

Haarlem, 12th of December 2019

Sonia Slavinski
Marine Stewardship Council
Marine House
1 Snow Hill
London EC1A 2DH
United Kingdom

Subject: Response to the Marine Stewardship Council

Dear Sonia Slavinski,

Many thanks for taking the time to provide your comments on the GSSI Benchmark Report for the Marine Eco-Label Japan (MEL) Program.

GSSI is committed to a transparent benchmark process with opportunity for engagement and comments. Following the consultation, the comments received from Marine Stewardship Council and other stakeholders have been carefully reviewed by the Independent Experts, Benchmark Committee and the GSSI Board. Comprehensive responses to each of the comments are provided in this and other letters. After careful deliberations, the Benchmark Committee concluded the comments had been sufficiently addressed and recommends GSSI recognition of the MEL program.

In response to the comments referring to version 1.0 of the MEL Japan Fisheries Management Standard, GSSI explicitly points out that the GSSI benchmarking process and recognition only applies to version 2.0 of the MEL Japan Fisheries Management Standard (2018) and version 1.0 of the MEL Aquaculture Standard (2018). Furthermore, during the transition phase up until January 31 2021, MEL-Japan will be required to clearly differentiate between the different versions of its standard through the logo.

In response to comments concerning the present limited availability of evidence proving implementation of the MEL Japan Fisheries Management Standard v.2.0 (2018), the GSSI requirement of having at least 1 accredited certification in place before being able to achieve recognition is met.

That being said, GSSI requires a stringent monitoring of continued alignment. Under normal circumstances, the Monitoring of Continued Alignment (MOCA) review process is to take place after 1.5 years of recognition. However, in response to the comments received, the GSSI Steering Board has decided that for the case of MEL, this MOCA will be advanced to 1-year post recognition and will comprise of a public consultation to provide stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the new evidence of implementation provided and the continued alignment of the MEL scheme with the GSSI benchmark Tool.

GSSI's detailed responses to your comments by component number raised in relation to the GSSI Benchmark of MEL aquaculture standard are set out below.

The response to each of the comments is structured as follows:

1. Description of the component: Essential or Supplementary and the corresponded numeration
2. Text of the Component
3. Submitted Comment
4. Answer from GSSI
5. Conclusion [old part in black] [new part in blue]
6. References [old part in black] [new part in blue]

The answers to the comments and conclusions of the components make use of the GSSI benchmark language, including the following acronyms:

IE: Independent Expert
EC: Essential Component
SC: Supplementary Component
BC: Benchmark Committee
MOCA: Monitoring of Continued Alignment

■ **Section A – Governance**

SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT A.1.09.01

The Scheme Owner has procedures for taking into account the special circumstances of data deficient and/ or small-scale fishery/aquaculture operations.

■ **MSC comment**

Where are the exact “procedures” that the fisheries IE is satisfied by? It’s not clear how the introductory text given as evidence would be applied/audited. Expectation that this should be supported by a stronger methodology

■ **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Supplementary Component A.1.09.01. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter. The GSSI supplementary component A.1.09.01 addresses the following:

The Scheme Owner processes and policies reduce barriers or promote access of small scale enterprises. This may include specific small scale standards or exemptions that do not lower the requirements of the standards themselves.

Examples of evidence for scheme alignment:

- Separate specific standard for small scale enterprises or programs such as capacity building and access to finance targeted to small scale enterprises. Policies may include sliding scale fees or simplified reporting templates. There are specific GSSI components that address small scale fisheries, and data deficient fisheries that are now in alignment with the version 2 standard.

Specifically, this topic is covered in GSSI Essential Component D.1.06. The IE conclusion to Essential Component D.1.06 cites the MEL standard, the MEL Guidelines for auditors with indicators, and a reference to the Hokkaido assessment report. This conclusion provides the details of the IEs procedure or criteria for evaluating MEL alignment with this GSSI component, including the evidence that was considered. The IE conclusion for this section D component is as follows:

MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 2.5 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

There shall be publicly-defined target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration set on the basis of the best scientific evidence available, in order to maintain or recover the stock at levels consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY) or a suitable proxy.

Indicator(s) 2.5 (d) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether, in the case of small-scale and/or data limited fisheries, fisheries governance and management systems for those fisheries are prepared, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries.

- Existence of small-scale fisheries or data limited fisheries

Indicator(s) 2.5 (e) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether, in the case of small-scale and/or data limited fisheries, the knowledge of traditional fisheries, fishers and fishery regions is objectively verified and applied into the fisheries management system.

- Existence of verification methods of the knowledge of traditional fisheries, fishers and fishery regions is objectively

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 2.5; Indicators 2.5 (d) and (e). p. 28-31.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.5 (d). p. 69 and 2.5 (e). p. 70.

The references cited for this Essential Component in the section D are as follows:

- 1) Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 2.5. p.7.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
- 2) Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 2.5 (d), (e). p. 28-31.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
- 3) Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.5 (d). p. 69 and 2.5 (e). p. 70.

Conclusion on GSSI Supplementary Component A.1.09.01

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment with acknowledgement of the role and importance of small scale fisheries in Japan and the region. In line with the FAO Guidelines - FMS Introduction page 4 "FMS can be applied to the small-scale fisheries. Management systems differ substantially for

different types and scales of fisheries.

Since the data of small-scale fisheries are limited, the historical record of good management practices could be considered as supporting evidence of

the adequacy of the management measures and systems. However, if the scientific evidence about the impacts of fishery operation on the stock is uncertain, fishers shall take precautionary approaches to prevent adverse effects on sustainable fishery operations." In the opinion of the fisheries IE - the revised standard documents "now has the procedures for taking into account the special circumstances of data deficient / small scale fisheries"

REFERENCES

1. FMS ver.2.0, 2018, Introduction
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. AMS (Ver.1.0), 2018, Introduction
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aquaculture-Management-StandardAMSver.1.0.pdf>

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT A.1.11

The Scheme Owner undertakes a fully documented annual management review of scheme performance, including its assurance program, and the performance of certification and accreditation bodies. The results of the review are used to revise its operating procedures and practices, where necessary.

MSC comment

Since the scheme has been in operation for less than a year, it cannot be judged whether this standard is correctly operated.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component A.1.11. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The performance review of the certification and accreditation bodies has been ongoing and was documented and reviewed by the IE before the public consultation.

MEL J has conducted their annual scheduled internal management review during the MEL Board of Directors Meeting held on 21st June 2019, (after the 4th MEL General Membership Meeting, on the same day). The management review was the first agenda item. Review of internal documents for evidence of internal management review and consideration for revisions to improve procedures and practices:

Agenda of BOD meeting 21st June 2019.

2. Handout for Management Review, as Proposal 1. , in which 1-4 advisory board seen to be improved as Proposal 2, as well as 2-1. Third bullet point - revision of the regulations also as Proposal 2
3. Advisory Board Establishment Procedure - draft of revision as Proposal 2
4. Logo Regulations -draft of revision as proposal 2
5. Meeting Minutes of the 16th BOD meeting_190626

In which written, Proposal 1, Management Review result was successfully shared and approved by the BOD. Proposal 2, as the revision of regulations, Advisory Board Procedure and the Logo Regulations were approved by BOD to be improved, implementing the result of the management review is reflected/ addressed to the improvement of MEL scheme. - Proposal 1, Management Review result was successfully shared and approved by the BOD. Proposal 2, as the revision of regulations, Advisory Board Procedure and the Logo Regulations were approved by BOD to be improved, implementing the result of the management review is reflected/ addressed to the improvement of MEL scheme.

GSSI acknowledges the concerns of the commenter and has indicated to the MEL scheme that a Monitoring of Continued Alignment (MOCA) will take place one year following initial final benchmarking determination, in lieu of the usual 1.5 year period. During this MOCA review the MEL scheme will be required to fully and transparently demonstrate implementation of all the GSSI components, and the MEL requirements in recent, post-benchmarking assessment and audit reports.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component A.1.11

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because it is stipulated in the OMR that “The MEL Council shall undergo an annual management review including of its assurance program to allow for verification of Certification Scheme performance, as well as the performance of AB and CB. The documents of the review shall be reported to the Board of Directors to be used in revising operating procedures and practices as appropriate.”

Detailed Rules of OMR, 3.1 also defines the "Contents of Management Review".

Evidence of implementation include review of internal meeting minutes for Board of Directors including annual report, management evaluation review. Review of Mel progress management file which includes MEL activities for 2019, objectives, timelines and progress. this is used as the end of year business report and management review. Regular meetings have been set up for review of the MEL assurance program with CB and AB evidenced through reviewed meeting minutes and calendar schedule.

For the annual management review, the system is in place and would be considered for follow up in the Monitoring of Continued Alignment (MOCA). However, since the public consultation, MEL J has conducted their annual scheduled internal management review during the MEL Board of Directors Meeting held on 21st June 2019, (after the 4th MEL General Membership Meeting, on the same day). The management review was the first agenda item. Review of internal documents for evidence of internal management review and consideration for revisions to improve procedures and practices:

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REFERENCES

1. OMR, 2019, Clause6.4.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Detailed_Rules_of_OMR_190207.pdf
 Detailed Rules of OMR(D-OMR), 2018, clause 2.5
2. https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Detailed_Rules_of_OMR_190207.pdf

Office Visit/internal review:

3. Annual report 2017 fiscal year
4. Plan of 2018
5. CB management review 7 Jan 2019 meeting minutes (Japanese translated)
6. 190315_(1st) JAB・JFRCA・MEL meeting minutes_0321.docx
7. 190328_MEL top minutes _improve plan.pdf
8. 190425._MEL_JFRCA_FA (minutes) .docx

Internal documents:

9. Japanese - google translate
10. 第16回理事会次第.doc - 116th COuncil Document
11. マリン・エコラベル・ジャパン協議会マネジメントレビュー_MEL COuncil Management review.doc
12. MELアドバイザーボード設置要領_190619 - MEL Advisory Board
13. 190621ロゴマーク使用・管理規程_(理事会配布用)マーカー入り_0619 - Logo Use/Management Regulations
14. 第16回理事会議事録_送付用_190626 - Meeting Minutes of the 16th BOD meeting_190626

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT A.2.04

The Scheme Owner or its delegated authority issues written and enforceable authorizations and/or licenses to use the scheme's mark/ claim/logo only when the facility and/or product has been certified as being in conformity with the relevant standard.

■ MSC comment

the MEL logo users are required to have contract with the CB, not with the scheme owner or its delegated authority. This is indirect contracts/agreements through the CB, but it seems there is no requirements to include this in contracts/agreements between the scheme owner and the CB.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component A.2.04. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

As a result of MEL management review (with JFRCA included), MEL decided to improve the Logo management system, by revising of Logo Regulations which contains the Template of the Logo Contract, to be concluded between the certified entity and MEL Council.

IE reviewed the official notice of the change of Logo management system (revision of the Logo regulations, to conclude Logo use contract between entity and MEL). internal document and 201907_ロゴ契約 (東町漁協) actual example of Logo use contract between Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association and MEL Council

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component A.2.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because in using the MEL logo, the users are required to have contract with the CB. RCB (FMS), RCB (AMS) and RCB (CoC) require the CB to conclude contract with the logo user to ensure that the user will follow the logo policy stipulated in R-LOGO. The Template for Contract on the Use of Logo is available as Appendix F in the RCB(CoC), Appendix E in the RCB (FMS) and RCB (AMS).

Clause 2.1.2 of the R-LOGO defines the conditions for the logo use.

Review of signed CB Contract Template and Logo Application form includes clauses requiring certification and use limited to the scope of the certification.

As a result of MEL management review (with JFRCA included), MEL decided to improve the Logo management system, by revising of Logo Regulations which contains the Template of the Logo Contract, to be concluded between the certified entity and MEL Council.

IE reviewed the official notice of the change of Logo management system (revision of the Logo regulations, to conclude Logo use contract between entity and MEL). internal document and 201907_口ゴ契約 (東町漁協)

Actual example of Logo use contract between Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association and MEL Council

Additionally, V2 of the logo mark for fisheries, corresponding to the GSSI benchmarked standard is clearly differentiated from the V1 logo in final products available for consumers.

REFERENCES

1. R-LOGO, 2018, clause 2.1.2.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Regulations_Logo.pdf
2. R-LOGO, 2019, Appendix 2
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Regulations_Logo.pdf
3. RCB(FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.3.4. , 5.16
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
4. RCB(AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 5.3.4. , 5.16
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
5. RCB (CoC)ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.3.8. , 5.16
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
6. Review contract Tomokomai Fisheries dated 5 Sept 2018 including Logo Mark Usage template completed and signed (Japanese translated)
7. Review audit checklist assessment report

SUPPLEMENTARY COMPONENT A.3.06.04

Where the Scheme Owner limits decision-making to members, it ensures that membership criteria and application procedures are transparent and non-discriminatory.

■ MSC comment

You could argue that the membership procedures for the MEL Council are discriminatory because a membership fee is required. It isn't a significant sum (minimum of 50,000 yen i.e. £370, per year [it is not stated when more than 50,000 yen would be payable]) but it does seem at odds with the statement "The MEL Council shall ensure a well-balanced representation of stakeholders and their geographical distribution." No information on any financial support/waiver available for organisations with small means. The conclusion provided by GSSI is also poor because it only addresses the transparency element of the SC; it makes no mention of whether the membership procedures are non-discriminatory.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Supplementary Component A.3.06.04. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the membership fee required for participation within the MEL council. Yet, the Annual fee for Full Member, at fifty-thousand yen per year (twenty thousand yen for Supporting Member) is not regarded as too expensive in the context and would not cause economic discrimination. This amount is appropriate for the right and responsibility of the MEL membership.

GSSI Acknowledges that an area for further development by MEL is to include an explicit description of the policy of non-discrimination.

Conclusion on GSSI Supplementary Component A.3.06.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because membership criteria and application procedures are publicly accessible and open.

REFERENCES

1. Statutes, 2017, Chapter 3 Membership
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/170626_Statutes_of_MEL_Council_HP.pdf
2. Membership Regulations, 1Dec 2016, Attached Form 1 MEL Council Membership Application Form
Available on the MEL website:
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/161201_Membership-Regulations_HP.pdf
3. MEL website, "Members"
<https://melj.jp/eng/members>

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT A.3.19

As part of the standard development process, the Scheme Owner assesses the feasibility and auditability of requirements in the draft standard.

■ MSC comment

Cannot see any evidence listed for feasibility/auditability assessment of the Fisheries Management Standard, only the Aquaculture and CoC ones. Unless “FMS CoCS” refers to the two standards together.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component A.3.19 Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The evidence listed for feasibility/auditability assessment of the Fisheries Management Standard, is the FMS CoCS.

