



amfori & MSC collaboration

Recognition of amfori BSCI audits in the MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Who is the MSC?

A: The [Marine Stewardship Council](#) (MSC) is an international non-profit organisation. Their vision is for the world's oceans to be teeming with life, and seafood supplies safeguarded for this and future generations. They work with scientists, NGOs, fishers and stakeholders across the seafood industry to set global standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability.

Q: Why is amfori collaborating with the MSC?

A: The partnership is a response to a widespread concern about labour abuses in the global seafood supply chain. The MSC has introduced new requirements for Chain of Custody Standard certificate holders to include independent labour audits for supply chain companies if they operate in a country where there is a risk of forced or child labour practices taking place. The third-party labour audits recognised by the MSC include programs and schemes that are already in use by certificate holders and the wider industry including amfori BSCI, SA8000 and SEDEX SMETA.

For more information please see: [MSC's Summary of Changes to the Chain of Custody Standard](#)

Q: What is the added value of this partnership for each initiative?

A: The collaboration between amfori and the MSC provides the market with greater assurance that MSC-certified supply chain companies meet internationally recognised standards for labour practices and provides greater assurance that forced and child labour violations are not taking place in seafood supply chain companies that hold MSC Chain of Custody certificates.

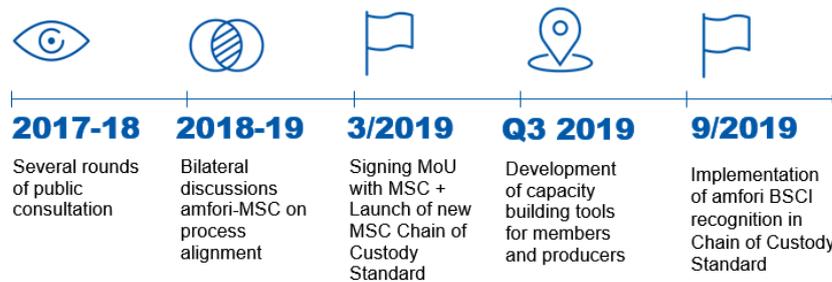
amfori has been recognised as an industry leader and has a strong system to provide companies and their supply chain partners with solutions to implement labour requirements and combat violations. With this collaboration amfori is following through member demands to increase its presence in the seafood sector.

Together, amfori and MSC aim to improve labour standards in the seafood industry. This collaboration also seeks to avoid duplication and audit fatigue through the recognition of already established labour programs such as amfori BSCI.

Q: What is the timeline for the partnership?

A: First interactions with the MSC started between 2017 and 2018 during the [public consultation](#) phases initiated by the MSC when feedback was collected from stakeholders on the proposal for new requirements for on-shore labour practices to be incorporated into the revised version of the MSC Chain of Custody standards.

The revised MSC Chain of Custody standard will be launched by the MSC on the 28 March 2019, and requirements relating to labour will come into effect from 28 September 2019. Both organisations will use the time in between to develop materials and training that supports and prepares those affected.



Q: Will there be any changes for amfori members using amfori BSCI?

A: The partnership affects only amfori members that use amfori BSCI in the seafood supply chain industry and that currently use the MSC Chain of Custody Standard certification or are planning to do so in the future.

MSC Chain of Custody certificate holders who have been identified as standard risk need to undergo a labour audit and show no major non-compliances. Additional guidance and training will be developed for auditors, companies and producers. amfori BSCI audits are *not* affected by the recognition. amfori members don't have to expect additional cost implications either.

Particular attention should, however, be paid to the following:

- 1. **Audit validity:** The validity of an audit is a prerequisite for maintaining or keeping the MSC Chain of Custody certificate. Members need to ensure that audits are valid and followed-up in a timely manner to avoid the suspension of the certificate.

