



MSC ecolabel user guide

April 2023



Welcome

This guide sets out the basic rules on how to use the MSC ecolabel on product packaging, restaurant menus, fish counters and promotional material.

Protecting the MSC's trademarks

The MSC owns the trademark of the ecolabel, the abbreviation "MSC" and its name "Marine Stewardship Council" and reserves all rights in relation to these trademarks. MSC (MSC's trading company) is responsible for all ecolabel use handled by the Licensing Team.

Only organisations that have signed a formal written agreement with the MSC's Licensing Team may display the MSC ecolabel. Unauthorised display is prohibited and will be treated as a trademark infringement.



We're here to help you: please contact the Licensing Team



Show your customers that your fish comes from a certified sustainable source by using the MSC ecolabel – a trusted and recognised indicator of seafood sustainability.

Three easy steps to successfully using the MSC ecolabel



Step 1

Add the MSC ecolabel to your materials

Once you've signed a licence, the Licensing Team will provide you with a high resolution copy of the ecolabel (formats: AI, EPS, JPEG, TIFF, PDF)

Incorporate the MSC ecolabel, claim and Chain of Custody code into the design of your materials, following the rules set out in this guide. Correct use of the MSC ecolabel will speed up the approval process.

TIP: Share a copy of these guidelines with all design agencies and other service providers who work with the MSC ecolabel.



Step 2

Submit your artwork for approval

Please submit colour proofs of all materials carrying the MSC ecolabel before printing or using publicly, preferably in PDF format. The Licensing Team responds to all emails within 3 working days.



Packaging: please send the final draft design and a completed product approval form.



Menus or fish counters: please send all final draft designs and a completed seafood approval form.

Promotional materials: please send the final draft design. You don't need to complete a form.



Do you have a licence to use the ecolabel?

All organisations must sign a formal written agreement with the MSC's Licensing Team prior to using the ecolabel.



[Email to request a licence](#)



[Click here for more information on Chain of Custody certification](#)



Step 3

Get approval

Once design has been agreed, the Licensing Team will send you written approval. Only at this stage should you print your materials.

As a licence holder you'll be able to access our suite of visual assets to promote your commitment to MSC sustainable seafood.



[Click here to request a login](#)

The three MSC elements

1 The MSC ecolabel



The MSC ecolabel comprises of six features, which may not be separated from each other or altered in any way:

- A – The phrase 'Certified sustainable seafood'
- B – The letters MSC, the abbreviation of the Marine Stewardship Council
- C – The MSC's website address

- D – The oval fish checkmark
- E – The letters TM indicate that this ecolabel is a trademark.
- F – The white keyline which outlines the fish checkmark and the ecolabel

2 The MSC Chain of Custody code

Every MSC labelled product must carry a Chain of Custody code following the format of MSC-C-xxxxx that refers to the producer of the product. It can be displayed anywhere on your materials and should be readable.

The code will be provided by your certifier or supplier.



See Chain of Custody code section for more information

3 The MSC claim versions:

1 Thank you for choosing seafood that has met the MSC's global standard for sustainability. Together we can help protect fish stocks for the future. www.msc.org

2 This product comes from a fishery that has been independently certified to the MSC's standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery. www.msc.org

3 The [insert seafood species] in this product comes from a fishery that has been independently certified to the MSC's standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery. www.msc.org

4 This seafood has met the MSC's global standard for sustainability. www.msc.org

5 From an MSC certified sustainable fishery. www.msc.org

Menu and fish counter claim: **Seafood with this mark comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery.** www.msc.org

Note: The Licensing Team is not responsible for validating any additional claims, legal requirements or other labelling guidelines.



[Click here for translations of the MSC claim](#)

Formats and colour

Formats

The MSC ecolabel is available in two formats: horizontal (landscape) and vertical (portrait).

Horizontal



Vertical



White TM



Blue TM



If you are using the MSC ecolabel on top of an image or dark coloured background please use the version with the white trademark symbol (TM). For light or white backgrounds use the standard version of the TM symbol in blue.

Ecolabel language versions

Translations of the phrase 'CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD' are available in over 20 languages and must be carried out by the Licensing Team.



[Click here for translations of the MSC claim](#)



Use the MSC ecolabel in the language of your packaging or material, if available. For materials with multiple languages you may use a generic variation of the MSC ecolabel, which only contains the text 'MSC' and the MSC website address.