The “FMS COCS” refers to the two standards together. The feasibility tests of the FMS and COC were conducted together as indicated in evidence.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component A.3.19

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the OMR defines this requirement.

Evidence of implementation include review of SSC meeting minutes.

FMS CoCS Feasibility test: 2017.09.07-08

SSC approved the final draft: 2017.09.27

Approved by General Membership Meeting: 2017.10.03

AMS

SSC approved the final draft: 2017.11.30

check with feasibility test : 2017.12.16

Approved by General Membership Meeting: 2017.12.21

REFERENCES

1. OMR, 2019, Clause 3.1. Step 6 Verification of Feasibility
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OMR_190207.pdf

Internal documents:

2. Japanese - summary translation memo for feasibility_SSC.txt
3. AMS feasibility program and SSC meeting minutes.pdf
4. FMS_CoC_feasibility test program and report.pdf
5. SSC agreed_FMS_CoCS 27SEP2017_example.pdf
6. 第7回MEL規格委員会の開催について（書面）email for SSC.pdf

■ Section B – Operational Management

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.1.04

Subsequent to any changes in the requirements for assessing certification bodies, the Scheme Owner ensures certification bodies are given a defined time period within which to conform to the changes. Special considerations should be given to accredited bodies in developing countries and countries in transition.

■ MSC comment

Demonstration of evidence of this occurring with the CBS? Is there evidence of a transition period?

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.1.04. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter concerning the demonstration of evidence of a transition period for CBs. Essentially through the process of the GSSI assessment, many changes were introduced for the one CB, JFRCA. These were effective immediately and also considered/reviewed in the accreditation process. Therefore, in this instance, there was no occurrence of a transition period.

In this regard, MEL-J has been notified that this will be followed up upon during the MOCA, which will take place 1 year after GSSI recognition instead of 1,5 years after recognition.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.1.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because OMR 6.3.2 stipulates “Subsequent to any changes in the RCBs for assessing CBs, the MEL Council ensures CBs are informed and given a defined time period within which to conform to the changes, considering the impact of change.”.

As the scheme is operating only in Japan, developing/ in transition countries are not applicable.

REFERENCES

1. OMR, rev 7 Feb 2019, Clause 6.3.2
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OMR_190207.pdf
- Office Visit:
2. Contract between MEL and Japan Accreditation Board (JAB), Oct 13th, 2017 (confidential)
3. Contract between MEL and Japan Fisheries Resource Conservation Association (JFRCA), dated Jan 31, 2018 (confidential)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.1.05

The Scheme Owner only works with accreditation bodies that have personnel with the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience for performing accreditation functions in fisheries and aquaculture operations.

■ MSC comment

This does not demonstrate that training on the standard has occurred with the accreditation body on the scheme documents.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.1.05. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter. During the assessment process against this component, MEL presented the enforceable MOU they have with the AB to ensure that the accreditation personnel has the education, training knowledge and experience in the sector.

In addition, the IE has reviewed emails with the appointment of accreditation auditor and training on MEL standards and documents Aug 18-Feb 19. The technical auditor has the expertise (fishing and aquaculture) necessary for the accreditation audit team as evidenced by the records of training, meetings and auditor training workshops and determined by MEL.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.1.05

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because they require CBs to have accreditation by IAF ISO members to ensure that the Scheme is in conformance with this requirement. Stipulated in OMR clause 6.2.1

[The record of meeting with JAB auditor/technical specialist were reviewed 2018.08.03](#)

[Review of emails correspondence on auditor training needs on MEL standards and documents and appointment Aug 2018 - Feb 2019.](#)

[2019.02.22 . Agenda, participant list and meeting notes MEL auditor training workshop 6 Feb 2019](#)

REFERENCES

1. OMR, 2019, clause 6.2.1.and 6.2.2
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OMR_190207.pdf
Website:
 2. http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Japan/85
 3. http://www.iaf.nu/articles/Policy_Documents/40
- Office Visit:
4. Contract between MEL and JAB, 2017, clause 7(2) (confidential)
 5. Contract between MEL and JFRCA, 2018 (confidential)
 6. Internal emails with JAB and MEL
 7. MEL_GSSI_workshop list (summary).xls
 8. MEL-GSSI Workshop (Draft).190116.docx
 9. PAT10-00 180702_auditor training program_Ver1.doc (Japanese Google translate)
 10. [01 Training 2018FEB_JAB Mr.Yamada.xls](#)
 11. [email correspondence Aug 18 - Feb 2019 appointment of accreditation auditor and training needs/conducted](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.1.06

The Scheme Owner ensures that external audits are carried out on the accreditation body to assess performance.

■ MSC comment

The document linked to states that the peer review happened in 2013 (https://www.jab.or.jp/files/items/19/File/Execution_condition_result_of_PAC_APLAC_mutual_evaluation-2013_3_j.pdf). This was six years ago and does not reflect JAB's operation of the MEL scheme documents.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.1.06. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter. Yet, The IAF members undergo an external peer evaluation (PE), which is associated with a lengthy approval process. The interval of the PE is four years. The previous PE was conducted during 10-15/11/2013.

The following is an overview of recent PAC (Current APAC) Peer Evaluation

PE dates: 6 – 10/11/2017

PE activity: office assessment & witnessing Assessment team: PAC PE Team (8 people)/APLAC PE Team (6 people) PAC PE scope: QMS, EMS, EnMS, FSMS, ISMS, Product, GHG, Persons

The PE result has been approved by APAC on 7th September 2019. The result approved by APAC was submitted to IAF Frankfurt General Assembly in October for final approval and publication. Until then, all documents are internal.

Given the limited evidence of implementation available, BC members concluded that during the MOCA process additional evidence has to be provided. The evidence can consist of additional certification reports (in English) and a transparent verification system for the conclusions of the auditors, i.e. a Peer review process with local experts. To ensure consistency in the process, BC members also requested the MEL-Japan program to undergo the MOCA process 1 year after any recognition instead of 1.5 years.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component A.1.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because external and independent performance review is a standard component of IAF membership through the MLA. IAF members undergo peer review by other IAF members to ensure quality and consistency of approach across their whole membership.

The following is an overview of recent PAC (Current APAC) Peer Evaluation. The interval is four years. The previous PE was conducted during 10-15/11/2013.

PE dates: 6 – 10/11/2017

PE activity: office assessment & witnessing Assessment team: PAC PE Team (8 people)/APLAC PE Team (6 people) PAC PE scope: QMS, EMS, EnMS, FSMS, ISMS, Product, GHG, Persons

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REFERENCES

1. OMR, rev 7 Feb 2019, Clause 6.2.1.

https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OMR_190207.pdf

Website:

2. http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Japan/85
3. http://www.iaf.nu/articles/Policy_Documents/40
4. Peer review 2015 results PAC/APLCA
https://www.jab.or.jp/files/items/19/File/Execution_condition_result_of_PAC_APLAC_mutual_evaluation-2013_3_j.pdf (Japanese google translate)

Office Visit :

5. review of previous JAB Peer review 2015 and current ongoing (every 4 years) internal timeline and documents (Japanese translated)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.1.08

The Scheme Owner ensures that the accreditation process includes an on-site audit of the certification body.

■ MSC comment

Output of the office audit should be included as evidence.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.1.08. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the missing evidence concerning the Office Audit output. During the MEL GSSI office visit, the initial findings of the accreditation office visit by JAB was reviewed at the JFRCA offices. JFRCA subsequently provided a copy of the highly confidential accreditation report for internal review only.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.1.08

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because as a member of IAF, the inclusion of an office audit is part of the standard approach for the JAB accreditation process.

Further, contract between MEL and JAB article 7 stipulates that the AB shall conduct an accreditation of MEL certification body in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011: 2004 (clause 7.7) which requires an on-site assessment which includes an office audit and a field audit.

Review of accreditation application including office audit conducted 25 Dec 2018 FMS, AMS and CoC documents. Acceptance of JFRCA for product certification of MEL standard 10 Oct 2018. Three of witness audits were completed by middle of January 2019, as well as JFRCA office visit by JAB in December 2018. JFRCA accredited March 28, 2019.

REFERENCES

1. OMR, rev 7 Feb 2019, Clause 6.2.1.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/OMR_190207.pdf
2. IAF Website: http://www.iaf.nu/articles/IAF_MEM_Japan/85
JAB website:
3. Accreditation procedure: <https://www.jab.or.jp/service/product/step/> (Japanese)

Office Visit/Internal:
4. Accreditation project management documents including desk based and office visits (confidential)
Japanese translated
5. Contract between MEL and Japan Accreditation Board (JAB), Oct 13th, 2017 (confidential)
Japanese translated
6. Contract between MEL and JFRCA, 2018 (confidential) Japanese translated
7. JAB_schedule for JFRCA_20190322 (Japanese).pdf
8. JFRCA Accreditation Certificate PO170

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.04

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies carry out periodic surveillance and monitoring at sufficiently close intervals to verify that certified operations continue to comply with the certification requirements. For aquaculture operations, this should be on an annual basis.

■ MSC comment

Comment 1/2: The FMS surveillance requirements treats "Annual" as up to 18 months after the initial or re-certification audit*, with no requirements around justifying why this could be scheduled for the maximum 18 months rather than the 12 months that is more common in certificate schemes. Although this goes down to 12 months for remaining surveillance audits. But 5.10.2 then goes on to say that a desktop review (used in place of an audit if appropriate) "should be taken within two years after the previous on-site audit". This is potential 2-year gap, and a "should" is used instead of a "shall" which suggests that the 2-year limit may not always be enforced. These aspects are important to set out in the benchmark report for full transparency. (Note - the MSC does allow a 6 month leeway as well but this comes with caveats that MEL does not appear to (must be appropriate to circumstances of the fishery, CAB must give reasons, stakeholders must be informed of revised timing; and, regardless of timings, 4 surveillance audits are to be conducted before the expiry date of the existing certificate))

Comment 2/2: the annual audit has not happened for the first fishery certified by MEL because it was certified recently. Therefore it cannot yet be verified whether the "annual" audit would be conducted in an appropriate and robust way.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.04. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the FMS surveillance requirements of certification bodies and the annual audit for the first fishery certified by MEL.

With regards to the first comment, the FMS surveillance requirements of certification bodies as specified in 5.10.1 are considered periodic surveillance and monitoring at sufficiently close intervals to verify that certified operations continue to comply with the certification requirements. The advice for justifying why this could be maximum 18 months rather than 12 has been passed on to MEL-J for consideration.

Regarding 5.10.2 and the use of should - this was reviewed and discovered that the original (in enforcement) Japanese version is written "shall" meaning and a mistake in translation. The English version was updated. Additionally, after the public consultation, Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association CoC and AMS Annual Surveillance plan was reviewed (Sept 19th, 2019) and as within the time period as prescribed in the MEL procedures. Association Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative FMS surveillance audit was conducted 21st July 2019, with the full audit report provided dated August 2019.

With consideration of the second comment, this aspect has been flagged for MOCA follow up and review.

A full review of the reports, NCs and Corrective Action timelines (B.2.10 and B.2.16) will take place with the MOCA.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the RCB stipulates annual audits for FMS (18 months) and AMS (12 months)

Review of copies of new certificate one each for FMS, AMS and CoC in Japanese (rough Google Translate) confirming renewal dates. JFRCA website of certified entities(NEW MEL=FMS ver.2.0, AMS, and CoC Ver.2.0) shows also the validity date (and due for the next annual audit).

Review sample management sheet of JFRCA to manage/ inform certified entity of annual audit due .

Annual surveillance audit for Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association CoC and AMS Association Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative FMS are for Sept and August 2019 respectively - within the time period as prescribed in the MEL procedures. A full review of the reports, NCs and Corrective Action timelines (B.2.10 and B.2.16) will take place with the MOCA.

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.10.1
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. RCB (AMS) ver.2.1, 2019 Clause 5.10.1
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. RCB(CoC) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.10.1, Appendix C
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
4. http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html#mel_capture_fisheries_ver2

Internal review/certificates:

5. JFRCA_F – 1 .management sheet (Azuma-cho AMS) .pdf
6. Certificate_FMS ver.2.0_Hokkaido_0306.pdf
7. Certificate_AMS ver.1.0_Azumacho_0306.pdf
8. Certificate_CoC ver.2.0_Azumacho_0306.pdf
9. Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association JFRCA Assessment plan dated 1 September 2019
10. Marine Eco-Label Japan Fisheries Management Certification First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.05

The Scheme Owner ensures that certification bodies apply a consistent methodology to assess compliance with the standard.

■ MSC comment

There is not enough evidence to demonstrate compliance with this requirement. No demonstration of annual management review or scheme oversight of CABs.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.05 Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate alignment with GSSI Essential Component B.2.05.

With regards to the evidence to demonstrate consistent methodology: A review of audit reports was done prior to the public consultation to ensure a consistent methodology. In addition, the GSSI IE reviewed a sample of audit plans and auditor qualifications/competence for those audits.

To verify the application of consistent methodology, this component will have special follow up during the MOCA process in consultation with IEs C and D with additional reports.

With regards to the comment on no demonstration of management review of scheme oversight: Please also see related GSSI Essential Component A.1.11

There was a CB management review 7 Jan 2019 meeting minutes (Japanese translated) with regular monthly meetings being conducted:

190315_(1st) JAB · JFRCA · MEL meeting minutes_0321.docx

190328_MEL top minutes _improve plan.pdf

190425._MEL_JFRCA_FA (minutes) .docx

In the fiscal year of 2019,(2019.04.01) MEL and JFRCA are having official and in-depth meeting on a regular basis (every month), to share the important information regarding GSSI, Certification operation such as Certified entity, the progress of assessments being conducted, and the perspective of listed candidates for applying MEL Certification.

Regular MEL-JFRCA official meetings (record of regular review meetings) was reviewed.

Agenda	handouts	minutes	MEL top		
2019/3/15	○	○	○submitted		
2019/3/28			○submitted	○	
2019/4/25					
	○submitted	○			
2019/5/17	○	○	○	○	
2019/6/19	○	○	○	○	
2019/7/17	○	○	○	○	
2019/8/30	○	◎	◎	○	
(2019/9/30)					

Additionally, the Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association CoC and AMS Annual Surveillance plan was reviewed (Sept 19th, 2019). Association Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative FMS surveillance audit was conducted 21st July 2019, with the full audit report provided dated August 2019. Both reports used the guidelines consistently but a full review of the reports, NCs and Corrective Action timelines (B.2.10 and B.2.16) will take place with the MOCA.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.05

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the methodologies to be used to assess compliance with the FMS/ AMS are described in both “Guidelines for Auditors” and “Checklist for Auditors” of each standard which are all freely available on the website.

Review of CB JFRCA regulations, guidance and training records.

