



Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS)


RFVS Auditor Competency and Course Approval Requirements

Issue 1.2

05-November-2021

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1.0 Overview

1.1 Introduction

Best Seafood Practices' (BSP) Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS) Auditor and Industry Observer Training Program is an intensive, classroom-based seminar with field trips to operational fishing vessels, where possible, conducted several times a year in a variety of locations around the world. The program includes foundational training courses on fishing vessels, social auditing, central management systems, and the RFVS Requirements.

Part 1a: Foundational Training on Fishing Vessels and Catch Methods:

This section of the course is designed for auditors with no prior knowledge of the catching or harvesting sector and provides an overview, common catching methods, and a thorough review of the operations of a fishing vessel. The aim of this course is to equip an auditor with a good understanding of how commercial fishing vessels operate.

Course Duration: 3 hours; examination depending on experience (see section 2.3).

Part 1b: Foundation Training on Social Auditing Techniques:

This section of the course is designed for auditors who are not yet registered to the Association of Professional Social Compliance Auditors (APSCA). The aim of this course is to allow them to undertake a social based audit in a consistent and competent manner. The course will be based on international social auditing skills criteria based on the Social Accountability International (SAI) requirements or an equivalence. The aim of the course is to equip an auditor with the social auditing skills that will allow them to meet the criteria needed to register for APSCA

Course Duration: 1 day; no examination

Part 1c: Central Management System (CMS):

This section of the course is designed for auditors who would like to conduct Group Fleet audits on single-handers or crewed vessels. It will focus on Quality Management Auditing skills to meet ISO 9001/22000 or a GFSI recognized standard equivalence.


Course Duration: 3 hours; no examination

Part 2: Requirements of the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS):

This section of the course is intended for all auditors and is compulsory if they wish to audit against the RFVS. The aim of this course is to go through the RFVS criteria to give an overview of their intent and provide examples of compliance to the standard. In addition, the course will give training on auditor safety in executing this RFVS audit and advice on how to arrange audits with commercial fishing vessels.

Course Duration: 2 days and final verification examination

The RFVS Training Program is taught by a qualified BSP staff member, consultant, or by senior auditors with practical field knowledge and expertise in their respective modules.

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In addition to new candidates and returning auditors, Global Seafood Alliance (GSA) encourages interested industry observers to join the course for a first-hand, in-depth look into the RFVS. Space is available on a first-come first-served basis.

Course announcement details and other information can be found on the BSP website:

<http://www.bspcertification.org/>

1.2 Conflict of Interest Policy

To avoid potential conflicts of interest, Individuals who work in the seafood industry may attend as observers but cannot be admitted as auditor candidates. This includes:

- Active Vessel owner/captain/crew
- Government seafood regulatory body inspectors
- Or other similar type of organization

Auditor candidates must be independent/third-party individuals.

1.3 Attendee Categories

There are three course attendee categories:

1.3.1 Observers


Examples of Observers would include government representatives, industry producers, retailers, staff of RFVS certified facilities and all interested non-auditor parties.

1.3.2 Returning Auditors

Returning and currently approved and active RFVS auditors who must take their required refresher training or who would like to apply for extending their competencies.

1.3.3 New Auditor Candidates

Auditors who have not audited for RFVS in the past or who have not attended a RFVS Auditor and Industry Observer Course in the past three years from the date of completion of their shadow/witness requirements from a certification body.

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2.0 Overview of Requirements to Become a New RFVS Auditor or for RFVS Auditors That Are Not Current to Re-Qualify

Auditors must fulfill the following requirements in order to qualify to audit under RFVS.

- Meet the Auditor competency requirements for the RFVS.
- Submit credentials and other information in compliance with the steps specified in this document and be approved to attend a RFVS auditor course.
- Once notification of final approval is obtained all attendees are required to pay the auditor course fee in advance of the start of the course.
- Pass the part of the program for their area of competency.
- Work for or be subcontracted by a RFVS-approved certification body.
- Obtain final approval to audit from a RFVS-approved certification body.
- Maintain competency and perform the minimum number of audits per year under APSCA registration or Certified Social Compliance Auditor (CSCA) level requirements, or under certification body (CB) oversight utilize initial RFVS audits for Crewed Vessels as evidence towards achieving APSCA registration by 2024.
- Attend and pass the RFVS course periodically to keep up to date, as described in policy documents sent to all certification bodies.

2.1 Auditor Screening


Any new or returning auditor who is an employee of a RFVS approved CB, must be screened by the CB prior to submitting documentation to RFVS. All RFVS approved certification bodies are responsible for ensuring that the proper information, registration steps, and screening have taken place before submittal to RFVS for course approval.

Incomplete or improper information and submittals will be rejected and returned to the CB for correction.

2.2 RFVS Auditor Categories

New applicants or returning auditors wishing to extend their approval competencies shall submit social accountability competency information to either their certification body or, if independent, to BSP Management.

Auditor applicant information submitted to RFVS where the competency requirements have not been clearly met, where all required documents listed herein were not sent, or where the certification body did not properly screen their candidates will be rejected and returned to the applicant or certification body for correction.

