BIM RESPONSIBLY SOURCED STANDARD

PART 1

STANDARD INFORMATION

Issue No 2	
Revision 2	May 2012

The Responsible Sourced Standard

The BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) Responsibly Sourced Standard provides the fishing industry and the consumer of wild caught Irish seafood with a 'Certification of Best Practice'.

The Standard is designed to promote consumer confidence in the fishing methods used by Irish fishermen and those who handle Irish fish, from the time of capture to the point of sale. It is the direct result of pro-active discussions and interaction with fishermen, packers, processors, markets, regulators, standards and certification experts. It reflects the awareness of an ever-perceptive public and provides a platform from which the practices of the industry can be measured.

Collectively, three Standards comprise a product certification system that is in the process of accreditation by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) to the internationally recognized ISO Guide 65 (EN 45011) standard. As such the standards are independent and third-party certified and they are regarded as best practice globally.

BIM's Responsibly Sourced Standard is composed of certification standards that are based on international best fishing practices, derived from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisations' Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other European and international best practice initiatives. As such the Standard has a broad base of similarity with other standards including that of the Marine Stewardship Standard as they are both built upon the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing.

BIM's Responsibly Sourced Standard has been developed in conjunction with independent, competent bodies, in particular an accredited Certification Body and relevant stakeholders through technical committees under the governance of BIM, the standard owner. In addition the BIM Standard is designed to meet the requirements prescribed by international seafood buyers and also by environmental stakeholder groups.

The Objectives of the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard

1) To contribute to the creation of wealth and employment in fishery-dependent regions in Ireland.

2) To promote the continuation of traditional, professional fishing activities.

3) To promote the provision of high-quality seafood in the domestic and export markets of Irish seafood.

4) To promote the contribution of seafood to enhanced food security in both the domestic and export markets of Irish seafood.

5) To contribute to the conservation of fish and shell fish stocks exploited by Standard members.

6) To promote and advertise existing good fishing and other environmentally focused practices by Standard Members.

7) To develop a culture of responsible fishing, stewardship of the marine environment and quality focussed production amongst Standard members.

8) To provide standards of conduct for those involved in the production and sale of wild caught seafood.

9) To promote the participation and co-operation of Standard members in the provision of data towards a deeper understanding of the social and economic conditions of the fishing industry, to promote improved scientific knowledge, to promote equitable and transparent control and enforcement and to promote the overall implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy.

10) To promote equitable, safe and appropriate working conditions on board fishing vessels and onshore intermediaries' through the supply chain.

Structure of the Standard

The Responsibly Sourced Standard comprises three integrated Standards:

1) A Fishing Vessel Standard;

2) An Onshore Handling Standard for intermediaries through to the supply chain;

3) A Chain of Custody Standard that underpins the provenance and traceability guarantees provided by the programme.

Table 1: Responsibly Sourced Standard		
Vessel	**Onshore**	**Supply Chain**
Fishing Vessel Standard Detailing Responsible Catching, Handling, and Care of the Catch for fishing vessels **Annexes** Detailing more specific criteria for responsible fishing of the specific species group	Onshore Seafood Handling and Quality Standard Detailing Good Product Handling Practices, Good Environmental practice, Product Quality and Traceability of Products	Chain Of Custody Standard Detailing Chain of Custody of Products

Each standard is designed to be practical and pragmatic to implement, and each provides a means to bring together the many aspects of best practice currently commonplace in the industry. This is a robust, common sense, practical and cost-effective approach allowing fishermen to meet criteria which have been developed from the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and European Union (EU) initiatives as criteria for credible certification.

Key Components

Each of the standards in the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard contains key components which together ensure the overall aims of the Programme: Responsible Fishing (Environmental Management), Care of the Catch, Traceability, and Training and Awareness (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Key components of the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard

Seafood Environmental Management System (sEMS)

At the heart of the Standard is the development and implementation of the **sEMS**, tailored to the individual requirements and operating circumstances of each vessel participating in the Standard. The Fishing Vessel Standard requires successful applicants to have an operational BIM Seafood Environmental Management System (**BIM's sEMS**) at the time of audit. In particular applicants are required to document their environmental management actions and provide appropriate evidence using the **BIM sEMS** manual.