Annual management review of CBs (OMR 6.4)

Review of sample of audit reports

[Review of audit plans and auditor qualification/competence sheets](#)

[Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association CoC and AMS Annual Surveillance plan was reviewed \(Sept 19th, 2019\). Association Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative FMS surveillance audit was conducted 21st July 2019, with the full audit report provided dated August 2019. Both reports used the guidelines consistently but a full review of the reports, NCs and Corrective Action timelines \(B.2.10 and B.2.16\) will take place with the MOCA.](#)

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, 4 (Resource Requirements)
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
 2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, 4 (Resource Requirements)
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
 3. RCB(CoC)ver.2.1, 2018, 4 (Resource Requirements)
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
 4. Guidelines for Auditors of FMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
 5. Guidelines for Auditors of AMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aquaculture-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-1.1.pdf>
 6. Checklist for Auditors of FMS, 2019 (not on the website)
 7. Checklist for Auditors of AMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Checklist-for-Auditors-of-the-Aquaculture-Management-Standard.pdf>
 8. Guidelines for Auditors of CoC, 2018
 9. Checklist for Auditors of CoCS, 2018 (not on the website)
- Office Visit/internal review:
10. JFRCA Regulations and training documents (confidential) in Japanese translated
 11. audit reports confidential (Japanese google translate)
 12. Chubu Suisan (CoC) report 11.pdf
 13. Chuo Gyorui (CoC) report 6.pdf
 14. Fukushima (FMS) report 15.pdf
 15. Yonkyu Ohita (AMS) report 3.pdf
 16. Yumigahama (AMS) report 7.pdf
 17. 審査計画書 (東町) =Audit Plan (Azuma-cho)
 18. 審査計画書 (北海道) =Audit Plan(H o k k a i d o)
 19. 審査員資格・力量管理シート(井上)=Auditor qualification/competence management sheet
 20. 審査員資格・力量管理シート(岩田)=Auditor qualification/competence management sheet
 21. Azuma-cho Fishery Cooperative Association JFRCA Assessment plan dated 1 September 2019
 22. Marine Eco-Label Japan Fisheries Management Certification First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of
 23. Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.06

The Scheme Owner ensures that accredited certification bodies have consistent documented procedure(s) that specify the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total, for all or part of the scope of certification.

■ MSC comment

There is not enough evidence to demonstrate NCs have been raised and handled appropriately. There is minimal definition on how NCs are defined per requirements. One clause allowing continued certificate use while a decision is pending presents a risk (5.5.10 in the RCB for FMS).

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.06. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the limited evidence to demonstrate the NC's have been raised and handled appropriately. Yet, to ensure there is not a gap of continued use during a renewal audit, JFRCA uses a precautionary approach. When the certification comes into effect, JFRCA issues a timetable showing the schedule of the annual and renewal audit to the applicant, ensuring sufficient assessment time (at least 2 months before) to prevent from expiration before a renewal audit decision. JFRCA acceptance notice extends the expiration date to the date of notification of the judgment result". A review of the JFRCA acceptance notice letter reviewed "if the decision result notification time exceeds the current qualification expiration date, the expiration date of the auditor qualification will be extended to the determination result notification date with this letter."

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the RCB (FMS) /RCB (AMS)/ RCB (CoC) section 5.12. require the CBs to comply with ISO/IEC 17065 section 7.11, Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification as well as outlines the process

JFRCA MEL Certification Regulations outlines procedure for suspension and withdrawal of certification

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Section 5.12.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Section 5.12.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. RCB (CoC) ver.2.1, 2019, Section 5.12.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
4. ISO 17065, Section 7.11. Termination, reduction, suspension or withdrawal of certification

Office Visit:

5. Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018. Japanese translated
6. Review actual contract JFRCA with client (confidential) in Japanese, translated

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.07

The Scheme Owner requires that accredited certification bodies have certification procedures and guidance for multi-site certifications, if allowed under the scheme.

■ MSC comment

Insufficient evidence if there is no demonstrated use of the requirements.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.07. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on limited evidence of accredited certification bodies. JRICA has certification procedures and guidance for multi-site certifications. As of recently, there is one AMS certified as multi-site, effective on 2019.07.26, Yonkyu Co., Ltd. : Red sea bream (farmed) full report provided. http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/pdf/mel/farmed_fisheries_JFRCA10A7500011.pdf

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because RCB (FMS)/ RCB (AMS) clause 5.4.4. defines that the sampling methodology Appendix B be used.

No multi-site audits to date for review of audit reports.

[There is one AMS certified as multi-site, effective on 2019.07.26, Yonkyu Co., Ltd. : Red sea bream \(farmed\) full report provided](#)

JFRCA MEL Certification Regulations and training of auditors cover this topic

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.4.4., Appendix B
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 5.4.4., Appendix B
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/pdf/mel/farmed_fisheries_JFRCA10A7500011.pdf
4. Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb 2018.
5. JFRCA training modules and records (Japanese translated)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.09

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies have in place consistent procedures for stakeholders to provide input during the certification process.

■ MSC comment

MEL provide information of the fishery online when they apply for the certification, but it is not enough for stakeholder to provide input. For example, one of the announcements (URL is attaching end of this comment) share the information only client organization name and gear type, so stakeholder won't be able to provide relative information of the fishery. That's why, I think RCB(FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, clause 5.3.5 is unexecuted. http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/shinsei/shinsei_osaka.html

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.09 Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the opportunity of stakeholders to provide input during the certification process. The JFRCA has a consistent procedure in place which is disclosed with announcement on their website. In the JFRCA Certification operation regulation, section 5.3.6, it is stipulated that 1) the acceptance of certification application shall be announced, 2) consistent system shall be in place for interested parties to provide input. Stakeholder input is available by email. The method is assessed and approved in conformity by JAB.

<example>

株式会社兵殖Hyoshoku Co., Ltd. (<http://hyoshoku.com/>)

2019/2/1 certification application was accepted and disclosed on JFRCA website:

http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/shinsei/shinsei_hyoshoku.html

*in the announcement

3. 意見提出要領

上記申請に関連し、当協会が考慮すべきであると考える事項について、簡潔な文、又は箇条書きで、意見及び提供可能な場合にはその裏づけとなる具体的な事実をお知らせ下さい。

(意見送付先) mel-jfrca@mbr.sphere.ne.jp

3. Opinion submission guidelines

Related to the application above, on what you think JFRCA should consider, please provide opinions, with brief statement or list of opinions, and if available, specific facts supporting it.

(to submit) mel-jfrca@mbr.sphere.ne.jp

Aquaculture and CoC Certifications to Hyoshoku. Co. Ltd. effective on 2019/07/26

(JFRCA10A7500021), (JFRCA20C7500011)

http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.09

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the RCB (FMS)/ RCB (AMS) requires that the CB at the time of receipt of audit application, make a public announcement and have a consistent system in place by which interested stakeholders can provide input.

JFRCA has in place consistent procedure publicly announces applications for certification with the opportunity for public input during the certification process. Review for sample of audit reports (#6,7,11,15) on JFRCA website with public announcements.

In the JFRCA Certification operation regulation, section 5.3.6, it is stipulated that 1) the acceptance of certification application shall be announced, 2) consistent system shall be in place for interested parties to provide input. And the stakeholder input is available by email. The method is assessed and approved in conformity by JAB.

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.3.5.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. RCB (AMS), ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 5.3.5.

- https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. JFRCA website (Japanese Google translate). accessed 22 Oct 2018.
http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html#mel_capture_fisheries_ver2
 4. Screen shot public consultation Application for Hokkaido Fisheries Cooperative Federation Aug 27, 2018
 5. Screen shot public announcement (Japanese Google translate) accessed 14 May 2019
http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html - Chuo CoC (2018/3/20), Yumigahama AMS 2018/5/8, Chubu CoC 2018/8/10, Fukushima FMS 2018/12/24
 6. 株式会社兵殖Hyoshoku Co., Ltd. (<http://hyoshoku.com/>)
 7. 2019/2/1 certification application was accepted and disclosed on JFRCA website:
http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/shinsei/shinsei_hyoshoku.html
 8. *in the announcement
 3. 意見提出要領
上記申請に関連し、当協会が考慮すべきであるとする事項について、簡潔な文、又は箇条書きで、意見及び提供可能な場合にはその裏づけとなる具体的な事実をお知らせ下さい。
(意見送付先) mel-jfrca@mbr.sphere.ne.jp
 9. 3. Opinion submission guidelines
Related to the application above, on what you think JFRCA should consider, please provide opinions, with brief statement or list of opinions, and if available, specific facts supporting it.
(to submit) mel-jfrca@mbr.sphere.ne.jp
 10. Aquaculture and CoC Certifications to Hyoshoku. Co. Ltd. effective on 2019/07/26 (JFRCA10A7500021), (JFRCA20C7500011)
http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.10

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies use a consistent procedure for determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances and allowing for appeals of non-compliances.

■ MSC comment

We can't judge by lack of information. In the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019 has several minor non-conformities required corrective action but there is no document relative the fishery in the references. As the RCB(FMS)5.10.6, these Minor non-conformities are corrected within a year at the latest. Since there is no corrective action report and it is less than a year since obtaining certification, it can't be judged whether this component is satisfied about Fishery certification.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.10. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the limited information available as a normal aspect of a new program like MEL Japan.

The MEL-Japan certification program is only starting its implementation phase, and as such does not yet have a broad basis of evidence for implementation. Yet, MEL-Japan does meet the GSSI requirements to be in alignment with this component.

Given the limited evidence of implementation available, BC members concluded that during the MOCA process additional evidence has to be provided. The evidence can consist of additional certification reports (in English) and a transparent verification system for the conclusions of the auditors, i.e. a Peer review process with local experts. To ensure consistency in the process, BC members also requested the MEL-Japan program to undergo the MOCA process 1 year after any recognition instead of 1.5 years.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.10

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because Guidelines/Checklists for Auditors of FMS/AMS provide detailed guidelines for non-compliances. RCB (FMS) / RCB (AMS) clause 5.5.6-8 and 5.10.4-7, RCB (CoC) clause 5.5.5-7 and 5.10.4-5 define the procedures for non-compliances and its corrective action to be verified.

As for appeals of non-compliances, RCB (FMS) / RCB (AMS)/ RCB (CoC) clause 5.14. define that the requirements provided in Section 7.13 of ISO/IEC 17065 shall be applicable.

Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018 specify methodology outlines steps and closure

[This has been flagged for MOCA follow up and review. Review actual corrective action report for Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard \(Salmon, Hokkaido\), 2019.](#)

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.6-8, 5.14 and 5.10.4-7.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
 2. RCB (AMS)ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.6-8, 5.14 and 5.10.4-7
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
 3. RCB (CoC)ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.5-7, 5.14 and 5.10.4-5
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
 4. Guidelines for Auditors of FMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
 5. Guidelines for Auditors of AMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Aquaculture-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-1.1.pdf>
 6. Checklist for Auditors of FMS, 2019 (not on the website)
 7. Checklist for Auditors of AMS, 2019
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Checklist-for-Auditors-of-the-Aquaculture-Management-Standard.pdf>
- Office Visit:
8. Guidelines for Auditors of CoC, 2018
 9. Checklist for Auditors of CoCS, 2018 (not on the website)
 10. Audit reports confidential (Japanese google translate)
 11. Chubu Suisan (CoC) report 11.pdf
 12. Chuo Gyorui (CoC) report 6.pdf
 13. Fukushima (FMS) report 15.pdf
 14. Yonkyu Ohita (AMS) report 3.pdf
 15. Yumigahama (AMS) report 7.pdf
 16. AMS Audit Report Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association 2018/3/23
 17. Audit Report (Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association 2018/3/23
 18. Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018. clauses 5.5.9 and 5.5.11
 19. Review Corrective Action client answer sheet JAB RFL61-Rev8

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.13

For fisheries, the Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to make full audit reports available on request after certification has been granted, while excluding commercially sensitive information.

■ MSC comment

In the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019. p5, auditor name is blackened. GSSI Essential component allow to exclude commercially sensitive information, but auditor name does not include in the information. If the auditor name and background is not available to the public, stakeholders cannot judge conflict of the interest between the auditors and the fisheries.

Actually, a report of amberjack aquaculture p1 is written "the information fit into commercially sensitive information and could fail to fair determination in the certification activity (ISO/IEC17065 4.2.2) is blackened because we cannot open.", but ISO-17065 4.2.2 does not refer to hiding auditor.

In the MEL's scheme, there is no opportunity consulting by stakeholder after Final report published to determination of certification, so transparent of auditor information is very important.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.13 Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by MSC. With regard to the first comment made; in addition to the commercially sensitive information kept in private by the applicant, information (such as the names of auditors) that may impair the fairness of certification activities is blackened at the discretion of the certification body.

For JFRCA, not to disclose the auditor's name is justified by JFRCA on the basis of ISO: ISO 17065. 4.2.2 "The certification body shall be responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality."

This is stated on the JFRCA website; http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html

On this page, clearly stated (so as on the right above corner of each published report)

審査報告書内で、以下に該当する情報は開示することができないので黒塗りしています。

- 商業的に機微な内容（認証機関への要求事項5.3.3（漁業、養殖）、5.3.5（CoC））
- 認証活動の公平性を損なう圧力に結び付き得る情報（ISO/IEC17065 4.2.2）

The translation being as follows;

In the assessment report, the following information cannot be made public, so is blackened:

- Commercially sensitive contents <RCB 5.3.3(FMS,AMS), 5.3.5(CoC)>
- Information that can lead to pressures that undermine the fairness of certification activities (ISO/IEC17065 4.2.2)

For JFRCA - risks due to disclosure of auditor's name are assessed as serious, such as slander against the auditors, Threat, or corruption, etc. that interferes the fairness/impartiality of the certification assessment. The only way to avoid these risks is to keep the auditor's name undisclosed.

Contrarily, by not releasing the auditor's name, some people may question the competence of the auditors who conducted the assessment. However, the requirements for the auditors are made public, and CB's operation in accordance with the requirements is assessed by the Accreditation Body, with conformity assessment."

In other words, the competence required to auditors is defined and disclosed in RCB (Requirements for CB). And the reason that the auditor meets the competency is that the CB to which the auditor belongs is accredited by AB.

This was also reviewed by the GSSI IE under GSSI in components Auditor Competence including CVs, training schedules and competencies and qualifications.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.13

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the RCB (FMS) clause 5.9.1. defines that “The Certification Body shall disclose the status of certification and a summary of the audit report by electronic medium. The Certification Body shall, based upon an agreement with the applicant, disclose to the public the whole text of audit reports by electronic medium or at the request of a third party.” Commercially sensitive matters are excluded as stated in the RCB(FMS) 5.3.3.

