Consumers and retailers increasingly demand guarantees that seafood products have not contributed to the environmental or social problems caused by over-fishing. The MSC Fisheries Standard offer fisheries a way to confirm sustainability, using a credible, independent, third-party assessment process.

Certification in accordance with this standard demonstrates a commitment to sustainable practices, gives sustainable fisheries recognition in the market, and provides assurance to consumers and retailers that their seafood products come from a well-managed and sustainable source.

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Fisheries Standard is a standard ensuring that a fishery is well managed and responsibly harvested to sustain the target fishery and the surrounding marine environment. Certification to this standard demonstrates commitment to sustainable practices and results in recognition in the market.
The standard applies to fisheries, and can be used to certify wild captured freshwater and marine species.

What are the benefits?
There are many reasons why fisheries choose to become certified, and there are several possible advantages from certification:
- Fulfilling market requirement of third-party verification of sustainability.
- Differentiated products in an increasingly competitive marketplace.
- Preferred supplier status and premium price for the fish.
- A way of adapting to the trend of more environmentally conscious consumers.
- Demonstrating good resource stewardship to the community and stakeholders.
- Pursuing transition to self-management.

How we can help you
As an accredited certifier, DNV GL assesses fisheries against the three MSC Fisheries Standards:

Principle 1: Sustainable target fish stocks
A fishery must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to over-fishing or depletion of the exploited populations and, for those populations that are depleted, the fishery must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery.

Principle 2: Environmental impact of fishing
Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the fishery depends.

Principle 3: Effective management
The fishery is subject to an effective management system that respects local, national and international laws and standards and incorporates institutional and operational frameworks that require use of the resource to be responsible and sustainable.

While measuring against three principles, unique circumstances of the fishery are taken into consideration. An issued certificate is valid for 5 years, but once a fishery has been certified, all companies in the supply chain must have the MSC Chain of Custody certification. This ensures that only seafood from certified fisheries carries the MSC eco-label.

How can I prepare for certification?
1. Contact DNV GL to get more information.
2. Give responsibility for progress to a person within the organisation and have a designated contact person in the certification body.
3. Decide who the customer should be, taking into account the rights and responsibilities that come with the certificate.
4. Make sure you have a clear purpose and understanding of what you want to accomplish through the certification process.
5. Decide what should be certified in terms of the specific fishery, fish stock or particular gears/fishing methods.
6. Collect as much information as possible concerning your fish stock and related issues as it speeds up the assessment and reduces related costs.
7. Have a clear understanding of likely time frames.
8. Ensure the support and input of all stakeholders.

The most important element in the certification process is to transparently identify and address issues about target stock(s), the impact of fishing on the marine environment, and the effectiveness of the fishery’s management system. It is important to be aware of the fact that unique circumstances out of your company’s control may prevent you from becoming certified, such as unsustainable governmental policies. For this reason the pre-assessment is a fundamental step in the certification process, in order to identify possible problems at a very early stage.

Why partner with DNV GL?
DNV GL is one of the world’s leading certification bodies. We help businesses manage risk and assure the performance of their organizations, products, people, facilities and supply chains through certification, verification, assessment and training services across a wide range of industries.

In the food and beverage industry, we help customers worldwide to achieve excellence in food safety and quality, environmental management, supply chain management and product sustainability. We combine technical, digital and industry expertise to empower companies’ decisions and actions. Partnering with our customers, we build sustainable business performance and create stakeholder trust.

With origins stretching back to 1864 and operations in more than 100 countries, our experts are dedicated to helping customers make the world safer, smarter and greener.