- The BIM's **sEMS** is a tool that helps operators describe the environmental challenges and responsibilities that they face, it outlines the management and mitigation measures that they currently or will employ in the future to address these challenges.

- It is designed to give insight into many important aspects of a seafood business, to provide a framework for managing risks using the most efficient cost effective

measures, to assist the management of legal compliance and of performance requirements.

- It is based on the idea of continuous improvement following a simple 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' model reviewed at appropriate intervals. **sEMS** operators must continuously quantify their current levels of performance and thereafter systematically work towards realistic and achievable improvements for the future.

- **BIM's sEMS** can be readily implemented by an industry group, such as a fishermen's co-operative, a group of fishermen with common interests, or an individual fishing vessel. The process is the same although some of the tasks may vary depending on the size of a group.

- In general a **BIM's sEMS** is developed, initially, at a group level. This ensures that the final sEMS is co-managed by individual operators (fishermen) acting together. Operators may be assisted by an industry based mentor, a BIM facilitator, and relevant onshore intermediaries (co-operatives, producer organisations and other appropriate entities).

- A group approach i) enables operators to identify and develop a shared understanding of the issues affecting their activities, ii) enables operators to agree the scope and scale of their response iii) enables operators to identify and reduce risk in a coordinated way, and, iv) enables operators to maximize opportunities from their sEMS.

BIM's sEMS is built on 11 key actions:

1. Determining a vision and deciding where you want your industry and business to be in the future.
2. Outlining a scope - determining the activities that will be covered in your sEMS.
3. Setting up a sEMS Management Team - determining who will be responsible for the implementation and review of your sEMS.
4. Developing a policy – a commitment to address your key impacts on the environment.
5. Identifying business aspects - developing a clear picture of your business activities to help define your risks and opportunities.
6. Identifying and assessing risks by planning to manage your own risks, Countermeasures can be put in place to offset negative impacts before they materialise, or to capitalise on positive opportunities.
7. Taking action - deciding on actions and making them happen.
8. Setting Objectives and Targets - identifying how progress will be measured.
9. Monitoring - checking progress towards targets and policy objectives.
10. Reviewing - verifying claims and checking performance.
11. Communicating - telling the story, celebrating success and promoting achievements.

Definitions

Applicant: A vessel, company or group of companies in the supply chain that has formally applied to meet the BIM Standard through the formal application form.

Certified Applicant: An applicant vessel, company or group of companies that have been formally certified by the Certification Body as meeting the BIM Standard.

Certified Vessel: A fishing vessel that has been independently certified as meeting the "BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard".

Chain of Custody: The set of measures which is designed to guarantee that the seafood product is really a product of designated origin and coming from the certified vessel concerned. These measures thus cover both the tracking/traceability of the product all along the processing, distribution and marketing chain, as well as the proper tracking of the documentation and control of the quantity concerned.[1]

The Standard: The list of requirements that the applicant must meet to claim certification to the Standard and /or use the certified claim.

Certified Chain: An applicant company or group of companies in the supply chain that can demonstrate all certified stages back to the certified fishing vessel.

Certified Claim: A claim made by a certified applicant approved for use and licensed by the Standards Owner.

Identification Number: A certificate number issued to each certified applicant.

Stage: A handling / transfer point in the supply chain e.g. vessel, packing, processing, distribution and sales.

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[1] FAO Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries, Rome 2005 and Revision 1 2009

BIM RESPONSIBLY SOURCED STANDARD

PART 4

ONSHORE HANDLING STANDARD

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Introduction to the Onshore Handling Standard

This Standard sets out the requirements for Onshore Facilities to become certified to the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard. Applicants of Onshore Facilities must demonstrate a high degree of stewardship toward responsible sourcing of seafood, traceable to certified vessels through a chain of custody. In so doing applicants support the conservation of fisheries, and maintenance of the quality and safety of seafood.

Chain of Custody Section

Traceability and proof of provenance are the cornerstones of an assurance to buyers and consumers that products originate from a Certified Responsibly Sourced Vessel. The objective of the chain of custody is to preserve the identity of seafood that originates from a vessel certified to this Standard throughout the supply chain, allowing it to be positively identified by the buyer and consumer.

