

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 Sets out specific guidance on how the ASI Accreditation Procedure applies to accreditation of certification bodies for the MSC Certification Scheme.

2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 All terms and definitions are provided in the ASI Vocabulary.

3 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION

3.1	Standards and Policies	ISO 17011:2004 ISO Guide 65:1996 MSC Accreditation Manual Version 5
3.2	Procedures, Guidelines	ASI-PRO-20-101 ASI Accreditation Procedure
3.3	Checklists, Templates, etc.	Accreditation Agreement
		Application Form
		Assessment Schedule and Itinerary

4 ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE: GUIDANCE FOR MSC

- 4.1 In this document, ASI provides guidance on accreditation processes that are specific to ASI's operation of the MSC Accreditation Program. This guidance is referred to as "MSC Guidance" and it is abbreviated here as **MSCG**.
- 4.2 Clauses shown in italics were copied in full from ASI Accreditation Procedure Version 2.0. Only the clauses for which ASI provides MSC Guidance are

presented. Clauses in the ASI Accreditation Procedure which apply uniformly to all ASI accreditation programs do not require MSC Guidance and they are therefore not repeated here.

- 4.3 The terms Certification Body (CB) and Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) are used interchangeably in this document. Note that MSC Certification Scheme Documents consistently use the term Certification Body.

5 ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 *The requirements for accreditation are defined in the relevant ASI-CAB accreditation agreement and in the normative documents of a particular certification scheme.*

MSCG 5.1: The MSC Accreditation Manual is the primary normative document through which the MSC prescribes accreditation requirements. The MSC Accreditation Manual specifies that all applicant and accredited CBs shall comply with the requirements of ISO Guide 65:1996 and all applicable requirements of the MSC certification scheme as set forth in MSC Certification Scheme Documents. ASI maintains a controlled list of all MSC scheme documents on the ASI website. ASI provides copies of MSC scheme documents upon request. MSC scheme documents can also be downloaded from www.msc.org or by requesting them directly from the MSC.

6 ENQUIRY AND APPLICATION

- 6.1 *CABs requesting general information on accreditation requirements for a specific certification scheme shall contact ASI by post or by e-mail (info@accreditation-services.com).*
- 6.2 *The designated APO may send relevant application information as required.*

MSCG 6.1 and 6.2: For CB enquiries about MSC accreditation requirements, the designated APO responds by email. The MSC Accreditation Manual, MSC Standards, and relevant MSC certification and assessment methodologies are sent as email attachments. ASI does not issue all MSC scheme documents to CBs at the enquiry stage. A complete set of MSC Scheme Documents is provided when the CB requests an Application Pack.

- 6.4 *An Accreditation Application Pack shall contain the following information:*

MSCG 6.4: A pro forma Accreditation Agreement is included in the Application Pack that is sent to CBs enquiring to the MSC Accreditation Program.

- 6.6 *A fee may be raised for the Accreditation Application Pack on a scheme by scheme basis.*

MSCG 6.6: ASI does not currently raise a fee for the Application Pack for the MSC Accreditation Program.

7 APPLICATION REVIEW AND APPROVAL

7.8 *The APM shall review the application and shall verify that:*

7.8.1 The applicant CAB is established as a legal entity and professional CAB;

MSCG 7.8.1: ASI will consider applications from business organisations that are not 'professional CABs' for acceptance into the MSC Accreditation Program. However, only organizations that are legal entities may apply to ASI for accreditation.

7.8.2 The applicant CAB is within the scope of ASI requirements and within the scope of each certification scheme for which application is made. If this requires further information, it shall be obtained from the CAB. Changes to the application scope can be proposed if necessary;

MSCG 7.8.2: For the MSC Accreditation Program, the ASI Director conducts a review of ASI's ability to carry out the assessment of the applicant CB in terms of ASI policy, competence, and the availability of suitable APM, assessors and experts. The review also includes the ability of ASI to carry out the initial assessment in a timely manner. By signing the Application Form, the ASI Director confirms that the review has been completed and that the application is approved.

7.18 *Once the CAB Accreditation Agreement has been signed by both parties, the ASI makes the name and contact details of the applicant CAB publicly available.*

MSCG 7.18: Applicant CBs to the MSC Accreditation Program are not allowed to advertise their services on the MSC website until ASI has completed a desk study review and initial office assessment of the CB's certification program.

7.20 *If allowed under the certification scheme requirements, the APM shall confirm that the CAB may make claims of applicant status and seek non accredited clients as covered in specific certification scheme guidance documents.*

MSCG 7.20: For the MSC Accreditation Program, an applicant CB may enter into contracts with clients only after ASI has completed a desk study review and an initial office assessment. Further guidance relating to non-accredited CBs seeking clients is provided below under section **MSCG 17.2**.

8.0 DOCUMENT REVIEW

8.2 *The ASI lead assessor shall verify that:*

8.2.1 The Documentation Checklist has been fully completed

MSCG 8.2: ASI does not provide applicant CBs to the MSC Accreditation Program with a pre-prepared Documentation Checklist. However CBs may develop

their own checklist to verify that all MSC certification scheme requirements are addressed.