Zero Tolerance Protocol: MSC Chain of Custody certificate holders are not immediately penalised if a zero tolerance case has been identified during an audit. The certificate holder is obliged to communicate any zero tolerance to their conformity assessment body (CAB) within 2 days, CABs then grant a 30-day grace period after a zero tolerance alert has been triggered to motivate immediate action and address the violation. If no remediation has been performed after 30 days the certificate will be suspended.

While the extension of the MSC Chain of Custody Standard to labour requirements specifically focuses on the topics of forced and child labour, MSC also recognises the full Zero Tolerance Protocol of amfori BSCI includes bonded and child labour, inhumane treatment, severe occupational health and safety risks (OHS) as well as other unethical business behaviour.

2. **Responsibility:** As part of the recognition, MSC acknowledges valid audits with no major non-conformity in the Zero Tolerance Protocol, considering all ratings ranging from A to E. The integration of the amfori BSCI audit into the MSC certification does, however, not release companies or producers of their responsibility to work towards continuous improvement for findings that have been flagged during the amfori BSCI audit and beyond.

Q: What happens if MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate holders do not comply with the minimum requirements set by the MSC and amfori?

A: “Standard risk” MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate holders that fail to comply with the minimum requirements, meaning they have no valid audit by a recognised scheme or programme or if a zero tolerance issue has been identified, must raise the issue within 2 days to the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) who will then raise a major non-conformity. This will need to be addressed within 30 days. Failure to address the issue or underreporting will lead to suspension of the MSC certificate.

Q: Will audits be mutually recognised?

A: No, amfori is not looking into sharing audits. The objective of the partnership is to recognise amfori BSCI audits in the MSC Chain of Custody Standard to incorporate labour requirements.

Q: Many human rights violations occur in off-shore environments (e.g. on fishing vessels and boats). Does this collaboration address this concern?

amfori is only collaborating with the MSC in the case of on-shore supply chains.

In 2018, MSC introduced separate requirements for fisheries and off-shore supply chains as part of a phased approach to address labour issues at sea. For more information please contact MSC or read more:

Press Release: [MSC announces changes to labour reporting, objections and stakeholder engagement](#) (August 31, 2018)

MSC Report: [Summary of Changes](#) (page 8/9)

Q: The requirement to undergo a labour audit and comply with the minimum requirements only concern MSC Chain of Custody certificate holders that have been identified as standard risk. Which countries classify as standard risk and how does this relate to the amfori Country Due Diligence Tool?

A: Certificate holders who are engaged in processing, packing or repacking or manual offloading from a fishery will need to undergo a third-party, on-site labour audit **unless** they can demonstrate that they are lower risk according to 2 or more of the following indicators:

- Country Risk Assessment Process for SA8000
- International Trade Union Confederation Global Rights Index
- Ratification of 5 or more of UN conventions on forced or child labour, human trafficking or seafood/fishing (C188, C105, C182, C29, Protocol to C29, Palermo Protocol, UN Slavery

Convention (1926)), UN Supplemental Slavery Convention (1956), Port State Measures Agreement)

- US Department of Labor List of Goods made with incidence of forced and child labour

Certificate holders that cannot demonstrate that they are lower risk are deemed to be 'standard risk' and must show evidence that they have reached the relevant performance criteria of a recognised labour program.

The overall risk level of a country is defined by the likelihood to be engaged in and exposed to human rights violations, particularly in the areas of forced and child labour within the seafood sector. Figures may therefore slightly vary from the amfori Country Due Diligence Tool in which indicators capture a broader level.

The Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) will inform the MSC Chain of Custody certificate holder of their risk level and if they need to undergo a labour audit by a recognised scheme.

Q: Which Certified Auditing Bodies (CABs) does MSC use?

A: MSC uses a number of different CABs, including Bureau Veritas, Intertek Fisheries, SGS Nederland BV, TÜV NORD and others.

A full list of Accredited Bodies is available on the [ASI website](#). You can filter 'COC' in the 'Program' option.

Do you have any additional questions that are not addressed in this document?

Our teams will be glad to help answer any questions.

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