



# **Certification Rules for the MSC-Marine Stewardship Council Standard**

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## CONTENTS PAGE

<b>CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1 SCOPE.....	3
1.2 APPLICABILITY .....	3
1.3 INTERVENTION OF ACCREDITATION BODIES.....	4
1.5 DEFINITIONS .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 2 – CONTRACT REVIEW</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 REQUEST .....	4
2.3 CONTRACT .....	5
<b>CHAPTER 3 - SELECTION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE TEAM</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 - INITIAL CERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.1 GENERAL .....	6
4.2 INITIAL AUDIT .....	6
4.4 MANAGEMENT OF INITIAL AUDIT FINDINGS.....	7
4.5 INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW .....	8
<b>CHAPTER 5 - MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1 GENERAL .....	8
5.2 SURVEILLANCE PROCESS.....	8
5.3 MANAGEMENT OF SURVEILLANCE AUDIT FINDINGS .....	9
5.4 ADDITIONAL AND UNANNOUNCED AUDITS.....	10
5.4.1 ADDITIONAL AUDITS.....	10
5.4.2 - UNANNOUNCED AUDITS .....	10
<b>CHAPTER 6 – RECERTIFICATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7 – CERTIFICATES</b> .....	<b>11</b>
7.1 CERTIFICATE ISSUE .....	11
7.2 MANAGEMENT OF CHANGES.....	12
7.2.1 CHANGES REQUESTED BY THE ORGANIZATION.....	12
7.2.2 MODIFICATION OF THE NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS AND/OR REFERENCE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS.....	12
7.3 CERTIFICATES TRANSFER.....	13
7.4 CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION.....	13
7.5 CERTIFICATES RESTORATION .....	14
7.6 REVOCATION OF THE CERTIFICATION .....	14
7.7 CERTIFICATE RENUNCIATION .....	15
7.8 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE .....	15
<b>CHAPTER 8 – USE OF THE MSC / ASC ECOLABEL</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9 – CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS</b> .....	<b>16</b>



## CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL

### 1.1 SCOPE

This document defines the procedures applied by RINA Services (RINA) for certification against the MSC Chain of Custody standard, issued by the Marine Stewardship Council, in its three versions:

- MSC Chain of Custody Standard Default Version
- MSC Chain of Custody Standard: Group Version
- MSC Chain of Custody Standard: Consumer-Facing Organisation Version.

Moreover, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) has elected to use the MSC CoC Standard for all certified seafood products originating from ASC-certified farms. This allows supply chain organisations to handle both MSC certified and ASC certified seafood.

Access to certification is open to all organisations and is not affected by their membership or lack thereof to any association or group.

RINA can legitimately not accept certification requests concerning organisations subjected to, or whose production or activities are subjected, to restrictive, suspensive or interdictory measures by a public authority.

The procedures for requesting, obtaining, maintaining and using, as well as any suspension and revocation of this certification are also defined.

For the certification activity, RINA applies its current tariffs, guaranteeing fairness and uniformity of application.

The list of schemes for which RINA is accredited is available on the website [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org).

### 1.2 APPLICABILITY

RINA activities described in the present Regulation apply to any seafood product destined to various sectors of goods and / or consumption, under the MSC or ASC certification.

Certification is required for any organization taking legal ownership of certified product, wishing to sell it as certified, until the point in the supply chain in which the certified product is packed in consumer ready tamper proof packaging, labelled as certified.

Organizations could still be required to obtain certification if the consumer ready tamper proof packed product is opened later in the supply chain.

The certification issued by RINA refers exclusively to the single organisation, where an organisation means a group, company, subsidiary, factory, corporation or institution, or parts or combinations thereof, whether associated or not, public or private, that has its own functional and administrative structure.

As part of the application of these Regulations, RINA does not provide consulting services to the Organisations.



