



## **GSSI recognizes the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management Certification Program**

*12 July 2016, Rome, Italy*

Today the GSSI Steering Board announced its recognition of the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program for the scope of Fisheries Certification at the 32nd session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries in Rome, Italy.

GSSI's recognition shows that the Alaska RFM Program, with Fisheries Management Standard Version 1.3, effective 1 January 2016, is in alignment with all 143 applicable Essential Components of the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool (version 1.0, 8 October 2015). The Tool is grounded in the FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries and consists of performance areas related to scheme governance, operational management (including chain of custody) and applied wild-capture fisheries audit standards.

Alaska RFM is the first certification scheme to be benchmarked against GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool and to achieve recognition demonstrating alignment. This recognition follows a rigorous benchmark process over the last seven months, which included a 30-day public consultation, before approval by the GSSI Steering Board.

*"The Alaska RFM Certification Program successfully completed the process as the first GSSI-recognized scheme, following the launch of GSSI's Global Benchmark Tool last year October,"* stated GSSI Steering Board co-chair Bill DiMento (VP Quality Assurance, Sustainability and Government Affairs, High Liner Foods). Co-chair Tania Taranovski (Director Sustainable Seafood Programs, New England Aquarium), added *"Today marks an important milestone in enabling informed choice for the procurement of certified seafood."*

*"We commend the Alaska RFM Program for successfully completing the GSSI benchmark process,"* said Audun Lem (Deputy Director Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy and Economics Division, FAO). *"Through a rigorous and transparent process they have proven alignment with the components of the Global Benchmark Tool which are grounded in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and related instruments. The recognition of robust certification programs by GSSI will improve transparency in seafood certification and increase confidence in the seafood market, objectives FAO fully supports."*

*"ASMI appreciates the opportunity to be part of the GSSI process and would like to thank all those involved for many years of dedicated work,"* commented Susan Marks, Sustainability Director for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. *"With over 40 organizations worldwide including NGOs, retailers, foodservice operators and seafood industry supporting GSSI, we are pleased Alaska RFM is recognized as meeting all applicable Essential Components of this Benchmark Tool. Seafood buyers want to make informed choices and GSSI provides a tool for them to identify credible certification programs. We look forward to seeing how this will help resolve some of the challenges faced by those in the seafood industry."*



At the launch of the Global Benchmark Tool in October 2015, retailers, brand manufacturers, traders and food service companies committed to include the outcomes of the GSSI Benchmark Process in their daily operations by recognizing all GSSI recognized certification schemes as acceptable when sourcing certified seafood. *“Sodexo is committed to accept all GSSI recognized schemes when sourcing certified seafood. We welcome Alaska RFM’s recognition today by GSSI and encourage companies across the seafood sector worldwide to join our commitment,”* stated Lesley Sander, Director, Sustainability Metrics and Performance Measures, Sodexo.

[Access the Benchmark Report and learn more about recognition](#)

### **About Alaska RFM**

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) developed the Responsible Fisheries Management program in 2010 to offer seafood buyers and sellers a credible, cost-effective choice in seafood certification. The aim of the program was to deliver a voluntary, internationally accredited, third-party certification of Responsible Fisheries Management based on existing and widely accepted fisheries management models and guidance documents of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. RFM is committed to an open, transparent, collaborative process with a sound governance structure and expert advisory committees.

For more information on the Alaska RFM Program visit <http://www.alaskaseafood.org/rfm-certification/>

### **About GSSI**

GSSI is a global platform and partnership of seafood companies, NGOs, experts, governmental and intergovernmental organizations. The mission of GSSI is to ensure confidence in the supply and promotion of certified seafood as well as to promote improvement in seafood certification schemes.

GSSI’s Global Benchmark Tool, which is based on international reference documents from the FAO, will identify and recognize robust and credible certification schemes and support other schemes to improve. The Benchmark Process is open to all certification schemes that wish to be GSSI-recognized. GSSI will recognize a scheme that has gone through the process and is in alignment with all GSSI Essential Components.

For more information on GSSI Benchmarking, contact the GSSI Secretariat at [secretariat@ourgssi.org](mailto:secretariat@ourgssi.org) or visit the website at [www.ourgssi.org](http://www.ourgssi.org).