

RFM Procedure 9: CSC RFM Extraordinary Event and Remote Assessment or Audit Procedure

Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program

Fully Aligned to ISO 17065



**RFM Procedure 9:, Version 1.1 CSC RFM Extraordinary Event
and Remote Assessment or Audit Procedure, November 2022**

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Procedure for the Conducting of CSC RFM Fishery and CSC RFM Chain of Custody Audits during Extraordinary Events or Circumstances

The following procedure is based on an IAF (International Accreditation Forum) Document IAF ID 3:2011.

In a normal business environment, every organization is continuously exposed to opportunities, challenges, and risks. However, extraordinary events or circumstances beyond the control of the organization happen. In such circumstances, Accreditation Bodies and Certification Bodies should have a process for the proper maintenance of accreditation and certification in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this document.

The objective of this document is to provide ABs and CBs associated with the CSC RFM program guidance on the appropriate course of action.

1. Definition: Extraordinary event or circumstance (IAF)

A circumstance beyond the control of the organization is commonly referred to as “Force Majeure” or “act of God”. Examples are war, strike, riot, political instability, geopolitical tension, terrorism, crime, pandemic, flooding, earthquake, malicious computer hacking, and other natural or man-made disasters.

Extraordinary events or circumstances affecting a CSC RFM certified fishery/organization may temporarily prevent the CB from carrying out planned CSC RFM assessment/audit on-site.

When such a situation occurs, CBs and the CSC RFM Team will need to plan a course of action to maintain the integrity of the CSC RFM program.

2. CSC RFM Extraordinary Event Procedure

CSC RFM Program Manager shall with the CB in the first instance determine the following to enable the CB to assess the risk for continuing certification, and understand the certified fishery/ organization’s current and expected future situation. The CB should also gather necessary information from the certified fishery/organization before deciding with the CSC RFM Program manager on an appropriate course of action.

CSC RFM Program Manager shall with the CB decide on what alternative short-term methods of assessment to verify continuing system effectiveness for the certified fishery/organization.

The following options will be considered:

- a) Certificate Extensions until such time as to allow the extraordinary event to pass and allow the resumption of normal certification and assessment protocols. The Maximum length of time shall not exceed 6 months
- b) Certification/Annual surveillance assessment/audits using a Remote Assessment/Audit to assess relevant documentation (for example, management review meeting minutes, corrective action records, results of internal audits, inspection reports, etc.) off-site by the CB to determine continuing suitability of the certification

Information to the AB

All deviations from the established certification program procedures should be justified, documented, and made available to CBs AB upon request.

3. Remote CSC RFM Audit Procedure

Before using a Remote Assessment/ Audit procedure, the CB shall inform the CSC RFM Program Manager/Team in advance of arranging and conducting a remote assessment/audit. CSC RFM Program Manager shall require documented evidence that an extraordinary event is occurring, e.g. if an audit cannot be undertaken due to travel restrictions, or the health of the auditor or assessor may be compromised.

All Remote assessments/audits shall be conducted by an assessor/auditor that has been approved to conduct assessment/audits to the CSC RFM Program Standards.

3.1 Planning the audit

A remote assessment/ audit shall be scheduled for a specific date and time with confirmation that on this day the relevant people will be available to participate by video conference or telephone plus have online capabilities to email information as requested.

The CB shall conduct a test in advance of the assessment/audit to ensure that the technology is functional and there shall be an intellectual property agreement in place signed by the applicant and the CB to all allow data/evidence etc. to be transmitted to the auditor/assessor

The CB shall ensure that an interpreter is present, if required, to overcome any possible language barriers.

Remote audits shall be arranged to cover all sites on a certificate, including any subcontractors.

3.2 Preparation for the Audit

- **The auditor** shall review the applicant's last assessment /audit, to determine the scope of the remote assessment.
- **The auditor** shall ask for information in advance of the remote assessment/audit for review which can then be verified during the virtual assessment. For a COC assessment, the applicant shall need to provide some traceback information back to each of their certified fisheries
- **The fishery/facility** to be assessed/audited shall ensure they have remote IT/Technology sharing capabilities and a colleague available to liaise with the assessor/auditor through the whole course of the assessment/audit

3.3 Conducting the audit

An opening meeting, closing meetings, and interviews should be conducted by video conference, or where not available, by telephone. The auditor shall use the CB's approved CSC RFM Fishery or CoC Audit Checklist

The relevant documents and records required to show compliance with the intent of each CSC RFM standard clause shall be reviewed and assessed through sharing using the agreed IT/Technology.

There are various ways in which independence in sampling can be assured, these may include:

Selecting people to interview based on an organization chart and prearranging video interviews

Conducting the record-verification exercises of the auditor's choice following their review of the tracebacks.

3.4 Reporting on the audit

The CSC RFM checklists shall be annotated where the applicant is in Full conformance or not. The Assessor/Auditor shall determine if the non-conformance is a Critical, Major, or Minor as determined within the CSC RFM program. The CB shall conduct a technical review of the report to check any non-conformances and determine if the applicant certification is to be maintained in the case of annual surveillance, or be reissued in the case of recertification, as stipulated in the requirements of the CSC RFM program.