### 1.3 INTERVENTION OF ACCREDITATION BODIES

The body that guarantees the certifications issued by RINA (Accreditation Body) may request the participation of its observers or in the audits carried out by RINA itself, in order to ascertain that the evaluation procedures adopted by RINA comply with the rules applicable to it, for the certifications subject to accreditation.

The participation of these observers is previously agreed between RINA and the Organisation. If the Organisation does not grant its approval to the aforementioned participation, the validity of the certificate is suspended.

### 1.5 DEFINITIONS

Certificate of conformity: certification issued by an independent third party, which declares that, with reasonable reliability, a given product conforms to one or more regulatory documents and / or technical specifications.

Certified product: any product covered by MSC or ASC certification, originated by sources certified against the MSC Fisheries standard or the ASC standard.

Regulatory document: the document that specifies the requirements to be met by a product, process or service; the document may be in various forms such as: rule, technical standard, law of the State, Ministerial circular, code of good practice, etc.

Technical document: It constitutes the voluntary normative reference (voluntary technical disciplinary) elaborated with the consent of all the interested parties and on procedures adapted to the characteristics of the object of the certification and to the expectations of the market. As a rule, they are drawn up by competent bodies and submitted for approval to the Certification Body which evaluates them, in consultation with the interested parties.

Organisation: company, operator, factory, firm, body or association, legally recognised or not, public or private, which has its own functions and administration.

Applicant: Organisation that requires RINA to issue the Certificate of Conformity.

RINA: RINA Services S.p.A.

Traceability of supply chain: Ability to reconstruct the history and to follow the use of a product through documented identifications (regarding material flows and supply chain operators).

Finding: any deviation of the Organization's system from the Standard requirements

For any other term used in these Regulations, the definitions of the Standards ISO 9000, UNI CEI EN ISO / IEC 17000 and MSC Certification Requirements are applied, in the current editions.

## CHAPTER 2 – CONTRACT REVIEW

### 2.1 REQUEST

Organisations wishing to obtain a Certificate of Conformity against one version of the MSC CoC Standard for one or more specific product and / or site must provide RINA with the essential data of their Organisation and related activities, and the location of the Site(s) by sending the appropriate form "Informative Questionnaire" compiled in its entirety, available on the website [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org) on the basis of which an economic offer is formulated by RINA.



In particular, the Organisation must provide to RINA:

- a description of the product/s subject to certification, detailing the scientific name of the species involved;
- a description of the certified raw material and the list of certified suppliers;
- a description of activities related to the MSC and / or ASC product(s);
- a list of the sites to be included in the certification process, detailing the activity performed at each site, their location, the species and certified product(s) handled;
- number of sites subject to certification and the related activities carried out with respect to the certified product(s);
- number, type and geographical location of any sites of other organisations involved in the certified product handling, detailing the activity performed at each site, the species and certified product handled.

This information is requested in order to define the relevant MSC CoC Standard variant and option applicable, and to prepare an appropriate economic offer.

During the initial audit or recertification process, the correctness of the information provided by the Organisation will be verified through an up to date informative questionnaire.

## **2.3 CONTRACT**

The Organisations, in case of acceptance of the economic offer, formalize the certification request by sending to RINA the offer signed, which contractually formalize the relationship between RINA and the Organisation and the applicability of these Regulations.

The contract stipulated between RINA and the Organisation includes the services detailed in the offer, generally:

- initial audit, independent technical review and decision making activities, certificate issuance, MSC and/or ASC database update;
- annual surveillance audit, independent technical review and decision making activities, MSC and/or ASC database update;
- recertification audit, independent technical review and decision making activities, certificate reissuance, MSC and/or ASC database update;
- eventual unannounced audit and relevant independent technical review and decision making activities, certificate reissuance, MSC and/or ASC database update;
- any additional services specified in the offer.

The MSC CoC Standard version against which the company is assessed for is clearly detailed in the Offer.

In case of differences among data initially provided and data verified at any later stage of the certification process, including any information leading to modification to the defined MSC CoC Standard version against which the company is seeking certification, may require quotations, timelines and allocated resources to be reconsidered by RINA in order to comply with the relevant requirements set by the Marine Stewardship Council, the relevant Accreditation Body or RINA reference documentation.