Principles of the Process

To become Certified as meeting the Onshore Handling Standard, applicants must be able to demonstrate compliance with this Standard, through an independent assessment by an approved Certification Body.

The Certification Body must be approved and be accredited to EN45011 / ISO/IEC Guide 65:1996 (General Requirements for Bodies Operating Product Certification Systems) by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB).

The approved Certification Body will formulate a contract between the applicant and the Certification Body detailing the requirements and commitments needed from the applicant.

The Application Process

The application is designed to capture the information that will allow operators fully incorporate the range of their intended activities and avoid unnecessary duplication of audits or additional cost to operators. In the case of an onshore establishment the full application will include a plan detailing the scope of their operations, including the species for which they require certification, and the supply chain route intended for certified seafood products.

This application should, if possible, be compiled in co-operation with a BIM facilitator, an industry based mentor, and/or relevant onshore intermediaries (co-operatives, producer organisations and other appropriate entities).

The scope of the application may be further amended/adapted post audit where additional facilities and activities are to be included. This may result in further audits of the additional facilities.

The onshore audit is managed by the chosen independent Certification Body.

The certification process has a number of distinct stages which are described below.

Stage 1 Information Request

Potential applicants may request information from the Standard Owner, BIM about the certification process, the Standard requirements, the outline costs or timeframes to gain certification.

Applicants are advised to carry out a self-assessment against the standard (in conjunction with a BIM facilitator if preferred), in order to ascertain their readiness for external assessment.

Further information regarding application, Rules and Regulations can be obtained from the Standard Owner, BIM.

Stage 2 Certification Body prepares an Audit Plan

When the application form is received by the Certification Body, the Certification Body will provide the applicant with an audit schedule and assessment cost based on the information provided in the application form. Costs will be based on set rates and will be transparently communicated.

When the applicant formally agrees to the audit schedule, Terms and Conditions, and forwards the relevant payment for associated assessment costs, the application will then move forward for audit.

Stage 3 The Audit

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information supplied in the application form is factual and accurate.

The Certification Body's auditor will carry out the audit in an independent, professional and courteous manner.

Stage 4 The Audit Report

During the audit the auditor will compile an audit report of how the applicant does/does not meet the Standard.

The audit report will identify any non-conformances and timelines for completion of corrective actions. Applicants will be required to close the non-conformances through corrective actions within the specified timelines and provide evidence of this to the satisfaction of the Certification Body to proceed to a certification decision.

Stage 5 Certification Decision

The applicant's audit report and any necessary corrective actions will be submitted to a certification committee for a certification decision.

The certification committee is separate from the audit and comprises of competences including; practical knowledge of seafood handling, technical details of this Standard and the procedural requirements for accredited certification under this programme.

Stage 6 Certification

Where certification is the outcome, certificates will be issued within 14 days after the certification date. In the event that this cannot be achieved, the Certification Body must formally write to the applicant stating a prospective date of issue and the reasons for the delay.

The certificate and/or status remains under control of the Certification Body.

Certificates are valid for two years with annual re- assessment. Certification will not be awarded where any non-conformance remains outstanding.

Ongoing certification is maintained where there is substantive and demonstrable evidence that the applicant remains in compliance with the criteria of the Standard. Any non-conformity raised must be verified as completed, with objective evidence within timescales defined within the relevant audit report.

Appeals

The applicant has the right to appeal the certification decision of the certification committee. Appeals should be made in writing within fourteen days of the certification decision. Appeals are made to the accreditation manager of the Certification Body.
A full response will be given by the Quality Manager who is independent of the assessor and certification committee.

On Certification

Applicants that become certified to the Standard are eligible to apply for use of the certification label and use the certification claim which can be displayed on products and associated company documentation and promotional materials. Further information and application of the certification claim can be obtained from the Standards Owner, BIM.

1.0   Fundamental Requirements

Introduction

This section covers the fundamental requirements for the legal responsibilities as a food business operator and management commitment to comply with the requirements of this standard.

