

# Case study methodology & protocol

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Case studies, like experiments, generalise to theoretical propositions, and not to populations. In this sense, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a sample, and in doing a case study the goal is to expand and generalize theories (analytic generalisation) and not to enumerate frequencies (statistical generalization.) The case study method uses replication logic as opposed to a sampling logic common to quantitative surveys. Case studies, like surveys or sampling, focus on a single data point, but this is where the similarity ends. The case study delves deep into context, using information richness, and analyses issues and problems that are embedded in a social reality as opposed to an artificial or controlled environment. This is why the case study is suitable for investigating 'live' policy issues or complex multidisciplinary environmental problems.

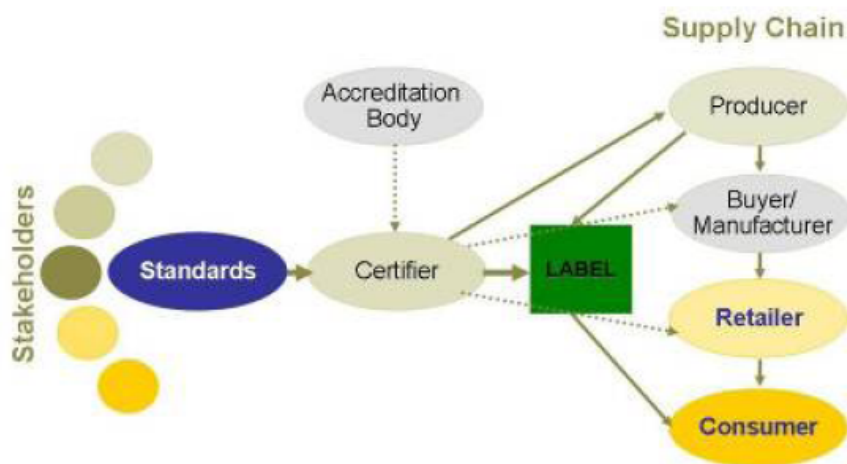
A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Case studies use multiple lines of evidence, and quantitative and qualitative sources of information. The enquiry relies on multiple sources of evidence with convergence sources to guide data collection & analysis. The methods is appropriate when examining contemporary social and political phenomena, exploring the actions of actors in the policy process, the role of institutions, developing and testing theories and hypothesis on policy, and contributing to a broader understanding of issues that cross jurisdictions and scales (Peachment, 1993; Yin 2003).

## Background to the Research

Market-based instruments are emerging as complimentary tools in natural resource management (Potts 2004). Market based instruments are increasingly used in environmental management alongside traditional legislative, administrative and economic instruments (Goodlund 2002). Market based instruments use market or price signals to achieve policy outcomes. They can be divided into four types: incentives and subsidies, tradable permits, taxes, and liability schemes (EEA 2005). Certification and eco-labelling are considered to be incentive based instruments that change the way people behave when making purchasing decisions. Certification refers to the process of auditing a fishery against a set of voluntary or regulatory criteria that establish the sustainability of the product. Eco-labelling refers to the process of awarding of a visual label to a product that passes a set of defined criteria, usually along the lines of environmental best practice (Potts & Haward 2006).

Eco-labelling schemes promote products and production processes that distinguish themselves by having fewer impacts on the environment than similar products (Deere 1999). The aim is to promote well managed operations directly to consumers who, in theory, are increasingly demanding products from sustainable sources (Goodlund 2002; Gardiner and Viswanathan 2004). From the producer perspective, eco-labelling schemes aim to improve resource management by providing market incentives such as increased price or market access to producers who meet 'sustainability' criteria. The growth of eco-labels is dominant in the fisheries sector, led by organisations such as the Marine Stewardship Council. However, in recent years, the aquaculture sector has been experimenting with eco-labelling with a range of 'best practice' and 'organic' labels appearing in the market. In an increasingly competitive environment for seafood products and consumer awareness, labelling is a means of securing market access and competitiveness in this sector.

The figure shows a simplified schematic of an Eco-labelling and certification system. Stakeholders collaborate with a standard setting organisation to create a standard for a particular sector or product. A certifier, who in some cases, is independently evaluated by an accreditation body, undertakes verification of a process or product against the standard. If the process or product meets the standard a label (or eco-label) is awarded. The label signals to the consumer that the producer has met the criteria for the standard - be that sustainability, ethical treatment, organic or best practice.



