



## Procedure for the issuing and withdrawal of Certificates to the MarinTrust Programme

Document PRO-005 (prev. A5) – Version 2.1

Issued October 2025 – Effective November 2025

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**Reviewed by:** Technical Assurance Committee

**Approved by:** Governing Body Committee

## 1. Purpose

To define the procedure by which certificates of conformity are issued, suspended or withdrawn by registered Certification Bodies (CB) against the MarinTrust Certification Programme.

## 2. Scope

All Certificates of Conformity issued against the MarinTrust Certification Programme by the registered Certification Body (CB) and issued under their name, which includes:

- MarinTrust Standard
- MarinTrust Chain of Custody Standard

The scope does not include issuance of letter of acceptance under the Improver Programme (IP). For the issuance of IP Acceptance letters, please refer to the Improver Programme Acceptance Mechanism (IPAM) document.

## 3. Authority

Each registered CB shall have a certification committee, or delegated/responsible person, and shall have the sole authority for the issuance, suspension, reinstatement or withdrawal of a certificate of conformity to the MarinTrust Certification Programme.

All certificates issued shall be under the approval of the CBs Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegated/responsible person. The person's name shall be recorded by the CB.

## 4. Issue of Certificates

Ownership of the certificate of conformity shall remain the CBs and shall be issued subject to the applicant/certificate holder conforming with the MarinTrust Programme requirements and CB Certification Protocols, a copy of which is provided with the application documentation.

### 4.1. Initial Certificate

The CB Scheme Manager, or delegated/responsible person, on completion of the following activities will prepare a certificate of conformity for issue:

- A satisfactory audit conducted and reported in accordance with the procedure for conducting MarinTrust Factory/Facility Audits by registered CBs to the MarinTrust Certification Programme (document PRO-004.)
- All raw materials listed in the application scope, for whole fish and/or by-products, have been assessed as conforming with the MarinTrust Raw Material Approval Criteria, or recognised as an approved equivalent.
- Review of the audit report and recommendation for approval by the MarinTrust CB Programme Certification Committee/Certifier for the MarinTrust Programme.
- All payment to MarinTrust with regards to administration standard fees has been cleared.

Before releasing the certificate for signature by the CB's CEO, or delegated/responsible person, the CB Scheme Manager, or delegated/responsible person, will ensure that records of the above are in place and that the accuracy of the certificate details are checked with respect to the MarinTrust certification programme requirements.

At minimum, the certificate of conformity shall contain the following details:

For all Certificates:

- CB Information (name, address, and accreditation details)
- Certificate Number issued by CB
- Name and address of applicant's facility certified
- Applicant's certification status
- MarinTrust Certification Programme/Standard Information including version number
- Initial certificate issue date.
- Expiry of certificate issue date.
- CB's authorised signature, name, and position
- MarinTrust Logo

#### **MarinTrust (MT) Standard**

- Scope of raw materials (approved fisheries and by-product fisheries)
  - Whole Fish - *if applicable*
  - By product (wild caught) - *if applicable*
  - By product (aquaculture/farmed) - *if applicable*

- Recognised (MSC) - *if applicable*
- Product scope (Fish meal and/or fish oil production, other)
- Subcontracted facilities – if applicable

#### **MarinTrust Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard**

- List of registered facilities
  - Activity (Refer to CoC standard for relevant activities)
- Subcontracted facilities - *if applicable*
  - Activity (Refer to CoC standard for relevant activities)

**Note:** *The Facility will be certified from the issue date of the certificate and not the evaluation audit date provided the dates are within 6 months of one another. If not, the Certification Body may need to consider the possible risks and possible need to re-audit.*

Within 5 working days of the certificate decision, the certificate shall be shared with the nominated contact name and address held in the applicant's file, and MarinTrust Certification Programme Coordinator and Assurance Officer, or assigned persons responsible, (for publishing on the official website) and an original copy shall be arranged to be sent by post to the applicant.

Where an error is identified in a certificate following issuance, the CB shall make the necessary amendments to the certificate. The CB shall share the amended certificate within 3 working days upon being aware of the error.

A record of the certification committee, or delegated/responsible person, recommendation shall be made in the minutes of the Certification Committee meeting or Certification Committee's Decision Record.

Maintenance of certification status is ensured through annual audits in line with the auditing frequency outlined in document PRO-004 – *Conducting of MarinTrust Factory & Chain of Custody audits by Registered Certification Bodies* (CBs).

