

# RFM Procedure 10:

## CSC RFM Standard Development Procedure

Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program

Fully Aligned to ISO 17065



**RFM Procedure 10, Version 1.1: CSC RFM Standard  
Development Procedure, November 2022**

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### 1. Introduction

The CSC RFM program standards and certification procedures strive to be consistent with relevant international guidelines for fishery certification programs,

Compliance with all CSC RFM standards is assessed by auditors/assessors supplied by independent certification bodies with training in the CSC RFM standards. The auditors/assessors must have relevant knowledge, experience, and credentials.

Copies of the current CSC RFM standards, which are copyrighted by the CSC Program can be found on the [CSC website](#). The Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Program consists of an RFM Fishery Standard applicable to North American-based fisheries assessment and a standard for Chain of Custody certification for seafood through the supply chain.

### 2. CSC Management Board

CSC Management Board is the oversight body for the RFM Program with ultimate decision-making authority. Further information is available on the [RFM website](#).

### 3. CSC Fisheries Standard Committee (FSC)

The Fisheries Standard Committee (FSC) is appointed by the CSC Board and oversees the ongoing review and development of the Fisheries Standard. Further information is available on the [RFM website](#).

### 4. CSC Unified RFM Technical Advisory Committee

Unified RFM Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – a joint committee of CSC and Icelandic Responsible Fisheries Foundation (IRFF), which develops and maintains an ongoing review of the unified Chain of Custody (CoC) standard. Further information is available on the [RFM website](#).

### 5. CSC RFM Program Manager

The CSC RFM Program Manager works closely with the Committees and CSC Management Board chairpersons to carry out the general administration of the standards. The CSC RFM Program Manager with the CSC Management Board and the Committee Chairs establish program goals and target dates for the key stages of public comment and publication.

The CSC RFM Program Manager, is a CSC employee or contractor is appointed by the CSC Management Board.

The CSC RFM Program Manager, helps the chairperson's guide committees, advises on general standards policies, and coordinates among committees. CSC RFM Program Manager also helps prepare committee draft standards and related documents as needed and is responsible for assuring that all records remain on file for at least one full standards revision period, including keeping Curriculum Vitae / Resumes and Conflict of Interest declarations of all committee Members as needed to maintain a record of their technical expertise and affiliations.

## 6. Standards Development

CSC RFM standards define the most important elements of responsible fishery management and provide quantitative metrics and auditing procedures whereby adherence to those practices can be determined. By defining acceptable methods, and processes, and identifying appropriate performance metrics and targets, the standards directly address fishery management, environmental, and product traceability concerns.

Working with the CSC RFM Program manager, the relevant committee strive to ensure that the standards development process is consistent with relevant FAO guidelines. As part of this effort, the relevant committee and the CSC RFM Program Manager ensure that the overall process, including procedures and public input opportunities, are made transparent to the public through the CSC website.

### 6.1 Development Process

The stages in the preparation of new or updated CSC RFM standard or revision is listed below. The CSC RFM Program Manager facilitates the flow of information throughout the development process.

1. Preliminary draft
2. Committee draft or drafts
3. Public comment draft
4. Final committee draft
5. Committee review
6. CSC Management Board approval

**1-Preliminary draft** are developed by expert consultants with the assistance of the CSC RFM team. Development of preliminary drafts involves reviews of existing best fishery practices and standards from outside bodies and may include draft material submitted by other interested organizations or individuals.

**2-Committee draft** The committee examines and approves the preliminary draft. To gain approval the decision must reflect a consensus among the committee members. The committee can suggest changes through the CSC RFM Program Manager to review with the expert consultants and with the program's Certification Bodies to check their auditability. If there are many contentious points or points requiring further investigation or testing, there may be several committee drafts. Completed/Approved committee draft pass to the CSC Program Manager in preparation for public comment.

**3-Public comment** In advance of the start of the public comment period the CSC RFM Program Manager will communicate this stage in international/national/regional publications and will proactively contact all stakeholders that were consulted at the start of the Standard development/revision process, to make them aware and to direct them on how they can provide comments.

All drafts are made available for 60 days of public comment on the CSC website. All comments received are carefully considered by the expert consultants with the CSC RFM team. Not all submissions are incorporated into the CSC RFM standard. Properly submitted comments will receive responses from the committee chair or the

CSC RFM Program Manager as needed. The comments and responses will be posted on the CSC website.

**4- Final drafts** incorporate the public comment changes upon which the committee members agree. The final draft will undergo further testing, if necessary, with one of the program's approved Certification Bodies to determine its impact on current certificate holders, how long the audit/assessment will take to complete, and if the level of assessor competency has to be amended to complete the new audit/assessment.

**5- Committee Review** Final drafts are approved by a positive vote by at least 75% of a quorum of 60% or more of the committee membership. Approved final drafts then proceed forward to the CSC Management Board for approval.

**6- CSC Management Board Approval** The CSC Management Board must endorse the final standard with a two-thirds vote of approval or return the standard to the Committee. The board cannot modify the standards or apply "line-item vetoes." Once approved by the CSC Management Board, the completed standard is forwarded to the CSC Program Manager for implementation.

## 7. New Standards and Standards Revisions

The priority of new standards development is determined by CSC Management Board with guidance from the Committees and the CSC RFM Program Manager.

The Committees work with the CSC RFM Program team to annually review the CSC RFM standards and to make appropriate changes at least every five years. The committees attempt to incorporate innovations and progress generated in a range of seafood forums and international conventions, such as meetings of the, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Maritime Organization, etc. Regular reviews ensure the CSC RFM standards represent current international best practices.

When minor errors are found in published standards documents, or clarification to existing clauses are necessary, proposed corrections are considered by the committee and the CSC RFM Program Manager, who have the option to enact the corrections or pass them on for further CSC Management Board.

When new material or other significant changes to existing standards are presented, the complete review and approval process must be followed.

Once agreed by the CSC Management Board and prior to the outset of a new standard development/ revision, the CSC RFM Program Manager will publish information about the proposed changes to the affected standard in the form of a Terms of Reference for this new standard/revision with a set of objectives and rationale for the need for these changes. This information is published online in the public domain, as well as directly shared with the program's Certification Bodies and all affected certificate holders.

This communication includes:

- A rationale of the need for this new standard/revision; .
- A summary of the steps required in the standard-setting process (as identified in this procedure document) including proposed timelines for completing each phase and when key decisions need to be finalized will be communicated;
- Contact information and
- Details for contributing to the development process, allowing interested stakeholders the opportunity to provide input and comment on the final standard/review.