

MEL Japan Standard for Chain of Custody Certification

(Draft)

Introduction

This standard is established to ensure that all the seafood products with Marine Ecolabel Japan Council (MEL-J Council) logo is produced from MEL certified fisheries. All the entities involved in the supply chain, producers, processors, distributors, sellers and caterers and restaurants, shall have Chain of Custody (CoC) systems that comply with the requirements stipulated in this standards.

MEL-J Council shall establish requirements based following 4 principles.

1. Eligibility criteria for the applicant
2. Management system requirements
3. Requirements for segregation and traceability
4. Requirements for logo management

Each principle contains further requirements that the applicants must comply. The applicants are certified when he/she complies with all the requirements stipulated in this standard.

Normative references

- Fisheries and Aquaculture Standard for Marine Eco-Label Japan certification
- Marine Eco-Label Japan logo use maintenance and user policy
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems — Requirements
- ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- ISO/IEC 17067:2014 Conformity assessment — Fundamentals of product certification and guidelines for product certification schemes
- FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries
- FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries (Revision 1)
- FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries
- GSSI Global Benchmark Tool (Version 1)

Terms and Definitions:

- **All the stages:** All the stages within the Applicant's site that handles the certified seafood product including supplying, storing, processing, packaging, labelling, merchandising, and delivery stages directly related to the certified fishery product
- **All the involved parties:** All the parties or individuals that directly handles the certified seafood product
- **Applicant:** An operator or multi-site organisation in the supply chain that has applied to meet the MEL CoC standard through the formal application process, or, an operator or multi-site organisation that has been certified
- **Certified fishery:** A fishery that has been independently certified as meeting the MEL Fisheries Management Standard or the MEL Aquaculture Management Standard
- **Certified operator:** An operator that has been independently certified as meeting the requirements stipulated by MEL Fisheries/ Aquaculture Management Standard and/or MEL CoC Standard
- **Certified seafood product:** A product produced by the certified fisheries or a processed product that is produced from the certified seafood product
- **Chain of custody (CoC):** The set of measures which designated to guarantee that the seafood product put on the market and bearing the ecolabel logo is really a product of designated origin and coming from the certified fisheries concerned (FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Inland Capture Fisheries). In this standard, CoC is used as an acronym for Chain of Custody.
- **CoC standard:** The list of requirements that the Applicant shall meet to become certified to the MEL CoC standards and/or use the certified claim.
- **Multi-site Applicant:** The applicant with multiple single site that handles the certified seafood product. There are three different types of multi-site applicants (for details see Appendix 2):
 1. **Type A Multi-site applicant:** A multi-site applicant with unified management system
 2. **Type B Multi-site applicant:** A multi-site applicant with subcontractors and with different management system
 3. **Type C Multi-site applicant:** A multi-site applicant who sell or serve to the final consumer with multiple sites
- **Non-certified seafood product:** All products (including fishery products) supplied by fisheries other than certified fisheries
- **Non-compliant certified seafood product:** A product with MEL ecolabel logo but not in compliance with the requirements of MEL Fisheries/ Aquaculture Management Standard or is not distributed through an operator that does not comply with MEL CoC standard
- **Segregation:** Separation of certified seafood product and other non-certified seafood product(s)
- **On site:** Any place that handles the certified seafood product

- **Packaging/ repackaging:** Process of changing the package of the certified seafood without any modification of the product
- **Processing:** Process of modification of the certified seafood product
- **Single site applicant:** The applicant with one single site that handles the certified seafood product
- **Site:** A place that is defined by one mailing address
- **Subcontractor:** An operator that is contracted to carry out work (processing and packaging) for the Applicant. Those parties that only distribute, store, or sell without breaking the seal of the packaged seafood product are not included in the scope of certification. The Applicant who has subcontractors are categorised as a Multisite Applicant B.
- **Supply Chain:** The whole process from the producer to the final consumer which the certified seafood product is handled, including processor(s), distributor(s), wholesaler or restaurant
- **Traceability:** A mechanism to track and to refer the records related to the certified seafood products

1. Eligibility criteria for an applicant

- 1.1. The Applicant shall observe the national law pertaining to his/her business.
- 1.2. The Applicant shall ensure the supplier that he/she buys the certified seafood from is independently certified as meeting the requirements stipulated by MEL Fisheries/ Aquaculture Management Standard and/or MEL CoC Standard.
- 1.3. The Multi-site applicant shall comply with additional requirements stipulated in Appendix 2.