For all surveillance audits, a confirmation letter of maintenance of certification shall be shared with both the certificate holder and MarinTrust Certification Programme Coordinator and Assurance Officer, or delegated persons responsible. The letter shall include, as minimum:

- CB Information (name, address, and accreditation details)
- Certificate Number issued by CB
- Name and address of facility certified
- Audit type (surveillance)
- Audit date and results (pass / fail)
- MarinTrust Certification Programme/Standard Information including version number
- CB's authorised signature, name, and position

Copies of all final audit reports shall be shared with the nominated contact name and address held in the certificate holders file, and MarinTrust Certification Programme Coordinator and Assurance Officer, or assigned persons responsible, and stored in the certificate holder's file.

in accordance with document PRO-004 - *Procedure for registered Certification Bodies conducting audits against the MarinTrust Programme*.

## 4.2. Recertification

Ongoing certification after the completion of a certification cycle is ensured through a programme of continuing recertification of the certificate holder in line with the auditing frequency outlined in document PRO-004 – *Conducting of MarinTrust Factory & Chain of Custody audits by Registered Certification Bodies* (CBs).

Records of these audits and notification to the certificate holder of the resultant review by the CB's certification committee, or delegated/responsible person, shall also be maintained in their individual file.

A copy of the audit report, in accordance with document PRO-004 - *Procedure for registered Certification Bodies conducting audits against the MarinTrust Programme* and certificate issued by the CB shall be sent to the certificate holder within 5 working days of the certificate decision, as well as MarinTrust's Certification Programme Coordinator and Assurance Officer, or delegated persons, for record keeping and monitoring of certification consistency. The certificate of conformity shall be published on the MarinTrust website.

Recertification certificates shall have an issue date that is three years from the new certificate's issue date. This is to ensure continuous certification with no gaps between certification cycles,

The recertification certificate shall be issued prior to the expiry date of the current certificate but no more than 3 months in advance.

CBs shall share the recertification certificate to MarinTrust prior to the expiry date of the current certificate for posting on the MarinTrust website.

## 5. Changes affecting Certification

### 5.1. Changes affecting status of certification

Changes affecting certification status can include new information related to the fulfilment of certification requirements obtained by the CB after certification has been established. These changes can include extension of certificates validity, and rebranding.

Certificate extensions of up to 6 months may be granted in accordance with all relevant norms and MarinTrust procedural requirements due to circumstances outside of the control of the certificate holder and/or certification body such as:

- Pandemics / epidemics
- Natural disasters & force majeure (such as flooding, earthquake, war, terrorism etc)

For reasons outside the scope outlined above the CB Scheme Manager shall contact the MarinTrust Assurance and Risk Manager, or delegated responsible person, directly prior to issuing any certificate extensions for further discussion and approval.

In such cases, the CB shall issue a revised formal certificate which shall include an annex indicating the extension granted. At minimum, the annex information shall include:

- Extension duration
- Start and end date of extension

The rationale for the extension shall be communicated by the CB to MarinTrust for record keeping purposes.

The CB shall send the revised certificate to the certificate holder and MarinTrust Secretariat, no less than one month prior to the certificate expiry for posting on the MarinTrust website.

Where an extension has been granted (certificate expiry is extended), the recertification issue date shall be three years from the new issue date.

When there is a change in the certificate (e.g., rebranding), a new version of the certificate is issued considering the date on which the change is approved, and the end date is respected according to its certification cycle. The CB shall include an annex to the certificate explaining the change.

## 5.2. Changes affecting the current certification scope

Certificate holders may require changes to their current certification scope outside the certification cycle.

Changes to certification scope may be granted, in such cases, the CB shall issue a revised formal certificate to include the scope granted or maintain the current certificate and add an annex to the certificate to indicate the scope granted. Within 5 working days of the certification scope decision, the certificate shall be shared with the nominated contact name and address held in the applicant's file, and MarinTrust Certification Programme Coordinator and Assurance Officer, or assigned persons responsible, (for publishing on the MarinTrust website) and an original copy shall be arranged to be sent by post to the applicant.

The changes to the certification scope may differ depending on the programme (MT standard or CoC), including, but not limited to, the following:

### MT Standard

- Addition of new production facility
- Addition of a whole fish for assessment
- Addition of by product for assessment
- Type of material produced (such as hydrolysates)

### Chain of Custody Standard

- Addition of a production facility
- Addition of new subcontractor facility

- Addition of activities
- Change to product description

With regards to the update of certificate scope where an existing certificate holder wishes to add a fishery or by-product specie to their certificate scope between audit cycles the following rules apply.