Specific communication on the required modifications will be given to the customer, in case the Organisation does not accept them it could be required to correspond RINA with the fees previously agreed for the audit, provide adequate justification and accept the possible interruption of the certification process. In the absence of a response from the Organisation to the specific communication, necessary revisions are tacitly accepted as based on data verified by the audit team and transparently presented and discussed during the final audit meeting.



## **CHAPTER 3 - SELECTION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE TEAM**

RINA selects the team that performs the audit activities and the personnel who will carry out the independent technical review/certification decision, based on the knowledge, skills and competences necessary, taking into account the criteria/requirements of the agreed MSC CoC standard version and each additional element indicated by the standard owner or by the accreditation body.

The personnel appointed for the audit and the independent technical review/certification decision is independent of all aspects concerning the verification and has not participated in any way to the design of any part of it, in accordance with the procedures approved by RINA Committee for the Safeguarding of Impartiality.

Personnel performing independent technical review/certification decision is also appointed to be independent from the specific process, in order to ensure an independent evaluation and ensure a stronger control on processes.

RINA communicates to the Organisation the name of the technical staff responsible for carrying out the audit activities, the Organisation can object to the appointment of such technicians, justifying the reasons.

## **CHAPTER 4 - INITIAL CERTIFICATION**

### **4.1 GENERAL**

To obtain certification from RINA, the product/s and the related management system, as applicable, must meet initially and in time, the requirements of the Marine Stewardship Council normative document and technical specification of reference and those indicated to in the following points of this Chapter, in addition to any additional elements provided by the Accreditation Body.

Briefly, the certification process consists in an audit, followed by an independent technical review/certification decision which leads to the certificate issuance. Certificates and reports are then uploaded in the MSC and/or ASC database, and the relevant information related to the Organization and the audit are updated in the MSC and/or ASC database.

### **4.2 INITIAL AUDIT**

The initial certification audit consist of assessing the Organization compliance to the applicable MSC CoC standard version requirements, and the effective implementation of the management system involving the certified product.

The audit is performed at the Organisation's site, and/or the production site(s) involved and/or any other site or subcontractor involved, as per the requirement of the applicable MSC CoC standard version.

The above checks are carried out in accordance with the relevant MSC CoC standard version applicable, as well as any additional element required by the Accreditation Body and the Marine Stewardship Council.

The Organisation must adopt, in the site/s of production and, where applicable, at any other sites/subcontractor involved, a system which ensure compliance with the normative documents, the relevant MSC CoC standard version, and the Marine Stewardship Council technical specifications of reference.



During the initial audit the Organisation must demonstrate, with significant evidences, that the system implemented to comply with the applicable MSC CoC standard version requirements is operative and that the Organization effectively applies the system and related documented procedures for the products subject to certification.

The audit is based on a process of sampling the available information, verifying the processes / aspects defined by the organisation and the requirements of the reference MSC CoC standard version. The absence of findings does not guarantee the total absence of anomalies in the areas verified and / or in other areas.

Audit results and eventual deviation of the Organization's system from the MSC CoC standard requirements (findings) are discussed at the closing meeting with the Organisation.

#### **4.4 MANAGEMENT OF INITIAL AUDIT FINDINGS**

Any deviation from the MSC CoC standard requirements found during the audit is classified depending on the severity of the disclosure from the requirement and detailed in the specific section of the audit report, which is signed at the audit closing meeting time by the Organization's responsible.

The non-conformities resulting from the assessment are classified as follows:

Minor non-conformity: the Organization does not comply with the MSC CoC Standard, but those issues do not jeopardize the integrity of the chain of custody.

Major non-conformity: where the integrity of the CoC Standard is potentially jeopardised, or in cases where the organisation has not complied with specific requirements on forced and child labour, and therefore certification cannot be granted.