1.1   Legal Compliances rules and regulations

1.1.1   The applicant must have a valid EU Approval Number.

1.1.2   The applicant must have no current legal food safety notices issued by the relevant competent authority.

1.1.3   The applicant must have no current legal Health and Safety notices issued by the relevant competent authority.

1.1.4   The applicant must have no existing legal environmental notices issued by the relevant competent authority.

1.2   Facility hygiene and Management

1.2.1   Facilities and equipment must be designed, constructed and maintained to allow efficient and hygienic handling of all seafood, avoid contamination from internal or external sources and provide a safe working environment for staff.

1.3   Food Safety and Quality Policy

1.3.1   The applicant must have a clearly defined and fully documented food safety quality policy statement, conveying intentions to meet relevant legal obligations for products, the objectives of the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard and ensuring responsibility to customers.

1.4   Food Safety Management System, Including HACCP

1.4.1   Applicants must have established a Food Safety Management System (FSMS), including a Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point system (HACCP) specific to their own premises and appropriate to the nature, scope and volume of the production in accordance with the Scheme Standards and statutory legislation.

1.5   Complaints

1.5.1   A customer complaint procedure must be established for the handling of customer complaints and concerns relating to certified products.

2.0   Responsible Sourcing Practices

Introduction

This section covers the general requirements for the responsible supply of seafood that is sourced from fishing vessels certified under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard.

2.1   Applicants must implement a documented policy that commits them to responsible sourcing of fishery products in accordance with this standard.

2.2   The applicant must be able to demonstrate that all seafood purchased or handled on behalf of vessels landing to the applicant facility and intended for identification as a 'certified product' are traceable to certified vessels under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard and relevant annex for that product.

2.3   Applicants must adhere to legal requirements for the purchase, handling and reporting of fish from EU waters.

2.4   The applicant must implement a checking and sampling procedure for representative batches of each certified product handled to confirm the consignment meets relevant legal requirements in addition to the requirements of this Standard and annex (es).

2.5   Records of these checks must be available at audit.

3.0   Temperature Control

Introduction

This section covers the temperature requirements for the control of the cold chain to ensure the maintenance of the quality of the fishery products sourced from fishing vessels certified under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard.

3.1   Products must be maintained at the appropriate temperatures (depending on live, fresh, frozen) throughout each handling step for the entire supply and distribution chain. (Please refer to separate annex (es) for specific products).

3.2   Seafood such as crustacean and molluscs intended for live sale must be kept at a temperature that will maintain the animal in a healthy, living condition within a range of +1°c to +7°C.

3.3   The temperature of fresh seafood at intake (unless live) must be maintained at the temperature of melting ice (and within a range of 0-4°C), unless specified differently within the annex(es).

3.4   The temperature of frozen seafood must be maintained below -18°C in all parts of the product at all times, except for very short handling periods.

3.5   Refrigerated stores, operating at 0 - 4°C must be provided for the holding of fresh fish after packing and prior to dispatch from the facility and used at all times unless packed fish are transported immediately.

3.6   During any break in the production process product must be suitably stored at chill or frozen temperatures.

3.7   There must be a working temperature-recording display unit fitted to all refrigeration stores.

3.8   Transport must be temperature controlled at all times so as to maintain product safety, quality and the correct temperature for the nature of the product (chilled/frozen/live). Alternative methods to ensure appropriate cold chain management may be used

4.0   Traceability and Chain of Custody

Introduction

This section sets out the traceability requirements as defined by this Standard. Applicants at each step in the supply chain must be able to identify the seafood that originated from a certified vessel and to handle the product according to the requirements of this Standard.

4.1   Traceability and Labelling Criteria

4.1.1   The applicant must have a system in place to ensure that the production of seafood intended to be identified as certified product can be traced back to a certified vessel.

4.1.2   Applicants who purchase directly from fishing vessels or sell product on behalf of fishing vessels (e.g. Fishing Co-ops) must maintain an active, up-to-date list of BIM Responsibly Sourced Certified vessels.

