



Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) Certification Program Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) Fact Sheet Updated 11/1/2020

Alaska RFM Certification Program – First to be Recognized by GSSI

Alaska RFM Certification was the first certification program to be benchmarked against the Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative's (GSSI) Global Benchmark Tool and achieve recognition. This recognition demonstrates that Alaska RFM is in alignment with all 143 applicable GSSI Essential Components. The Benchmark Report is available at <https://www.ourgssi.org/gssi-recognized-certification/>. The Alaska RFM Program completed GSSI's Monitoring of Continued Alignment (MOCA) in August 2019, which comprises a review of any changes in the Scheme's ownership, management or the standard itself. Independent Experts found the Alaska RFM Program continues to be in alignment with all GSSI Essential Components and the Benchmark Committee recommended continued recognition. The MOCA report is available at <https://www.ourgssi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Alaska-RFM-Report.pdf>

Why GSSI Recognition is Important

One way businesses provide assurances to their customers are the use of seafood certification schemes for both aquaculture production and wild capture fisheries. However, the increase in the number of programs and ecolabels has led to confusion among producers, retailers and consumers over how to recognize a credible seafood certification scheme.

The GSSI Benchmark Tool is an attempt to streamline procurement decisions by making it easy for buyers to see which certification programs have met the rigorous bar set forth by FAO's internationally agreed guidelines.

Members of the seafood supply chain, NGOs, governmental and intergovernmental organizations and a number of independent scientists have come up with a collective, non-competitive approach to provide clarity on seafood certification and ensure confidence in certified seafood.

This shared solution will make information available across the seafood supply chain to drive change and lower costs:

- **For producers**, it means more options to choose the scheme that is right for them and reduce the need for multiple audits.
- **For seafood buyers**, it means simpler, more consistent data to guide their purchasing decisions.
- **For NGOs**, it means more open and verified information to help promote environmental sustainability.
- **For Alaska RFM**, it means being publicly recognized for meeting all applicable GSSI Essential Components, a globally agreed benchmark building confidence in seafood certification.

What GSSI Is

In October 2015 GSSI launched the Global Benchmark Tool for seafood certification schemes. The Tool is the first collective and non-competitive approach to provide clarity on seafood certification worldwide.

GSSI publicly recognizes seafood certification schemes that meet GSSI Components grounded in the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO Guidelines for Seafood Certification and Ecolabelling.

GSSI is modeled on a successful global retail driven benchmark program called the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI). Like the previously adopted GFSI, which resulted in inter-operability among the world's food safety certifications, the GSSI provides a common benchmark that makes it easier for seafood buyers to identify which of the various third-party certification programs are credible.

The GSSI Partners

GSSI continues to increase their funding partners and participation in their benchmark program. They now have nine certification programs that have successfully been benchmarked, and over 90 stakeholder partners from 24 countries, which is a 70+% growth in partnerships since it began. Funding partners from across the industry include harvesting, aquaculture, farming, processing, foodservice, retail and brand manufacturing. GSSI also counts on the support of FAO and non-profit Affiliated Partners.



Nine GSSI recognized certifications

In 2019, two new Scheme Owners were benchmarked against the GSSI Global Benchmark Tool and have achieved recognition by GSSI: Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), in February, and Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) V2, in December.

In total, there are 9 GSSI recognized certification schemes.



CONFIDENCE IN CERTIFIED SEAFOOD: MARKET RECOGNITION

✓ 6 OF TOP 15 LARGEST FOOD RETAILERS use GSSI benchmarked schemes as basis for their sourcing programs



GSSI RETAIL AND FOOD SERVICE PARTNERS WHO REFER USE GSSI AS A BASIS FOR THEIR SOURCING POLICIES

For more information on GSSI go to <https://www.ourgssi.org/>

For more information on Alaska RFM - <http://www.alaskaseafood.org/rfm-certification/>