There is a listing of certified entities with links to all reports. In the case that reports have not been finalized in terms of removing commercially sensitive information with the certified entity, there is the possibility to request the report once it becomes available. Google translated “when you click the certification number, the examination report will be displayed. In the examination report, the information corresponding to the following cannot be disclosed and is blackened.

- Commercially sensitive contents (Requirements for certification body 5.3.3 (fishing, aquaculture), 5.3.5 (CoC))
- Information that can lead to pressure that impairs the fairness of certification activities (ISO / IEC17065 4.2.2).

While some certification reports have not been released during confirmation of relevant information with certification holders, they will be released one by one as soon as the confirmation is obtained. For requests for unpublished reports, please contact the secretariat (mel-jfrca@mbr.sphere.ne.jp). As soon as ready, we will contact you.”

JFRCA client contract template for all standards Article 2.2 Disclosure notes that upon acceptance, the client's application will be announced publicly and 2.3 upon certification - reports shall be made public without commercially sensitive information.

Regarding the delay in publication of the audit reports, JFRCA has measures to prevent recurrence and to make public reports part of the requirements for certification. Administrative procedure ensures that Certification shall not take effect until the report is ready to be made public.

updated JFRCA administrative procedure referenced

S-7 is 認証判定書 "decision making on Certification" □申請者が同意した公開用の報告書が用意され、認証発効時に公開できる。A report for publication that the applicant has agreed to is prepared and can be published when the certification comes into effect.(google translate)

and put in their procedure.

F-1 認証管理シート”certification management sheet” the certification comes into effect when the assessment report is made public on the website.

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.9.1 and 5.3.3.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html accessed 19June 2019

Office Visit:

3. Review template and actual signed contract with clients Information Disclosure clauses 2.1-2.3 (Japanese translated)
4. JFRCA_様式 F - 1 .Rev2認証管理シート (改) .docx
5. JFRCA_様式 S - 7 .Rev1認証判定決定書 (改) .docx

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.16

The Scheme Owner clearly defines the criteria relating to the classification of non-conformities. Where the Scheme Owner allows for certification of an entity with non-compliances, the Scheme Owner requires that:

- only non-conformities on minor, non-critical issues are allowed;
- a timeline for closing out corrective actions must be defined;
- a system to verify that corrective actions have been closed out is in place.

■ MSC comment

The steps for handling an NC that is raised during a surveillance audit are not well defined.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.16. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter on the steps for handling a NC. Yet, the handling of NCs are clearly defined in the JFRCA Certification Process Manual 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 provide the handling of Non-conformity. That is in accordance with the RCB.

認証プロセス手順書 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9に不適合の取り扱いについて定めています。

The definition of NCs can be found in the first section, with how these are handled specified as per the evidence already submitted. The conclusion and evidence have been updated. This aspect of the surveillance report has been flagged for the MOCA and review.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.16

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment as the RCB specifies the definition of NCs and that certification is not allowed in the event of a major non-conformity (only max 3 minors). The timeline for closing out CA is defined. The verification date is required. JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018 specify methodology outlines steps and closure

[The handling of NC are clearly defined in the JFRCA Certification Process Manual 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9 provide the handling of Non-conformity.](#)

[That is in accordance with the MEL RCB.](#)

[Review actual corrective action report](#)

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.6-10, Section 5.7., Clause 5.10.4-6
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf
2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.6.,
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. RCB (COC) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 5.5.5.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf
4. Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018. clauses 5.5.9 and 5.5.11
5. Review Corrective Action client answer sheet JAB RFL61-Rev8
6. Internal (confidential):
7. 認証プロセス手順書 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9に不適合の取り扱いについて定めています。

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.17

The Scheme Owner has defined the qualifications and competence criteria required by auditors and audit teams, employed by certification bodies, and it makes this information publicly available.

■ MSC comment

In the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019. p5, the names and CV of auditors are hidden. Therefore, it is not judged whether the auditors are competent or not.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.17. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter. The GSSI Component is publicly available information on the qualifications and competency requirements of auditors employed by certification bodies which can be found on the MEL website as per the evidence submitted.

The requirements for the auditors are made public, and CB's operations are in accordance with the requirements as assessed by the Accreditation Body, with conformity assessment."

In other words, the competence required to auditors is defined and disclosed in RCB (Requirements for CB). And the reason that the auditor meets the competency is that the CB to which the auditor belongs is accredited by AB.

This information was also reviewed by the IE under GSSI in components Auditor Competence including CVs, training schedules and competencies and qualifications

For JFRCA, not to disclose the auditor's name is justified by JFRCA on the basis of ISO: ISO 17065. 4.2.2 "The certification body shall be responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality."

This is stated on their website

http://www.fish-jfrca.jp/04/progress_and_results.html

in this page, clearly stated (so as on the right above corner of each published report)

審査報告書内で、以下に該当する情報は開示することができないので黒塗りしています。

- 商業的に機微な内容（認証機関への要求事項5.3.3（漁業、養殖）、5.3.5（CoC））
- 認証活動の公平性を損なう圧力に結び付き得る情報（ISO/IEC17065 4.2.2）

The translation being as follows;

In the assessment report, the following information cannot be made public, so blackened:

- Commercially sensitive contents <RCB 5.3.3(FMS,AMS), 5.3.5(CoC)>
- Information that can lead to pressures that undermine the fairness of certification activities (ISO/IEC17065 4.2.2)

For JFRCA - risks due to disclosure of auditor's name are assessed as serious, such as slander against the auditors, threat, or corruption, etc. that interferes the fairness/impartiality of the certification assessment. The only way to avoid these risks is to keep the auditor's name undisclosed.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.17

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the public and freely available RCBs defines the qualifications and competence criteria required by MEL auditors employed by CB

Auditor assessments and training records include these criteria and competencies. An update to date list of auditors trained with detailed auditor CVs maintained in JFRCA offices [and was reviewed by the GSSI IE.](#)

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS) ver.2.1,2019, Section 4.1.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf

2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Section 4.1.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. RCB (CoC) ver.2.1, 2019, Section 4.1.
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf

Office Visit:

4. JFRCA training records, auditor records including CVs, training manual (Japanese translated)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.2.20

The Scheme Owner requires that certification bodies include the following in their competence assessment of auditors:

- an assessment of knowledge and skills for each fundamental area the auditor will be expected to be working,
- an assessment of knowledge of pertinent fishery and /or aquaculture Programs and the ability to access and be able to apply relevant laws and regulations,
- an assessment of the personal attributes of the auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner,
- a period of supervision to cover the assessment fishery and/or aquaculture principles, specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge,
- a documented sign off by the certification body of the satisfactory completion of assessment requirements.

■ MSC comment

Conclusion and evidence do not demonstrate that a confirmation of auditor competence has been assessed.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.2.20. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter. Yet, the auditor competence is in accordance with the RCB and its own procedures. JFRCA has an assessment process that covers all of the GSSI elements of this component, including an exam, witness audit and keeps a documented record of scores, participation and a documented sign off of the assessment. To verify these elements are covered, the commenter can also refer to the evidence provided in the references of this component.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.2.20

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because RCB (FMS)/ RCB (AMS)/ RCB(CoC) clause 4.1.6. (Competence management for auditors) stipulate that “The requirements provided in Section 6.1.2 of ISO/IEC 17065 shall be applicable.”

Assessment Method for Qualifications and Competence of Auditors is provided in the Appendix A of each RCB. An assessment methodology is provided for consistency and completeness in the Appendix A. Auditor assessments and training records as per 7.4 and 7.5 and Section 8 of the Training manual. An update to date list of auditors trained with detailed auditor CVs maintained in JFRCA offices [and reviewed by the GSSI IE.](#)

[In accordance with the RCB and its own procedures, JFRCA has an assessment process that covers all of the GSSI elements, including an exam, witness audit and keeps a documented record of scores, participation and a documented sign off of the assessment.](#)

REFERENCES

1. RCB (FMS)ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 4.1.6., Appendix A
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_FMS_ver.2.1.pdf

2. RCB (AMS) ver.1.1, 2019, Clause 4.1.6., Appendix A
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RCB_AMS_ver.1.1.pdf
3. RCB (COC) ver.2.1, 2019, Clause 4.1.6., Appendix A
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf

Office Visit:

4. Training Manual for MEL Auditors, 2018
5. JFRCA training records, auditor records including CVs, training manual (Japanese translated)
6. 【審査実施記録簿】 "Audit conducting record sheet" (confidential)
7. 【判定試験採点表】 "Auditor Exam scoring table" (confidential)
8. 【判定試験問題】 "Auditor exam " (confidential)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.3.03

The Scheme Owner requires certification bodies to verify that all enterprises within the chain maintain accurate and accessible records that allow any certified product or batch of products to be traceable from the point of sale to the buyer.

■ MSC comment

The evidence for compliance with this requirement is limited. An initial audit will not necessarily have looked at traded product because they have not been certified yet.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.3.03. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter concerning the limited evidence available on the implementation at this stage.

The MEL scheme is only starting its implementation phase, and as such does not yet have a broad basis of evidence for implementation. Yet, MEL does meet the requirement to be in alignment with this component.

As per the GSSI Benchmark Committee decision, a follow-up MOCA has been requested to take place 1 year, instead of the usual 1.5 years period, after any recognition and the evidence of implementation of this component will be reviewed as part of this process.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.3.03

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the CoCS clause 3.5. requires the applicant to establish a procedure to ensure the traceability of the certified seafood product at all stages.

Checklist for Auditors of the CoCS covers this point.

Given the limited evidence of implementation available, BC members concluded that during the MOCA process additional evidence has to be provided. The evidence can consist of additional certification reports (in English) and a transparent verification system for the conclusions of the auditors, i.e. a Peer review process with local experts. To ensure consistency in the process, BC members also requested the MEL-Japan program to undergo the MOCA process 1 year after any recognition instead of 1.5 years.

REFERENCES

1. CoCS ver.2.0, 2018, clause 3.2. and 3.5.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Chain-of-Custody-StandardCoCver.2.0.pdf>
Office Visit
2. CoC Audit Report Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association 2018/3/23
3. Checklist for Auditors of the CoCS., 2018 (not on the website)
Internal reports
4. Chuo Gyorui (CoC) report 6.pdf
5. Chubu Suisan (CoC) report 11.pdf

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.3.06

The Scheme Owner requires the certification body to record all identified breaches of the chain of custody, including:

- *an explanation of the factors that allowed the breach to occur;*
- *an explanation of the corrective actions required to ensure that a similar breach does not re-occur;*
- *the time frames for the corrective actions to be completed; and*
- *the date of closing out of the corrective actions and how the problem was solved.*

■ **MSC comment**

The evidence for compliance with this requirement is limited. An initial audit will not necessarily have looked at traded product because they have not been certified yet.

■ **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.3.06. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the commenter concerning the limited evidence available on the implementation at this stage.

The MEL-Japan certification program is only starting its implementation phase, and as such does not yet have a broad basis of evidence for implementation. Yet, MEL-Japan does meet the GSSI requirements to be in alignment with this component.

As per the GSSI Benchmark Committee decision, a follow-up MOCA has been requested to take place 1 year after any recognition and the evidence of implementation of this component will be reviewed as part of this process.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.3.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because the procedures by which non-conformities are identified and recorded including the timeframes for the corrective actions to be completed and verified are described in RCB (CoC). The system for closure is adequately covered.

Root cause analysis is done through Client Answer Sheet on CARs with actual sample reviewed

As per the GSSI Benchmark Committee decision, a follow up MOCA has been requested to take place 1 year after any recognition and the evidence of implementation of this component will be reviewed as part of this process.

REFERENCES

1. RCB (CoC) ver.2.1, 2019, clause 5.5.6., 5.5.7. and 5.10.4
https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/RCB_CoC_ver.2.1.pdf

Office Visit:

2. Review JFRCA MEL Certification regulations 1 rev1 effective 5 Feb2018. clauses 5.5.9 and 5.5.11
3. Review Corrective Action client answer sheet JAB RFL61-Rev8

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT B.3.09

The Scheme Owner requires that an enterprise keeps records that demonstrate conformity with the Chain of Custody requirements for a period that:

- exceeds the shelf life of the certified product; and
- exceeds the periodicity between audits

■ MSC comment

The evidence for compliance with this requirement is limited. An initial audit will not necessarily have looked at traded product because they have not been certified yet.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component B.3.09. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment concerns the limited evidence available on the implementation at this stage.

The MEL-Japan certification program is only starting its implementation phase, and as such does not yet have a broad basis of evidence for implementation. Yet, MEL-Japan does meet the GSSI requirements to be in alignment with this component.

However, in the Azuma-cho's (FM) case of the CoC initial audit, the auditor checked with the forms of 2016 and their manual to confirm that they set the document storage period as for 3 years, and also checked to confirm that none of their seafood products exceed 3 years of shelf life.

As per the GSSI Benchmark Committee decision, a follow up MOCA has been requested to take place 1 year after any recognition and the evidence of implementation of this component will be reviewed as part of this process.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component B.3.09

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because CoCS specifies records be kept for minimum 3 years but if the shelf life of longer than 3 years, the enterprise shall keep the record as long as certified products are stored.

As per the GSSI Benchmark Committee decision, a follow up MOCA has been requested to take place 1 year after any recognition and the evidence of implementation of this component will be reviewed as part of this process.

However, in the Azuma-cho's case of the CoC initial audit, the auditor checked with the forms of 2016 and their manual to confirm that they set the document storage period as for 3 years, and also checked to confirm that none of their seafood products exceed 3 years of shelf life.

REFERENCES

1. CoCS ver.2.0, 2018, clause 2.1.3.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Chain-of-Custody-StandardCoCver.2.0.pdf>

Office Visit:

2. CoC Audit Report Azuma-cho Fisheries Cooperative Association 2018/3/23
3. Checklist for Auditors (CoC), 2018

■ Section D – Fisheries

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.1.01

The standard requires the existence of a fishery management organization or arrangement that manages the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 1.1.1 does not make clear, explicit reference to the existence of a fishery management organization or arrangements. It only refers to national legislation and a 'competent authority', which may not necessarily be an authority with a mandate for fisheries management as per the GSSI guidance.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC, the IE conclusion refers to MEL requirement 1.1.1 that the unit of certification shall be operated legally in accordance with national legislation, such as acquiring fishery license and permission necessary for operating the fisheries from the competent authority (i.e. national or prefectural governments). In the Japanese system of fisheries management there are only two competent authorities, one at the national level, the other at the prefecture level.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.1.01

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 1.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0).

The unit of certification shall be operated legally in accordance with national legislation, such as acquiring fishery license and permission necessary for operating the fisheries from the competent authority (i.e. national or prefectural governments).

Indicator(s) 1.1.1 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1).