Suspension: selling non-certified product as certified is a cause for suspension.

For initial certification the client may be recommended for certification once an action plan to implement suitable corrective action to resolve the minor non-conformities has been accepted by RINA Audit Team.

Minor non-conformities raised during initial audits shall be satisfactorily corrected no later than the next scheduled audit. If not corrected within this timeframe, the non-conformity shall be re-graded as a major non-conformity, and 30 days is given to correct it.

Major non-conformities raised during initial audits shall be corrected or downgraded before certification can be granted: an appropriate action plan to implement suitable corrective action to resolve the major non-conformities shall be accepted by RINA Audit Team, together with a root cause analysis identifying the cause of the non-conformity occurrence. Positive implementation of the corrective action shall be verified by the RINA Audit Team, in order to confirm the major non-conformity closure or downgrading.

If within 90 days of the date of the initial audit major non-conformities cannot be closed or downgraded, a full re-audit shall be required.

In general, the Organisation must provide RINA, within the deadlines indicated on the dedicated section of the audit report, and in line with the requirement defined by the Marine Stewardship Council, the required management input for any finding, as well as the expected timelines and root cause analysis, depending on the grading of the finding.

The acceptance of these proposals and of the timelines required for implementation are communicated in writing by RINA to the Organisation, defining also if an additional audit is required for the purpose of assessing the effective implementation of the action proposed to resolve the non-conformity.



Once the above periods have elapsed without a positive conclusion of the evaluation, RINA can consider the certification file closed, charging the time and expenses incurred up to that time without issuing a certificate or suspending the current one. In such cases the organization that wishes to continue with the RINA certification must present a new request and repeat the certification process.

All costs relating to any additional audits resulting from deficiencies to comply with the relevant MSC CoC Standard version are to be considered at the Organization's expenses.

#### **4.5 INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL REVIEW**

In case of positive outcome of the verification, the complete audit documentation is subject to an independent technical verification/certification decision within 30 working days from the audit closure or from the official closure of the eventual non-conformities.

The technician in charge of carrying out this final check on the certification process documentation may raise further requests for clarification, eventually modify the classification of one or more finding or eventually rise findings which may have not been identified by the team and shall be addressed by the Organization, according to the modalities and timeframe detailed in CHAPTER 4.4, before the certification process continues.

The certificate of conformity is issued by RINA following the positive outcome of the independent technical review/certification decision process. Confirmation about the consequent issue of the certificate is sent in writing to the Organisation.

Once payments are registered, the certificates become available in the RINA Clients member area: <https://clients.rina.org/#/homepage>.

Certificates, together with the relative audit report and relevant attachments, are then uploaded on the MSC and / or ASC database, and the proper section of the same are update accordingly.

For details on the management and validity of the certificates of conformity issued by RINA, see the following CHAPTER 7.

In the event of any decision not to issue the certificate, RINA shall notify the organisation in writing, detailing the relevant reasons.

The Organisation is required to pay for the activities performed by RINA, as defined and detailed in the contract, even in the event of a negative outcome of the certification process.

### **CHAPTER 5 - MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION**

#### **5.1 GENERAL**

Certificates are valid for three years, depending on the conformity of the Organization to the relevant MSC CoC Standard version. Any change occurred in the Organization which may impact the certificates validity shall be communicated to RINA for evaluation of the needed actions.

Moreover, any changes to the Organization name, address, scope, suppliers, subcontractors, product certified to another certification scheme (MSC or ASC), or contact details, shall be notified to RINA according to the MSC CoC Standard.

#### **5.2 SURVEILLANCE PROCESS**

During the three years certificate validity periodical surveillance audits are required to confirm continuous conformity of the Organization to the relevant MSC CoC Standard version.





The surveillance frequency is defined after each certification, surveillance and re-certification audit.

In general annual surveillance audits are required for all Organizations, but a 18 months surveillance frequency can be applied only for Organization certified against the MSC CoC Standard, Default version, if:

- 100% certified seafood is handled, or
- only trading activities are performed, or
- only certified seafood packed in sealed containers is handled, with no repacking or processing.

