

3 November 2025

Marine Stewardship Council

"Working to End Overfishing and Build a Sustainable Future"

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) is a global nonprofit organization whose mission is to end overfishing around the world. For 25 years, the MSC has been working with scientists, fisheries, industry experts, and other nonprofits, to improve the way our ocean is fished through the MSC Fisheries Standard and Chain of Custody Standard. Globally, 20.6% of the world's wild capture fisheries are engaged with our program.

Our goal is to use our ecolabel and fishery certification program to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood and working with our partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

Why GDST?

MSC has been involved with the GDST in some capacity since the development of the first GDST Standard. We formally became a partner of the organization in October 2024. MSC recognizes the importance, but also the challenges of ensuring robust traceability across the seafood industry. Through our partnership, we hope to help support the adoption of interoperable data standards across the seafood industry, find solutions to ensure interoperability is accessible to all and stay abreast of developments in the space.

Why Digital Seafood Traceability Matters

The MSC Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard verifies that MSC certified seafood comes from an MSC certified sustainable fishery. Traceability is at the core of our program and ensures consumers and businesses can trust products bearing the MSC ecolabel.

Greater traceability practices will help us ensure our CoC Standard continues to deliver the expected levels of assurance. Additionally, technological advances and interoperable data standards can facilitate data exchange between supply chain actors and could streamline the certification process for our Chain of Custody certified partners.

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 [Global Dialogue on Seafood Traceability \(GDST\)](https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-dialogue-on-seafood-traceability/)

How GDST helps to Address Challenges

A critical aspect of the MSC program, is our Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard which ensures that products bearing the ecolabel can be traced back to a certified fishery. The need for robust traceability systems is a cornerstone of our program and is necessary for partners wanting to become certified. Working with the GDST allows us to collaborate with industry leaders helping to facilitate adoption of interoperable standards. It also allows the MSC to play a role in addressing the challenges facing the industry as it transitions from analogue to digital processes while championing the benefits of standardised data collection and exchange through interoperable data standards. We see the fundamental importance in collaborating to develop solutions to support accessibility for all partners, large and small, who may face varying challenges as they work to implement interoperable systems.

Impact of GDST on the Business

The GDST has responded to rapid technological advancements and growing regulatory demands around food safety and illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing by working with the seafood industry to promote standardized data collection and interoperable traceability solutions. Their Standard makes it easier to share data across the supply chain and provides much needed flexibility around what tools or software companies choose to use. Considering the scope and scale of the MSC program, this flexibility is critically important for our partners if we wish to scale broader adoption of digital traceability systems across our program.

Long-Term Goals

The MSC's goal is to use our GDST partnership to collaborate with industry leaders to advocate for the adoption of digital interoperable traceability systems across the seafood industry. Ultimately, we see interoperable traceability as an approach to enhance the assurance of our program and more broadly as an important mechanism to mitigate illegal, unreported, unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud.

Advice for Potential GDST Partners

With important regulatory changes related to traceability on the horizon, participating in the GDST is a great resource to better understand current and upcoming traceability requirements, push for the development and adoption of practical tools to facilitate implementation and connect with other industry leaders on how they are approaching some of these challenges.

You can learn more about the Marine Stewardship Council at: [MSC Website](https://www.msc.org)
Explore the benefits of GDST partnership at: [GDST Get Involved](https://www.gdst.org)

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