4.1.3   There must be a system for recording and reporting the following information for transfers of each vessel's consignment of seafood by applicants who are at first point of sale (e.g. Fishing Co-ops acting on behalf of fishing vessels) or buyers who are the first point of purchase directly from a fishing vessel:

   4.1.3.1   Date of landing.

   4.1.3.2   Quantity handled or purchased (weight) of each species.

   4.1.3.3   FAO Area of capture.

   4.1.3.4   Method of capture by species.

   4.1.3.5   Size and freshness grade.

   4.1.3.6   Vessel name and registered number.

   4.1.3.7   BIM Responsibly Sourced Registered Certificate Number for the vessel.

4.1.4   For fishery products that are despatched from the applicant, the label must comply with legal obligations as outlined in the FSAI Guidance Note 7.

4.1.5   Product that does not meet the requirements and Specifications of this standard but is handled by the Applicant must be kept separate, identifiable and traceable throughout the course of processing, packing and distribution.

4.1.6   Product that does not meet the requirements and Specifications of this Standard and relevant annex must not be identified through labelling or other means as a product that is certified under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard.

4.1.7 All applicants must be able to track seafood from Certified vessels to the next point in sale (customer/agent/distributor) and maintain a list of customers who purchase Certified seafood.

4.1.8 Batch or lot identifiers, must be in place for tracing and tracking of fishery products from intake through processing, storing and transporting to the consumer.

4.1.9 A documented procedure for the withdrawal and recall of products must be implemented.

4.1.10 Applicants must test their traceability and product recall systems at least annually.

4.1.11 The outcome of internal traceability and product recall audits must be documented including evidence of close out/corrective action of any internally raised non conformances.

4.1.12 Product coding and distribution records must be adequate to ensure positive batch identification.

4.1.13 The applicant must inform the relevant competent authorities of any withdrawal/recall of product.

4.2 Identification of Certified Seafood Products

4.2.1 Only product that meets the specifications of this Standard and annex (es) and traceable to certified vessels is eligible for identification as 'certified product' under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard.

4.2.2 Applicants must ensure that all records required by this standard are kept for a minimum of three years.

5.0   Seafood Quality and Handling of Fishery Products

Introduction

This section covers the key requirements for handling, grading, processing, packing, weighing and labelling of seafood in order to demonstrate the ability to maintain product quality and the correct handling of fishery products.

Applicants must also refer to the relevant Annex(es) to the Standard for specific product handling requirements which will also form part of the criteria assessed during an audit.

Applicants can refer to BIM and the following Publications for further guidance:

- BIM Whitefish Handling Guide- Best Practice
- BIM Cod, Haddock, Whiting Quality Guide
- BIM Monkfish Quality Guide
- BIM Megrim, Witch- Quality Guide
- BIM Plaice, Black Sole, Lemon Sole Quality Guide
- BIM Hake Quality Guide
- BIM Brill, Halibut, Turbot Quality Guide
- BIM Dublin Bay Prawn Handling and Quality Guide
- BIM User Friendly Guide Series No. 4, 2007
- BIM Herring, Mackerel, Blue whiting and Horse Mackerel Handling Guides

Only the relevant paragraphs of this section need be applied, to meet the requirements as specified in the applicants application form.

5.0.1   On receipt, Fresh Seafood identified under the BIM Responsibly Sourced Standard must meet and be handled in accordance with the Quality Specifications detailed in the relevant Annex of the Standard.

5.0.2   Where customer specifications for incoming product are higher than those set out in the annex, the applicant must default to the higher requirements.

5.0.3   All incoming product must meet customer specifications.

5.0.4   All finished and packaged product must meet customer specifications where these are higher than that set by this Standard.

5.0.5   Current product specifications must be available and understood by relevant staff.

5.1 Quality and Handling of Fresh Fishery Products under Part 3A Technical Annex A

(Applicants must also refer to Part 3A Technical Annex A: Demersal Whitefish & Nephrops)

5.1.1   Seafood must be size and quality graded according to customer specifications which must be available to and understood by staff carrying out these activities.

5.1.2   Gutted fish must be boxed in clean, hygienic plastic or non returnable boxes in neat rows, head to tail, belly cavity down (round fish), with sufficient ice to maintain chilled temperature. The layers of fish should be interleaved with plastic or paper sheets to protect from ice marks.

