

# Ocean Stewardship Fund – Recertification Assistance Fund

## Guidance for Applicants

Applications are welcome for up to a maximum of GBP 30,000 to contribute towards the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) fees for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent recertification of MSC certified fisheries.

### 1) Who can apply?

- Fishery client groups that have had a Public Certification Report (PCR) for their 2<sup>nd</sup> (and subsequent) recertification published i.e. fisheries must have been certified at least three times overall (see Figure 1. RAF Eligibility in the Fishery Certification Timeline).
- Fisheries can apply for the Recertification Assistance Fund (RAF) to support all recertifications subsequent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> recertification as well.
- 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 Lead Organisation will also be the grant holder if the application is successful and will be responsible for apportioning the RAF amount among members of the fishery client group, which is expected to follow the same formula used for sharing CAB costs within the fishery client group.
- MSC only awards RAF funding to eligible fisheries that are certified at the time when the RAF application is reviewed.
- 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.
- 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 the RAF **once** it completes the Correction Action Plan and regains MSC certification.
- 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.

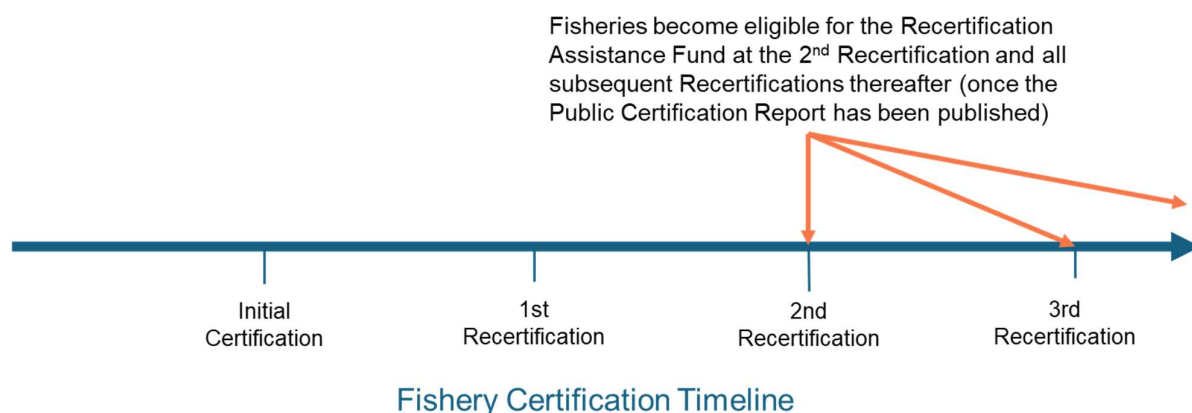


Figure 1. RAF Eligibility in the Fishery Certification Timeline

## 2) What does the RAF cover?

- a) 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 consultant fees that did not directly support the reassessment), or
  - ii) GBP 30,000.

## 3) What should RAF applications include?

- a) 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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), and CAB fee invoice.

## 4) Application process and timelines

- a) Applications to the RAF can be submitted at any time but must be received within 12 months of the publication of the PCR.
- b) From April 2026 to March 2029, the MSC is piloting a rolling review of RAF applications. Grant awards will be issued to eligible applicants continuously throughout the year on a first-come first-served basis. The MSC will review this approach after March 2029.
- c) The MSC does not use its discretion in relation to the value of RAF grants awarded but it does exercise oversight of the RAF.

## 5) Grant distribution process

- a) RAF applicants will be notified of the value of the grant awarded within two months of submission of the application.
- b) The fishery client group is responsible for apportioning the RAF amount among its members.

## 6) Dissemination of personal data

- a) All applications will be held by the MSC on secure servers in the European Union (the EU) or in the UK (on Microsoft Azure Servers (UK) and Amazon Web Services (AWS) Europe (London Region)). Where personal data are transferred outside UK or EEA, appropriate safeguards will be applied in accordance with applicable data protection laws.
- b) The MSC may publicise details of the RAF grant awards in its annual report, on its website, and other relevant publications.
- c) Applicants submitting a RAF application should review and understand the Ocean Stewardship Fund Privacy Policy. This can be accessed on the Ocean Stewardship Fund Grants Portal by clicking on the icon with the applicant's initial at the upper right corner of the Portal.
- d) Applicants have various rights under applicable data protection laws, including the right to obtain a copy of their personal data that MSC holds, and to require correction of inaccurate or incomplete personal data. They also have the right at any time to require that MSC deletes their personal data, subject to applicable legal and regulatory requirements. These rights are described in the Ocean Stewardship Fund Privacy Policy. To exercise these rights, please contact [OSF@msc.org](mailto:OSF@msc.org).

## **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.

## **8) How to apply**

- a) Interested applicants are encouraged to contact their [local MSC representative](#) for guidance and are advised to reach out at the earliest opportunity to ensure all requirements are met in good time before the application deadline.

## **9) Further questions**

- a) Please email any further questions to: [OSF@msc.org](mailto:OSF@msc.org).