Colour

The blue version of the MSC ecolabel is always preferred. MSC regularly markets the label as the 'Blue Fish label', so this use of colour is most recognised by consumers. However, if your packaging is black and white, or the same Pantone blue, you may use the solid Monotone version.

MSC blue

Pantone 286
CMYK 100 60 0 2
RGB 0 93 170
Hex #005DAA

The white keyline which outlines the fish checkmark and the ecolabel as a whole must always be displayed. No other colour may be used.



Size and clear space

Minimum size

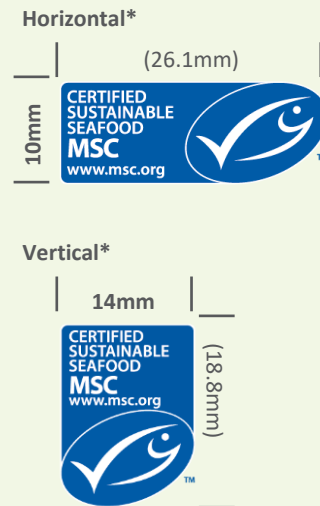
The minimum size for on-product applications of the horizontal ecolabel is **10mm H** x (26.1mm) W.

The minimum size for the vertical ecolabel is **14mm W** x (18.8mm) H.

Always make sure you scale the MSC ecolabel up or down proportionately.

There is no maximum size restriction for display of the MSC ecolabel or its variations, either on-product or off-product.

*Actual size

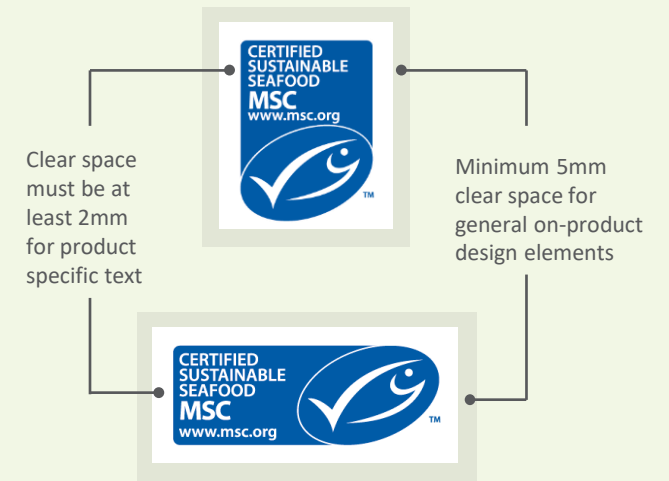


Minimum clear space

When the ecolabel is produced at its minimum size the clear space around it must be:

- at least 2mm for product-specific text (such as species, weight, ingredients).
- at least 5mm for general design elements (such as brand names, logos) where the MSC ecolabel could be associated with the host brand.

When the ecolabel is reproduced at larger sizes it must be surrounded by a minimum clear space at 10 per cent of the ecolabel height (vertical) or width (horizontal). Always allow as much space as possible.



Incorrect ecolabel usage

Always ensure that you use the ecolabel files that are supplied to you by the MSC's Licensing Team, do not attempt to change or create the MSC ecolabel yourself.

X Do not display the MSC ecolabel without the trademark symbol (TM)



X Do not change the colours of the MSC ecolabel



X Do not remove the white keyline



X Do not alter the design, lock-up, or separate the elements of the MSC ecolabel



X Do not distort the shape of the MSC ecolabel



X Do not tilt the MSC ecolabel



X Do not use the MSC logo, always use the ecolabel



X Do not place items or text over the MSC ecolabel



Make sure that the MSC ecolabel and Marine Stewardship Council's name are never displayed in a way that:

- Confuses consumers as to the association of the MSC with other brands or logos
- Suggests or implies that non-certified seafood is MSC certified
- Creates an association with products that are not from a fishery certified to the MSC standard

On product use

When using the MSC ecolabel on packaging, each product label should display:

The MSC ecolabel

The MSC ecolabel must appear on the front of the packaging to ensure it is immediately visible to consumers.