### Existing category

Where a facility wishes to add a species to its certification scope and is already sourcing from that species category<sup>1</sup>, the new species may be assessed and added to the certificate scope following approval.

Segregation systems and associated clauses with the specific category have already been assured at the facility through the certification process. CBs shall update the certificate upon confirmation of approval of the species in line with guidance provided in Section 5.2 herein. At the next audit due date of the facility the assigned auditor shall conduct a traceback exercise of the added species to ensure conformity with segregation requirements has been maintained throughout.

### New category

Where a facility wishes to add a species from a category not currently included in its certification scope, certificate holder may submit a scope extension request to indicate the intention of adding a species. The relevant fishery or by-product assessment shall be scheduled and conducted in line with usual process timelines. As segregation systems and associated clauses with the specific category have not already been assured at the facility through the certification process, the facility must undergo a MarinTrust audit with the inclusion of the relevant new species prior to its addition to the certificate scope.

In cases where the species approval has been granted, the CB shall review the timing of the certificate holder's next scheduled audit and shall discuss with the certificate holder the possibility of bringing the audit date forward by up to a maximum of four months to accommodate the inclusion of the newly approved species.

For example, a certificate holder submits a scope extension application in March to add a whole fish species, a category not currently covered under their certification scope. The application is processed and shared with the CB, and the whole fish assessment is then scheduled and completed. Whole fish assessments must be completed within three months of receiving the application, meaning the assessment must be completed by June. The facility's next scheduled audit is in November. In this case, the CB may offer the certificate holder the option of either

- Maintain the existing November audit date and wait for the addition of the species until that time, or
- Bring the audit date forward by up to four months, meaning the earliest permissible date would be June

The certificate holder opts to bring the audit forward to August, allowing time to complete the audits and issue the updated certificate approximately two months after the species approval was granted.

<sup>1</sup> Species categories are: whole fish, and by-products (wild caught and aquaculture inclusive)

In the case of Improver Programme species, the facility may add IP species to their certificate scope if they already source from an existing category within the certificate scope. However, if the facility is an IP accepted site only, and wishes to add an approved species and gain MarinTrust certification status, the facility must undergo a full certification and audit process.

**Important note:** In cases where a fishery or by-product specie has been removed from the certification scope, the CB shall issue the updated certificate within 24 hours upon receipt of the approved scope extension form.

## 6. Suspension of Certificates

Certificates of conformity may be suspended, pending further investigation, where the CB's CEO, or delegated/responsible person, or certification committee, or delegate/responsible person for the MarinTrust Programme has evidence that a certified location has failed to conform with any of the requirements as detailed in MarinTrust Certification Programme and the CB's own "Rules Governing Certification". A copy of which shall be issued to every certificate holder when the certificate of conformity is issued to them.

This evidence may comprise of, but may not be limited to, any of the following:

- Persistent failure to meet the requirements of the MarinTrust Certification Programme as noted during audit Visits and agreed by the certification committee, or delegate/responsible person.
- A Breach of Legislation,
- Substantiated complaints regarding supply of inferior products supplied under the Logo of Conformity for the MarinTrust Certification Programme.
- Evidence that the certificate holder has no approved raw material source

The CB Scheme Manager or delegated/responsible person shall, on instruction of the CBs CEO or delegated/responsible person, notify the certificate holder in writing of their concerns detailing the reasons and requiring that satisfactory corrective action be implemented within a specified time scale, as determined by the CB but shall be no more than 6 months.

Suspension shall be upheld until the certificate holder submits the required evidence to close the concerns raised.

MarinTrust Secretariat shall be informed by the CB Scheme manager, or delegated/responsible person, within 24 hours of the decision and the suspended certificate holder will be highlighted on the MarinTrust database and website as being suspended from the programme, pending further investigation.

Certificate holders that have their certificate of conformity suspended, pending further investigation, shall be informed by the CB, and instructed:

- Not to use the MarinTrust logo or make claims with regards to their association with the programme, during the suspension period.

- To inform its customers, who may also be certificate holders under the MarinTrust Programme MarinTrust, not to place the MarinTrust logo or make claims with regards to the MarinTrust programme in relation to products associated with this supplier until notified directly by the CB/MarinTrust Secretariat/suspended certificate holder.

The CB shall request evidence from the suspended certificate holder to demonstrate that their customers have been informed and shall share this evidence with MarinTrust Secretariat upon request.