2. Management system requirements

2.1. Establishment of a management system

- 2.1.1. The Applicant shall install at least one manager responsible for segregation, traceability, and logo management.
- 2.1.2. The Applicant shall prepare in writing the procedures pertaining to his/her CoC. The written document shall include the following:
 - Organizational structure, responsibility, and authority of the CoC.
 - Procedures to implement the process specified in 3. and 4. and a flow chart of

certified fishery product

- 2.1.3. The Applicant shall collect all records from all stages relating to the certified seafood product, and keep them for at least the three years. In addition, the Applicant shall keep the records for the shelf life of the certified fishery product (such as expiration dates) if its shelf life is more than the three years.
- 2.1.4. The Applicant shall prepare in writing the procedures for processing complaints and appeals related to the certified seafood product.
- 2.1.5. The Applicant shall prepare in writing the procedure for recalling/ retrieving the non-compliant certified seafood product. The Applicant shall recall/retrieve all the non-compliant seafood product in case of its detection.
- 2.1.6. The single site Applicant may install an internal audit procedure that complies with the requirements stipulated in Appendix 1. If the Applicant implements an internal audit procedure in conformity with the requirements, the applicants may be considered as low risk (for details of risk assessment see "Requirements for Certification Body operating against the MEL-J Council Chain of Custody Standard")

2.2. Reporting changes

- 2.2.1. The Applicant shall inform his/her certification body in writing or by email within 1 month of the following changes:
 - 1. Certified seafood products received from a new supplier
 - 2. New certified species received
- 2.2.2. The Applicant shall receive written approval from his/her certifier before making the following changes:
 - 1. Undertaking a new activity with respect to certified seafood products, which is not already included in the scope of certification
 - 2. Using a new subcontractor that handles the certified seafood products

2.3. Multi-site Applicants

- 2.3.1. The multi-site Applicants shall comply with the requirements related to the management system stipulated in Appendix 2.

3. Requirements for segregation and traceability

- 3.1.** The Applicant shall have a process in place to ensure that all certified seafood products are purchased from a certified supplier(s). In the process, the applicant shall keep the record of the following:
1. The name of supplier
 2. The copy of certification (Fisheries or Aquaculture or CoC) of the supplier
 3. The purchase date
 4. The weight of the certified seafood product purchased
- 3.2.** The Applicant shall have a process of identifying the certified seafood product as certified at all stages of purchasing, receiving, storage, processing, packing, labelling, selling and delivery. The applicant may use additional label or sign on the container or package to identify the certified seafood product on top of the traceability records.
- 3.3.** The Applicant shall have a procedure to ensure the segregation of the certified seafood product at all stages except for processing. The Applicant shall use methods either to ensure temporal or physical segregation.
- 3.4.** The Applicant shall keep the record of the following in processing or packaging/ repackaging. If the applicant is mixing the certified seafood product with non-certified seafood product(s), the applicant shall comply with the requirements stipulated in "Supplementary regulation for mixing the certified seafood product with non-certified seafood product".
1. Date of the processing or packaging/ repackaging
 2. Details of the processing or packaging/ repackaging
 3. Weight of the certified seafood product before the processing or packaging/ repackaging
 4. Weight of the certified seafood product after the processing or packaging/ repackaging
- 3.5.** The Applicant shall install a procedure to ensure the traceability of the certified seafood product for all the stages. The procedure shall ensure the following:
1. The certified seafood product is traced back from its shipment record to the purchase record.
 2. The certified seafood product is segregated at all stages except for its processing.
 3. If the certified seafood product is processed by the applicant, the certified seafood product complies with the requirement stipulated in "Supplementary regulation for mixing the certified seafood product with non-certified seafood product"
 4. The Applicant is able to disclose the accurate, complete and unaltered information

related to the certified seafood product upon request from the consumer, supplier, certification body or Marine Ecolabel Japan Council.