- 8.9 *The completed relevant ASI checklists, together with ASI lead assessor's key findings and conclusions will be compiled as the ASI Document Review Report.*

MSCG 8.9: For the MSC Accreditation Program, there is currently no set format for the Document Review Report.

9 APPOINTMENT OF ASI ASSESSMENT TEAMS

No MSC Guidance.

10 PRE-ASSESSMENTS

- 10.1 *ASI should consider any CAB applicant's request for a pre-assessment, and may at its sole discretion accept or decline such a request.*

MSCG 10: Pre-assessment in this context refers to pre-assessment of the CB by the Accreditation Body - not the witnessing of a fishery pre-assessment performed by a CB. ASI does not currently conduct pre-assessments of CBs within the MSC Accreditation Program.

11 ASSESSMENT PLANNING – INITIAL ASSESSMENTS

- 11.3 *The provisional assessment plan and budget shall be sent to the CAB by the APM or designated APO.*

MSCG 11.3: A typical MSC Assessment Schedule and Itinerary will contain the following elements:

- Date(s), location, and type of assessment
- Statement of applicable audit criteria (e.g. MSC Standards)
- Scope of assessment
- Participating assessment team members and their roles
- Assessment itinerary subdivided into hourly segments

12 ASSESSMENTS

No MSC Guidance.

13 ASSESSMENT REPORTS

- 13.9 *When ASI needs to publish a Public Summary Report, then it shall be placed on the ASI website within 30 days of the finalisation of the report. In preparing public summary reports confidential information of third parties shall be protected if necessary. Note: ASI publication of Assessment Reports to the ASI website varies on a scheme by scheme basis.*

MSCG 13.9: Currently, ASI does not prepare Public Summary Reports of results from assessment of CBs in the MSC Accreditation Program. Currently, ASI does not publish results from assessments of CBs in the MSC Accreditation Program.

14 VERIFICATION OF CAB CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTIVE ACTION

14.1 CABs may be required to provide details of their planned corrective and preventive actions to address the nonconformities identified by the ASI assessment team at the discretion of the ASI lead assessor. If such plan is requested, the ASI lead assessor shall ensure that feedback is provided to the CAB on the acceptability of proposed corrective actions. If proposed corrective actions are found to be insufficient, the ASI lead assessor shall request further information.

MSCG 14.1: In addition to or in place of a corrective action plan, ASI may request that the CB undertake immediate corrective action to address an identified nonconformity. ASI may impose a technical limitation upon a CB, preventing certain types of assessments for a defined period or until conformity has been demonstrated. If a total breakdown of the system is detected that constitutes a risk for the credibility of ASI and/or the MSC certification scheme, ASI reserves the right to launch immediate disciplinary measures, including the right to stop a CB assessment or audit activity immediately.

15 DECISION-MAKING AND GRANTING ACCREDITATION

15.5 If the ASI Accreditation Committee recommends accreditation, the ASI Director shall communicate a positive accreditation decision to the CAB and ensure that it is made publicly available.

MSCG 15.5: ASI informs MSC's Top Management when there is any change to the accreditation status of CBs in the MSC Accreditation Program. Current accreditation status is made publicly available on the MSC website.

16 SURVEILLANCE

No MSC Guidance.

17 CLAIMS OF APPLICANT / ACCREDITED CAB STATUS

17.1 After receiving written confirmation from their assigned APM that they may do so, the CAB can make claims regarding its formal status as an applicant CAB for a specific accreditation scope until the applicant is formally accredited or until the application is terminated. Applicant CABs shall follow requirements set out in ASI and the certification scheme documents which specify the claims can or cannot be made.

MSCG 17.1: A CB may make claims of formal applicant status once ASI has formally accepted the CB as an applicant into the MSC Accreditation Program. However CBs cannot enter into certification contracts with clients until after

ASI has completed desk study review and initial office assessment. Also see sections **MSCG 7.20** and **MSCG 15.5**.

17.2 *If the certification scheme requirements allow for this option, ASI shall advise the CAB in writing of the number of clients it may accept for unaccredited assessments, and any further conditions that the CAB may be required to meet.*

MSCG 17.2: ASI restricts the number of clients that an applicant CB may enter into contracts with. ASI imposes this restriction through setting of conditions which are based on scope of accreditation sought. Conditions may be modified at the discretion of the APM only after approval by the ASI Director. Conditions are established as follows:

- a. Following an office assessment and closure of all major nonconformities (if any) the APM shall advise the CB that they may enter into a contract with no more than one client for fishery certification and one client for chain of custody certification. The chain of custody client may not be a trader who does not handle products because the CB's audit of such a company would not provide sufficient and appropriate detail for an ASI witness assessment.
- b. Following a first witnessed fishery assessment and closure of all major nonconformities (if any) the APM shall advise the CB that they may obtain two further clients for fishery certification, but they may not move to a later stage of certification (as defined in the MSC Fishery Certification Methodology) with more than one client until they have received written approval to do so from the APM.
- c. Following a first witnessed chain of custody assessment and closure of all major nonconformities (if any) the APM shall advise the CB that they may obtain four further clients for chain of custody certification.
- d. In all cases, a certificate may not be issued until the certification process is complete and accreditation has been granted.

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