The CB shall ensure that the suspended certificate holders take immediate steps to remove the logo from any products affected, webpages or other materials and set a timeline for this to be achieved. CB shall follow up and monitor suspended certificate holders to ensure that MarinTrust logo or claims are not used during the suspension period. CB shall conduct periodic (at least 3 times within a 6-month timeframe) surveillance checks of the suspended applicant to ensure MarinTrust logo or claim is not in use. As well as the CB, MarinTrust will conduct monitoring activities **in line with MarinTrust procedures for monitoring and investigation of misrepresentation.**

Upon successful closing of corrective actions and provision of supporting evidence by the suspended certificate holder within the stipulated timeframe, the CB shall carry out the process in accordance with ISO/IEC 17065 and shall reinstate the certificate. The CB shall inform MarinTrust of the decision within 24 hours. MarinTrust shall update the status of certificate holder on the website.

Where corrective actions have not been implemented and evidenced within the stipulated timeframe the CB shall proceed with the withdrawal of the certificate as outlined in Section 7 herein.

## 7. Withdrawal of Certificates

### 7.1. Withdrawal

Certificates of conformity may be withdrawn where the CB's CEO, or delegated/responsible person, their MarinTrust Programme certification committee, or delegated/responsible person has evidence that a certified facility has failed to comply with any of the requirements as detailed in MarinTrust Certification Programme and the CB's own "Rules Governing Certification".

Failure by the suspended certificate holder to respond with, and successfully complete, a Programme of Corrective Action deemed acceptable by the CB within the time specified shall lead to the withdrawal of the Certificate of Compliance.

Immediate withdrawal without a suspension period outlined in section 6 herein may be required in cases where evidence may comprise of, but may not be limited to, any of the following:

- \* Evidence of a critical nonconformities.
- \* Failure to pay the appropriate fees required of the MarinTrust Programme.

On withdrawal of certification, the withdrawn certificate holder, and MarinTrust's Operations Manager and Assurance Officer, or delegated person responsible, shall be notified by the CB in writing within 24 hours of the withdrawal decision, and shall request the return and/or destruction of the Certificate of Conformity and any materials that display the MarinTrust logo or claim of certification held by the withdrawn certificate holder. The CBs own database shall be updated accordingly.

The MarinTrust Operations Manager, or delegated/responsible person, shall remove the certificate holder's details from the list of certificate holders on the MarinTrust website, and update the database accordingly.

Certificate holders that have their certificate of conformity withdrawn shall be informed by the CB and instructed:

- Not to use the MarinTrust logo or make claims with regards to their association with the Programme.
- To inform its customers, who may also be certificate holders under the MarinTrust Programme, not to place the MarinTrust logo or make claims with regards to the MarinTrust programme in relation to products associated with this supplier.

At the discretion of the CB's CEO, or delegated/responsible person, an auditor may visit this withdrawn certificate holders' facility/facilities to verify conformity with the above request.

All correspondence and supporting reports relating to the CB's CEO, or delegated/responsible person, decision to suspend / withdraw Certification will be held in the Certificate Holders file pending any Appeal, which may be lodged.

The CB Scheme Manager, or delegated/responsible person, shall amend the CB's own database of certificate holders of the MarinTrust Programme to show the date of certificate withdrawal of the affected certificate holder.

At minimum, the content of the withdrawal letter shall include:

- Effective date of withdrawal
- Reason for the withdrawal: The reason must be clearly stated and shall include the details of the grounds on which the decision was made (such as evidence of critical NCs, failure to pay appropriate fees, corruption and fraud) and reference to any requirements where applicable.
- Specific actions required of the withdrawn certificate holder: At minimum shall include:
  - Obligation to cease use of the MarinTrust branding and any reference to MarinTrust certification.
  - Request return and/or destroy certificate (if applicable) and any material that displays MarinTrust logo or claim of certification held by the withdrawn certificate holder.
  - To inform their customers who may be a certificate holder under the MarinTrust Programme not to use or place the MarinTrust logo or make claims with regards to the MarinTrust Programme in relation to products associated with the withdrawn certificate holder.

## 7.2 Optional Withdrawal

Certificate holders may decide to opt out of the MarinTrust Certification Programme for various reasons. In such cases, the certificate holder shall put into writing the decision to opt out of the programme and the reason for the optional withdrawal. The CB shall acknowledge the receipt of the decision and inform MarinTrust Secretariat within 24 hours of this decision being taken.

