

Marine Stewardship Council

MSC Chain of Custody Program – Supplementary Requirements for the ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Program



Version 1.2, 26 October 2022

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The official language of these requirements is English. The definitive version is maintained on the MSC website (www.msc.org). Any discrepancy between copies, versions or translations shall be resolved by reference to the definitive English version.

The MSC prohibits any modification of part or all of the contents in any form.

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Responsibility for these requirements

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is responsible for these requirements.

Readers should verify that they are using the latest copy of this and other related documents. Updated documents, together with a master list of all available MSC documents, can be found on the MSC website ([msc.org](https://www.msc.org)).

Versions published

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
1.0	22 March 2018	N/A – new document
1.1	28 March 2019	No change to the modified requirements in this document. Clauses corresponding to clauses in the MSC Chain of Custody Standards, MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, and MSC General Certification Requirements have been updated as per changes to these documents.
1.1.1	23 August 2019	No change to the modified requirements in this document. References to version numbers of the MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements and MSC General Certification Requirements have been updated.
1.2	26 October 2022	ASC-MSC Derogation referenced in versions 1.0 & 1.1 removed. Reference to “MASI Partnership Agreement” replaced with “Seaweed Partnership Agreement”. The contact updated to ecolabel@msc.org . Reference to MSC General Certification Requirements version 2.5 clause numbering updated. Standard clauses 2.1, 2.2, 3.4; Chain of Custody Certification Requirements Guidance 6.5.1 revised to clarify intent and process.

About the Marine Stewardship Council

Vision

The MSC's vision is of the world's oceans teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations.

Mission

The MSC's mission is to use our label and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

About this document

The Chain of Custody Program – Supplementary Requirements for the ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Program contains mandatory requirements for all Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) carrying out Chain of Custody audits with Seaweed in scope. Auditors shall use this document in addition to the MSC Chain of Custody Standard, MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, and the MSC General Certification Requirements.

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Chain of Custody Module is not applicable to seaweed product intending to carry the MSC/ ASC labels or trademarks.

This document provides supplementary requirements, additions, and modifications to the latest versions of the Chain of Custody Standard: Default Version, Chain of Custody Standard: Group Version, Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, and the General Certification Requirements. These additions and modifications are marked in the document using **bold**. Original clause references have been retained.

Effective date

The effective date for version 1.2 of the Chain of Custody Program – Supplementary Requirements for the ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Program is 1 December 2022. All CABs shall apply this version on this date.

For General Certification Requirements (GCR) relating specifically to seaweed CoC audits, GCR version 2.5 shall be applied to all audits that start on or after 1 December 2022.

Derogations

Derogations are indicated by a footnote including:

- a. The authority who made the decision on the derogation.
- b. The date or meeting number of the decision.
- c. The date on which the derogation came into force or expires.
- d. A short description of the derogation.

A derogation indicates a measure which allows for all or part of the requirement to be applied differently, or not at all, to certain applicants or certificate holders.

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MSC Chain of Custody Program – Supplementary requirements for the ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Program

A. General¹

- A.1 The CAB shall apply these supplementary requirements in all Chain of Custody (CoC) audits with Seaweed in scope.
- A.2 Unless specifically noted, all other requirements in the latest versions of the MSC Chain of Custody Standard: Default Version, the MSC Chain of Custody Standard: Group Version, the MSC Chain of Custody Certification Requirements, and the MSC General Certification Requirements shall apply.
 - A.2.1 The CAB shall read “Seaweed Partnership Agreement” where “licence agreement” appears in any of the program documents referenced in A.2.
 - A.2.2 The CAB shall read “seaweed” and/or “seaweed product” where “fish” and/or “fish product” appears in any of the program documents referenced in A.2.
 - A.2.3 The CAB shall read “ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Standard” where “MSC Fisheries Standard” and/or “ASC Farm Standards” appears in any of the program documents referenced in A.2.

¹ Until the MSC/ ASC scheme database is operational for seaweed scope, the CAB shall submit all audit information using the MSC Chain of Custody Audit Checklist and Reporting Template (in Excel XLS/XLSX format), and all certification related information and changes to: seaweedstandard@msc.org.

B. Chain of Custody Default Standard v5.0 and Chain of Custody Group Standard v2.0

Principle 1 Certified products are purchased from certified suppliers

- 1.1 The organisation shall have a process in place to ensure that all certified products are purchased from certified suppliers, fisheries, or farms.
- 1.1.1 **If receiving or purchasing directly from the seaweed production unit, the organisation should also verify the production category (A, Bi, Bii, Ci, Cii) in the certificate code or the Public Certification Report.**

Principle 2 Certified products are identifiable

- 2.1 Certified products shall be identified as certified **and include the product identification category to which they belong** at all stages of purchasing, receiving, storing, processing, packing, labelling, selling and delivering, except for sales invoices to final consumers.

