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### **FAO Ecolabeling Guidelines**

The Marine Stewardship Council participated in the development of the FAO Guidelines for the ecolabeling of fish and fishery products from Marine Capture Fisheries (FAO Guidelines) through the stakeholder consultation process.

In March 2005, shortly after the FAO Guidelines were adopted, the MSC issued a news release on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2005, which included this quote from CEO Rupert Howes: "The shape and detail of the FAO's new guidelines recognize the MSC's pioneering work in establishing high quality fishery eco-labeling.

Our standard is already consistent with the core FAO requirements, and our track record of effective systems, commercial success and consumer recognition is strengthened by the setting of this credible international minimum."

The FAO Ecolabeling Guidelines contain 151 specific points for a ecolabel program to address.

The guidelines, which are voluntary, apply to ecolabeling programs focused on certification, and include principles, minimum substantive requirements and criteria, assessment, certification and governance. Within each category are metrics to achieve in order to be in compliance.

The Marine Stewardship Council meets or exceeds all of them, as the following table shows.



## United Nations FAO Guidelines for the EcoLabeling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries

### MSC

### Marine Stewardship Council

#### UN Guideline Principles

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea  
UN Convention relating to Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks  
UN Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries  
World Trade Organization (WTO) rules  
Recognize sovereign rights and comply with all laws and regulations  
  
Voluntary and market driven  
Transparency in the process; balanced and fair participation  
Non-discriminatory: No trade barriers; fair trade  
Provide an opportunity to enter international markets  
Establish clear accountability for standards' organization and certification bodies  
Reliable independent auditing and verification procedures  
Practical, viable, verifiable, clear ecolabelling program  
Based on the best scientific evidence but consider traditional knowledge  
Ensure that labels communicate truthful information

#### UN Guideline General Considerations

Applicable to Developed, Transitioning and Developing Countries  
Government involvement should be encouraged  
Financial and technical assistance afforded to developing and transition countries

#### Minimum Substantive Requirements and Criteria for Ecolabels

Management Systems based on good practices  
Stocks under consideration are not overfished; optimal levels; management response  
Sustainable for present and future generations  
Ecosystem considerations; adverse impacts should be assessed and effectively addressed  
Methodological aspects; formal assessment methodology  
Considerations for small scale, data deficient fisheries  
Objectively, independently verifiable data, regardless of source  
Compliance, surveillance and monitoring  
Precautionary approach for data deficient fisheries  
No overfishing and provisions for restoring stock  
Marine ecosystem impacts assessed and mitigated where necessary

#### Governance

Separate, independent certification body conducts an assessment  
Standards should not distort global markets  
Transparency  
Involvement  
Objections procedure

#### Guidelines for the Setting of Standards of Sustainable Fisheries

Outcome based using qualitative and quantitative indicators  
Standards developed based on FAO, WTO, ISO, ISEAL

#### Functions and organizational structure in standard setting

Standard setting body to review, assess, revise, approve standards  
Technical committee  
Transparency in standard development  
Consultation during standard development  
Standards accessible online  
Spanish, French translations available upon request  
Balanced participation in standard setting  
Extensive consultation period  
Written procedures and record keeping  
Proposed revisions from any interested party  
Validation that any revised standard does not diminish sustainability  
Review and revision of standards and procedures

#### Guidelines for Accreditation

Accreditation of certification bodies backed by an accreditation system  
Accreditation carried out by impartial, independent organization; fully transparent  
Accountability and reporting requirements  
Procedure for considering and resolving complaints  
Confidentiality, maintenance, suspension and withdrawal, and change in status

#### Guidelines for Certification

Certification of a fishery; Certification of chain of custody between harvest and sale  
Both certifications required for fish products indicating sustainable origin to consumers  
Certifier independence and impartiality; non discriminatory; adequate resources  
Certifier accountability and reporting; confidentiality; maintenance of certification  
Certification of a fishery lasts five years with annual audit  
Chain of custody certification lasts three years with annual audit  
Certification can be suspended or withdrawn  
Integrity of certification claim, symbol or logo  
Resolution of complaints, appeals; record keeping