Why study CEOs? In investigating the effectiveness of eco-labelling in achieving improved outcomes for seafood resources, it is essential that the analysis cover the domain of organisational process and governance. Understanding effectiveness must link to an in depth description and analysis of the organisation, how it enacts a certification system and how it applies and manages the ecolabel and builds credibility for its product. With the increasing popularity of certification as an instrument that influences government policy and the seafood industry, and the use and analysis of varying approaches to certify and apply ecolabels must be clarified. The study will clarify the relationship between function, structure, governance and outcomes. In the course of the analysis, observations into best practices (and the opposite) will be documented. This information is of considerable interest to the CEOs themselves, policy makers, industry and broader stakeholders in the seafood industry.

## Research questions

The research asks the following hypothesis:

*Are certification and eco-labelling systems effective in addressing the sustainability of fishery and aquaculture derived seafood resources? Do the benefits and advantages from certification and eco-labelling schemes outweigh the disadvantages and obstacles?*

The hypothesis is divided into five more specific questions:

- I. How are the primary fishery and aquaculture certification systems *designed* in order to differentiate 'sustainable' or 'organic' products from other like products in the market? What are the instruments used in this process?
- II. What processes are in place for the certification body to build legitimacy and credibility? How is the certification process governed to ensure quality and effectiveness?
- III. What is the impact of certified products in the market? Do labeled products influence consumers and provide incentives for certified producers and retailers?
- IV. What have been the experiences of producers who have engaged in eco-labelling of the products?

This phase of the EECSAF project addresses research questions 1 and 2, that is, an examination of the structure and function of eco-labelling organisations, the methods and instruments used in certification, and governance processes to ensure effectiveness and accountability. Several propositions underlie the research questions. The first is that market-based instruments are observed as a rapidly growing component of environmental policy. Certification and eco-labelling are growing in popularity and use across many sectors, including the seafood sector, and are a legitimate management tool if designed and used correctly. The question remains over the extent and effectiveness of that implementation. A second proposition is the role of different 'actors' in the eco-labelling process. CEOs, consumers and industry will likely take different perspectives on eco-labelling, and these perspectives are important drivers for the influence of the programs and products. Capturing these perspectives through a qualitative research design is an appropriate means for assessing this critical variable.

## Methodological framework

EECSAF is developing a *descriptive* approach to case study methodology. A descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon in its context (Yin 2003). Theoretical development is significant to descriptive case research as it helps define and prioritize data collection, interpretation and analysis particularly in the context of multiple replicated designs. A ***descriptive theory covers the scope and depth of the object being described under the study***, the criteria for selecting the analytical components, and the linkages between research questions, propositions, data, and analysis.

An approach to investigating the effectiveness of a policy system may be to compare it to a model that represents a best practice or theoretical proposition for the object of study and therefore a means to differentiate between cases. Alternatively a theory may contrast between different modes of governance or organisational structures with the aim to assess the function of a system using comparative replication logic. This phase of the research aims to understand and analyse the structure and function of CEOs as a part of determining their effectiveness to contribute towards sustainable seafood production. A descriptive theory allows for structuring of the case study design and a logical approach to investigating the influence of the case study components. In furthermore it provides an analytical framework for future research.

Research questions 1 and 2 are a starting point for developing a descriptive theory. Question 1 asks how certification and eco-labelling systems are *designed* to differentiate 'sustainable' or 'organic' products from other like products. This draws a focus upon *design variables* including documented

structures and processes that are present within organisations that enable the implementation of the sustainability or organic concept into a specific, marketable outcome. Question 2 focuses on the concept of governance as applied to the certification process. This includes the way organisations develop legitimacy to act with authority and credibility in the eyes of their stakeholders. Developing authority and credibility must capture processes such as conflict management, review and audit, and mechanisms to build transparency.