Whether the unit of certification is operated legally in accordance with followings:

- Existence of license/permission necessary for operating the fishery by the unit of certification issued by the competent authority such as the relevant national/local government.
- Existence of documents which verifies the legality of the fishery by the unit of certification in case that the unit of certification is not required for the license nor permission

Requirement 1.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0).

An organization and system shall be established to manage the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part. There should be an established management organization and system in order to manage the unit of certification.

Indicator(s) 1.1.2 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1). Whether organizations and arrangements (such as a fisheries cooperative association, national/local organization, official research institute, etc.) which manage the fishery are established.

- References on the management organizations and arrangements for the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 1.1.1 and 1.1.2; Indicators 1.1.1 (a) and 1.1.2 (a). p.4-5.

Examples of these requirement(s) and indicator(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 1.1.1 (a). p. 8-13 and 1.1.2 (a). p. 14-15.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.1.1, 1.1.2. p. 5.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.1.1 (a), 1.1.2 (a). p. 4-5.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 1.1.1 (a). p. 8-13 and 1.1.2 (a). p. 14-15.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.1.06

The standard is applicable to governance and management systems for small scale and/or data limited fisheries, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries.

■ MSC comment

This performance area is governance and management systems, but the requirements for 2.5 pertain only to management objectives, specifically limit and target reference points. It is not clear that the requirements referenced for meeting this benchmark are applicable to the ENTIRE management system. Further the guidelines themselves fall short of meeting this benchmark. 2.5(d) merely assess the presence/ absence of small-scale, data-limited fisheries management and not whether those are sustainable, or any criteria of sustainability. Knowledge of traditional fisheries requires objective verification, but it is not defined what this is - again only presence/ absence. It also seems knowledge of traditional fisheries is only permitted for small-scale or data-limited fisheries, but it doesn't cover other sources of information for such fisheries. This rationale better sits in GSSI D.2.01 and does not support meeting this benchmark.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.1.06. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The MSC comment addresses the unique structure of the MEL standard Ver.2.0, and the associated Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity. In essence the MEL standard is a statement of principles and the latter document provides the specific details or indicators that an auditor is required to evaluate when assessing a fishery. D.1.06 requires that the scheme standard is applicable to governance and management systems for small scale and/or data-limited fisheries, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries. MEL Indicator 2.5 (d) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) states:

Whether, in the case of small-scale and/or data-limited fisheries, fisheries governance and management systems for those fisheries are prepared, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries, i.e. Existence of small-scale fisheries or data-limited fisheries. The translation from Japanese to English that the GSSI assessed concerning the MEL indicator 2.5 (d) fulfils the intent and the language of Component D.1.06.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.1.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows; Requirement 2.5 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0).

There shall be publicly-defined target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration set on the basis of the best scientific evidence available, in order to maintain or recover the stock at levels consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY) or a suitable proxy. Indicator(s) 2.5 (d) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1).

Whether, in the case of small-scale and/or data limited fisheries, fisheries governance and management systems for those fisheries are prepared, with due consideration to the availability of data and the fact that management systems can differ substantially for different types and scales of fisheries.

- Existence of small-scale fisheries or data limited fisheries

Indicator(s) 2.5 (e) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1). Whether, in the case of small-scale and/or data limited fisheries, the knowledge of traditional fisheries, fishers and fishery regions is objectively verified and applied into the fisheries management system.

- Existence of verification methods of the knowledge of traditional fisheries, fishers and fishery regions is objectively

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 2.5; Indicators 2.5 (d) and (e). p. 28-31.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.5 (d). p. 69 and 2.5 (e). p. 70.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 2.5. p.7.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 2.5 (d), (e). p. 28-31.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.5 (d). p. 69 and 2.5 (e). p. 70.
4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of
5. [Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.1.07

The standard requires that the fisheries management system under which the unit of certification is managed operates in compliance with local, national and international laws and regulations, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management organization that exercises internationally recognized management jurisdiction over the fisheries on the stock under consideration.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 1.2.1 does not extend to compliance with international laws, only explicitly covering local and national laws. This would not seem to meet the GSSI requirement.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.1.07. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment addresses the unique structure of the MEL standard Ver.2.0, and the associated Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity. In essence the MEL standard is a statement of principles and the latter document provides the specific details or indicators that an auditor is required to evaluate when assessing a fishery.

D.1.07 states that the standard must require that the fisheries management system under which the unit of certification is managed operates in compliance with local, national and international laws and regulations, including the requirements of any regional fisheries management organization that exercises internationally recognized management jurisdiction over the fisheries on the stock under consideration. The MEL standard and Guidelines address this requirement in a number of clauses as described in the IE conclusion. Requirement 1.2.4 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) states that there shall be a cooperative stock management system (organization) in the regions where the stock under consideration is utilized or in more extensive areas. If the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, for instance in the case of transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock, there shall be in compliance with stock management measures set by the competent management authorities.

Indicator(s) 1.2.4 (a) in Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) Whether, in case that the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, a cooperative international/regional/bilateral stock management system or organization exists, as appropriate, that is concerned with the management of the whole stock unit over its entire area of distribution in addition to national/local system or organization to manage the stock under consideration.

- Existence of a regional stock management system or organization
- Existence of an international stock management system or organization

Clearly the MEL scheme extends to international laws in addition to local and national laws.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.1.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 1.2.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification should be conducted in compliance with regulations and arrangements set by national and local governments following effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement.

Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard : Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether an effective fisheries management system, including monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement, for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part exists in accordance with relevant laws and regulations

- Existence of laws and regulations to effectively manage the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part
- Existence of the effective management system for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part operates in accordance with relevant laws and regulations

Requirement 1.2.4 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

There shall be a cooperative stock management system (organization) in the regions where the stock under consideration is utilized or in more extensive areas. If the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, for instance in the case of transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock, there shall be in compliance with stock management measures set by the competent management authorities.

Indicator(s) 1.2.4 (a) in Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether, in case that the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, a cooperative international/regional/bilateral stock management system or organization exists, as appropriate, that is concerned with the management of the whole stock unit over its entire area of distribution in addition to national/local system or organization to manage the stock under consideration.

- Existence of a regional stock management system or organization
- Existence of an international stock management system or organization

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 1.2.1 and 1.2.4; Indicators 1.2.1 (a). p. 8-9. and 1.2.4 (a). p. 13-14.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (a). p. 22 and 1.2.4 (a). p. 31.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.2.1, 1.2.4. p. 6.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (a). p. 8-9. and 1.2.4 (a). p13-14.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (a) p. 22 and 1.2.4 (a) p. 31.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.1.08

The standard requires that the fishery of which the Unit of Certification is a part is managed under an effective legal framework at the local, national or regional (international) level as appropriate.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 1.2.3 has no relevance to the GSSI requirement that's relevant here. Requirement 1.2.1 appears to be more relevant, although does not cover the international dimension, but is not given as evidence by the IE.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.1.08. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The commenter is correct, the IE conclusion was incorrect. There has been a transcription error in the review process, between the final benchmark application that was reviewed by the BC and the version that was sent out for stakeholder comment. The IE conclusion and the cited references have been revised and now reflect the original text that was approved by the IE in the benchmark review.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.1.08

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 1.2.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification should be conducted in compliance with regulations and arrangements set by national and local governments following effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement.

Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether measures on the penalties against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures exist and the penalties are appropriately executed to the violation against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures.

- Existence of the record of appropriate execution of the penalties to the violation

Requirement 1.2.4 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

There shall be a cooperative stock management system (organization) in the regions where the stock under consideration is utilized or in more extensive areas. If the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, for instance in the case of transboundary fish stock, straddling fish stock, highly migratory fish stock or high seas fish stock, there shall be in compliance with stock management measures set by the competent management authorities.

Indicator(s) 1.2.4 (b) in Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether, in case that the stock under consideration is managed at the international level, the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part is in compliance with stock management measures in accordance with national/local laws and regulations, which are also consistent with relevant regional/international laws and regulations.

- Existence of management measures for the fishery including the penalties against the measures and a report on execution of the penalties as applicable.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 1.2.1 and 1.2.4; Indicators 1.2.1 (b) p. 8-9. and 1.2.4 (b). p. 13-14.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (b). p. 23-24. and 1.2.4 (b). p. 31-34.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.2.1, 1.2.4 <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (b). p. 8-9. and 1.2.4 (b). p. 13-14. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (b) p. 23-24. and 1.2.4 (b). p. 31-34.
4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.1.09

The standard requires effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 1.2.1 appears to focus on compliance but not the monitoring, control and surveillance system. This GSSI component clearly requires information on the MCS system, not just compliance with it, so I fail to see how MEL is in alignment based on this evidence.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.1.09. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC on lacking evidence regarding the monitoring, control and surveillance (MSC) system. D.1.09 states that the standard must require effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement of the fishery of which the unit of certification is a part. As noted in IE conclusion for this EC, MEL Requirement 1.2.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), states that the unit of certification should be conducted in compliance with regulations and arrangements set by national and local governments following effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement. Further, Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) states whether:

- d. an effective fisheries management system, including monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement, for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part exists in accordance with relevant laws and regulations
- e. existence of laws and regulations to effectively manage the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part

and

- existence of the effective management system for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part operates in accordance with relevant laws and regulations.

Additionally, Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) states whether;

- measures on the penalties against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures exist and the penalties are appropriately executed to the violation against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures
- existence of the record of appropriate execution of the penalties to the violation.

These MEL indicators clearly define the requirement for monitoring, control, and surveillance, in addition to simply compliance with the MCS.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.1.09

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 1.2.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification should be conducted in compliance with regulations and arrangements set by national and local governments following effective and suitable monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement.

Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether an effective fisheries management system, including monitoring, surveillance, control and enforcement, for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part exists in accordance with relevant laws and regulations

- Existence of laws and regulations to effectively manage the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part
- Existence of the effective management system for the fishery of which the unite of certification is a part operates in accordance with relevant laws and regulations

Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether measures on the penalties against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures exist and the penalties are appropriately executed to the violation against the laws and regulation including the fishery management measures.

- Existence of the record of appropriate execution of the penalties to the violation

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 1.2.1; Indicators 1.2.1 (a) and (b). p. 8-9.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (a). p. 22. and 1.2.1 (b). p. 23-24.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.2.1
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.2.1 (a) and (b). p. 8-9.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 (a). p. 22 and 1.2.1 (b). p. 23-24.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.2.01

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that are applicable to the unit of certification and the stock under consideration and seek outcomes consistent with the long term sustainable use of the fisheries resources under management.

■ MSC comment

It is not clear whether the requirements in 2.5 (b) are for UoC or whole stock, it is not specifically stated, the term stock is absent.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.2.01. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC through the comment containing questions whether the MEL requirement 2.5 (b) addresses the UoC or the whole stock. Requirement 2.5 (b) is a sunset of general requirement 2.5 in the MEL standard, and the language in that clause explicitly refers to "stock under consideration". While there is no specific mention of the UoC, it is considered that the UoC is a subset of the fisheries that take the stock under consideration.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.2.01

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 2.5 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

There shall be publicly-defined target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration set on the basis of the best scientific evidence available, in order to maintain or recover the stock at levels consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY) or a suitable proxy.

Indicator(s) 2.5 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether the management objectives and management measures to achieve the management objectives exist based on the Best Scientific Evidence Available and consistent with the long term sustainable use of the fisheries resources under management and management measures to achieve the management objectives exist.

- Existence of management objectives (including those equivalent thereto)
- Existence of management measures (including those equivalent thereto)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 2.5; Indicators 2.5 (b). p. 28-31.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidences 2.5 (b). p. 67.

REFERENCES

1. [Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard \(Salmon, Hokkaido\): Summary Evidence and Evidences 1.2.1 \(b\) p. 23-24. and 1.2.4 \(b\). p. 31-34.](#)
2. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.2.04

The standard requires, in the case of enhanced fisheries, the existence of management objectives consistent with avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed.

■ MSC comment

The requirement 3.2.2 referenced requires that management objectives 'shall be developed', not the existence of those management objectives as stated in the GSSI essential component text. The GSSI guidance is fairly explicit here, in regard to expected outcomes, such as the natural reproductive stock meeting target reference points, and not reduce the natural reproductive stock's productivity and abundance. There is no reference to maintaining the productivity nor abundance of wild stocks, nor how it would be monitored. For example, in the case of salmon fisheries as in the GSSI guidance, that reference points should be specific to and met for the wild component only, and this is not explicit in MEL requirements.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.2.04. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC through the comment which questions the language in the Essential Component versus the MEL standard with regard to management objectives 'shall be developed', not the existence of those management objectives as stated in the EC text. D.2.04 states that the standard must require, in the case of enhanced fisheries, the existence of management objectives consistent with avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under

consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed. The MEL standard Requirement 3.2.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) states (in case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement) management objectives shall be developed to maintain the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration at a sustainable level, and management measures shall be implemented that are consistent with achieving these management objectives. Additionally Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) states: Whether management objectives for avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed and management measures designed to achieve the management objectives exist. Existence of management objectives, management measures (including those equivalent thereto).

Contrary to the comment of the MSC, the MEL standard states that objectives shall be "developed" and subsequently the MEL indicators require the "existence" of objectives.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.2.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) Management objectives shall be developed to maintain the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration at a sustainable level, and management measures shall be implemented that are consistent with achieving these management objectives.

Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether management objectives for avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed and management measures designed to achieve the management objectives exist.

- Existence of management objectives, management measures (including those equivalent thereto)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.2.2; Indicators 3.2.2 (b). p. 50-52.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.2 (b). p. 98-99.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.2.2. p. 9.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (b). p. 50-52.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.2 (b). p. 98-99.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.2.05

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

■ MSC comment

The requirements 3.1 and 3.2, whilst clear on general aims (i.e. minimizing impact) as they relate to the consideration of ecosystem impacts, are not clear on what criteria are used to assess the magnitude/scale of impact or what levels of impact are tolerable (e.g. if reversible as per guidance for D2.05). Guidance contains further well defined aims but lack information about data requirements (e.g. number of years of data).