- 3.6.** The Applicant shall supply the following information to the operator that purchased the certified seafood product from the applicant.
1. Applicant's copy of CoC certification
 2. Date of purchase
 3. Weight of the shipped certified seafood product

4. Requirements for logo management

- 4.1.** The Applicant shall have a system in place for managing the MEL logo according to the requirements stipulated in "Manual for Using Marine Eco-Label Japan's Logo Mark"

Appendix 1 Requirements for an internal audit system

1. Implementation of internal audit

- 1.1.** The Applicant shall install at least one internal auditor to ensure the implementation of the CoC. The same individual may not assume both the manager and internal auditor roles.
- 1.2.** The Applicant shall have procedure in writing to conduct the internal audit. The procedure shall include the following:
 - Quantity check/ mass balance of weights of the certified seafood product purchased and sold by the Applicant
 - traceability challenge: whether the certified seafood product can be traced back from the shipment record to the purchase record through all the stages
 - Test of recall procedure
- 1.3.** The internal auditor shall carry out audits on a regular basis, which should not to exceed one year. The record of audit shall be kept until the next audit is conducted.

2. Non-conformities

- 2.1.** If non-conformities are found during an internal audit, the internal auditor shall record at least the following, and notify the manager:
 - date and time when non-conformity occurred,
 - details and cause of the non-conformity, and
 - identification of the personnel involved in the non-conformity.
- 2.2.** The manager shall take immediate action against non-conformities by swiftly composing corrective procedures that include steps to carry out the corrective measures and a timeline for completion, and by reporting the results of the corrective measures to the internal auditor. The report shall include the following:
 - corrective measures to prevent recurrence,
 - a timeline to complete the corrective measures, and
 - the actual date and time at which the corrective measures were completed.

Appendix 2 Additional requirements for multi-site Applicants

This appendix stipulates the eligibility of multi-site Applicants and the requirements for multi-site Applicant's management system

1. Eligibility criteria for the multi-site Applicants

1.1. The multi-site Applicant shall meet one of the following requirements:

1. Organisations operating with franchises or companies with multiple branches where the sites are linked through a common ownership, management or other organizational link
2. groups of independent legal enterprises established and functioning for the purposes of the CoC certification (producer group)
3. Organisation that have subcontracted more than one entity to process its certified seafood product

1.2. The multi-site Applicant shall be categorised as type A, type B, or type C. The multisite applicant shall comply with the following requirements depending on how he/she is categorised.

1.2.1. **Type A The multi-site Applicant:** Type A multi-site Applicant shall conform to the following requirements:

1. All the sites shall hold the contract with the operator that the central office is located
2. All the sites shall have a common management system, in writing, for segregation, traceability and logo management.
3. All the sites shall be internally audited by the central office.

1.2.2. **Type B multi-site Applicant:** Type B multi-site Applicant shall conform to the following requirements:

1. All the sites shall hold the contract with the operator that the central office is located
2. The central office shall ensure that all the site comply with the requirements of segregation, traceability and logo management in MEL CoC standard through the internal audits and the auditing by the certification body.