#### Key

**P1:** MSC Principle 1; Health of the Stock  
**P2:** MSC Principle 2; Marine Ecosystem Impact  
**P3:** MSC Principle 3; Management of the fishery  
**AM:** MSC Accreditation Manual - v. 5.1  
**CoC:** MSC Chain of Custody Standard - Traceability Standard - v. 2.1  
**CoCCM:** MSC Chain of Custody Certification Methodology - v.7



**MSC P&C:** *The fishery subject to effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards; and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require the use of the resource to be responsible & sustainable. Stakeholder involvement per MSC FCM § 1.5*



MSC Theory of Change; MSC FCM p. 6; MSC P&C p. 4  
MSC SSP v. 2.0, § 1.0; MSC FCM; MSC FAM  
<http://www.msc.org/about-us/credibility/how-we-meet-best-practice>  
MSC P&C, p. 4  
MSC SSP v. 2.0  
MSC FCM; CoCCM; AM  
MSC P&C, CoC, FCM, CoCCM  
MSC FCM, p.11; FAM (P1, P2), P&C p. 6  
MSC CoC p. 4, 5-6; CoCCM p. 5



MSC P&C, p. 3, 4  
MSC P&C, p. 2  
MSC Developing World Program; other partners



MSC P&C (P3); FAM (P1, P3), RBF  
MSC P&C (P1); FAM (P1, P2)  
MSC P&C, p. 4  
MSC P&C (P2); FAM (P1, P2)  
MSC FAM, RBF  
MSC P&C, p. 3; RBF Section 2; RBF Appendix 1  
MSC P&C; FAM  
MSC FCM; CoCCM; FAM; AM  
MSC RBF Section 2; RBF Appendix 1  
MSC P&C (P1); FAM (P1, P2)  
MSC P&C (P2); FAM (P2)



MSC FCM pp 5-6; CoCCM § 1.0  
MSC P&C  
MSC FCM, CoCCM, P&C  
MSC FCM, CoCCM, P&C  
MSC TAB Directive 23



MSC FAM, § 4.2, 5.0  
MSC SSP v. 2.0



MSC SSP v. 2.0  
MSC FCM; TAB; SSP v. 2.0  
MSC FCM p. 5; CoCCM § 1.0; SSP  
MSC FCM p. 4; SSP v. 2.0  
<http://www.msc.org/documents>  
Micro websites at msc.org  
MSC P&C p. 2; SSP v. 2.0  
MSC P&C p. 2; SSP v. 2.0  
MSC SSP v. 2.0, § 7.0  
MSC FCM pp. 4,7; SSP v. 2.0  
MSC SSP v. 2.0  
MSC FCM pp. 4, 7; SSP v. 2.0



MSC FCM pp.5, 7; CoCCM § 4.2; AM  
MSC FCM p.5; CoCCM § 4.2; AM  
MSC AM  
MSC AM  
MSC AM



MSC FCM, § 5.0; CoCCM § 1.0; CoC p. 4  
MSC CoCCM, § 1.0; FAM p.7; FCM p. 5  
MSC AM § 1.7, 1.8, 1.10, 1.14  
MSC AM § 1.9, 1.12, 1.13  
MSC FCM, § 5.3  
MSC CoCCM, § 5.10  
MSC FCM § 6.9; CoCCM § 5.5; AM § 1.12  
MSC P&C, FCM, CoCCM; AM § 1.17, 1.18, 2.4, 2.5  
MSC FCM; AM § 1.14, 1.9, 2.2, 2.5

**FAM:** MSC Fishery Assessment Methodology - v.2.1  
**FCM:** MSC Fishery Certification Methodology - v.6.1  
**P&C:** MSC Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Fishing - v. 1.1  
**RBF:** Risk Based Framework  
**SSP:** MSC Standard Setting Procedure - v.2  
**TAB:** MSC Technical Advisory Board