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Introduction

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is an independent initiative designed to help identify fisheries that meet an international standard for well-managed or sustainable fisheries, and to assist the marketing of seafood products from these fisheries through use of the MSC eco-label.

The MSC initiative accomplishes the identification of sustainable fisheries through an independent auditing system that examines a number of issues from the management system used to control the fishery, to environmental impacts, the health of the fished resources, and the fishing operations. For a more comprehensive explanation of how MSC fisheries certifications are conducted and which fisheries have already completed the process, go to www.msc.org.

Once a fishery is certified as sustainable (meeting the MSC Principles and Criteria), any business selling products that result from this fishery may utilize the MSC ecolabel if they can establish a Chain-of-Custody from the fishery through their facilities to the shipment of product to their customers. The remainder of this document provides a general explanation of what is required to establish a Chain-of-Custody that complies with MSC standards.

MSC Chain-of-Custody Requirements

The MSC requirements for establishing a Chain-of-Custody are straightforward. A business wishing to be certified as meeting the MSC requirements must be able to provide evidence that it has knowledge about and control over inputs into its processing system, a documented control system for tracking product through each stage of processing, and output controls for identifying and properly labeling product from certified sources. The actual Chain-of-Custody standard is also available on the MSC website.

Preparing for MSC Chain of Custody Certification

In essence, any processor, distributor, wholesaler or retailer that is able to prove that it is acquiring, processing, labeling and selling fish from certified fisheries can qualify for the Chain-of-Custody program by contracting with an MSC-accredited certification body such as Scientific Certification Systems (SCS). Through a review of records and a physical audit of the facilities, SCS certifies that the processor, distributor, wholesaler or retailer complies with the MSC standards.

To start the MSC Chain-of-Custody process, please submit the attached application form along with either a flow diagram or written explanation of your manufacturing process. From this information, SCS will be able to establish the required work and provide an estimate of costs for the required review and audit to achieve certification. Upon receipt of the application, SCS will send a contract and work order that describes the proposed work and costs. Once SCS receives a signed copy of the contract and work order (a faxed signature page is sufficient if the original is sent in the mail), SCS will select the auditor and begin the review and certification process.

Scientific Certification Systems Contacts for MSC Certification

Head of Fisheries Program:

Dr. Chet Chaffee
Vice President and Director of Fisheries Certification
Scientific Certification Systems, Inc.

Phone: 650-969-1366
Fax: 650-969-4731
Email: chaffe3@attglobal.net

Head of Chain-of-Custody Program:

Aaron Maizlish
Director, Chain of Custody Certification Services
Scientific Certification Systems, Inc.

Phone: 510-452-8005
Fax: 510-452-8001
Cell: 415-260-0570
Email: amaizlish@scscertified.com



Chain-of-Custody Auditing Services in Alaska

Hugh Bertmaring
Alaska Quality Seafood
Center for Alaska Seafood Quality Assurance

Phone: 907-565-5655
Fax: 907-565-5646
Email: hugh.bertmaring@alaskaqualityseafood.com



Application for MSC Chain-of-Custody Certification

Please fill in the appropriate information. All information will be held in strict confidence.

1. Corporation/Business Name: _____

2. Contact Person: _____

3. Address: _____

4. City/State or Province/Country/Postal Code:

5. Phone _____ Fax _____ Email: _____

6. Please provide information for each facility to be considered under your MSC Chain-of-Custody certification. Please be specific and list all facilities (cold storage, transhipper, processing, etc.), all products to be considered at each plant, and the amount of product shipped annually from each facility. Please use additional pages if necessary to complete this information.

Processing, Handling, & Storage Facilities included in application for MSC Chain of Custody Certification	Address of Processing & Storage Facilities	HACCP PLAN (yes or no)	HACCP Audits (Date of last audit)	Organization providing 3 rd Party HACCP Audits	Last Mock Recall (Date)	Description of Product Produced	Volume of Products Produced

7. Please provide information on your supply of raw materials purchased (either from business entities or directly from fishers) for those products to be considered for certification. Please use additional pages if necessary to complete this information.

Raw Material (Species or common name is acceptable)	Supplier Identifier (Use Name or Number if information is confidential)	MSC Registration Number of Supplier (may not be applicable if suppliers or fishery are not yet certified)	Form of Raw Material Purchased (whole, fillets, H&G, etc.)	Volume of Raw Material Purchased per Annum per Supplier

8. Please attach a flow chart or written explanation of the manufacturing processes at each facility to be considered for MSC Chain of Custody Certification.

9. Send information to:

(Worldwide)

Aaron Maizlish
Director, Chain of Custody Certification Services
Scientific Certification Systems, Inc.

Phone: 510-452-8005
Fax: 510-452-8001
Cell: 415-260-0570
Email: amaizlish@scscertified.com

(in Alaska)

Hugh Bertmaring or Joanne Nevak
Alaska Quality Seafood
Center for Alaska Seafood Quality Assurance

Phone: 907-565-5655
Fax: 907-565-5646
Email: hugh.bertmaring@alaskaqualityseafood.com

Chain-of-Custody Certification Process

The process involves 3 parts. An authorized auditor working on behalf of SCS will:

1. Conduct a desktop review of the Client's submitted documents.
2. Conduct an on-site inspection to verify submitted information and tracking processes.
3. Write a report with findings and recommendations.

SCS requires that each client submit a package of information about the products under consideration and the systems used to identify and track resources/products through the company's facility or facilities (see below). After completing the initial review of submitted documents (see below for information on which documents to submit), the certifier will contact the applicant to discuss certification audits. If the certifier feels the document package reviewed is sufficient, the certifier is authorized to establish an interim certification number at that time. The auditor will then explain how the on-site inspection will be handled for verification of the submitted information. The assigned certification number can be used immediately to identify certified product being shipped to customers and to apply to the MSC for use of the MSC ecolabel.

Information Requirements

Once the client and the certifier have set the costs and agreed by contract to proceed, SCS will ask for information to be submitted on the documented control system and traceability of raw materials and product associated with *each step* in the flow diagram that the client provides. Many types of customer supplied documentation may be sufficient to satisfy the documented control requirements. Following are examples of the types of documents that may be used to establish a Chain-of-Custody for certified seafood products coming into and flowing out of facilities. This list should not be considered exhaustive nor are all documents necessarily required to establish the control system. Rather, the following list should serve as a guide to help you identify the types of documents that you may already have that will be useful in the certification process:

General list of documentation to support an MSC Chain-of-Custody certification:

1. Documents showing how product from raw material suppliers is identified when purchased and received. This may include receiving docket, unloading details, or fish tickets if purchased directly from fishers;
2. Inward receipt document;
3. Daily production report indicating what raw materials are used and products manufactured on a given day (live, frozen, fillet, canned, cooked, etc.);
4. Inventory report (daily, weekly);
5. Invoices, sales documents, and export documents – showing product shipped to customers;
6. Copy of HACCP Registration Certificate;
7. Copy of Independent inspection report for HACCP compliance (ex. FDA, DEC, etc.);
8. Copy of Processing license;
9. List of raw materials and suppliers;
10. Total certified raw material received per annum;
11. Amount of product (by category if applicable) intended for certification.

If the client desires, we can accept documentation that is cleaned up so as to remove names of clients and pricing as deemed appropriate. All documents provided to SCS are considered confidential and governed by our contractual agreement. However we understand that the client may require that certain documents such as QA manuals, HACCP Manuals, etc. should not leave the premises. These documents should be noted in the written submission to SCS and will be viewed later by an SCS auditor during the on-site inspection.