Another comment;

3.1.2 as a reference 2) required taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Then 3.1.1(a) (2) required "applicable international standards and practices.", and according to the reference 1) 3.1.2 p8, endangered species are specified in the Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. But, in this national law, endangered species in domestic designate based on List of endangered species made by Ministry of Environment, not CITES (Basic policy for conservation of rare wild animals and plants p5-6, and a figure in the Measures system of the species preservation law). The list designates some species the rank under the IUCN Red list. And international endangered species chosen based on CITES Appendices I, but as an annotation "However, excluding species that Japan has suspended". Because this Japanese national law does not meet Fisheries Management Standard (FMS) and its Guidelines, the FMS 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 will not work to reference of this GSSI essential component.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.2.05. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by MSC. With regard to the first concern addressing the perceived lack of specificity in the MEL requirements and associated indicators 3.1 and 3.2. The commenter states that it is "not clear on what criteria are used to assess the magnitude/scale of impact or what levels of impact are tolerable". D.2.05 states that the standard must require the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. The MEL requirement 3.1 and 3.2 clearly align with this GSSI component as described in the IE conclusion. The lack of specificity or stated criteria assessing impacts or the number of years of data required, that is cited by the MSC commenter, is not required by the GSSI component. As the MEL standard Ver.2.0 is a new standard, GSSI is confident that MEL and MEL's CAB will develop these criteria with time and experience. At this point, the MEL standard and indicators are considered in alignment with this GSSI component, and no change in the IE conclusion is required.

With regard to the second concern addressing the definition of endangered in the GSSI Glossary (GSSI Global Benchmark Tool User Manual: p. 299) state that "Endangered species are expected to be defined in the Standard, with reference to relevant national listings (e.g., Vietnam's Red Data Book) and/or global listing organizations such as CITES (Appendix 1), IUCN Red List (Categories Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU))". MEL defined the endangered species in the standard with reference to Japan's red list; thus, it is in alignment with the GSSI EC D.2.05.

The Ministry of Environment set the red list in accordance with the standards of IUCN (2001) IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria: Version 3.1 (HP of Ministry of Environment: <https://www.env.go.jp/press/files/jp/110618.pdf>). Based on its standards, Ministry of Environment sets and reviews the red list of marine organisms (fish, corals, crustaceans, cephalopods and invertebrates) (HP of Ministry of Environment: <https://www.env.go.jp/press/103813.html>).

On the other hand, Article XXIII 2 in CITES state that; any State may, on depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, enter a specific reservation with regard to:

- (a) any species included in Appendix I, II or III; or
- (b) any parts or derivatives specified in relation to a species included in Appendix III.

Today, Government of Japan made specific reservation on 10 whale species (*Balaenoptera physalus*, *Balaenoptera borealis* (except for (a) in North Pacific; and (b) in areas from 0 to 70 degrees east longitude and from the equator to the Antarctic Continent), *Physeter macrocephalus*, *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*, *Balaenoptera bonaerensis*, *Balaenoptera brydei*, *Balaenoptera omurai*, *Berardius bairdii*, *Orcaella brevirostri*, and *Orcaella*

heinsohni) in Appendix I and 11 species (*Rhincodon typus*, *Cetorhinus maximus*, *Hippocampus*, *Carcharodon carcharia*, *Carcharhinus longimanus*, 3 species of *Sphyrnidae*, *Lamna nasus*, *Carcharhinus falciformi* and *Alopias*) in Appendix II. Government of Japan made specific reservation based on scientific information that objectively shows the sustainable population of 10 whole species in Appendix I. In addition, those species must be effectively managed by the regional fisheries organizations (HP of Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/kankyo/jyoyaku/wasntn.html>).

As Japan's red list was set and reviewed in accordance with the standards and rules of CITES and scientific information, MEL requirements meet D. 2.05. Therefore, no change in the conclusion is required.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.2.05

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

(1) Management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration does not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (c) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(c) Whether following management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) exist to avoid severe adverse impacts of release of artificial seedling on the natural reproduction of the stock under consideration and on the ecosystem:

(1) Management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and management measures designed to achieve the management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) referred in (1) – (3) above

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (1) p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (1). P. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (1). p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (1). P. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.2.06

The standard requires the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 3.1.1 (2a:2) does not explicitly define the quality and type of data assessors would need to use to qualify this assessment: e.g. "Assessment of the impacts...with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices" does not qualify any specific parameters regarding the type of data.

Another comment;

According to the Glossary (p230), Endangered means design to CITES appendices 1. However, In the MEL FMS 3.1.1 and 3.2.2 refer to the Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora it is not covered CITES to domestic endangered species. International endangered species is decided based on CITES, but some species exclude (e.g. Finless porpoise (*Neophocaena phocaenoides*) is not included in the Japanese Act, but it is listed in CITES appendices 1.). It follows that MEL FML does not fit the component.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.2.06. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by the MSC on that Requirement 3.1.1 (2a:2) does not explicitly define the quality and type of data assessors would need to use to qualify this assessment. For instance, "Assessment of the impacts...with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices" does not qualify any specific parameters regarding the type of data. Similar to the GSSI IE response to the MSC comment on D.2.05, the lack of specificity or stated criteria for the quality and type of data required to assess the impacts of the fishery on endangered species, that is cited by the MSC commenter, is not required by the GSSI component. As the MEL standard Ver.2.0 is a new standard, GSSI is confident that MEL and their CAB will develop these criteria with time and experience. The MEL standard and indicators are considered in alignment with this GSSI component, and no change in the IE conclusion is required.

With regard to the MSC comment on the definition of "endangered". The GSSI Glossary defines "endangered" as "Taxa in danger of extinction and whose survival is unlikely if causal factors continue operating. Included are taxa whose numbers have been drastically reduced to a critical level or whole habitats have been so drastically impaired that they are deemed to be in immediate danger of extinction. Also included are those that possibly are already extinct, in so far as they definitely have not been seen in the wild in the past 50 years". The GSSI glossary references the IUCN (1994) and CITES (1994) but does not explicitly list species to be considered "endangered", it relies on the glossary definition. The MEL standard refers to "endangered species", and the MEL Glossary defines "endangered species" as "Species listed in Act on Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by Ministry of Environment". While it may be possible that there are species not listed on the

list of the Japanese Act of Conservation, that are considered endangered on other lists, the MEL requirements meet the GSSI EC D.2.06, as the GSSI requirement does not identify a particular list of species.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.2.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

(2) Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with the achieving management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (c) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(c) Whether following management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) exist to avoid severe adverse impacts of release of artificial seedling on the natural reproduction of the stock under consideration and on the ecosystem:

(2) Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives and management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) referred in (1) – (3) above

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (2). P. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (2). P. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2) p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (2). P 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.2.07

The standard requires the existence of management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification.

■ MSC comment

It is unclear how/on what basis the habitat impact assessment is conducted (e.g. is it based on recovery potential)? The aims, like previous, link up to the GSSI Essential text however it's unclear how assessment teams would apply the requirements in a consistent manner (e.g. if there are no metrics specified).

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.2.07. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The concern raised by the MSC through the comment addresses the lack of specificity or detail in both the GSSI EC and the MEL requirements as how or on what basis an assessment of habitat impact would be conducted. In general, the GSSI Benchmark Tool components are considered to be suite of principles and principle indicators that are intentionally generalized, as they were intended to be used for the benchmarking of scheme standards around the world. GSSI assumes that individual schemes and their CABs will develop more detailed guidelines for tier standards for use in conducting assessments of fisheries against their principles and principle indicators, and that these guidelines will become ever more detailed with experience. D.2.07 states that the standard must require the existence of management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. The MEL standard and associated guideline indicators: Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (3) were determined to be in alignment with the GSSI EC.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.2.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

(3) Management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives

- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (3). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (3). P. 41-44.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.04

The standard requires that management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives that allow for the restoration of the stock to such levels within a reasonable time frame. This requirement also pertains to species introductions or translocations that have occurred historically, and which have become established as part of the natural ecosystem.

■ MSC comment

GSSI requirements are clear that actions would need to be taken when the stock drops below the target reference point. MEL simply states "in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives" which could refer to target or limit reference points and this does not match with GSSI requirements.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.04. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the MSC comment addressing the timing of actions with regard to stock dropping below set reference points. D.3.04 states that the standard must require that management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives that allow for the restoration of the stock to such levels within a reasonable time frame.

The GSSI guidance further states that this requires the specification in advance of decision rules that mandate remedial management actions to be taken if target reference points are exceeded and/or limit reference points are approached or exceeded or the desired directions in key indicators of stock status are not achieved.

The MEL Requirements 2.7 and Indicators 2.7 (c) align with D.3.04, but do not address the details of the GSSI guidance for D.3.04. MEL Requirements 2.5 and Indicator 2.5 (a) describe the setting of target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration set on the basis of the best scientific evidence available, in order to maintain or recover the stock at levels consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yields (MSY) or a suitable proxy, and this text and references are added to the IE conclusion to better support the "in alignment" determination by the IE.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

[Requirement 2.5 in the Fisheries Management Standard \(version 2.0\)](#)

[There shall be publicly-defined target and limit reference points, or proxies for the stock under consideration set on the basis of the best scientific evidence available, in order to maintain or recover the stock at levels consistent with achieving Maximum Sustainable Yields \(MSY\) or a suitable proxy.](#)

[Indicator\(s\) 2.5 \(a\) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – \(version 2.1\)](#)

[Whether stock under consideration and “limit reference point” or a suitable proxy are defined with precautionary approach and based on the best scientific evidence available in the management objectives. In addition, whether the “target reference point” is set to achieve the MSY or a suitable proxy in average and the “limit reference point” is defined to avoid recruitment overfishing and irreversible or very slowly reversible influence. Existence of the appropriate definitions of stock under consideration and limit reference target reference point or those substitute proxies under the management objectives](#)

[Requirement 2.7 in the Fisheries Management Standard \(version 2.0\)](#)

[The stock under consideration is not overfished. In the event that the status of the stock drops below levels at which remedial actions should be undertaken, necessary measures shall be implemented in a timely manner in order to avoid recruitment overfishing.](#)

[Indicator\(s\) 2.7 \(c\) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – \(version 2.1\)](#)

[\(c\) Whether management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives that allow for the restoration of the stock to such levels within a reasonable time frame. This consideration is required to pertain to species introductions or translocations that have occurred historically, and which have become established as part of the natural ecosystem.](#)

- [Preparation of management measures specify the actions to be taken in the event that the status of the stock under consideration drops below levels consistent with achieving management objectives \(including those equivalent thereto\).](#)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Guidelines for Auditors of the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): [Requirements 2.5](#); [Indicators 2.5 \(a\)](#). p. 28, [Requirements 2.7](#); [Indicators 2.7 \(c\)](#). p. 34-36.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.7 (c). p. 75.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 2.7. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 2.7 (c). p. 34-36.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.7 (c). p. 75.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.07

The standard requires the existence of management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable.

■ MSC comment

As with comment on D.2.0.5

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.07. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the MSC. The concerning comment states: "as with the comment on D.2.05", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.2.05.

D.3.07 states that the standard must require the existence of management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable. GSSI EC D.2.05 addresses the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. In essence both GSSI ECs address the need to minimize the impacts of the fishery on non-target species. The GSSI IE response to the MSC comment on D.2.05 indicated recognized MSC concern for the perceived lack of specificity in the MEL requirements and associated indicators 3.1 and 3.2. Specifically, the MSC commenter states that it is "not clear on what criteria are used to assess the magnitude/scale of impact or what levels of impact are tolerable". GSSI EC D.2.05 states that the standard must require the existence of management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activity do not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible". The MEL requirement 3.1 and 3.2 clearly align with this GSSI component as described in the IE conclusion to D.2.05 and D.3.07. The lack of specificity or stated criteria assessing impacts or the number of years of data required, that is cited by the commenter, is not required by the GSSI component. As the MEL standard Ver.2.0 is a new standard, GSSI is confident that MEL and MEL's CAB will develop these criteria with time and experience.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether management measures designed to achieve the management objectives referred in 3.1.2 (a) (1) – (5) and management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable exist.

- Existence of appropriate management measures above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (b). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (b). p. 84.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (b). p. 41-44.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (b). p. 84.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.08

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.08) that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

■ MSC comment

As with comment on D.2.0.6

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.08. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the MSC. The concerning comment states: "as with the comment on D.2.05", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.2.05.

D.3.08 states that the standard must require the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.08) that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or

enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. MSC comment on D.2.06 noted that Requirement 3.1.1 (2a:2) does not explicitly define the quality and type of data assessors would need to use to qualify this assessment: e.g. "Assessment of the impacts ... with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices". Similar to the IE response to the MSC comment on D.2.06, the lack of specificity or stated criteria for the quality and type of data required to assess the impacts of the fishery on endangered species, that is cited by the commenter, is not required by the GSSI component. As the MEL standard Ver.2.0 is a new standard, GSSI is confident that MEL and MEL's CAB will develop these criteria with time and experience.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.08

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

(2) Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with the achieving management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether management measures designed to achieve the management objectives referred in 3.1.2 (a) (1) – (5) and management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable exist.

- Existence of appropriate management measures above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (c) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(c) Whether following management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) exist to avoid severe adverse impacts of release of artificial seedling on the natural reproduction of the stock under consideration and on the ecosystem:

(2) Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives and management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) referred in (1) – (3) above
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Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (2). p. 41-44. and (b), 3.2.3 (c) (2). p. 53-56. Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2). p. 41-44. and (b), 3.2.3 (c) (2). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-82. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.09

The standard requires the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.09) seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the "stock under consideration" and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. In assessing fishery impacts, the Standard requires consideration of the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

■ MSC comment

As with comment D.2.0.7

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.09. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment states: "as with the comment on D.2.07", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.2.07. D.3.09 states that the standard must require the existence of management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives (D.2.07) seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the "stock under consideration" and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. In assessing fishery impacts, the standard requires consideration of the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing. The comment on D.2.07 addressed the lack of specificity or detail in both the GSSI EC and the MEL requirements as how or on what basis an assessment of habitat impact would be conducted. In general, the GSSI Benchmark Tool components are considered to be suite of principles and principle indicators that are intentionally generalized, as they were intended to be used for the benchmarking of scheme standards around the world. GSSI assumes that individual schemes and their CABs will develop more detailed guidelines for tier standards for use in conducting assessments of fisheries against their principles and principle indicators, and that these guidelines will become ever more detailed with experience. D.2.07 states that the standard must require the existence of management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. The MEL standard and associated guideline indicators: Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (3) were determined to be in alignment with the Essential Components.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.09

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
3. Assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification in the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing with appropriate related data/information.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) - (5) above.

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.
- a. Management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives.
 - Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether management measures designed to achieve the management objectives referred in 3.1.2 (a) (1) – (5) and management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable exist.

- Existence of appropriate management measures above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1):

Requirements 3.1.1 and 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (3). p. 37-40., 3.1.2 (a) (3) and 3.1.2 (b). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.1.2 (b). p. 84.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. p. 8.

- <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (3). p. 37-40., 3.1.2 (a) (3) and 3.1.2 (b). p. 41-44.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
 3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.1.2 (b). p. 84.
 4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.12

The standard requires that the precautionary approach is applied widely through the management system to the conservation, management and exploitation of living aquatic resources in order to protect them and preserve the aquatic environment.

