



RFM Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

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1. Purpose

To ensure that Assessors carrying out work on behalf of Certification Bodies (CBs) meet the requirements specified.

2. Scope

All personnel engaged to conduct assessments against Program requirements for the award or maintenance of a CB's Certificate of Approval. Programs include:

- a) RFM Fishery Standard
- b) RFM Chain of Custody Standard

3. Method

3.1 Appointment

Each Assessor will be required to meet the Certification Body criteria detailed (as a minimum) in the relevant Form for the appropriate scopes.

Prior to appointment, an Assessor must submit a detailed C.V. to the Certification Body covering professional qualifications, training, and experience in the area of expertise required for assessment of the relevant scopes.

Approval of a new Assessor will be carried out in two stages:

Stage 1

The CB's Manager or suitable individual nominated by CB's' Management will review the Applicant's C.V. against the relevant assessor criteria. This will be followed by an interview.

Stage 2

Upon satisfactory completion of stage one, the Applicant will be required to attend an induction session.

Induction will cover as a minimum:

- a) Overview of CB's organization, quality systems and accreditation requirements;
- b) Specific role and responsibility of Assessors; and
- c) Chain of Custody Methodology and FAO-Based Program for Responsible Fisheries Management.

Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

3.1 Appointment (continued)

Where applicable, this may be followed by a series of shadow assessments to verify Assessor competence. Experienced Assessors may demonstrate competence within a specific Program through interview and/or evidence of having completed an appropriate number of audits against the standard in question.

Assessor competence will be determined through interview and professional experience review; such reviews will be documented and approved.

Satisfactory completion of this process will lead to confirmation of appointment. Where an Assessor has not been used for a period of more than 24 months, they must be treated as a new Assessor.

The Program Manager/Administrator for each Program will maintain a master list of approved Assessors. For individual sub-contracted personnel, a formal contract will be drawn up on appointment and signed by both parties.

Upon appointment, each Assessor will sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Undertaking form.

3.2 Controls

The performance of each Assessor will be systematically reviewed by the following means:

- (a) Assessment reports - continuously reviewed by CB's staff and the Certification Committee; and
- (b) Assessment performance - an on-site assessment performance review will be carried out at least once every two years on each Assessor. A competent individual with appropriate sector knowledge and assessment experience appointed by CB's, will carry out the review. Results of the review will be recorded on an Assessor Performance Review form.

4. Records

The CB Program Manager/Administrator will maintain an Approved Assessor file for each Assessor. Having gained approval, evidence of the following will be held on file:

Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

4.1 General

- a) Contract;
- b) C.V.;
- c) External Training Certificates;
- d) Evidence of training against relevant QPs;
- e) Assessor Criteria Requirement Record;
- f) Date of Approval;
- g) Signed copies of Confidentiality Agreements;
- h) Staff Training Forms, where applicable;
- i) Performance review schedule;
- j) Staff training proposal forms, where applicable;
- k) Assessor performance review;
- l) Addition to audit scope - training & supervised audits;
- m) Record of number of audits conducted annually;
- n) Internal assessment reports; and
- o) On site assessment review (once every two years).

5. Fishery Assessor Qualifications for RFM Fishery Standard

5.1 Formal Qualification

At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) must have been obtained in a discipline related to fishery studies.

5.2 Technical Skills and Qualifications

5.2.2 Lead Assessor Training

- a) Successful completion of a Lead Assessor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that must have a minimum duration of 37 hours and must be externally recognized by the industry. The certificate must specify the course content, duration. Successful completion must be indicated on the certificate. **(Lead Auditor Only)**
- b) Training on FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.
- c) Training on FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries.

5.2.3 Experience - Demonstrate experience in at least one of the following:

Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

- a) **Fish stock assessment** - must have experience in the production or review of stock assessment(s) relevant for the fishery(ies) under assessment;
- b) **Fish Stock Biology/Ecology** - must have five years' experience in research expertise in biology and ecology of the target or similar species;
- c) **Fishing impacts on aquatic ecosystems** - at least five years' experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of, fisheries impacts on aquatic ecosystems, and/or marine conservation biology;
- d) **Fishery management and operations** - must have at least ten years' experience as a practicing fishery/aquatic natural resource manager and/or fishery/aquatic natural resource management analyst. Must also have a good understanding of the management system(s) used in the fishery under assessment;
- e) **Local Knowledge** Current knowledge of the country, language and local fishery context that is sufficient to support meaningful assessment of the fishery.

5.3 Communication Skills

“Working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language. This must include the locally used specialist terminology in this working language.

6. Chain of Custody Qualifications for RFM

6.1 Scope of Expertise

CBs must demonstrate that their staff and contractors have the knowledge and expertise to work within the specified fields of knowledge relevant to the seafood sector being assessed. Each assessor undertaking certification assessments must have the appropriate qualifications, training, experience and skills to perform an evaluation against the Alaska RFM CoC Standard. CBs must demonstrate that appropriate training for each assessor and sub-contracted assessor has been undertaken to understand the Alaska RFM CoC Standard. The importance of demonstrable competency under the scope of evaluation cannot be over emphasized for all staff and assessors.

6.2 Assessor Registration and Training

The CB will hold a detailed and complete skills matrix or files for each assessor undertaking Alaska RFM CoC Standard assessments.

Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

The CB shall maintain up-to-date records demonstrating how each assessor complies with the requirements for qualifications, training and experience required under the Alaska RFM CoC Standard.

These records shall be made available to ASMI and supplied on request.

6.3 Specific Assessor Qualification Requirements

All assessors must be able to report in the English language. Assessors must also be able to communicate effectively with the language spoken at the site of the applicant for assessment. (The use of independent interpreters accompanying the assessor will be acceptable to cover any language barriers).

Formal education to a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) must have been obtained in a discipline related to fish processing or food production studies.

Successful completion of a Lead Assessor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that must have a minimum duration of 37 hours and must be externally recognized by the industry. The certificate must specify the course content and duration. Successful completion must be indicated on the certificate.

Formal auditor training in assessment techniques that would be relevant in the seafood supply chain.

Must have at least two years auditing experience in similar assessment programs.

Assessors must have successfully completed a recognized training course for the Alaska RFM CoC assessment techniques which includes:

- a) General knowledge of the entire Alaska RFM Standards and relevant FAO references;
- b) Specific Details of the RFM CoC Standard and certification Process;
- c) Knowledge and understanding of specific processes to the sectors in the supply chain being assessed; and
- d) Knowledge of relevant legislative requirements or regulations

Procedure 10: Appointment and Control of RFM Assessors

Assessors must have experience and knowledge in the production or review of the type of fish packing, processing, and distribution relevant for the unit of certification, the supply chain and species under assessment.

CB training program for each new assessor to the program shall incorporate, at a minimum:

- a) An assessment of knowledge and skills for each field of evaluation; and
- b) A document signed off upon to prove the satisfactory completion of the training program by a competent trainer within the Certification Body.

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