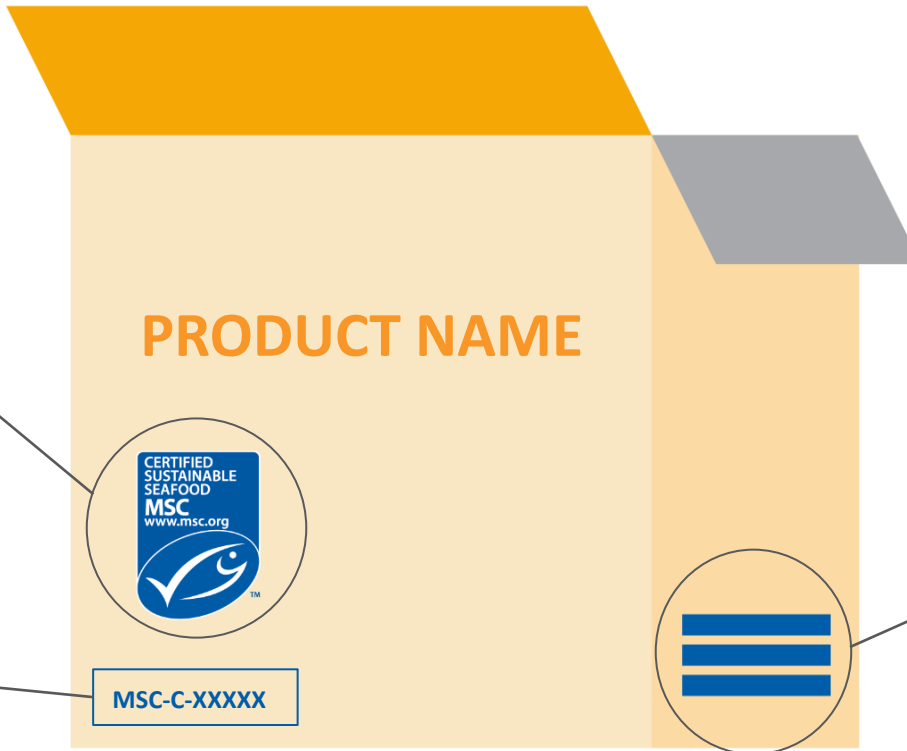
Click to get ecolabel translations

The Chain of Custody code

Every MSC labelled product must carry a Chain of Custody code. It can be displayed anywhere on the packaging and should be readable.



Click for Chain of Custody search



To promote your product with the MSC ecolabel its seafood content must be at least 95 per cent MSC certified. For products that don't meet this requirement:



See [Non-certified seafood section for information](#)

Good to know

- On consumer facing (retail) products you must use the MSC ecolabel to show certification of the product. The acronyms MSC or the organisation's full name are not allowed on their own.
- You may not use images of non-certified species or fishing activity on product packaging.
- The trade name of a product should not refer to non-certified species.

The MSC claim

When the MSC ecolabel is used on a product, it must always be accompanied by the MSC claim. The MSC claim can go anywhere on a pack and is available in five versions.



Click to see claims

Using the MSC ecolabel on cans and jars

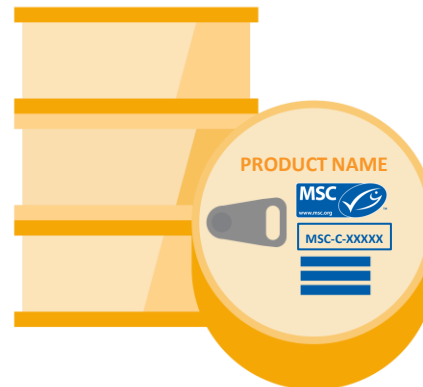
For non-square packaging it can be difficult to define "front of packaging" as products can be stacked on shelves in different ways.

The MSC ecolabel should go next to part of the label that is considered as the front, i.e. next to the brand and product name. See examples below.

MSC ecolabel on the label



MSC ecolabel on the lid



MSC ecolabel on the seal



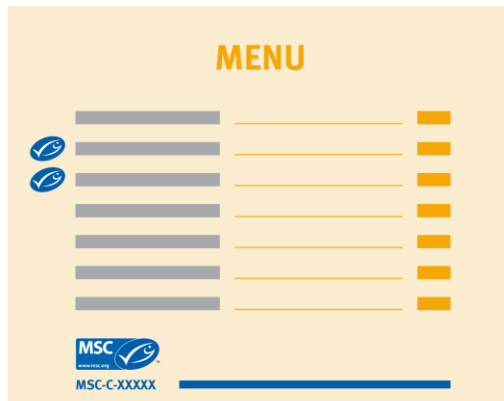
The MSC claim and Chain of Custody code can go anywhere on the can or jar and must be readable.