Guidance 2.1

It is recommended that certified products are identifiable as certified on the physical product as well as on the accompanying traceability records. This can be done by placing a sign or label on the package, container, or pallet.

Organisations can use a variety of methods to identify certified products, including acronyms (e.g. “MSC” or “ASC”), the CoC code, or another internal system of identification.

Where it is impossible or impractical to label physical products (**e.g., loose seaweed**) the organisation will need to demonstrate how the product can be linked with associated traceability or inventory records that specify the certified status.

Seaweed products can be identified according to 3 product identification categories: ASC, MSC, or ASC-MSC, depending on the seaweed production category assigned in the Public Certification Report, as shown below:

Product identification category	Production category
ASC-MSC	Bi and Ci (enhanced)
MSC	A (wild)
ASC	Bii and Cii (farmed)
ASC-MSC	Mixed production category

- 2.2 If products are sold as certified, they shall be identifiable as certified **and include the product identification category to which they belong** on the line item of the related invoice, unless all products on the invoice are certified **to the same product identification category**, except for sales invoices to final consumers.

Guidance 2.2

The seaweed product needs to be identifiable according to one of the product identification categories (MSC, ASC, or ASC-MSC) as per table in Guidance 2.1. This is normally on the line item of the invoice using these acronyms. This identification needs to correspond to the process in 1.1 and 2.1 to verify whether the product is wild (MSC), farmed (ASC), enhanced (ASC-MSC), or mixed (ASC-MSC).

This requirement aims to make clear to a buyer which products on any given invoice are certified, and what claim can be made about each product (i.e. ASC, MSC, or co-labelled ASC-MSC).

- 2.4 The organisation shall only promote products as certified or use the **MSC** or **ASC** label or other trademark(s) if it has been granted approval to do so under the terms of the **Seaweed Partnership Agreement** (ecolabel@msc.org).

Guidance 2.4

During an audit, the organisation may be asked to show evidence of **approval to use trademarks**. This can be done through showing the valid **Seaweed Partnership Agreement** and/or evidence of approval emails received from MSCl.

Principle 3 Certified products are segregated

- 3.4 If products with different seaweed production categories are mixed, they shall thereafter carry the product identification category ASC-MSC.

Guidance 3.4

Seaweed of different production categories should not be mixed, if it is intended to carry only the MSC or ASC label (i.e. production category A, Bii, or Cii only, as per Guidance 2.1). Clear segregation back to the origin category should be maintained at all stages until the appropriate claim gets applied. At any stage where different seaweed production categories become mixed, apply product identification category as “ASC-MSC”.

Principle 5 The organisation’s management system addresses the requirements of this Standard

5.2 Reporting changes

5.2.2 The organisation shall receive written approval from their CAB before making any of the following changes:

- b. Extending the scope of CoC to sell or handle products certified against different recognised certification schemes that share the CoC Standard.

Guidance 5.2.2.b

For example, if the current CoC certificate covers only MSC certified products, the organisation would need to receive approval from the CAB before selling ASC certified products as certified.

This requirement applies to all existing CoC holders selling or handling certified seaweed for the first time.

C. Chain of Custody Certification Requirements v3.1

6 Process Requirements

6.1 Need for CoC certification

Guidance 6.1.1.a.iii

Entities identified by reference to or on a **seaweed production unit** certificate could consist of agents, auctions, unloaders, or others that handle certified **seaweed** in the proximity of the point of landing or first sale. The Public Certification Report for the **seaweed production unit** will clearly state that these entities are included in the **seaweed production unit** certificate and will list the specific entities, the eligibility criteria, or where to find this information. The Public Certification Report will also clearly state the point in the supply chain from which CoC is required (see the [ASC-MSC Seaweed \(Algae\) Certification and Accreditation Requirements 17.14](#)). Any similar entities not specifically referenced in the **seaweed production unit** certificate will require CoC certification.

In relation to ASC farms, entities relate only to the certified farm operations themselves. The audit report will name these and should also clearly state if CoC certification is required at this step.

6.3 Application and scope extension

- 6.3.2 The CAB shall define the proposed scope of the certification with the applicant by identifying:
- a. The certified species that are to be purchased or handled.
 - b. The activities to be undertaken with respect to certified products, as per the definitions in [Table 4](#).
 - i. **Where the organisation is intending to handle seaweed, the CAB shall advise the applicant of the need to sign the Seaweed Partnership Agreement.**
 - c. The main activity undertaken by the client with regards to certified products.
 - d. Whether the applicant intends to handle products certified under other recognised certification schemes that share the CoC Standard.

Guidance 6.3.2.d

The specific certified fisheries or farms from which the applicant is sourcing do not need to be included in the scope of certification.

Species and activities can be recorded without association to each other in the certification scheme database and the CoC audit checklist.

