

Choose the Right Seafood Chain of Custody (CoC) for Your Business

MSC/ASC CoC Standard

- Owned by the **Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)**, shared with the **Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)**
- Global focus on sustainable wild-caught (for MSC) and responsibly farmed (for ASC) seafood, including seaweed
- Most relevant if handling diverse global sources (wild/farmed/seaweed), and need strong labour safeguards as well as broad market recognition

CSI CoC Standard

- Owned by **Certified Seafood International (CSI)**, unified with **Iceland Responsible Fisheries Management (IRFM)**, and **Community Catch**
- Focus on Alaska and Iceland-certified fisheries, based on Food and Agriculture (FAO) guidelines; other coastal fisheries pending
- Emphasis on simpler, region-specific provenance assurance

Aspect	MSC/ASC CoC (Default v5.1, May 2023)	CSI Unified CoC (v2.6, Sept 2025)
Scope & Legibility	Single/multi-site (all audited); variants for groups/CFOs. Applies to any supply chain handling certified products	Single/multi-site; Unpackaged at Point-of-Sale Organization (UPOS) module for unpackaged sales. Applies to supply chains from CSI certified fisheries
Key Principles	Five Principles: - Certified suppliers - Identifiable - Segregated - Traceable/volumes - Management system (including Training and non-conformities) Handles under-assessment products	Four Sections: - Traceability principles - Supply chain traceability - Traceability/labelling - Training Additional information for multi-site: Organizational integrity, member management

Aspect	MSC/ASC CoC (Default v5.1, May 2023)	CSI Unified CoC (v2.6, Sept 2025)
Traceability & Segregation	• Full traceability system • No mixing certified/non-certified (except specific ingredient rules) • Records for 3+ years • Product authentication cooperation	• Traceable back to fishery • Annual traceability tests • Separation (physical/temporal) • No mixing (except 5% non-certified in compounds) • Records for 3+ years
Certification Process	• Sample audits for group-sites	• Sample audits for multi-sites
Unique Features	• Integrates labour practices • Co-labelling for MSC/ASC • Seaweed categories • Global recognition	• Cost-effective for regions • Origin on ecolabel • UPOS for point-of-sale • Unified for Alaska/Iceland
Typical Costs	Comprehensive, potentially higher due to global standards	Emphasizes efficiency, may be lower cost for targeted supply chain members
Food Safety	For ASC ONLY: GFSI or ISO 22000 is compulsory for organizations conducting processing/re-packing, etc., with exceptions	No requirements
Social Responsibility	Labor audit and/or self-assessment of labour risks compulsory for orgs conducting processing/re-packing, or product adulteration etc., with exceptions	No requirements
Ecolabeling Claim and Requirements	• Annual fee and ecolabeling licensing agreement • Fees based on MSC labeled seafood purchase and sale • Starts at 200 pounds • Royalties collected on consumer-facing product starting at 0.5% by volume sold annually	• Partner agreement required (if consumer-facing) • Fees based on wholesale value • For B2B, there is a 500 USD annual fee
Improvement Program	Eligible products originating from the MSC Improvement Program can be verified and sold under the MSC Default Chain of Custody Standard v 5.1 into global markets	No Improver Program



For more information:

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