1.2.3. **Type C multi-site Applicant:** Type C multi-site Applicant shall conform to the

following requirements:

1. The multi-site Applicant shall sell and/or serve the certified seafood product exclusively or primarily to final consumers.
2. All the sites shall be owned the operator where the central office is located or have a contract with the operator where the central office is located.
3. All the sites shall have a common management system, in writing, for segregation, traceability and logo management.
4. All the certified seafood products supplied to the sites shall be supplied by the central office.
5. If the central office utilises a subcontractor(s), the central office shall contract the subcontractor and ensure that the subcontractor(s) puts in place the common management system, in writing, for segregation, traceability and logo management.
6. All the sites shall be internally audited by the central office

2. Requirements for the management system of Type A multi-site applicant

2.1. Requirements for the central office

- 2.1.1.** The multi-site Applicant shall establish a central office comprising of at least two personnel, a manager and an internal auditor.
- 2.1.2.** The manager shall establish a management system that is in compliance with the requirements mentioned in the MEL CoC standard, requirement 2.1. and is applicable to all the sites.
- 2.1.3.** The manager shall provide the procedures for the CoC and ensure that all the sites comply with the requirements for segregation and traceability (section 3) and for logo management (section 4) in MEL CoC standard. The manager shall, if necessary, conduct a training for the site managers.
- 2.1.4.** The internal auditors shall establish a procedure in writing to conduct the internal audit and implement corrective action in accordance with the requirements mentioned in Appendix 1.
- 2.1.5.** The internal auditor shall include in the procedure the followings in addition to the requirements in the Appendix 1.
 - Schedule for the audit of all the sites included in the scope of CoC certification
 - Procedures for conducting audit to the potential new site before officially adding to

the scope of CoC certification

- 2.1.6.** The manager shall take immediate action against non-conformities by swiftly composing corrective procedures. If the non-conformity is identified in one site, the manager shall consider the possibility of non-conformities in other site or there are any negative impacts on other sites. If there is the possibility of non-conformities in other sites, managers shall implement the corrective action in all the site. The internal auditor shall confirm the completion of all the corrective action.
- 2.1.7.** The central office shall keep the contract and the directory of all the sites. The directory shall include the following:
1. Name of the site
 2. Address
 3. Name of site manager and the contract address
 4. Name of the certified seafood product
 5. Date of latest audit and its result
- 2.1.8.** The central office shall inform the certification body when there are any changes stipulated in 2.2.1. in MEL CoC standard. The central office shall request an approval of the certification body whenever it makes changes stipulated in 2.2.2. in MEL CoC standard.
- 2.1.9.** The central office shall inform the certification body within 10 working days if it adds a new site to its scope of CoC certification. The central office shall ensure that the new site implements the common management system for segregation, traceability and logo management. The central office shall inform the certification body within 10 working days if it deletes any existing site from its scope of CoC certification.

2.2. Requirements for site(s)

- 2.2.1.** The site shall appoint site manager who supervises the CoC procedure and communicate with the central office.
- 2.2.2.** The site manager shall implement and maintain the segregation, traceability and logo management under the supervision of the manager from the central office.
- 2.2.3.** If non-conformity is detected, the site manager shall implement the corrective action with the manager from central office according to the procedure stipulated in 2 Appendix.

3. Requirements for the management system of Type B multi-site applicant

3.1. Requirements for the central office

3.1.1. The multi-site Applicant shall establish a central office comprising of at least one personnel, an internal auditor.

3.1.2. The central office shall have contract with all the site and ensure that all the sties comply with the requirements for segregation and traceability (section 3) and for logo management (section 4) in MEL CoC standard. The contract shall include the following conditions:

1. The site shall put in place a system which comply with the requirements for segregation and traceability (section 3) and for logo management (section 4) in MEL CoC standard.
2. The site shall allow the access to its facilities and its records related to the certified seafood product by the certification body or MEL-J Council upon request

3.1.3. The central office shall keep the contract and the directory of all the sites. The directory shall include the following:

1. Name of the site
2. Address
3. Name of site manager and the contract address
4. Name of the certified seafood product
5. Date of latest audit and its result

3.1.4. The central office shall inform the site(s) that does not obtain MEL CoC certification are required to go through the field audit by the certification body.