Menu use

To promote your dish as MSC certified its seafood content must be at least 95 per cent MSC certified.

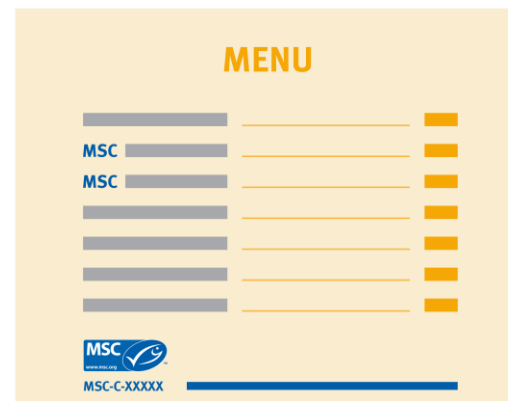
Option 1 – preferred

Place the MSC oval next to your MSC certified dishes and use the standard ecolabel as a key.



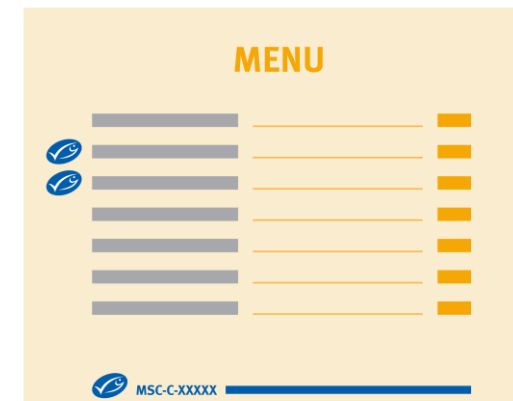
Option 2

Use the initials 'MSC' for identifying your MSC certified dishes and the standard ecolabel as a key.



Option 3

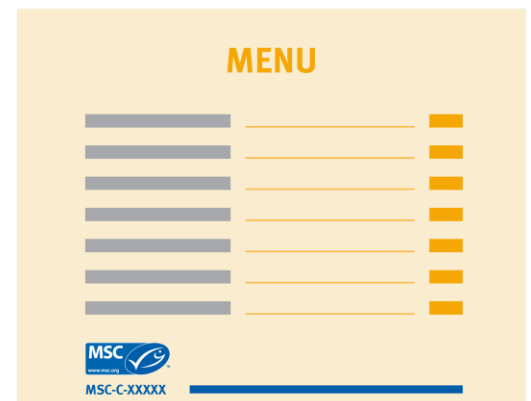
Use the MSC oval as both, indicator next to your MSC certified dishes and key.



You may also use a black and white or black and white inverted oval when choosing option 3.

Option 4

To explain which species on your menu are MSC certified without using the oval indicator, display the standard ecolabel with specific claim identifying MSC certified species.