Additional audits and unannounced audit may be performed as required by the normative document and detailed in the offer and later in the present rules.

Remote surveillance audits can be performed only on Organization that performs only trading activities and are located in a country with a Transparency International CPI score of 41 or above.

Surveillance audits shall be carried out according to the duration defined in the contractual document., if no change is occurred since the contract stipulation regarding audit duration, following the same processes defined for initial certification (please refer to CHAPTER 3 and CHAPTER 4): Team selection, Audit, Independent technical revision/certification decision.

The certificate will not be reissued at surveillance audits, if no relevant change has occurred, such as changes in the Organization name, address, scope, subcontractors, products certified to another certification scheme (MSC or ASC).

The date by which the audit must be carried out is reported on the three-year audits program drafted at the end of the initial certification and recertification process.

The dates of execution of the surveillance audits are agreed with the Organisation with adequate advance, can be set with an anticipation or delay of a 90 days on the date defined in the three-year audit program, and are officially confirmed by a written communication.

Any deviations of the surveillance audit execution beyond the above detailed timeframes may lead to suspension of the certificate and subsequent withdrawal.

### **5.3 MANAGEMENT OF SURVEILLANCE AUDIT FINDINGS**

For the classification of findings refer to CHAPTER 4.4.

For Minor non-conformities raised during surveillance or recertification audits shall submit a corrective action plan defining suitable timelines for implementation. Minor non-conformities shall be satisfactorily corrected no later than the next scheduled audit, otherwise the non-conformity shall be re-graded as a major non-conformity, and 30 days is given to correct it.

Major non-conformities raised during surveillance or recertification audits shall be corrected or downgraded within 30 days of detection: an appropriate action plan to implement suitable corrective action to resolve the major non-conformities shall be accepted by RINA Audit Team, together with a root cause analysis identifying the cause of the non-conformity occurrence. Positive implementation of the corrective action shall be verified by the RINA Audit Team, in order to confirm the major non-conformity closure or downgrading.

If the major non-conformities are not addressed within the 30-day maximum timeframe, suspension or withdrawal of the certificate and a full re-audit may be initiated.

Major non-conformities relating to specific requirements on forced and child labour raised during surveillance or recertification shall be closed within 30 days of detection.



i. Major non-conformities raised in relation with 9.2.8.c cannot be downgraded.

In general, the Organisation must provide RINA, within the deadlines indicated on the dedicated section of the audit report, and in line with the requirement defined by the Marine Stewardship Council, the required management input for any finding, as well as the expected timelines and root cause analysis, depending on the grading of the finding.

## **5.4 ADDITIONAL AND UNANNOUNCED AUDITS**

### **5.4.1 ADDITIONAL AUDITS**

RINA also reserves the right to carry out additional audits and/or checks, compared to those foreseen by the three-year program, announced or not announced, at the Organisation:

- to assess corrective actions applied to resolve findings detected during a scheduled audit;
- if RINA receives complaints or reports, deemed to be particularly significant, concerning the compliance of the certified product with the requirements of the reference standard/s and the present Regulations;
- in relation to significant changes occurred in the Organisation;
- in certain case of certification suspension in order to reinstate the certification validity.

Also, in case of additional audit a qualified team will be selected for the audit execution following the normative regulation and communicated to the Organization.

In case of refusal, without valid reasons, by the Organisation, RINA can start the process of suspension/withdrawal of certification.

If the complaints and reports are considered justified by RINA, the cost of carrying out the additional audit is borne by the Organisation.

For the classification and management of findings and timeframes, refer to CHAPTER 5.3

### **5.4.2 - UNANNOUNCED AUDITS**

The Marine Stewardship Council requires unannounced audits to be performed on a sample of certified organizations, prioritizing clients that have been identified as high risk for product substitution by the MSC, the MSC's accreditation body, or through receipt of a complaint, otherwise RINA own risk assessment is applied to select Organizations for unannounced audits.