A normative framework is a useful means to inform the development of the descriptive theory and analysis. Normative frameworks are concerned with setting standards or desired states if the given goals for a particular issue are obtained. They can be a 'road map' for achieving or assessing progress towards a particular goal. Such a framework may be distilled from the literature on CEOs and the development of generic standards for certification and eco-labelling processes. This study has drawn upon The International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards and the ISEAL Emerging Initiatives Modules (Box 1).<sup>1</sup> These resources represent a modern, generic and best practice approach to developing and managing a certification and eco-labelling system in any sector. The Code and the Modules detail various practices, issues and standards to inform the development of a labelling program (see Box 1 below). The issues raised in the Code are useful check points to inform the development of a descriptive theory. This followed to stages - the first to distill and build a framework from the literature, the second to verify and adapt this framework against the ISEAL Code and Modules.

ISEAL is a recognised benchmark that has been developed in an international consultative process. An advantage of this approach is that the Code and the Modules are generic - they apply to any sector or organisation developing certification, accreditation or eco-labelling initiatives. This is suitable for informing theoretical development as the instruments do not relate to a specific sector of activity and are not biased towards a particular sectoral outcome. This is reflected in the use of the Code by several international organisations that have developed positions on certification processes including the FAO, World Bank, DEFRA and the European Parliament<sup>2</sup> in discussing sustainable food policy and governance. In addition, this research has drawn upon the FAO Guidelines for Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries.

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<sup>1</sup> The Code and the Modules can be accessed at: <http://www.isealalliance.org/>

<sup>2</sup> For example, the European Parliament refers to the ISEAL Code in its resolution on Corporate Social Responsibility. Available from <  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?Type=TA&Reference=P6-TA-2007-0062&language=EN>>

## **BOX 1: The ISEAL Alliance**

The International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance is a formal collaboration of leading international standard-setting and conformity assessment organisations focused on social and environmental issues. The ISEAL Alliance supports credible standards and conformity assessment by developing capacity building tools to strengthen members' activities and by promoting credible voluntary social and environmental certification as a legitimate policy instrument in global trade and development.

The ISEAL Alliance is an open membership association for international social and environmental standard-setting and conformity assessment organisations that seek to meet objective criteria for credible operating practices. ISEAL is primarily a service provider to its members. ISEAL member organisations are committed to implementing programs that comply with internationally-accepted criteria; that do not act as technical barriers to trade; and that focus on best social and environmental production practices.

Two instruments have informed the development of the theoretical framework:

### **The Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards**

Since its initial publication, the ISEAL Code of Good Practice has become recognised as a definitive international norm for good social and environmental standard-setting practices. The Code is intended primarily for application to standards that fulfill social and environmental policy objectives. By adhering to procedures that constitute good practices for setting standards, standard-setting organizations help to ensure that the application of their standard results in measurable progress towards their social and environmental objectives, without creating unnecessary hurdles to international trade. In addition, a Code of Good Practice can serve as a minimum bar against which to measure voluntary standards. The Code can be accessed from:

<http://www.isealalliance.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=502>

### **ISEAL Emerging Initiatives Modules**

The Emerging Initiative modules delivering a program of support to new and emerging voluntary standards and certification initiatives. There are 10 training modules providing practical information for setting up effective social and/or environmental standards in any sector and include examples from established social and environmental certification schemes. The modules cover:

- Module 1: Overview
- Module 2: E025 Setting Standards
- Module 3: E026 Verification
- Module 4: E027 Governance
- Module 5: E028 Finance
- Module 6: E029 Stakeholder Engagement
- Module 7: E030 Measuring Impacts
- Module 8: E031 Conflicts of Interest
- Module 9: E032 Trademarks and Labelling
- Module 10: E033 Engaging Stakeholders Online

**The modules are available from:**

<http://www.isealalliance.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&PageID=944>

The theoretical framework that guides the data collection and analysis is presented in Figure X below. It has drawn upon the ISEAL Emerging Initiatives modules, the FAO Eco-labelling guidelines, and from key literatures sources (Nilsson 2004; Caswell 2006; Jacquet 2007) This framework aims to capture the primary functionality within certification and eco-labelling processes, isolate the main components for analysis, and present the components within an integrated system. This approach frames the selection and description of case studies, and provides the basis for further theoretical development, testing and application.

The theoretical framework in figure x makes two distinctions in the system: functional processes and instruments against governance processes, and the certification system against the eco-labelling system. Both distinctions are somewhat porous, as both instruments and governance, and certification and eco-labelling are integrated in practice, however discreet tools and vernacular (and businesses) have evolved to address different components of the system. However, to understand these complex arrangements systems have been simplified.