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The auditor competencies are:

Category 1: Single vessel audits

Category 2: Category 1 + Group audits for single and crewed vessel groups

2.3 Minimum Auditor Competency Requirements

Auditor candidates shall have the minimum required experience for each of the competencies listed below as follows:

Category 1 – Certificate in Commercial Fishing and 2 years life experience (related to a wild fishing industry) or a 3 -4-year degree in a nationally or internationally accredited program.

Any candidates with less than one year’s experience onboard commercial fishing vessels in any capacity must complete an onsite training on Part 1a: Foundational Training on Fishing Vessels and Catch Methods, as well as pass an onsite exam demonstrating high proficiency in commercial fishing vessel operations, gear, and crew safety.

Candidates with 1-2 years’ onboard vessels may complete Part 1a and the requisite exam remotely. Candidates with greater than 2 years’ experience onboard vessels are not required to complete Part 1a training.

Under exceptional circumstances, the onsite foundational training requirement can be replaced by a remote course under the approval of GSA Program Integrity staff, though an exam will still be required.

At the time of application, the auditor must be on a training journey to meet Section 3 requirements to become APSCA Registered or CSCA level (Must be Registered or CSCA by 2024). All candidates must also take a GSA provided or approved auditor training class.

Category 2 – Must meet all Category 1 requirements as well as successfully completed and passed a recognized course in lead auditor techniques and have attended the Foundations 1C (CMS) training course.

* Category 1 auditors will be expected to successfully complete a recognized course in lead auditor techniques within three years of joining as an RFVS approved auditor.

All auditors must have good written and verbal English capability and “working language” skills in the corresponding native/working language. This must include the locally used specialist terminology in this working language.

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3.0 Documents Required to be Submitted for Review

Certification bodies, or independent auditor candidates are required to send the following documents to BSP for review:

- CV/Resume – An up-to-date CV/resume in English, describing positions and experience related to each competency category that is being applied for. CVs/Resumes must easily and clearly show the number of years of experience, at a minimum, in each competency as defined previously. Also, include any relevant education, certifications etc.
- Audit Log – For those with auditing experience; submit an audit log in English showing experience related to social accountability and seafood within the competency listed above. The audit log should go back one to two years depending on the amount of auditing experience but can go back as much as three if necessary. The log must list the auditor name, type of facility, products/species, whether-or-not the applicant was a lead auditor, sole auditor, part of a team, or an observer. The log must also list the type of audit done, the duration and to what standard.
- Degrees – Copy of university-level degree (per APSCA requirement) (Competency 1 and 2 requirements only).
- APSCA Member Firm Number and APSCA Auditor Number (where applicable).
- A BSP Application Form.


3.1 Submittal to BSP

BSP will review the above information from all candidates and make the final decision as to approval for attendance.

3.1.1 New Independent Auditors

Independent auditors not currently working for or subcontracted by a RFVS approved certification body –wishing to apply to attend the RFVS course(s) as an independent auditor candidate have two options:

- Contact a RFVS-approved certification body in advance to find out if any of them might be interested in hiring you if you pass the course. If so, make arrangements with that certification body to send them all required credentials and have them screen your candidacy. Once the candidate has been confirmed by the certification body to meet the requirements the certification body is to send the candidate’s name and credentials to RFVS for final approval and invoicing.
- Submit your credentials as described in this document directly to BSP for screening. State the exact RFVS categories you are seeking approval for, and ensure you meet the requirements. Once screened and approved by BSP, pay the invoice for the course. If you pass the course, you may seek to be hired by one or more of the RFVS approved certification bodies after-the-fact.

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4.0 Course Completion and Next Steps

All auditors must attend their required classroom days and complete and pass all classwork, case studies and tests as applicable. Candidates that meet both the competency requirements and pass the final exam will be approved as RFVS Auditors.

Prior to use by the certification body to conduct RFVS audits, the certification body will need to shadow / witness newly approved auditors to ensure that they meet all requirements to conduct an RFVS audit, as stipulated within the RFVS Certification Body Requirements document.

Important Note:

If an auditor is APSCA registered or has social auditing skills to a recognized social standard e.g. BAP Social module, BRCI, SA 8000, SMETA and they have **NO fishing vessel experience** they **must attend** the Foundation Course 1a on Fishing Vessels and Catching methods.

If an auditor is NOT APSCA registered or has no social auditing experience to a recognized social standard e.g. Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) Social module, BRCI, SA 8000, SMETA they **must attend** the Foundation Course 1b on Social Auditing Techniques.

5.0 Auditor Training Course Fees

All auditors and observers must pay the corresponding fees prior to the first day of the course.

	Early bird fee	Late fee
Competency 1 and 2 (New Auditor)	\$250	\$400
Competency 1 and 2 (Renewing Auditor)	\$250	\$400
CMS Audit Training	\$150	\$200
Foundations Auditor Training	\$150	\$200
Observer	\$250	\$400

Questions?

Please contact the BSP with any question or comments at training@bapcertification.org

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