RINA may inform the Organization of a 6-month surveillance window in which the audit can occur but will not provide notice of the actual date. Entry must be granted to the RINA Audit Team within 30 minutes of their arrival. Entry cannot be refused on the basis of a responsible person not being available, or another audit being conducted on the same day.

Unannounced audits are performed without significant advance warning to the certified Organization, by a qualified team selected in accordance to the normative regulation.

RINA will inform the Organization and the Standard Owner with a maximum of two working days advance. The Organization must allow the team to perform the audit, if access at the Organization's site/s is not granted, suspension process may be initiated and the audit price would be charged to the Organization.

For the classification and management of findings and timeframes, refer to CHAPTER 5.3



## **CHAPTER 6 – RECERTIFICATION**

On the occasion of the conclusion of the three year certificate validity period the Organisation must contact RINA about six months before the certificate expiration date, submitting an updated Informative Questionnaire, in order to allow the correct recertification process to be initiated, following the same process detailed in CHAPTER 2, CHAPTER 3 and CHAPTER 4 of the present rules, in brief: Contract review, Team selection, Audit, Independent technical revision/certification decision and Certificate issue.

The date of execution of the recertification audit, agreed with the Organisation with adequate advance, is officially confirmed by a written communication.

The recertification process must necessarily end, with a positive result, before the expiry date indicated on the certificate.

Consequently, the recertification audit must be concluded in good time in order to allow RINA to approve the recertification proposal and to reissue the certificate by the aforementioned date (at least one month before the expiry date indicated on the certificate/or according to the indications of the normative document and/or applicable technical reference specification).

If an organisation does not comply with the aforementioned deadlines and therefore does not obtain the re-issuance of the certificate within the deadline, the certification must be considered expired starting from the day following the expiry date indicated on the certificate (unless otherwise indicated in the regulatory document and/or applicable technical reference specification).

RINA may extend a client's certificate by up to 90 days in order to accommodate audit scheduling by placing a request in the scheme's database at least 10 days prior to the expiry date, stating the reasons for extension and the planned audit date.

The extension of a certificate shall not have an impact on the overall validity duration of a certificate (i.e. the new certificate shall be issued on the original certificate expiration date, not on the extended expiration date).

Following the positive outcome of the recertification process, the audit team presents to RINA the recertification proposal of the Organisation for the purpose of re-issuing the certificate of conformity.

For the classification and management of findings and timeframes, refer to CHAPTER 5.3

## **CHAPTER 7 – CERTIFICATES**

### **7.1 CERTIFICATE ISSUE**

The certificate of conformity issued by RINA has a three years validity according to the normative document, normally starting from the date of approval of the initial certification proposal or recertification by RINA.

From the moment the certificate is issued by RINA, the original copy of the certificate and the related three-year audit program, if the payment conditions are met, will be made available to the Organisation on the "Member Area" of the RINA website ([www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org)). The Organisation, therefore, can access and download the document, directly from this area of the RINA site.



In case of inability to access the Internet, the Organisation may request a copy of the certificate from the RINA Office of relevance.

Certificates and audit documentation will be uploaded in the MSC and / or ASC databases, as defined by the normative document ruling the standard.

## **7.2 MANAGEMENT OF CHANGES**

### **7.2.1 CHANGES REQUESTED BY THE ORGANIZATION**

The Organisation in possession of the RINA certification can request a modification or extension of the same certification by contacting the relevant RINA office, in order for the extension/modification process to be initiated.

Changes to a certificate may occur due to:

- New sites being added.
- New subcontractors being used.
- Scope extension for a new species.
- Scope extension for a new activity.
- Purchasing certified products from a new supplier.
- Purchasing from a new under-assessment fishery.
- Scope extension to handle products certified against recognised certification schemes that share the CoC Standard

RINA reserves the right to examine the requests on a case-by-case basis and to decide the evaluation procedures for the issue of a new certification, in compliance with the "GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and to the regulatory document and/or applicable technical reference specification.