This approach is backed up in the literature, for example, (Gulbrandsen 2006)) distinguishes between certification and eco-labelling processes. This is a fairly common distinction that separates process of developing and administering a standard and the award and management of a product label that aims to influence consumers, businesses and broader society (D'Souza 2007; WWF 2007). ISEAL (2007) refer to the certification process as:

*'Third-party attestation related to products, processes, system or persons that fulfillment of specified requirements has been demonstrated. A decision on certification is taken based on information provided by an inspector or assessor.'*

Eco-labelling has been defined by (Vitalis 2002) as:

*'..... the granting of product labels (usually applied voluntarily) by a private or public organisation to inform consumers about the environmental impact of a product.'*

	<b>Certification System (pre-Label)</b>	<b>Eco-labelling System (post label &amp; external activities)</b>
<b>Functional processes &amp; instruments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective and scope of the standard</li> <li>• Structure of standard (Principles, Criteria, Indicators)</li> <li>• Verification methodology and instruments</li> <li>• Application of standard to regions and sectors</li> <li>• Resourcing required for certification</li> <li>• Accreditation processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chain of custody and traceability</li> <li>• Corrective measures and compliance audits</li> <li>• Application and regulation of label (on product / off product)</li> </ul>
<b>Governance processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisational classification &amp; objectives</li> <li>• Organisational governance and decision making structures</li> <li>• Links to ISO standards or equivalent</li> <li>• Stakeholder consultation</li> <li>• Verification governance</li> <li>• Mechanisms for credibility (consistency, independence and transparency)</li> <li>• Review of criteria and reform</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict management and appeals</li> <li>• Contractual arrangements</li> <li>• Monitoring and effectiveness of labels</li> <li>• Accountability mechanisms</li> <li>• Creating demand, marketing and branding</li> <li>• Revenue generation model and sources</li> <li>• Label complementarity</li> </ul>

**Figure X. A theoretical descriptive framework of the certification and eco-labelling system**

Functional processes and instruments are the documented tools and apparatus that implement the policies of the organisation. They are the physical and documented means to implement certification processes and administer and manage the ecolabel, examples include the method to define and measure performance against the standard (verification) or the process of establishing traceability of labelled product from production to consumer. Governance points to the broader rules and behaviours by which interests are articulated, resources are managed, and power is exercised in the CEO. A



useful definition of governance from the EU defines this as "rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised.... particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence" (European Commission, 2001). Discussions around governance not only refer to the building of credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders, but a broader questions relating to the emergence of non-state mechanisms in the management of marine resources. A common theme in the research is the broader question of the emergence of eco-labelling initiatives in the context of evolving non state governance approaches and the relationship with traditional regulatory approaches. Distinguishing between the broader notions of governance and power and the specific tools and processes used by the CEOs allows for a structured analysis into the objectives and operations of the organisation. It will facilitate direct comparison between the various CEOs in the analysis and guide data collection procedures.

### Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is an important decision in case study research - fundamentally defining 'what the case is' (Yin 2003). This research establishes the unit of analysis as the certification and eco-labelling system. This system will be influential in investigating the performance of the broader organisation. The data collection and analysis will occur through the variety of instruments and governance processes that make up the certification and eco-labelling process. The table of definitions below clarifies the terms and definitions when collecting data.

**Table of definitions**

<b>Certification instruments</b>	
<b>Objective and scope of the standard</b>	What is the overall aim for the standard? How is this decided? What broad aspects of sustainability are covered e.g. economic - social - ecological - governance? Are the objectives clear?
<b>Structure of the standard</b>	Do the strategic objectives clearly translate into the standard? How is the standard structured? Does a logical hierarchy flow from objectives to measurable components? What components are covered? Does it follow SMART criteria (specific/measurable/attributable/realistic/traceable)
<b>Verification methodology and instruments</b>	Verification is the process of establishing compliance with the standard. What processes are used to collect evidence against the standard? What methods are used to evaluate the evidence against the standard? E.g. scoring, indicators? What determines a pass or fail against the criteria and the overall standard?
<b>Application of standard to regions and sectors</b>	Consistency of scoring and interpretation between operations How is a balance achieved between consistency and flexibility?
<b>Resourcing required for</b>	Cost for verification and certification procedures