■ MSC comment

The requirements used in the conclusion do not require a record of past good management performance as stated in the GSSI guidance. The guidance also requires the standard must require inter alia that the management system uses a suitable method of risk management to take into account relevant uncertainties in the status of the stock under consideration and the impacts of the unit of certification on that stock and the ecosystem and there is no consideration of risk or uncertainty in the MEL requirements. There is also no mention of the situations that would require more precaution such as where application of less quantitative and data demanding approaches results in greater uncertainty, the management system should apply more precaution, which may necessitate lower levels of utilization of the resource.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.12. Based on the comment of MSC, additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment correctly points out that the IE conclusion does not address the requirements of EC D.3.12. Apparently there was a transcription error in the editing of the MEL application benchmark tool spreadsheet for the public consultation phase. More specifically, the IE conclusion was taken from another EC conclusion. This has been corrected and the conclusion now reflects the text of the D.3.12.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.12

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Guidelines for Auditors of the Fisheries Management Standard state as follows;

Requirement 1.2.6 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Taking due account of various uncertainty inherent in fisheries stocks, ecosystem and stock management, precautional fisheries management is undertaken. There shall be a mechanism to change and improve management measures in an adaptive manner depending on the status of the stock under consideration and of the ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 1.2.6 (a) in the Guidelines for Auditors of the Fisheries Management Standard

- a. Whether a mechanism exists in order to change and improve management measures in an adaptive manner to unexpected changes of the situation on the stock under consideration and relative matters due to environmental changes, etc.
 - Existence of the mechanism of precautionary measures and adaptive management

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Guidelines for Auditors of the Fisheries Management Standard: Requirements 1.2.6; Indicators 1.2.6 (a).
Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Comments from Auditor and Evidences 1.2.6

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.
- b. Management objectives that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives.
 - Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

Whether management measures designed to achieve the management objectives referred in 3.1.2 (a) (1) – (5) and management measures that minimize unwanted catch and discards, where appropriate, and reduce post-released mortality where incidental catch is unavoidable exist.

- Existence of appropriate management measures above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (4) and (b). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83 and 3.1.2 (b). p. 84.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.2.6. p. 6-7.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.2.6 (a). p. 16.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 1.2.6 (a). p. 37-38.
4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.13

The standard requires that the efficacy of management measures and their possible interactions is kept under continuous review, taking into account the multipurpose nature of the use patterns in inland and marine waters.

■ MSC comment

Requirement 1.2.7 appears to be about dialogue on management efficacy, but doesn't seem to go as far as requiring actual review, as per the GSSI component.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.13. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC through the comment addressing MEL requirement 1.2.7, and whether it meets the GSSI requirement. D.3.13 states that the standard must require that the efficacy of management measures and their possible interactions be kept under continuous review, taking into account the multipurpose nature of the use patterns in inland and marine waters. MEL requirement 1.2.7 state that there shall be continuous dialogue among stakeholders about the effectiveness of management measures and a corresponding record of this dialogue shall be maintained. The IE interprets the language of the MEL standard, in particular "dialogue" in imply exactly the same meaning as "review" in the GSSI benchmark tool.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.13

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 1.2.7 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

When there are other activities than the fisheries in the same waters where the unit of certification operates, there shall be continuous dialogue among stakeholders about the effectiveness of management measures and a corresponding record of this dialogue shall be maintained.

Indicator(s) 1.2.7 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether a room to dialogue the effectiveness of management measures among the stakeholders as applicable and the discussion records exists, taking into account the multipurpose nature of the use pattern in waters

- Existence of a room to dialogue the effectiveness of management measures among the stakeholders besides fishery related stakeholders as applicable
- Existence of the discussion records of the dialogue

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 1.2.7; Indicators 1.2.7 (a). p. 17.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 1.2.7 (a). p. 39.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 1.2.7. p. 7.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 1.2.7 (a). p. 17.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 1.2.7 (a). p. 39.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.3.15

The Standard requires that the methodology and results of the analysis of the most probable adverse impacts of the unit of certification and any associated culture and enhancement activity on the ecosystem are made publicly available in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

■ MSC comment

No comments. The indicator is virtually a cut and paste of the GSSI component

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.3.15 Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion

GSSI recognizes the concern raised by MSC regarding the similarity between the language of the MEL-J indicator the GSSI component. However, GSSI does not consider the use of the wording in the GSSI Benchmark Tool as a problem in the MEL standard and guidelines.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.3.15

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (c) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(c) Whether the methodology and results of the analysis of the most probable adverse impacts of the unit of certification on the ecosystem are made publicly available in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.

- Disclosure of the information on the impact of the unit of certification on the ecosystem

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (d) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- d. Whether the methodology and results of the analysis of the most probable adverse impacts of the associated culture and enhancement activity on the ecosystem are made publicly available in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where appropriate.
- Disclosure of the information on the impact of associated culture and enhancement activity on the ecosystem

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1):

Requirements 3.1.2, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (c) p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (d). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (c). p. 85-86 and 3.2.3 (d). p. 106-107.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8 and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-FMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (c) p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (d). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>

3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (c). p. 85-86 and 3.2.3 (d). p. 106-107.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.4.02

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on ecosystem structure, processes and function in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

■ MSC comment

Whilst there are clear aims outlined that "appropriate data" be collected/used; issues related to data quality are not covered. For example there is no criteria on the time series or scale of data required.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.4.02. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concern expressed by MSC through the comment regarding issues related to data quality not being covered in the MEL requirement 3.1.1, (for example there is no criteria on the time series or scale of data required). As noted in responses to previous comments regarding the lack of specificity in the MEL requirements, the GSSI Benchmark Tool also lacks this specificity or criteria. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.4.02

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (5) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
- 5. Analysis of the effects of the unit of certification on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement. Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0). (In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) there shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
- 4. Analysis of the effects of associated culture and enhancement activities on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (5). p. 37-40. and 3.2.3 (b) (4). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (5). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (4). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81 and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.4.03

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification.

■ MSC comment

As per comment on D.4.02

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.4.03. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the MSC. The concerning comment states: "as with the comment on D.4.02", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.4.02.

This EC states that the standard must require the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information on non-target catches and discards in the unit of certification. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI benchmark tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.4.03

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
 1. Assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible with appropriate related data/information.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (1). p. 37-40.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (1). p. 37-40.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.

4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.4.04

The standard requires the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on endangered species in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.

- **MSC comment**

As per comment on D.4.02

- **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.4.04. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment states: "as with the comment on D.4.02", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.4.02.

This EC states that the standard must require the collection and maintenance of adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information about the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities, on endangered species in accordance with applicable international standards and practices. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI benchmark tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.4.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)

5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
2. Assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) (In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) there shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
2. Assessment of the impacts of associated culture and enhancement activities on endangered species with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1):

Requirements 3.1.1, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (2). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (2). p. 53-55.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (2). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (2). p. 53-55. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a) .p 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.4.06

The standard requires that data and information are collected on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to enable determination of whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, and if so whether fishing on that stock might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

- **MSC comment**

As per comment on D.4.02

- **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.4.06 Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

GSSI recognizes the concerns raised by the MSC. The concerning comment states: "as with the comment on D.4.02", referring to the concerns raised in the comment for EC D.4.02.

This GSSI EC states that the standard requires that data and information are collected on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to enable determination of whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, and if so whether fishing on that stock might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI Benchmark Tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI benchmark tool is intentionally not prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.4.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
4. Assessment of the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to determine whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem and severe adverse impacts of fishing on that stock on dependent predators as applicable, with appropriate related data/information
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (4). p. 37-40.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (4). p. 37-40.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.

4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.05

In the case of fisheries that are enhanced through aquaculture inputs, the standard requires that the stock assessment of the stock under consideration must consider the separate contributions from aquaculture and natural production.

- **MSC comment**

The tagging of released fish only means they may be enumerated if there is monitoring in place. There is no evidence that counting tagged artificially reduced fish is undertaken nor that it is taken into account in stock assessment.

- **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.05. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion

The comment states that the tagging of released fish only means they may be enumerated if there is monitoring in place. There is no evidence that counting tagged artificially reduced fish is undertaken nor that it is taken into account in stock assessment. The GSSI IE understands the concern of the MSC commenter. D.5.05 states that in the case of fisheries that are enhanced through aquaculture inputs, the standard must require that the stock assessment of the stock under consideration must consider the separate contributions from aquaculture and natural production. MEL Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) states that (a) Whether such measures as tagging of released fish enable individual assessment of released and naturally-reproduced populations and hence the effect of releasing is assessed. Whether the naturally-reproduced population is assessed. The effect of releasing is assessed by taking such measures as tagging of released fish.

The IE believes that the issue is interpretation of the language used in the MEL standard and guidelines. The original language for the MEL scheme is Japanese. The IE has used the English translated version of the originally Japanese MEL standard. The translation of the language of the MEL indicator 3.2.2 (a) states that some released fish are tagged, and that these tagged fish are enumerated on return, and that this is considered in the individual assessments of released and naturally-reproduced populations.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.05

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) Management objectives shall be developed to maintain the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration at a sustainable level, and management measures shall be implemented that are consistent with achieving these management objectives.

Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (a) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether such measures as tagging of released fish enable individual assessment of released and naturally-reproduced populations and hence the effect of releasing is assessed. (Whether the naturally-reproduced population is assessed)
 - The effect of releasing is assessed by taking such measures as tagging of released fish

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.2.2; Indicators 3.2.2 (a). p. 50-52.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.2 (a). p. 97.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.2.2. p. 9.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (a). p. 50-52.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.2 (a). p. 97.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.06

The standard requires an assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration and any associated culture and enhancement activities threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

■ MSC comment

As per comment on D.3.06: the criteria here to assess impacts are vague/lacking so it's unclear how conformity is established.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.06. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion

The MSC comment repeats the comment on GSSI D.3.06, but the MSC offered no comment on D.3.06.

The MSC comment questions the criteria used to assess impacts, noting they are vague/lacking, so that it is unclear how conformity is established. The IE's response to this question is similar to the response offered to D.4.02 and D.4.06. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 and 4.06 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI benchmark tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive, and therefore does not expect the scheme standard to be detailed or prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
 1. Assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible with appropriate related data/information.
- Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
 1. Assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by associated culture and enhancement activities threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1):

Requirements 3.1.1 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (1). p. 37-40. and 3.2.3 (b) (1). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8 and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (1). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (1) p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81 and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.07

The standard requires an analysis of the effects of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts.

■ MSC comment

As comment above. The requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it is unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.07. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment states the requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it is unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity. As noted previously, GSSI recognizes that portions of the MEL requirements mirror the GSSI Essential Components and understands the MEL has done this to ensure alignment with these components.

With regard to the specific criteria that MEL will use to qualify conformity, the IE's response to this question is similar to the response offered to D.4.02 and D.4.06. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 and 4.06 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI Benchmark Tool also lacks this specificity. The Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive, and therefore does not expect the scheme standard to be detailed or prescriptive.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)

4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (5) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
 5. Analysis of the effects of the unit of certification on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) (In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) there shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
 4. Analysis of the effects of associated culture and enhancement activities on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (5). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (4). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (5). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (4). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Comments from Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81 and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.08

The standard requires an assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification. The assessment should consider the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.

■ MSC comment

As comment above. The requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it's unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity. For example, assessment of UoC on vulnerable habitats is required (as per the GSSI components), however it's unclear how that assessment will demonstrate magnitude of impact.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.08. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment on D.5.08 states the requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it is unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity. For example, assessment of UoC on vulnerable habitats is required (as per the GSSI components), however it is unclear how that assessment will demonstrate magnitude of impact. As noted previously, GSSI recognizes that portions of the MEL requirements mirror the ECs and understands the MEL has done this to ensure alignment with these components. With regard to the specific criteria that MEL will use to qualify conformity on vulnerable habitat, the IE's response to this question is similar to the response offered to D.4.02 and D.4.06. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 and 4.06 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI Benchmark Tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI benchmark tool is intentionally not a prescriptive, and therefore does not expect the scheme standard to be detailed or prescriptive. This is a matter for the MEL scheme and its CAB to determine.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.08

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
3. Assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification in the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing with appropriate related data/information.
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement. Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) (In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be

implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
- 3. Assessment of the impacts of associated culture and enhancement activities on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification in the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (3). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (3). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8 and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (3). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (3). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81 and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.09

The standard requires that data and information on the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web are assessed to determine whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem, and if so whether fishing on that stock might result in severe adverse impacts on dependent predators.

■ MSC comment

As Above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.09. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The MSC comment repeats a comment previously made: "as above". The GSSI response to this comment is therefore also repeated from D.5.08. The MSC comment on D.5.08 states the requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it is unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity. For example, assessment of UoC on vulnerable habitats is required (as per the GSSI components), however it is unclear how that assessment will demonstrate magnitude of impact. As noted previously, GSSI recognizes that portions of the MEL requirements mirror the ECs and understands the MEL has done this to ensure alignment with these components. With regard to the specific criteria that MEL will use to qualify conformity on vulnerable habitat, the IE's response to this question is similar to the response offered to D.4.02 and D.4.06. The GSSI

response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 and 4.06 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI Benchmark Tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI benchmark tool is intentionally not a prescriptive, and therefore does not expect the scheme standard to be detailed or prescriptive. This is a matter for the MEL scheme and its CAB to determine.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
4. Assessment of the role of the stock under consideration in the food-web to determine whether it is a key prey species in the ecosystem and severe adverse impacts of fishing on that stock on dependent predators as applicable, with appropriate related data/information
 - Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (4). p. 37-40.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (4). p. 37-40. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.5.10

The standard requires an assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification, including any associated enhancement activities where applicable, on endangered species.

■ MSC comment

As Above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.5.10. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The MSC comment repeats a comment previously made: "as above". The GSSI response to this comment is therefore also repeated from D.5.08. The MSC comment on D.5.08 states the requirements and guidance seem to mirror the GSSI components however it is unclear what specific criteria are being used to qualify conformity. For example, assessment of UoC on vulnerable habitats is required (as per the GSSI components), however it is unclear how that assessment will demonstrate magnitude of impact.