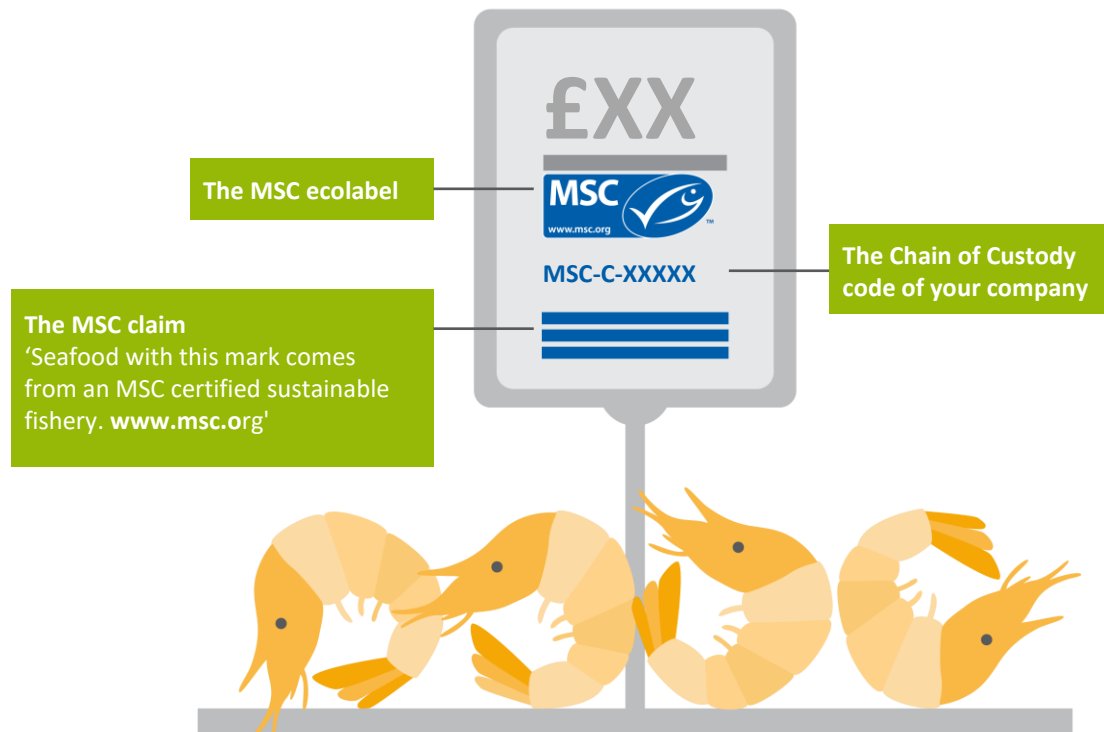


Your Chain of Custody code and the MSC claim: 'All our [species] comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery. www.msc.org' can be placed anywhere on the menu.

The Chain of Custody code of your restaurant or catering firm and the MSC claim: 'Seafood with this mark comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery. www.msc.org' can be placed anywhere on the menu.

Fresh fish counter use

When promoting MSC certified seafood at your fresh fish counter, each price tag should display:



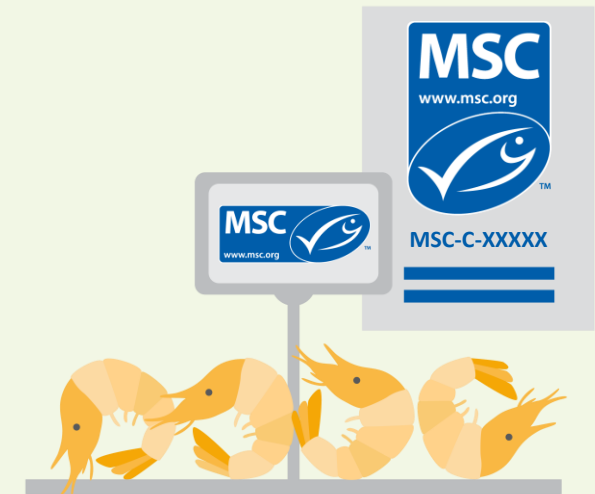
Good to know

You may use a sticker or clip to attach the MSC elements to the price tag.

If there's not enough space...

You can display the MSC ecolabel on the price tag and place a poster or display stand at your fish counter showing all three elements:

- The MSC ecolabel
- The MSC claim
- The Chain of Custody code of your company



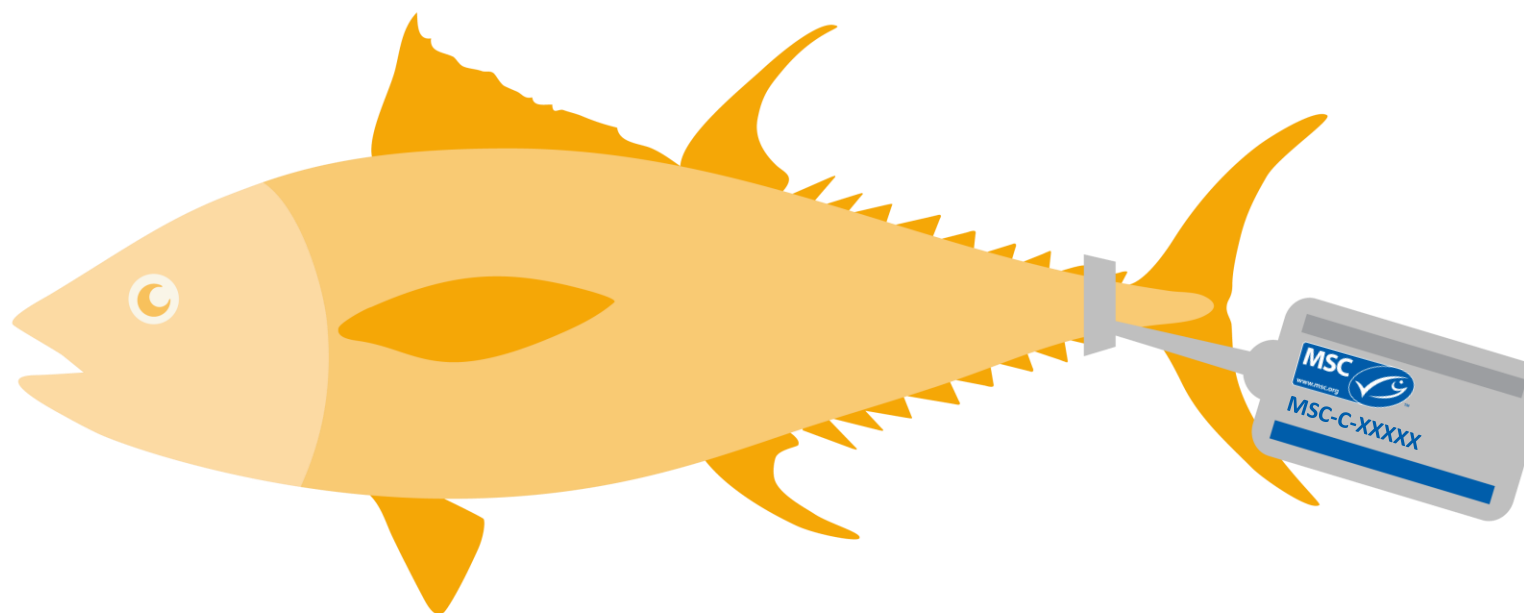
Use of fish tags

If you would like to identify a product as MSC certified by using a fish tag, band or similar mark, specific rules apply:

- The tag or band must be consumer ready and tamper proof, i.e. impossible to remove and for single use only
- The tag or band must be applied to a clearly visible part of the product
- The tag or band must display
 - The species name
 - The MSC
 - The Chain of Custody code of the company attaching the tag or band
 - A version of the MSC claim



[See claim versions here](#)



Note: As the company applying the fish tag, you will also be liable for paying fees to the MSC.



[See Usage costs section for information](#)

Good to know

As a consumer-facing product, a tagged seafood item can be sold by a retailer without the retailer needing to have MSC Chain of Custody certification.

Using the MSC ecolabel to promote certified products

Seafood products may only be promoted if they:

- are covered by Chain of Custody certification
- have previously been approved by the MSC's Licensing Team
- display the MSC ecolabel on the pack shot. Exemption for Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP), fresh fish and caterer's dishes.

TIP: When using imagery of fishing vessels, please note that these are considered part of the certification and need to accurately represent the fishing method of the advertised species.



If your materials refer to **MSC certified products only**, or all seafood sold by your company is **MSC labelled**, you may use the MSC ecolabel without additional explanatory text. It must be accompanied by the Chain of Custody code of your company – if it exists.



If your company sells **MSC certified and non-certified seafood** or publishes materials that refer to both, the MSC ecolabel must be accompanied by supporting text to make it clear to consumers which products are MSC certified.

MSC's Multimedia Library

The MSC is committed to actively engaging consumers and is joining forces with brands and retailers to help promote MSC labelled products in store.



[See MSC's Multimedia Library for more information](#)

Other promotional use

Approved supporting text:

Choose



Ask us about



All our [insert species] is



Proudly serving



When using the MSC ecolabel with supporting text, the text must be adjacent to and clearly associated with the ecolabel.

Good to know

You may develop your own wording to accompany the MSC ecolabel, providing you seek approval from the Licensing Team before publishing.

Promoting Chain of Custody certification

If you would like to promote your organisation's Chain of Custody certification without making any reference to specific products, you must use the MSC ecolabel with supporting text and your Chain of Custody code.

Approved wording:

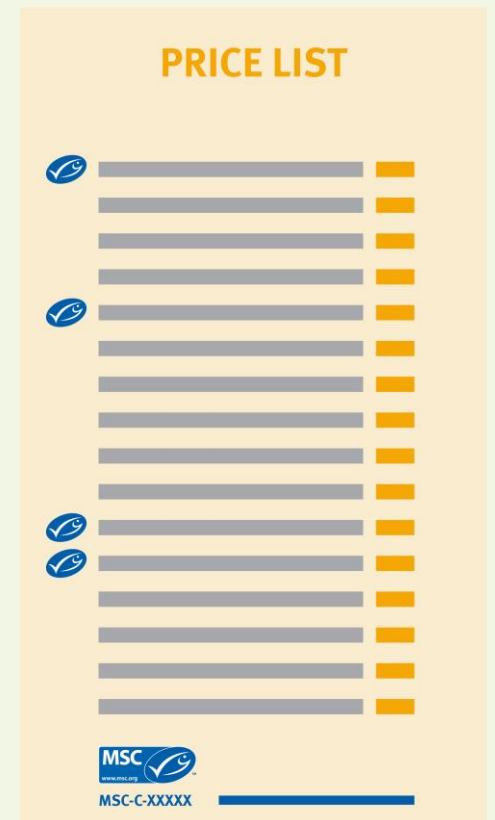
"We are MSC certified. Look for the blue MSC label."

We do allow room for flexibility (e.g. due to space constraints) providing the meaning is not lost.

TIP: Font style and colour are free to choose but if you wish to match the MSC ecolabel font style please use Myriad Pro Semi-bold. To match the MSC blue colour please use PMS286 or CMYK 100 / 60 / 0 / 2.

Price lists and catalogues

On price lists and catalogues you can choose to use the standard MSC ecolabel or the MSC oval, specifically designed for list views. Place the MSC ecolabel or MSC oval next to your products that are MSC certified. As a key, please use the standard MSC ecolabel with explanatory text: **'Seafood with this mark comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery. www.msc.org'** and – if it exists – Chain of Custody code of your company on the price list or catalogue.



Which company is the licensee?

The licence holder is the company that is the owner of the seafood at the time the MSC ecolabel is applied.

The licence holder is responsible for annual fee and royalty payments.



[Click here for more information on fees](#)



Examples of supply chains to illustrate the application of the rule

Processor places product into MSC labelled packaging (under processor or retail own brand) and sells to retailer



The processor is the licensee

Subcontractor places product into MSC labelled packaging on behalf of the processor.



The processor is the licensee.

Processor places product into MSC-labelled packaging (under brand owner own brand) and sells to a brand owner



The processor is the licensee

Processor sells certified but non MSC labelled seafood to retailer who then applies ecolabel on fish counter or processes in-store



The retailer is the licensee

Processor sells certified but non MSC labelled seafood to restaurant that then applies ecolabel on menu



The restaurant is the licensee

Contract caterer operates the canteen of a commercial client and places the ecolabel on menu with the consent of the client



The contract caterer is the licensee

Note: If the processor does not want to be the licence holder, the brand owner needs to seek permission from the MSC's Licensing Team to be the licence holder.

Non-MSC certified seafood ingredients

A product carrying the MSC ecolabel may contain 5% non-certified seafood in the total seafood content.

You can calculate the percentage of non-MSC certified seafood ingredients in a product by using the following formula:

Total net weight of non-MSC-certified seafood ingredients*

Total weight of the combined MSC certified and non-MSC certified seafood ingredients in the finished product*

*excluding water and added salt



[Click here for additional calculation guidelines](#)

If your seafood product contains more than 5% non-MSC certified seafood:

X You cannot show the MSC ecolabel on the packaging at all

X You may not use any text referring to the MSC on the front of the packaging

✓ Instead, please use version 3 of the MSC claim on the back of the packaging. It references the seafood ingredients which are actually certified:
Version 3: The [insert seafood species] in this product comes from a fishery that has been independently certified to the MSC's standard for a well-managed and sustainable fishery. www.msc.org

✓ Don't forget to display the MSC Chain of Custody code next to the claim.

✓ You need to specify in the ingredients section which seafood ingredient is certified. For example 'MSC certified Alaska salmon' or 'Alaska salmon – MSC certified'

Royalties are still applicable on consumer-facing products:



[Click here for more info on royalties](#)

Usage costs

Once you've signed a licence, you are liable to pay annual fees and, depending on the ecolabel application, royalties.

Annual fee

Once you've signed a licence you will pay an annual fee. The level of the annual fee payable is determined by the total net value of MSC labelled seafood sold by your company during a UK financial year (April – March), except for fresh fish counter items where the annual fee is based on net purchases.

The annual fee is due at the beginning of each royalty year, which starts 1st April. For existing licensees, the actual sales from the previous royalty year are used to determine the annual fee. For new licensees, the annual fee will be based on an estimation of sales for the royalty year.

Annual fees applicable to **foodservice** businesses can be found on page 19.

