

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

Policy Advisory

Policy Advisory 5 (v2.1): Reporting on the Tracking and Tracing of Fish and Fish Products.

Documents Supplemented or Modified by this Advisory

MSC Scheme Document	Status Change
Policy Advisory 5 (v2)	Superseded

Background

Continued growth in the number and diversity of fisheries certified to the MSC standard, an increasing number of certification bodies accredited to issue certificates for the MSC program and recent policy developments relating to the MSC Chain of Custody have reaffirmed the importance of certification bodies clearly and explicitly describing the system of tracking and tracing of fish and fish products in certified fisheries. To this end, existing requirements within the Fisheries Certification Methodology (FCM v6, Section 5.2 of Appendix 1) establish the necessity for certification bodies undertaking fishery assessments to provide information that supports the assurances that a certification body makes about the point to which products from a fishery can be traced.

Certification bodies undertaking Chain of Custody assessments for clients buying from a fishery require clear and complete information in this regard to enable proper Chain of Custody assessments to be undertaken in a prompt and straightforward manner. This is especially important in circumstances where product caught prior to the date of fishery certification becomes eligible to carry the MSC logo and companies are seeking the appropriate Chain of Custody certification to do so.

In support to the existing requirements of the FCM, this Policy Advisory is being circulated as guidance to certification bodies on the type and structure of information needed in fishery certification reports¹.

Intent

The intent of this Policy Advisory is to:

- highlight the information requirements for fishery certification reports so as to better facilitate subsequent Chain of Custody certification;
- ensure that the traceability systems within the unit of certification are being actively assessed by the fishery certification bodies;
- ensure that MSC's Chain of Custody is maintained; and,
- ensure that only products from certified fisheries use the MSC label.

Guidance

1. The current requirements of the FCM v6 (Section 5.2, Appendix 1) pertaining to the tracking and tracing of fish and fish products remain unchanged:

"In accordance with Section 3.5 of this methodology the report shall describe the system of tracking and tracing of fish and fish products in the fishery. The report shall set out the scope of the fishery assessment"

¹ Taken to include 'Preliminary Draft Reports', 'Public Comment Draft Reports', 'Final Reports' and 'Public Certification Reports'.

in the context of the assurances the certification body can make about the point to which products from the fishery can be traced and describe known risk factors prior to or after the point of first landing that may influence subsequent chain of custody assessments. The report shall specifically state whether products may or may not enter further chains of custody and whether products are or are not eligible to carry the MSC logo.”

2. Furthermore, the requirements of TAB Directive 021 and Policy Advisory 4(v3) establishing reporting requirements pertaining to the eligibility date remain unchanged.
3. In order to better achieve the intention of the existing MSC requirements, certification bodies shall include such information identified in paragraphs 1 and 2 within an explicitly identified section of the fishery certification report (the ‘Traceability’ section identified by TAB Directive 021 and Policy Advisory 4(v3)). Cross references to other sections should be avoided.
4. Where the information required for this section is found in other parts of a fishery certification report², such information shall be repeated within the traceability section of the fishery certification report.
5. The traceability section should include the information necessary to answer the following questions, and should be separated into the following sub-sections:

Traceability within the fishery

- a. How is traceability ensured within the fishery? Are there different systems in different companies within the fishery? Or different systems for different types of vessels? How have these different systems been assessed?
- b. Are there any specific risks, or systems to dramatically decrease/increase risk, in the fishery?
- c. If the fishery under assessment overlaps with, or is a component of, another fishery, how will the fishery ensure that only the product from the client fishery will be sold as certified (if the fishery is eventually certified)?

At-sea processing

- d. What is the range (if any) of at-sea processing operations undertaken by the fishery in assessment?
- e. What are the traceability risks associated with each category of at-sea processing operation undertaken? How is this risk mitigated?

Point of landing

- f. Are there any restrictions in defining the extent of fishery certification that should be noted (i.e. landing only in registered (named) ports, position of legally enforced auction processes etc.)?
- g. What are the known risk factors after the point of landing that may influence Chain of Custody assessments?

Eligibility to enter Chains of Custody:

- h. Include an explicit statement regarding which operators and/or businesses and/or points in the fishery are covered by the fishery certificate. This should not be open to interpretation and Chain of Custody certification bodies reading this section will get clarity regarding the requirements for certification for their clients (i.e. can their

² E.g. where such information is provided in justifying the scoring of a performance indicator within the assessment tree.

client buy from their supplier as part of the fishery certificate, or does their supplier need to have their own Chain of Custody).

END