The Organisation must promptly notify RINA of any changes in aspects that may affect the conformity of the product, the process and/or the ability of the applicable Standard to continue to comply with the requirements of the applicable regulatory document and/or technical specification used for certification.

These provisions concern, for example, relative variations:

- to the legal, commercial, Organisational or property status;
- Organisation and management (e.g. key managers or technical personnel, decision-making process);
- contact addresses and sites;
- the scope of activities covered by the certified management system;
- significant changes to the system, processes, product, species.

RINA reserves the right to carry out additional audits at the Organisation if the changes communicated are deemed to be particularly significant for the purposes of evaluation the conformity of the Organization to the applicable requirements of the reference standard and this regulation or to revise the economic conditions for any modification of the contract.

### **7.2.2 MODIFICATION OF THE NORMATIVE DOCUMENTS AND/OR REFERENCE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

RINA will notify the Organisation of any changes made to the normative documents and/or technical specifications by the Marine Stewardship Council and its own regulations that are applicable to the products subject of the certification, making the Organization aware of the entrance into force of said documents.



### 7.3 CERTIFICATES TRANSFER

The MSC will only recognise 1 certificate for the stated scope (combination of fishery and CoC activity) for the client at any one time. The certificate code that is assigned to the client via the MSC or ASC database will remain the same regardless of changing Conformity Assessment Body.

If an Organisation with certification currently in force issued by another Conformity Assessment Body accredited by the MSC Accreditation Body, applies for certification, RINA carries out a check that includes:

- document analysis of the Organization;
- review of the reports of previous audits (including test reports on the product subject to certification, where applicable) conducted by the accredited body that issued the previous certification, if available;
- assessment audit at the Organisation, whose extent of extension depends on the status of conformity and validity of the certification previously issued.

The Organisation must also communicate to RINA the reasons for the request for transfer of the certification.

The contract between RINA and the applicant is managed in the same way as described in paragraph 2.2, depending on the extent of the verification activity.

Upon completion with a favourable outcome of the above-mentioned activity, and after validation by the appropriate person in charge of the independent technical review, certification can be issued.

In general, the planning already established by the Certification Body that issued the previous certification is also maintained for the maintenance and recertification audits.

### 7.4 CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION

The validity of the certification issued may be suspended in accordance with the "GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and in the following specific cases:

- a) A wrong or misleading use or advertisement of the certification by the company;
- b) The company refuses or hinders the audit activities;
- c) Delay in the audit schedule due to unforeseen circumstances;
- d) The company fails to meet the financial obligations defined by the contract with RINA;
- e) The auditor detects major nonconformities which the Organization cannot resolve (e.g. stock status);
- f) The company fails to carry out corrective action for any nonconformity within the defined timeframes;
- g) Demonstrable breakdown in the Chain of Custody caused by the Organization's actions or inactions;
- h) The Organization sold products as certified which are shown not to be certified;
- i) MSC I has withdrawn a certificate holder's licence or other agreement to use the trademarks, and following that, the certificate holder does not comply with MSC I instruction within stated timeframes;
- j) The Organization failed to inform the RINA within 2 days of not meeting the MSC Third-Party Labour Audit Requirements

In the event of a suspension of certification RINA will update the certification status on the MSC and / or ASC database.

If the cause of the suspension is determined to be intentional and/or systematic, RINA will set the period of suspension at a minimum of 6 months, and will monitor the activities of the suspended client.



An on-site audit will be performed to confirm that corrective action has been effective, at a later date perform a second on-site unannounced audit.

The costs of the additional audit shall be covered by the Organization.

If the cause for suspension is j) above, the the period of suspension will be set to a minimum of 3 months or until the Organization is in compliance with the specific requirements on forced and child labour in the CoC Standard, whichever period is longer

When the CoC Certificate is suspended the Organization shall:

- Not to sell any products as certified from the date of suspension;
- Advise all sites of the suspension (if relevant);
- Advise existing and potential customers in writing of the suspension within 4 days of suspension notification from RINA (Final consumers purchasing certified products do not need to be notified);
- Keep records of advice to customers;
- Not make any claims of certification from the day of suspension.