5.1.3   Boxes must not be overfilled with ice, they must be iced to below the rim to prevent product from being crushed when stacked.

5.1.4   Seafood must be weighed according to presentation (individual pieces, boxed, batches, packs, bulk bins) and labelled before sale.

5.1.5   Direct labelling of seafood sold in returnable plastic boxes is required, and the information must be recorded on accompanying documentation to ensure that traceability of these products can be maintained.

5.1.6   All distribution boxes and pallets intended to be used to transport seafood must be undamaged and fit for their intended use.

5.1.7   Staff must be trained in the principles of Care of the Catch and the correct method for the handling, boxing and icing of seafood as described in the BIM Seafood Quality Guides. Seafood Hygiene training must also be provided.

5.1.8   Staff records of training must be maintained.

5.2 Quality and Handling of Fresh Fishery Products under Part 3C Technical Annex C

(Applicants must also refer to Part 3C Technical Annex C Pelagic (Mackerel, Horse Mackerel, Blue Whiting, Herring, Sprat, Boarfish).

5.2.1 The quality of fish at product reception intended for human consumption, must be equivalent to high or very high quality (as defined in the BIM Handling Guides for the species).

5.2.2 In the case of mackerel, a quality assessment of the product (i.e. that contained in the BIM Handling Guides) at point of receipt must be available for verification.

5.2.3 Fish not of the quality specification required by the standard must be offloaded separately in order to avoid any mixing with certified fish.

5.2.4 Where fish are of lower quality than specified by this Standard, these batches must be kept separate and may not be identified as being certified in accordance with the requirements of this standard.

5.2.5 **Cold Chain Management**

5.2.6.1 The core temperature of fish on receipt must be <2°C, unless it can be demonstrated that the fish is less than 16hrs old since capture. Where fish is less than 16hrs old since capture, the core temperature must be <2°C within 16hrs.

5.2.6.2 Fish that do not meet this specification are not eligible for identification with a direct certification claim.

5.2.6.3 Re-icing must be carried out as often as necessary to maintain a temperature of 0 to 4°C.

5.2.6.4 Where there is any doubt about the quality and freshness of product, a more comprehensive assessment must be carried out before it can be accepted as compliant under this Standard.

5.3 Quality and Handling of live Fishery Products under Part 3B Technical Annex B

(Applicants must also refer to Part 3 B Technical Annex B Crustaceans).

5.3.1 Product must be discharged from vessels and transported according to the requirements specified in the Annex.

5.3.2 Relevant documentation to allow traceability must be maintained by the transporter, handler or purchaser.

5.3.3 Purchase of brown crab that is not intended for human consumption is prohibited.

5.3.4 Where brown crab for human consumption is rejected by buyers due to quality down grading, it may be used as whelk bait.

5.3.5 Crustaceans purchased as live shellfish must be in good live condition to the point of processing or selling as live product.

5.3.6 Handling systems must be designed and implemented to ensure that live shellfish remain alive and healthy to the point of intentional slaughter for further processing.

5.3.7 Seafood intended for live sale must be provided with sufficient documentation detailing weight and label information in accordance with this Standard.

5.4 Specification of Fishery Products Intended for Sale

Introduction

This Standard is applicable for the responsible supply of all forms of seafood handling, preparation and processing placed on the market for sale.

The supply of unprocessed and primary processed seafood includes activities such as:

- Re-grading, weighing, re-presentation, re-boxing, re-icing and labelling
- Cutting and slicing of any description
- Freezing of any description
- Vacuum packing of fresh or frozen product
- Other forms of consumer ready packaging of fresh or frozen product

The supply of secondary processed seafood includes activities such as:

- Salting, curing, smoking (cold and hot)
- Heat preservation (cooking and pasteurisation)
- Enrobing and coating of fresh and frozen product
- Retail packaging of secondary processed product

5.4.1 Product specifications (either internal or customer specifications) for each type of seafood supplied by the Applicant must be documented and available.

5.4.2 A system of monitoring, checking and where necessary, sampling must be implemented to confirm that all products supplied are in accordance with specifications. Records of performance must be maintained.