Procedure 3: Certification Body Approval for the Unified Chain of Custody Standard

Participating Scheme Owners: Certified Seafood International (CSI) and Community Catch Certification Programs

Fully Aligned to ISO 17065

Procedure 3 Version 5.4: Certification Body Approval for the Unified Chain of Custody Standard, October 1, 2026

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The Participating Scheme Owners utilizing the Unified Chain of Custody and this procedure are Certified Seafood International (CSI) and Community Catch.

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1. Purpose

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the requirements for Certification Bodies seeking to become approved for the Unified Chain of Custody (CoC) Program .

2. Certification Body Registration of Intent

A Certification Body must be accredited to ISO 17065 by an Accreditation Body that is an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) member and Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) signatory to another internationally recognized program to be eligible to register for initial Unified CoC recognition.

Eligible Certification Bodies must first register their intent to apply by contacting the Certified Seafood International (CSI) Vice President, Program and Standards, in writing or through email.

3. Certification Body Pre-Application Review

In anticipation of the application process and before submitting an application, Certification Bodies are advised to carefully review the program information on the CSI website and its requirements in order to determine whether they can fully meet the minimum competency, resources, and geographic requirements of the program.

The following list of base requirements should assist Certification Bodies when determining their potential for approval:

a) Seafood and supply chain expertise and competency;

b) Sufficient numbers of assessors in appropriate locations that have the proper seafood and supply chain competencies to conduct Unified CoC assessments;

c) Sufficient numbers of Certification Body staff with seafood and supply chain competency in geographical locations suitable to properly manage certifications under the Unified CoC Standard;

d) Sufficient numbers of Certification Body staff and resources to ensure the integrity of assessments, to witness the approved assessors, to review and critique assessment reports, and to review corrective action within the time frames required by the Unified CoC Program;

e) Management commitment and organizational competence to maintain the integrity of the Unified CoC Program and to sufficiently respond to applicants and the CSI in a timely manner.

4. Certification Body Application

Certification Bodies wishing to apply to become an approved Certification Body of the Unified CoC Program shall submit an application package. The application package must include a formal letter of application addressed to the CSI Vice President, Program and Standards, as well as a minimum of the following supporting documents (all written in English):

a) Organizational chart(s) of the applicant's organization;

b) Copy of the Accreditation Certificate under ISO 17065 (including the scope of the certificate) for each Certification Body office seeking Unified CoC recognition; and

c) Copy of a valid liability/indemnity insurance certificate with a minimum value of 2 million USD;

d) Documented procedures that demonstrate how the applicant Certification Body will ensure impartiality and prevent conflicts of interest of Certification Body assessors and sub-contracted assessors;

e) Documented procedures that demonstrate how the applicant Certification Body and all personnel participating in the certification process will safeguard the confidentiality of all information obtained in the process of certification activities;

f) A list of Certification Body locations, relevant phone numbers, key contacts concerning the Unified CoC Program, and the roles and competencies of the key personnel, assessors, and sub-contractors at each location;

g) Documented procedures for assessor and subcontracted assessor training, oversight, performance tracking, and calibration;

h) Documented procedures for the technical review of assessment reports, non-conformities, and corrective actions;

i) Documented procedures for making certification decisions;

j) Documented procedures in relation to the use of the CoC Certificate, rules for granting, suspending or withdrawing the certificate, and the actions taken by the Certification Body should a suspension or withdrawal need to take place;

k) Documented certification procedures and guidance for multi-site (Group) certifications where applicable; and

l) A defined fee range that the Certification Body will charge applicants for certification services to the Unified CoC Standard.

5. Application Review

Final approval of a Certification Body application is at the discretion of the CSI Board. CSI will review only complete Certification Body applications, as described in Section 4.0 Certification Body Application of this document.

CSI may request further documentation from the applicant Certification Body or request clarifications to allow determination of qualifications of the applicant. Failure on the part of the applicant Certification Body to follow up and provide the requested information may result in the rejection of the Certification Body's application.

CSI will review each application to determine whether the applicant meets the qualifications for administration of Unified CoC Certification and provide written notice of its determination. CSI will also inform Participating Scheme Owners of determination.

6. Certification Body Approval and Notification

An approved Certification Body, prior to contracting to perform any assessments against the Unified CoC Standard, must enter a Contractual Agreement with CSI agreeing to meet the following Chain of Custody requirements:

a) All approved assessors must successfully complete a Unified CoC Standard assessor course (with training materials supplied by CSI and Participating Scheme Owners).

b) At a minimum, one management person (who may also be an assessor) for each approved office involved in the operation of the program must successfully complete a Unified CoC Standard assessor course;

c) Certification Bodies must successfully complete the required training/ witnessing assessor Certification Body approval procedure in a timely fashion, prior to allowing an assessor to become approved for assessment and provide CSI with updates on assessor progress and all final approvals.

d) All approved assessors must have met all approval criteria of the Unified CoC Standard, Procedure 8 and the Certification Body.

e) Procedures for reporting to CSI the assessment schedules for each program assessor must be in place.

f) Relevant documentation must be in place to demonstrate the competency, training and calibration of all CB staff who will participate in the Unified CoC Program.

g) Process for extending the scope of accreditation to include the Unified CoC Standard in their accreditation status within 18 months must have been initiated; and

h) A letter from the Certification Body's Accreditation Body confirming that an application was made to extend the scope of recognition to cover the Unified CoC Standard must be provided.

7. Certification Body Compliance

Once an applicant Certification Body is approved, the Certification Body is required to comply with all requirements, policies, and procedures that are currently stated in the Unified CoC Program, as well as, all future amendments and revisions to the program. CSI will notify the approved Certification Bodies regarding any amendments or revisions made to the program.

Approved Certification Bodies must agree to provide on-going access to information, staff, and sites as required by Unified CoC Standard Certification Body performance assessment and monitoring.

As a part of the CSI's annual management review (with support from Community Catch where relevant) of scheme performance, an approved Certification Body may be advised of any failure to meet the requirements of the Program and remedial actions to address those failures. At its discretion, CSI may apply sanctions for a failure to meet program requirements, which may include revocation of approval of the Certification Body.