If the Organization had its certificate suspended for the second time within the validity of the certificate for having sold products as certified which are shown not to be certified RINA will withdraw the certificate, and the Organization may not re-apply for CoC certification for 2 years from the date of certificate withdrawal.

In order to have the suspension lifted, the Organization shall provide a documented corrective action plan for addressing the cause of suspension, demmed by RINA able to address the cause(s) for suspension, within 30 days from the date of suspension. The corrective action plan shall include a binding timeframe. If the Organization does not submit an acceptable corrective action plan within 30 days, RINA will withdraw the certificate.

## **7.5 CERTIFICATES RESTORATION**

The restoration of the certification is subject to the verification of the elimination of the deficiencies that had caused the suspension itself through an in-depth audit that verifies the compliance of the Product and the applicable Standard to all the requirements of the applicable regulatory document and/or technical specification.

The certificates will be restored on the MSC and /or ASC

The Organisation is notified in writing by registered letter to the Organisation and made publicly known by RINA through the website [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org) as provided for in point 7.1.

## **7.6 REVOCATION OF THE CERTIFICATION**

The revocation of the Certificate of Conformity can be decided in accordance with the provisions of the "GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL" and in the following specific cases:

- a) when circumstances occur, such as those mentioned in 7.4 for suspension, which are considered to be particularly serious;
- b) upon formal request of the Organisation (see point 7.6), including the case in which the Organisation itself does not want or cannot comply with the new provisions issued by RINA (see point 7.2.2);
- c) if the Organisation has misused the RINA Certificate of Conformity and has not subsequently taken the measures requested by RINA;



- d) if the Organisation does not accept the new economic conditions established by RINA for any modification of the contract;
- e) for any other serious reason, in the opinion of RINA;
- f) in any other circumstances that may be provided for by the normative documents and/or technical specifications, as well as any additional elements required by the Accreditation Body.

The revocation of the Certificate of Conformity is notified in writing to the Organisation, and is made public by RINA in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 7.1, as well as registered on the MSC and or ASC databases.

The revocation notification also includes, where appropriate, the actions that the Organisation must undertake for products already in stock or on the market.

The Organisation that after the revocation intends to access certification again, must submit a new application following the whole process.

In the event of revocation, the Organisation must comply with any other measures established by RINA.

## **7.7 CERTIFICATE RENUNCIATION**

The Organisation may submit to RINA, a request to renounce certification for some or all the products for which it had obtained certification due to the termination of their production or for other reasons, including the case in which the Organisation does not want or cannot adapt to the new instructions given by RINA.

RINA, upon receiving this communication, starts the process to make the certificate status invalid.

In the case of partial renunciation, RINA will update the issued certification excluding the products subject to the same renunciation, prescribing, if necessary, also any actions that the Organisation must undertake for the products already manufactured.

In case of renunciation extended to all the products covered by certification, the contents of the previous paragraph apply.

In general, within one month from the date of the communication, RINA updates the validity status of the certificate.

## **7.8 APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Company has the right to appeal the certification decision made by RINA or submit a complaint following instruction published on RINA website [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org).

## **CHAPTER 8 – USE OF THE MSC / ASC ECOLABEL**

the MSC and/or ASC label, or other trademarks can be used by Organization only once a licence agreement has been signed with MSCl, and providing the Organization complies with the licence agreement.

Please refer to MSCl ([ecolabel@msc.org](mailto:ecolabel@msc.org)) for all enquiries regarding use of the label or trademarks.



## **CHAPTER 9 – CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS**

For anything not provided for in this document, refer to the "GENERAL CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF SYSTEMS, PRODUCTS AND PERSONNEL", available on the website [www.rina.org](http://www.rina.org).





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Technical Rules