



OCEAN STEWARDSHIP FUND – RECERTIFICATION ASSISTANCE FUND (RAF)

GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Applications are welcome for up to a maximum of £30,000 GBP to contribute to the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) fees for the 2nd or subsequent recertification assessment of MSC certified fisheries, subject to the level of CAB fees incurred by the fishery and the size of the Recertification Assistance Fund (RAF) available.

1) **Objective**

- a) To recognise the long-term commitment of MSC certified fisheries to sustainability by offering them support to cover a proportion of the CAB fees for their 2nd (or subsequent) recertification assessment.

2) **Eligibility: who can apply?**

- a) An eligible fishery client group is one that has had its Public Certification Report (PCR) for its 2nd (or subsequent) recertification published.
- b) Only one application per fishery is allowed for each eligible recertification. A fishery is defined as all members of the fishery client group for all Units of Certification as stated in the assessment documentation. Applications will be assessed on the status of this entity as a whole. The fishery client group is responsible for apportioning the RAF amount among its members, which is expected to follow the same formula used for sharing CAB costs within the fishery client group.
- c) The maximum recertification investment will be limited to the lower of:
 - i) 75% of the cost of the CAB's recertification audit (excluding surveillance costs and any costs related to an objection), or
 - ii) £30,000 GBP.

3) **Suspended and withdrawn fisheries**

- a) MSC only awards RAF funding to eligible fisheries that are certified at the time when the RAF application is reviewed (currently 15 October of each year).
- b) If a fishery which receives a RAF Award subsequently becomes suspended by a CAB, this does not affect the RAF Award as the fishery was recertified at the time of review.

- c) If a fishery which has applied to the RAF becomes suspended in the time between application and review, and it has not yet completed its Correction Action Plan, then the fishery's current RAF application will not be eligible for a RAF Award. However, the fishery may reapply to RAF **in the next round only** if it completes the Correction Action Plan and regains MSC certification before the next RAF deadline (currently set at 15 October each year).
- d) If a fishery which receives a RAF Award withdraws its MSC certificate, this does not affect the current RAF Award. However, if the fishery becomes MSC certified again, then it will be considered as a new fishery in the MSC program and will have to be recertified two further times to regain eligibility for the RAF in future.

4) **Application process**

- a) Applications to the RAF can be submitted at any time but must be received by the Fund Administrator within 12 months of the publication of the PCR. RAF applications are reviewed once a year after the annual cut-off date. **The application review deadline is currently 15 October each year.** Applications submitted after 15 October will be considered in the following year's round of applications.
- b) Application forms can be downloaded from the MSC website and must be submitted by email to OSF@msc.org
- c) Applications must contain the following:
 - i) Name, address and contact details of the Fishery Client Group (the application must encompass all members of the fishery client group for all Units of Certification in the MSC certified fishery)
 - ii) CAB details
 - iii) CAB fee amount – including, when applicable, allocation of CAB fee across multiple fisheries where the fishery client group is managing multiple assessments under one CAB audit contract
 - iv) PCR publication date
 - v) Supporting documentation – including scan of CAB fee quote (with any activities relating to the 4th surveillance audit highlighted or removed), workings to support the allocation of CAB fees across multiple fisheries (if the fee quote covers the assessment and audit of multiple fisheries and this is not obvious from the quote itself), CAB fee invoice and the fishery client group bank details.

5) **Grant distribution process**

- a) The MSC does not use its discretion in relation to the value of RAF grants awarded but it does exercise oversight of the RAF. RAF applicants will be notified of the value of the grant awarded as soon as possible after the MSC meets to confirm the awards. The intention is for the grant distribution to be made before 31 March in the year of the award.



- b) The fishery client group is responsible for apportioning the RAF amount among its members.
- c) Where the available RAF pot available in any year is too small to fulfil the maximum distribution per applicant fishery, each theoretical maximum grant will be proportionally reduced so that the available funding is distributed amongst the applicants in a pro-rata fashion. The value of the awarded grant can therefore only be calculated after the number of applicants and the value of each grant claimed is known (that is, after the claim deadline).

6) **Dissemination of personal data**

- a) The MSC may publicise details of the RAF grant awards in its annual report, on its website, and other relevant publications.
- b) Applicants submitting a RAF application should review and understand MSC's policy on data processing, sharing and retention outlined in the OSF Privacy Policy on the [RAF web page](#)

7) **Modification or variation of regulations**

- a) By making an application to the RAF, the applicant recognises the MSC reserves the right to modify, add to, or vary the RAF operating approach, as it sees fit.