



RFM

Procedure 3:

Certification Body Approval for Chain of Custody Standard

Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM)

Certification Program

17065

Procedure 3: Procedure for Certification Body Approval for the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard

1.0 Purpose

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the requirements for Certification Bodies seeking to become approved for the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Chain of Custody Program. Its intent is to make clear to the Certification Bodies wishing to apply for approval to assess and certify applicants against the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard, the needed level of commitment to complete the program.

2.0 Certification Body Registration of Intent

The only Certification Bodies eligible to register for initial Alaska RFM Chain of Custody recognition are those that are already accredited to ISO 17065 by an Accreditation Body that is an International Accreditation Forum (IAF) member and Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) signatory to another internationally recognized program.

Eligible Certification Bodies must first register their intent to apply by contacting the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) Executive Director in writing or through email.

3.0 Certification Body Pre-application Review

In anticipation of the application process and before submitting an application, Certification Bodies are advised to carefully review the program information on the ASMI website and its requirements in order to pre-determine whether they can fully meet the minimum competency, resources, and geographic requirements of the program.

The following list of base requirements should assist Certification Bodies when pre-determining their application capabilities:

- a) Seafood and supply chain expertise and competency;
- b) Sufficient numbers of assessors in appropriate locations that have the proper seafood and supply chain competencies to conduct Alaska RFM Chain of Custody assessments;
- c) Sufficient numbers of Certification Body staff with seafood and supply chain competency in appropriately distributed geographical locations in order to properly manage certifications under Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard;
- d) Sufficient numbers of Certification Body staff and resources to ensure the integrity of assessments, to witness the approved assessors, to review and critique assessment reports, and to review corrective action within the time frames required by the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program;

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- e) Management commitment and organizational competence to maintain the integrity of the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program and to sufficiently respond to applicants and ASMI in a timely manner.

4.0 Certification Body Application

Certification Bodies that have determined that they meet the program's base requirements during the pre-application review can apply to ASMI to become an approved Certification Body of the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program.

The application package must include a formal letter of application addressed to the ASMI Sustainability Officer as well as a minimum of the following support documents. All documents must be written in English:

- a) Organizational chart(s) of the applicant's site;
- b) Copy of the Accreditation Certificate under ISO/IEC Guide 65 now ISO 17065 (including scope) for each Certification Body office seeking Alaska RFM Chain of Custody recognition; and
- c) Copy of a valid liability/indemnity insurance certificate with a minimum value of 2 million USD;
- d) Documented procedures that demonstrate how the applicant will ensure impartiality and prevent conflicts of interest among Certification Body assessors and sub-contracted assessors;
- e) List of Certification Body locations, relevant phone numbers, the key contacts that would be involved in the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program, and the roles and competencies of the key personnel, assessors and sub-contractors at each location;
- f) Documented procedures for assessor and subcontracted assessor training, oversight, performance tracking, and calibration;
- g) Documented procedures for the technical review of assessment reports, non-conformities, and corrective action;
- h) Documented procedures for making certification decisions; and
- i) Defined fee range that the Certification Body will charge applicants for certification services to the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard.

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5.0 ASMI Application Review

Final approval of a Certification Body application is up to the discretion of ASMI. The ASMI RFM Team will review only completed Certification Body applications, as described in Section 4.0 Certification Body Application of this document. As needed, the ASMI RFM Team may request further documentation from the Certification Body applicant or request clarification of the already submitted application documents. Failure on the part of the Certification Body applicant to follow up and provide the requested information may result in automatic rejection of the Certification Body's application.

At any point in the process, if the ASMI Sustainability Director determines that the Certification Body does not have the necessary skill or resources to meet the program requirements, the Certification Body's application will be denied, and the Certification Body will receive written notification of the rejection.

6.0 Certification Body Approval and Notification

Once a Certification Body application has been approved, the Certification Body will be sent a Contractual Agreement by ASMI. The applicant Certification Body and ASMI must sign the agreement prior to the implementation of any assessment.

Once the Contractual Agreement has been completed, the approved Certification Body will ensure the requirements outlined in the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody document entitled *Requirements for Certification Bodies to the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management Chain of Custody Program* are met. The following is a summary of these requirements:

- a) Approved assessors must successfully complete an Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard assessor course; The training materials will be supplied by ASMI.
- b) At a minimum, one management person for each approved office involved in the operation of the program must successfully complete an Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard assessor course;
- c) Certification Bodies must successfully complete the required training/shadowing/witnessing assessor CB approval procedure in a timely fashion, prior to allowing an assessor to become approved for assessment and provide ASMI with updates on assessor progress and all final approvals. Assessors cannot assess against the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard until they have met all approval criteria of both Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard and the Certification Body.
- d) Procedures for reporting to ASMI the assessment schedules for each program assessor must be in place.

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- e) Training, competency and calibration documents related to assessors' identification of the Certification Body staff to be involved in the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program must be in place;
- f) Procedures for extending the scope of accreditation to include the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard in their accreditation status within a period of 12 to 18 months must have been initiated; and
- g) A letter from the Certification Body's Accreditation Body confirming that an application was made to extend the scope of recognition to cover the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard must be provided to ASMI.

7.0 Extension to Scope of Recognition

Certification Bodies wishing to be considered for additional Alaska RFM Standards, such as the Fishery Certification section, must register their interest with ASMI. These Certification Bodies are required to follow the same steps for submission of documented evidence specific to the Fishery section of the program, as described in Section 4.0 Certification Body Application of this document.

8.0 Certification Body Compliance

Once a Certification Body applicant is approved, the Certification Body is required to comply with all requirements, policies, procedures that are currently stated in the Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Program, as well as, all future amendments and revisions to the program. ASMI will send the approved members any amendments or revisions made to the program.

Compliance will also include on-going cooperation and access to information, staff, and sites as required by Alaska RFM Chain of Custody Standard Certification Body performance assessment and monitoring.

As a result of assessment and monitoring, Certification Bodies will be advised of any areas needing improvement, and at the discretion of ASMI, unacceptable performance may result in sanctions, such as possible suspension or total withdrawal of approval.