3.1.5. The central office shall keep the following records related to the site

1. Weight of the purchased certified seafood product and its details
2. Weight of the shipped certified seafood product and its details
3. Date of purchase by the site and shipment from the site

3.1.6. The central office shall inform the certification body when there are any changes stipulated in 2.2.1. in MEL CoC standard. The central office shall request an approval of the certification body whenever it makes changes stipulated in 2.2.2. in MEL CoC

standard.

- 3.1.7.** The central office shall inform the certification body and complete an audit of a new site by the certification body before adding the site to its scope of CoC certification. If the new site is already certified by MEL CoC certification, the central office shall just inform the certification body within 10 working days after adding this site. The central office shall inform the certification within 10 working days if it deletes any existing site from its scope of CoC certification.
- 3.1.8.** The internal auditors shall establish a procedure in writing to conduct the internal audit and implement corrective action in accordance with the requirements mentioned in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.9.** The internal auditor shall include in the procedure the followings in addition to the requirements in the Appendix 1.
- Schedule for the audit of all the sites included in the scope of CoC certification
 - Procedures for conducting audit to the potential new site before officially adding to the scope of CoC certification

3.2. Requirements for the site

- 3.2.1.** The site shall appoint site manager who supervises the CoC procedure and communicate with the central office.
- 3.2.2.** The site manager shall implement and maintain the segregation, traceability and logo management under the supervision of the manager from the central office.
- 3.2.3.** If non-conformity is detected, the site manager shall implement the corrective action with the manager from central office according to the procedure stipulated in 2 Appendix 1. The internal auditor shall confirm the completion of all the corrective action.

4. Requirements for the management system of Type C multi-site applicant

4.1. Requirements for the central office

- 4.1.1.** The multi-site Applicant shall establish a central office comprising of at least two personnel, a manager and an internal auditor.
- 4.1.2.** The manager shall establish a management system that is in compliance with the

requirements mentioned in the MEL CoC standard, requirement 2.1. and is applicable to all the sites. The central office shall maintain records of all the site that demonstrate conformity with this standard for a minimum of 18 months.

- 4.1.3.** The manager shall provide the procedures for the CoC and ensure that all the sites comply with the requirements for segregation and traceability (section 3, except for 3.6.) and for logo management (section 4) in MEL CoC standard. The manager shall, if necessary, conduct a training for the site managers.
- 4.1.4.** The internal auditors shall establish a procedure in writing to conduct the internal audit and implement corrective action in accordance with the requirements mentioned in Appendix 1.
- 4.1.5.** The internal auditor shall include in the procedure the followings in addition to the requirements in the Appendix 1.
- Schedule for the audit of all the sites included in the scope of CoC certification
 - Procedures for conducting audit to the potential new site before officially adding to the scope of CoC certification
- 4.1.6.** The central office shall keep the contract and the directory of all the sites. The directory shall include the following:
1. Name of the site
 2. Address
 3. Name of site supervisor
- 4.1.7.** The central office shall inform the certification body in writing in advance of increasing or decreasing the number of sites by more than 50 % since the previous audit.
- 4.1.8.** The central office shall inform the certification body when there are any changes stipulated in 2.2.1. in MEL CoC standard. The central office shall request an approval of the certification body whenever it makes changes stipulated in 2.2.2. in MEL CoC standard.
- 4.1.9.** The central office shall assign a supervisor who supervises the implementation of segregation, traceability and logo management in all the site. One supervisor shall oversight maximum of 10 sites.

2.2.4. If non-conformity is detected, the supervisor shall implement the corrective action with the manager from central office according to the procedure stipulated in 2 Appendix 1. The internal auditor shall confirm the completion of all the corrective action.

4.2. Requirements for the site

4.2.1. The site manager shall implement and maintain the segregation, traceability and logo management under the supervision of supervisor from the central office.