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MSC & GDST Joint Statement

The seafood industry plays a vital role in global food security, nutrition, and economic development. However, the complex and often opaque nature of seafood supply chains presents challenges related to traceability, a key tool in combatting seafood fraud, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and verifying environmental claims. In the face of these important challenges, organisations like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and the Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability (GDST) have distinct yet complementary roles in facilitating the implementation of robust traceability systems across the seafood industry.

The MSC and the GDST share a vision to drive standardisation of traceability requirements across global seafood supply chains, to ease the burden of implementation and demonstration of traceability for seafood businesses.

The MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard verifies that MSC certified seafood comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery. The CoC standard requirements include the need for certified partners to demonstrate one-up-one-down traceability. Furthermore, compliance with the MSC CoC standard is verified annually by an independent, third-party auditor. This offers consumers the assurance that products with the MSC ecolabel are sourced from an MSC certified fishery.

The GDST, in collaboration with industry, developed the GDST Standard which defines how traceability data can be standardised and shared throughout the supply chain. The GDST standard is a business-to-business (B2B) standard which recognises software that can send and receive interoperable digital data and standardises the nomenclature of traceability data. The GDST does not support a product claim, and compliance with the GDST standard is not audited by a third party. Instead, it lays the common foundation for data exchange, to support the seafood industry, with their various data needs, to operate in a legal, sustainable and or ethical way.

Though compliance with the GDST standard is not a requirement of MSC Chain of Custody certification, GDST implementation can assist supply chain companies to efficiently demonstrate compliance with the MSC CoC standard's traceability requirements. MSC is currently reviewing the traceability requirements of its program to further strengthen the integrity of the MSC label, and leverage the opportunities offered by advances in the use of interoperable digital technology and standardised data; employing the GDST standard to improve the efficiency and efficacy of supply chain auditing. While the two programs are complementary, each organisation acknowledges the distinct roles it plays in addressing the traceability challenges the seafood industry faces.

Learn more about the [Marine Stewardship Council](#)
Learn more about the [Global Dialogue for Seafood Traceability](#).