CSI Fisheries Standards and pertinent assessment procedures.
- Propose to the CSI Board of Directors any changes to the Fisheries Standards and pertinent assessment procedures that the FSC believes will strengthen the effectiveness of the CSI Program.

- Provide knowledge and guidance that will contribute to effective Program implementation and alignment with FAO Key Reference Documents for assessment purposes.
- Provide advice to the CSI Team on any implementation changes that will strengthen the effectiveness of the CSI Program.
- Provide input and advice on documents prepared on the technical interpretation of the Fisheries Standards.
- Provide technical oversight of Fisheries Standard revisions and pertinent assessment processes. .
- If requested, participate as a member of an Appeals Panel for stakeholders, including Fishery Applicants, who contest the decision of a Certification Body on the certification of a fishery. Grounds for appeals and the appeal process are defined in the CSI Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

Constitution

Membership of the Fisheries Standard Committee is determined by the Board of Directors and based on advice, consultation, and nominations put forward from fisheries managers, fisheries scientists, and other stakeholders associated with the CSI Program.

The Board of Directors shall determine the number of Fisheries Standard Committee voting members. It may choose to appoint one of the FSC members as the Committee Chairperson. The CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards shall act as secretariat but hold no voting rights.

The Board of Directors shall establish and maintain an FSC membership with relevant specialized expertise, including in fisheries science and fisheries management. Collectively, the FSC membership shall represent a broad understanding of fisheries policy and management, fisheries and environmental science, and the operational aspects of fisheries.

The Board of Directors shall periodically review the membership of the FSC to ensure that it continues to represent perspectives from regions where the CSI Program is actively engaged.

Rules of Procedure

Unless otherwise specified by the CSI Board of Directors, the Chairperson and members of the FSC shall be appointed to an initial term of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment.

Any member of the FSC may resign by notice in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. FSC members may be removed during their terms by the Board of Directors due to repeated failure to attend meetings of the FSC or for any other reason at the discretion of the Board.

Committee meetings shall be convened not less than once a year and by notice in writing (including e-mail) to each member.

The CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards shall be responsible for taking and presenting a correct record of the proceedings at each meeting. These minutes shall be prepared and circulated in advance of the next meeting and approved by the FSC.

A quorum at meetings of the FSC shall be one-half of the voting Committee members.

For key decisions on Standards and interpretation, the FSC shall strive for consensus. In the event of a vote, motions shall carry with a two-thirds majority. Each member shall have one vote.

Non-member specialist advisors may be invited to attend meetings of the FSC, but they shall not be entitled to vote.

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Members of the FSC are appointed to support the objectives of the CSI Program and must be:

- willing to contribute their time and expertise without promise of remuneration;
- dedicated to holding the interests of CSI above those of any one stakeholder group;
- committed to neutrality, transparency, and fairness in all dealings.

All FSC members shall be asked to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality undertaking. Should a conflict of interest arise, the member is requested to report this to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors as soon as reasonably possible. The Chairperson shall determine an appropriate response. All such reported conflicts of interest and action in response shall be recorded on the FSC files.

Standards Review Procedure

All program standards shall be subject to a review by the FSC or another relevant Committee

of the Board at least once every five years.

The Vice President, Program and Standards shall be responsible for scheduling relevant standard reviews with the Fisheries Standard Committee. Information for each review shall be collated from, but not limited to, the following:

- Fisheries Standard Committee comments;
- Observations from approved Certification Bodies and Assessment reports;
- Changes in legislation / Codes of Practice;
- Open comments and comments from Fishery Assessments;
- Customer / market information.

The outcome of each standard review shall be registered in minutes. Where changes to a standard are recommended by the Fisheries Standard Committee, the CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards shall ensure that a Program of Work is published.

Relevant Standard documents shall be changed in accordance with the recommendations and Program of Work. The redrafted Standard recommended by the FSC shall be presented to the CSI Board for approval. If the CSI Board does not approve the proposed Standard, it shall go back to the FSC for further consideration based on the CSI Board's comments.

Once the redrafted Standard is approved by the CSI Board, the CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards shall issue the new Standard and inform all relevant parties of the change of revision and adoption.

The CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards shall record in the Standard the date of a revision or reaffirmation of the Standard along with a transition period after which the revised Standard shall come into effect.

The new / revised Standard shall be posted on the CSI Program website.

Current Fishery clients of the Program will be allowed up to 36 months to implement changes to meet new criteria in the Standard.

Records

Records will be retained as follows:

- (a) Standards Review

- Committee Minutes and Recommendations
 - Evidence of external considerations
 - Redrafted Program Standards
- (b) Standards Approval
- Minutes of CSI Board Approval
 - Updated Standards

APPEALS PANEL

Constitution

Up to three members of the Fisheries Standard Committee may be appointed from the Committee by the Chairperson to act as an Appeals Panel for Complaints regarding Fishery Certification Decisions. Other individuals with qualifications and background deemed appropriate by the Chairperson may also serve on the Appeals Panel.

The Appeals Panel shall appoint the Chairperson.

The CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards, shall be an ex-officio member of the CSI Appeals Panel and act as Secretariat, but shall not vote.

Members of the Appeals Panel shall be appointed so that no one interest predominates.

Terms of Reference

The functions of this Panel include:

- Listening to complaints, appeals, disputes, and grievances relating to issues and withdrawal of Fishery Certificates of Approval;
- Making judgments on formal complaints and appeals and communicating findings to relevant parties.

Rules of Procedure

Members must sign a confidentiality/conflict of interest declaration before attending initial meetings.

The evidence will be prepared and presented by the CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards. The Certification Body and Fishery Applicant or Client shall have the opportunity to present their arguments.

Minutes of all meetings shall be prepared and circulated in advance of the next meeting. These minutes shall be approved at the next meeting, providing quorum exists.

Each member shall have one vote. In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson or person presiding shall instruct that all voting members not present be notified of the issue and requested to advise their decision. Should this fail to result in a clear majority either for or against the proposal, the proposal shall be withdrawn and *status quo* prevails.

With the consent of members of the Appeals Panel, specialist advisors may attend meetings

but they shall not vote. Specialist advisors shall be required to sign a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration.

The findings of the Appeals Panel shall be communicated by the CSI Executive Director or Vice President, Program and Standards to the Fishery Applicant or Client, the Certification Body, and the Accreditation Body.

The Appeals Panel has no authority to overturn a certification decision and can only make recommendations to the Certification Body and relevant Accreditation Body.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality

All Appeals Panel members shall sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality undertaking. Should a conflict of interest arise, the member will report this to the Chairperson as soon as reasonably possible. The Chairperson shall decide and instigate appropriate action. All such reported conflicts of interest and follow up action agreed shall be recorded on the Appeals Panel file.

Appeals Panel members shall agree to maintain in confidence all information obtained during the course of their review other than that information which has been authorized by CSI for disclosure; that which is required to be disclosed by law; or that which is already in the public domain.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____