Where applicants intend to handle products originating from fisheries or farms that are certified under schemes other than the MSC but do share the CoC Standards, this will be treated as a scope extension. For example, if the applicant wants to handle ASC certified products, the CAB will need to issue a separate ASC certificate for the client but can complete a single CoC audit.

Similarly, if an applicant wants to handle seaweed, the CAB will need to issue a separate seaweed certificate for the client.

An organisation's scope should include their non-certified subcontractors' activities where they relate to certified product.

Table 4: Activity scope definitions

	Activity	Definition
6	MSC Harvest	This shall only be used when vessels, or collection of seaweed from the wild environment (Seaweed Production Category A in Table 2 of the ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard) , are being certified to the MSC CoC Standard. If they are processing on-board, “processing” shall also be selected.
14	ASC Aquaculture	This shall be applied to any entity involved in the farming of aquatic organisms including seaweed (Seaweed Production Categories Bi, Bii, Ci, and Cii in Table 2 of the ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard). If there is processing at farm level, “processing” shall also be selected.

6.5 Use of trademarks

- 6.5.1 Once entered as an applicant on the database, the CAB shall inform the client that it can use the MSC **and/or ASC** label, or other trademarks:
- a. Once the **Seaweed Partnership Agreement** has been signed.
 - b. Providing the client complies with the **Seaweed Partnership Agreement**.

Guidance 6.5.1

The Seaweed Partnership Agreement contains the licence for the use of the MSC and/or ASC label on seaweed products certified to the ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard. If organisations wish to use the MSC and/ or ASC label on fish or fish products from MSC certified fisheries or ASC certified farms, they will need to have a separate MSC Ecolabel and/or ASC Logo Licensing Agreement with MSC.

11 Certificate management for all CoC clients

11.1 Certification decision

- 11.1.8 **If the client is handling seaweed products, the CAB shall first obtain confirmation from the client that it has signed the Seaweed Partnership Agreement.**

11.2 Changes to the certificate

- 11.2.5 On receiving a request for an extension to scope that includes new activities, or the first scope extension to handle products certified to recognised certification schemes that share the CoC Standard, the CAB shall:
- a. Review available information.
 - b. Consider if the client's existing management system is suitable for the proposed new scope of operations.
 - c. Consider if eligibility for the respective version of the MSC CoC Standard will be maintained.
 - i. If a client is no longer eligible to be certified under the same version of the CoC Standard, the CAB shall inform the client they must be re-certified against the appropriate CoC Standard within 6 months.
 - d. Consider if the client is no longer eligible for remote audits and determine whether future audits will need to be on-site.
 - e. Decide whether an on-site audit is required before the scope can be extended and record the rationale for this decision.
 - f. Notify the client within 10 days of its decision.
 - g. **Obtain confirmation from the certificate holder that it has signed the Seaweed Partnership Agreement, in the case of an extension to include seaweed in the scope of the certificate.**

11.3 Surveillance frequency, additional audits and non-conformities

- 11.3.10 **During surveillance, the CAB shall verify that the client has signed and remains in compliance with the Seaweed Partnership Agreement.**

Guidance 11.3

Extending the scope of certification to include seaweed would not alter the audit frequency, and CABs should seek to align audits as far as possible.

D. General Certification Requirements v2.5

4.8 Contract

4.8.7 The CAB's contract with CoC clients shall specify the following:

- h. **In the case of seaweed operations, the client shall sign the Seaweed Partnership Agreement before certification can be granted.**

7 Process requirements

7.4 Suspension or withdrawal of certification

CoC certificate suspension

7.4.10 A CAB shall suspend a CoC certificate if any of the following occur:

- i. **MSCI** has withdrawn a certificate holder's **Seaweed Partnership Agreement**, and following that, the certificate holder does not comply with **MSCI** instruction within stated timeframes.

Guidance 7.4.10.i

The CoC certificate may be suspended if the CAB obtains its own evidence that the client has not followed MSCI instructions after the withdrawal of the licence agreement.

In the case of CoC operations with seaweed within scope, the CoC certificate holder should sign and follow the instructions in the Seaweed Partnership Agreement. The CAB will suspend or withdraw the certificate if the certificate holder fails to do so.

If the certificate is suspended for seaweed, the whole CoC certificate will be suspended.

7.5 Information on certificates²

7.5.1 The CAB shall issue an English language certificate which, in addition to requirements in ISO 17065 7.7, contains:

- a. The latest published version of the **MSC and/or ASC label, which:**
 - i. **Shall be no smaller than the logo of the CAB.**
 - ii. **Should be selected based on the seaweed production category (i.e., MSC label for wild caught – category A, ASC for farmed – category Bii and Cii, and MSC and ASC for enhanced – category Bi and Ci).**

End of document

² Until the MSC/ ASC scheme database is operational for seaweed scope, a unique CoC certificate code is generated manually with the Seaweed code SWD-C-xxxxx by the certification scheme.