As noted previously, GSSI recognizes that portions of the MEL requirements mirror the Essential Components and understands MEL has done this to ensure alignment with the GSSI ECs. With regard to the specific criteria that MEL will use to qualify conformity on vulnerable habitat, the IE's response to this question is similar to the response offered to D.4.02 and D.4.06. The GSSI response to the MSC comment on D.4.02 and 4.06 stated: as noted in responses to previous MSC comments regarding the lack of specificity or criteria in the MEL requirements, the GSSI benchmark tool also lacks this specificity. The GSSI Benchmark Tool is intentionally not prescriptive and therefore does not expect the scheme standard to be detailed or prescriptive. This is a matter for the MEL scheme and its CAB to determine.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.5.10

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.1 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

Data and/or other information based on the best scientific evidence available covering the following factors shall be collected and maintained in order to assess the impacts of the unit of certification on non-target stocks and ecosystem:

1. Catches and discard of non-target stocks
2. Impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species, and efforts to conserve and protect those species as well as to avoid by-catch of those species
3. Information on the essential habitat for stock under consideration (e.g. spawning and nursery sites)
4. Impacts of fishing gear used by the unit of certification on ecosystem (including the seabed)
5. Prey-predator relationship of the stock under consideration in the food-web
6. Balance of whole ecosystem (i.e. whether there is any severe disturbance by the unit of certification on ecosystem)

Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether adequate, reliable and current data and/or other information of followings exist:
 2. Assessment of the impacts of the unit of certification on endangered species with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
- Existence of collected and maintained information referred in (1) – (5) above.

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- b. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
 2. Assessment of the impacts of associated culture and enhancement activities on endangered species with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.1, 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.1 (a) (2). p. 37-40. and 3.2.3 (b) (2). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81. and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.1. p. 8 and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.1 (a) (2). p. 37-40 and 3.2.3 (b) (2). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.1 (a). p. 76-81 and 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.03

The standard requires that the natural reproductive stock components of enhanced stocks are not overfished.

■ **MSC comment**

The standard requires the stock under consideration is not overfished but does not specify that for enhanced fisheries the management objectives must not include artificially produced (hatchery) fish.

■ **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.03. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment states that the MEL standard requires that stock under consideration is not overfished, but does not specify that for enhanced fisheries the management objectives must not include artificially produced (hatchery) fish. MEL Requirement 3.2.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard Ver.2.0 clearly states that "In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement, management objectives shall be developed to maintain the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration at a sustainable level, and management measures shall be implemented that are consistent with achieving these management objectives". By requiring that the natural reproductive stock component is at a sustainable level, the MEL standard is in fact requiring that artificially produced fish are not included in the assessment of sustainability.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.03

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 2.7 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The stock under consideration is not overfished. In the event that the status of the stock drops below levels at which remedial actions should be undertaken, necessary measures shall be implemented in a timely manner in order to avoid recruitment overfishing.

Indicator(s) 2.7 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(b) Whether the stock under consideration is not overfished.

- Status of the stock under consideration

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) Management objectives shall be developed to maintain the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration at a sustainable level, and management measures shall be implemented that are consistent with achieving these management objectives.

Indicator(s) 3.2.2 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(b) Whether management objectives for avoiding significant negative impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock component of the stock under consideration and any other wild stocks from which the organisms for stocking are being removed and management measures designed to achieve the management objectives exist.

- Existence of management objectives, management measures (including those equivalent thereto)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 2.7 and 3.2.2; Indicators 2.7 (b). p. 34-36 and 3.2.2 (b). p. 50-52.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.7 (b). p. 73-74. and 3.2.2 (b). p. 98-99.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 2.7. p. 8. and 3.2.2. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 2.7 (b). p. 34-36. and 3.2.2 (b) p. 50-52. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 2.7 (b). p. 73-74. and 3.2.2 (b). p. 98-99.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.04

In the case of enhanced fisheries, the standard requires that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.

■ MSC comment

None of the requirements provided address the GSSI benchmark that artificially produced fish do not displace the natural component.

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.04. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

The comment states that "None of the requirements provided address the GSSI benchmark that artificially produced fish do not displace the natural component". D.6.04 states that "In the case of enhanced fisheries, the standard requires that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components". The IE conclusion cites MEL Indicator 3.2.3 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
4. Analysis of the effects of associated culture and enhancement activities on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.

The last sentence of the MEL indicator addresses the GSSI requirement that the artificially produced fish (enhanced stock) do not displace the natural component.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.04

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether following information about the impacts of release of artificial seedling on other species and the ecosystem exists:
 1. Assessment of the extent to which non-target catches and discards by associated culture and enhancement activities threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.
 2. Assessment of the impacts of associated culture and enhancement activities on endangered species with appropriate related data/information collected in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 3. Assessment of the impacts of associated culture and enhancement activities on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification in the full spatial range of the relevant habitat, not just that part of the spatial range that is potentially affected by fishing.
 4. Analysis of the effects of associated culture and enhancement activities on ecosystem structure, processes and function to develop timely scientific advice on the likelihood and magnitude of impacts with appropriate related data/information in accordance with applicable international standards and practices.
 - Existence of information about impacts on other species and the ecosystem referred in (1) - (4) above.
 - Existence of information about the distributional area of seedling and growth after the seedling is released, including information to confirm that the natural reproductive stock component of enhanced stocks is not substantially displaced by stocked components.

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.2.3; Indicators 3.2.3 (b). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.2.3. p. 9.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (b). p. 53-56.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.2.3 (b). p. 102-103.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.05

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives for non-target stocks (D.2.05).

■ **MSC comment**

Lack of detail on what "outcome indicators" are and lack of clear criteria on how these are monitored/achieved. There is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working.

■ **GSSI response**

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.05. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

First, the comment addresses the lack of detail in the "outcome indicators" and the lack of clear criteria upon which these are monitored/achieved. MSC has expressed this comment previously on other GSSI section D ECs, and the response remains the same. The GSSI Benchmark Tool does not seek to be prescriptive. It intentionally lacks the specification of criteria or methodologies on how to a scheme standard is supposed to monitor or achieve a specific requirement. GSSI expects that a scheme will work with its CABs to develop the details of the criteria, and requirements of monitoring, etc.

Second, the comment states that "there is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working", our response is as follows. The MEL requirements and indicators 3.1.2 specifically state that there must be objectives and outcome indicators to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, and in particular does not threaten with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.05

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (1) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

(a) Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

(1) Management objectives that seek to ensure that non-target catches and discards by the unit of certification of stocks other than the stock under consideration does not threaten those non-target stocks with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives.

• Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (1). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8.

- <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (1). p. 41-44.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
 3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.
 4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.06

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.08) that seek to ensure that Endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification and any associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

■ MSC comment

As above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.06. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

This MSC comment repeats several concerns that have been expressed by the commenter previously. The MSC comment states "as above". The GSSI response to the previous MSC comment is repeated here for completeness.

First, the comment addresses the lack of detail in the "outcome indicators" and the lack of clear criteria upon which these are monitored/achieved. MSC has expressed this comment previously on other GSSI section D ECs, and the response remains the same. The GSSI Benchmark Tool does not seek to be prescriptive. It intentionally lacks the specification of criteria or methodologies on how to a scheme standard is supposed to monitor or achieve a specific requirement. GSSI expects that a scheme will work with its CABs to develop the details of the criteria, and requirements of monitoring, etc. Second, the comment states that "there is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working", our response is as follows. The MEL requirements and indicators 3.1.2 specifically state that there must be objectives and outcome indicators to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, and in particular does not threaten with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.06

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.
2. Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with the unit of certification, including recruitment

overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with the achieving management objectives.

- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (c) (2) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- c. Whether following management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) exist to avoid severe adverse impacts of release of artificial seedling on the natural reproduction of the stock under consideration and on the ecosystem:
 2. Management objectives that seek to ensure that endangered species are protected from adverse impacts resulting from interactions with associated culture or enhancement activity, including recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives and management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives.
- Existence of management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) referred in (1) – (3) above

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (2). p. 41-44 and 3.2.3 (c) (2). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (2) p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (2). p. 53-56. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.07

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.09) for avoiding, minimizing or mitigating the impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the "stock under consideration" and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification.

■ MSC comment

As Above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.07. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

This MSC comment repeats several concerns that have been expressed by the commenter previously. The MSC comment states "as above". The GSSI response to the previous MSC comment is repeated here for completeness.

First, the comment addresses the lack of detail in the "outcome indicators" and the lack of clear criteria upon which these are monitored/achieved. MSC has expressed this comment previously on other GSSI section D ECs, and the response remains the same. The GSSI Benchmark Tool does not seek to be prescriptive. It intentionally lacks the specification of criteria or methodologies on how to a scheme standard is supposed to monitor or achieve a specific requirement. GSSI expects that a scheme will work with its CABs to develop the details of the criteria, and requirements of monitoring, etc. Second, the comment states that "there is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working", our response is as follows. The MEL requirements and indicators 3.1.2 specifically state that there must be objectives and outcome indicators to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, and in particular does not threaten with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.07

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into

account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

3. Management objectives seeking to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts of the unit of certification on essential habitats for the stock under consideration and on habitats that are highly vulnerable to damage by the fishing gear of the unit of certification and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives
- Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (3). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (3). p. 41-44.
<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.08

The standard includes outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.10) that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species.

■ MSC comment

As Above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.08. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

This MSC comment repeats several concerns that have been expressed by the commenter previously. The MSC comment states "as above". The GSSI response to the previous MSC comment is repeated here for completeness.

First, the comment addresses the lack of detail in the "outcome indicators" and the lack of clear criteria upon which these are monitored/achieved. MSC has expressed this comment previously on other GSSI section D ECs, and the response remains the same. The GSSI Benchmark Tool does not seek to be prescriptive. It intentionally lacks the specification of criteria or methodologies on how to a scheme standard is supposed to monitor or achieve a specific requirement. GSSI expects that a scheme will work with its CABs to develop the details of the criteria, and requirements of monitoring, etc. Second, the comment states that "there is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working", our response is as follows. The MEL requirements and indicators 3.1.2 specifically state that there must be objectives and outcome indicators to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, and in particular does not threaten with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.08

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (4) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.

4. Management objectives that seek to avoid severe adverse impacts on dependent predators resulting from fishing on a stock under consideration that is a key prey species and outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives.
 - Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (4). p. 41-44.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (4). p. 41-44. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>
3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido), 2019: Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report Prepared: August 2019. On site assessment July 21, 2019.](#)

ESSENTIAL COMPONENT D.6.09

The standard requires the existence of outcome indicator(s) consistent with achieving management objectives (D.2.11) that seek to minimize adverse impacts of the unit of certification, including any enhancement activities, on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible. Any modifications to the habitat for enhancing the stock under consideration must be reversible and not cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure, processes and function.

■ MSC comment

As above

■ GSSI response

MEL-J is in alignment with Essential Component D.6.09. Based on the comment of MSC, no additional information has been included in the final conclusion.

This MSC comment repeats several concerns that have been expressed by the commenter previously. The MSC comment states "as above". The GSSI response to the previous MSC comment is repeated here for completeness.

First, the comment addresses the lack of detail in the "outcome indicators" and the lack of clear criteria upon which these are monitored/achieved. MSC has expressed this comment previously on other GSSI section D ECs, and the response remains the same. The GSSI Benchmark Tool does not seek to be prescriptive. It intentionally lacks the specification of criteria or methodologies on how to a scheme standard is supposed to monitor or achieve a specific requirement. GSSI expects that a scheme will work with its CABs to develop the details of the criteria, and requirements of monitoring, etc. Second, the comment states that "there is no requirement for the status of non-target catch, only that management is in place, not that they are working", our response is as follows. The MEL requirements and indicators 3.1.2 specifically state that there must be objectives and outcome indicators to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, and in particular does not threaten with recruitment overfishing or other impacts that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible.

Conclusion on GSSI Essential Component D.6.09

Conclusion: MEL is in alignment because requirement(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0) and indicator(s) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1) state as follows;

Requirement 3.1.2 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

The unit of certification shall be operated in ways to minimize adverse impacts on non-target stocks and ecosystem, taking into account the assessment results of above 3.1.1(a) (1) - (5).

Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (5) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- a. Whether the unit of certification operates the fishery with consideration to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse impacts on non-target stocks, endangered species and ecosystem with following management objectives and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto), taking into account the assessment results of 3.1.1.
5. Management objectives that seek to minimize adverse impacts of the unit of certification on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible and outcome indicators consistent with achieving management objectives, considered that any modifications to the habitat for enhancing the stock under consideration must be reversible and not cause serious or irreversible harm to the natural ecosystem's structure, processes and function.
 - Existence of management objectives and outcome indicators above including those equivalent thereto (information/data on non-target species, ecosystem)

Standard 3.2 particularly requires the consideration of ecosystem in the associated fish farming and resource enhancement.

Requirement 3.2.3 in the Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0)

(In case of the associated fish farming and resource enhancement,) There shall be continuous monitoring of the state of the stock under consideration and its habitat, and measures shall be implemented in order to avoid significant adverse impacts of enhancement activities on the natural reproductive stock components of the stock under consideration and ecosystem.

Indicator(s) 3.2.3 (c) (3) in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1)

- c. Whether following management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) exist to avoid severe adverse impacts of release of artificial seedling on the natural reproduction of the stock under consideration and on the ecosystem:
3. Management objectives that seek to minimize adverse impacts of associated enhancement activities if applicable, on the structure, processes and function of aquatic ecosystems that are likely to be irreversible or very slowly reversible, outcome indicators consistent with achieving the management objectives and management measures, as necessary, designed to achieve the management objectives.
 - Existence of management objectives, management measures and outcome indicators (including those equivalent thereto) referred in (1) – (3) above

Additional information for the above requirement(s) and indicator(s) can be found in the Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1): Requirements 3.1.2 and 3.2.3; Indicators 3.1.2 (a) (5). p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (3). p. 53-56.

Examples of the requirement(s) in use can be found in the Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a). p. 82-83. and 3.2.3 (c). p. 104-105.

REFERENCES

1. Fisheries Management Standard (version 2.0), 2018: Requirement(s) 3.1.2. p. 8. and 3.2.3. p. 9. <https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-StandardFMSver.2.0.pdf>
2. Fisheries Management Standard: Guidelines for Auditors – Indicators of Conformity – (version 2.1), 2019: Indicator(s) 3.1.2 (a) (4). p. 41-44. and 3.2.3 (c) (3). p. 53-56.

<https://melj.jp/eng/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Fisheries-Management-Standard-Guidelines-for-Auditors-Indicators-of-Conformity-Version.-2.1.pdf>

3. Assessment Report Fisheries Management Standard (Salmon, Hokkaido): Summary Evidence and Evidence 3.1.2 (a), p. 82-83 and 3.2.3 (c), p. 104-105.
4. [First Annual Surveillance Report. Hokkaido Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Association Chum Salmon Set-net Fishery Certification No.: JFRCA 20F2200011 Date certified: February 28, 2019. Report prepared: August 2019. On site assessment: July 23, 2019.](#)

Many thanks again for participating in the Public Consultation and we do hope that the above responses have been helpful. We look forward to a continued collaboration and dialogue going forward.

Kindest regards,



Herman Wisse

GSSI Managing Director