MSC sales / purchases (GBP)	Annual fee (GBP)
£0 – £250,000	£200
£250,001 - £500,000	£500
£500,001 - £1,000,000	£1,000
£1,000,001 - £5,000,000	£2,000
£5,000,001 and greater	£4,000

Royalties

If you are using the MSC ecolabel on consumer facing products, you will also need to pay royalties* starting at 0.5% on the net wholesale value of your MSC labelled seafood sales. For fresh fish counters the royalties will be charged on net purchases.

Details of the royalties applicable to **foodservice** businesses can be found on page 19.

*Within the whole supply chain of a product, royalties are only collected once.

Consumer Facing product: a product that could be available for sale to consumers in its current packaging.

Non-Consumer Facing product: the opposite of consumer facing, e.g. an item that is repacked or unpacked within supply chain

If you are a fishmonger reporting purchases of up to £250,000, you'll just pay an annual fee of £200.

MSC-labelled sales / purchases (GBP) of consumer facing products	Royalty rate
£0 – £10,000,000	0.50%
£10,000,001 – £20,000,000	0.45%
£20,000,001 – £30,000,000	0.40%
£30,000,001 – £40,000,000	0.35%
£40,000,001 and greater	0.30%

ASI accredited conformity assessment bodies, the media, charitable and educational institutions do not have to pay any fees or royalties to use the MSC ecolabel.

B2B companies, that do not label any products but wish to promote their Chain of Custody certification using the MSC ecolabel, for example on their website, only pay an annual fee. The level of annual fee is determined by the total net value of certified seafood sold.

For more information please contact us at ecolabel@msc.org.

Usage Costs for Foodservice

Foodservice businesses with 225 sites or less will pay an annual fee to use the MSC ecolabel on their menu and other marketing materials, plus additional site fees for operators with more than one site.

Annual fee

Once you've signed a licence you will pay an annual fee. The level of the annual fee payable is determined by the total net value of MSC certified seafood purchased by your company during a UK financial year (April – March).

The annual fee is due at the beginning of each royalty year, which starts 1st April. For existing licensees, the actual purchases from the previous royalty year are used to determine the annual fee. For new licensees, the annual fee will be based on an estimation of purchases for the royalty year.

Value of MSC certified seafood purchased (GBP)	Annual fee (GBP)
£0 - £250,000	£160
£250,001 - £500,000	£400
£500,001 - £1,000,000	£800
£1,000,001 - £5,000,000	£1,600
£5,000,001 or greater	£3,200

Eligibility

- These costs apply to small and medium size businesses only. Companies with more than 225 sites will be charged under the standard fee structure and royalties detailed on page 18.
- To check whether these fees apply to your business, please get in touch with the Licensing Team at ecolabel@msc.org.

Royalties

You will qualify for the site fee instead of the MSC royalty fee charge if you have 25 sites or less (Small Businesses) or have between 26-225 sites (Medium Businesses). All non-qualifying foodservice businesses continue to be subject to the standard 0.5% royalty structure. Foodservice businesses with a single site only pay the Annual Fee for each year.

The site fee is due at the beginning of each royalty year, which starts 1st April. The number of sites will be as at 1st April each year.

No of Sites	Royalty Fee per site (GBP)
Small Business Site Fee	
1 site	£0 (included in Annual fee)
2-4 sites	£160 x (total number of sites – 1)
5-9 sites	£150 x (total number of sites – 1)
10-14 sites	£140 x (total number of sites – 1)
15-19 sites	£130 x (total number of sites – 1)
20-25 sites	£120 x (total number of sites – 1)
Medium Business Site Fee	
26-225 sites	£600 x (v total number of sites - 1)

Good to know - calculating the number of chargeable sites

- the no. of foodservice sites will be determined by the number listed on your **Chain of Custody Certificate**.
- This number will determine the applicable site range.
- The amount per site is multiplied by the total no. of sites excluding the first site to calculate the total royalties payable. For example – total foodservice sites - 4 minus first site = 3 chargeable sites x £160.
- If you hold both an ASC and an MSC licence a 25% discount will be applied to both sets of fees.



[Contact us](#)

Please consider the environment before printing

All information correct as of April 2023

All images are copyright of the MSC unless otherwise stated.

Registered Charity number: 1066806. Registered Company number: 3322023

Find out more:

www.msc.org/ecolabel

ecolabel@msc.org

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