In the case of optional withdrawal, the current certificate shall remain valid until the next audit due date, when the withdrawal shall come into effect.

Where certificate holders wish for immediate withdrawal, the certificate shall be formally withdrawn with immediate effect.

Following the effective date of withdrawal, the validity of certification and claims shall follow the same process of withdrawal as outlined in section 7.1 herein.

Please refer to operational procedures and guidance for further information regarding the financial aspects of optional withdrawal.

## 8. Records

At a minimum, the following information shall also be recorded against the certificate holders name on the CB's own database of applicants and certificate holders against the MarinTrust Certification Programme:

- Certificate number
- Name and address of applicant's location certified
- Applicant's certification status
- MarinTrust Certification Programme/Standard Information including version number
- Certificate issue date
- Expiry of certificate issue date
- Scope of products
- Audit date
- Assigned auditor
- Next audit due date, type (surveillance/recertification), and status

The CB shall share this information with the MarinTrust Operations Manager, or delegated/responsible person, **on the first working day of each month** to support with the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of accurate records

In addition, the following records will be held in the CBs certificate holder's file.

### On Initial certification:

- Initial audit report.
- Nonconformity Report Form and all supplementary evidence to close them off if applicable

- Notification to applicant of decision on certification
- Copy of certificate of conformity

#### Maintenance of Certification:

- All annual audit reports
- Confirmation letters of maintenance of certification

#### On Suspension/Withdrawal of Certification

- Notification of pending review of status / suspension
- Confirmation of Suspension/Withdrawal
- Returned Certificate in cases of withdrawal (if obtained)
- Request to not use MarinTrust logo or certification claims
- Request to inform customers of to not place or use claims of MarinTrust certification
- Visit report (if authorised)
- Any correspondence relating to possible appeal.

**Note:** MarinTrust shall publish the list of withdrawn certificate holders for the past 5 years on the MarinTrust website, which shall include the date of withdrawal.

#### On Appeal

The appeal is a separate process, therefore in cases of appeal, please refer to document A6 - Appeals and complaints procedure for the MarinTrust Programme

## AMENDMENT LOG

DATE	ISSUE	AMENDMENT	AUTHORISED BY
14/06/2022	2.0	MarinTrust Header and Footer inserted	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Reference to IFFO RS updated to MarinTrust throughout	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	References to CB authority and sign off aligned with ISO 17065 throughout	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of clarification of scope, which does not include improver Programme Acceptance, instead referring to the IPAM document	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of approved raw material recognition to activities included in issuance of initial certification, section 4.1	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of specific sections for issuance of certificates, including initial certification, section 4.1, and recertification, section 4.2	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of guidance for changes affecting certification (5.1) and changes affecting current certificate scope (5.2)	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Additions of further detailed information and follow up guidance for the Suspension of Certificates (6)	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Updated guidance for follow up of withdrawal of certification (7.1)	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of further guidance for the optional withdrawal of certification (7.2)	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Inclusion of ongoing records, and addition of further detailed requirements for suspension and withdrawal in 'Records', section 8	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Updated 'certified applicant /approved programme applicant' to 'certificate holder' throughout	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Updated 'certificate of approval' to 'certificate of conformity'	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Addition of certificate holder information to be held on a database by CBs for the monitoring and tracking of certificate holders and audit scheduling	Governing Body Committee
14/06/2022	2.0	Removed appeal process and added reference to Doc A6-Appeals and	Governing Body Committee

		complaints procedure for the MarinTrust Programme”	
02/05/2025	2.1	Change from ‘sites’ to ‘facility’ throughout	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Addition of reinstatement of the certificate as part of the authority of the CB.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Change timeframe from ‘weeks’ to ‘working days’ throughout to align with other documents.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Update to document reference to align with the document control procedure.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Clarification on the possibility of gaps in certification cycles if recertification process is not completed prior to the expiry date of the current certificate.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Clarification on information to be included in the annex of a certificate.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Addition of subcontracted facility to the list of information to be included in MarinTrust Standard certificate.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Inclusion for CBs to share amended certificates following issuance.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	To clarify that where a certificate holder currently does not have an approved source of raw material, the certificate holder will be suspended.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Addition of minimum requirements for the content of a withdrawal letter.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	To clarify where the certificate holder mentions that they will not renew their certification upon expiry.	Governing Body Committee
02/05/2025	2.1	Inclusion of how long withdrawn certificate holders will be published on the MarinTrust website.	Governing Body Committee