<b>certification</b>	Financial relationships between standard setting organisation, certifier, and client Cost structure and accessibility for an organisation to be certified Managing perceived conflicts of interest between certifier and client
<b>Accreditation processes</b>	What are the processes and mechanisms used to accredit certifiers?
<b>Certification Governance</b>	
<b>Organisational classification &amp; objectives</b>	What is the mission of the organisation? Is it clearly articulated? What is the legal status of the organisation?
<b>Organisational governance and decision making structures</b>	How is the organisation governed? Are the management structures, roles and functions clearly articulated? What are the key policy making, technical, and consultative bodies and what are their respective powers, responsibilities and relationships? How are strategic decisions made in the organisation? How are members selected or elected to the bodies?
<b>Links of ISO standards or equivalent</b>	Does the organisation use, benchmark or refer to ISO standards for certification and management practices?
<b>Stakeholder consultation</b>	What sectors are represented in key decision making bodies, how are they selected, and to whom are they accountable? How are stakeholders engaged in the development and review of the standard? What innovative tools are used to engage stakeholders and build credibility?
<b>Verification governance</b>	Identify the management processes involved in assessing the operation against the standard. What is the procedure for identifying and scoping clients? Do mechanisms exist for a pre-certification assessment? What measures exist for managing conflict and engaging stakeholders in verification?
<b>Mechanisms for credibility (consistency, independence and transparency)</b>	The credibility of the standard underpins the claims made by producers. How is consistency interpreted and established across certification procedures? What measures are in place to ensure the objectivity and independence of certification assessments? Are conflicts of interest identified and managed? E.g. income, conformity assessment, separation of functions, advocacy etc.
<b>Review of criteria / and reform</b>	What processes exist to review the standards and associated criteria What evidence suggests governance reform of the organisation in response to audits and reviews.
<b>Eco-labelling Instruments</b>	
<b>Chain of custody and traceability</b>	The systems used to describe the production history of the product & other processes from primary producer to the consumer. How is the product traced from farm or fishery through the production chain to the consumer. What methods are used?
<b>Corrective measures and Compliance</b>	What procedure is established to improve operations that have gone through certification. Can operations pass a certification if they do not meet all of the criteria? How is the 'bar' set? How are corrective measures enforced and monitored? Does the certifier have cases of compliance and non-compliance and the responses?
<b>Application and regulation of label</b>	Once the label is awarded to a fishery, farm or product how is the label regulated and policed? Does a licence exist for regulating the label? In what ways can the label be used by the certified organisation? How strictly controlled is the label? Is the label a trademark?

<b>Eco-labelling Governance</b>	
<b>Conflict management and appeals</b>	What governance processes are in place to mediate and address conflicts in certification assessments? Does a mechanism exist for appeals? What are some of the notable conflicts in the organisations history and how were they resolved?
<b>Contractual arrangements, and revenue generation model</b>	What contractual arrangements or agreement exist between the organisation and industry, retailers, or government. How is the organisation financed? Have the sources for revenue changed over time? Does the organisation provide services?
<b>Monitoring and effectiveness of labels</b>	How is the effectiveness of the label monitored? Are there demonstratable improvements to the fishery or farm? How can improvements be attributed to the labelling program?
<b>Accountability mechanisms</b>	Do other methods exist to boost accountability and credibility of the label? E.g. managing conflicts of interest, separation of verification / conformity from financial influences, separation of verification from standard setting. Also representation in governance structures vs. vested interest in certification outcomes. Independent auditing.
<b>Creating demand, Marketing and Branding</b>	Marketing efforts refer to the target markets addressed by the schemes and the promotion efforts performed by the labeling scheme owners in order enhance acceptance.
<b>Complimentarity</b>	What are the relationships to other labelling schemes or system? E.g. Fair trade, freedom foods etc. Does the organisation see itself as competitor or collaborator?
<b>Contribution to sustainable seafood and challenges for the sector</b>	What are the challenges for the Ecolabelling sector into the future? What contribution does the organisation see itself making to sustainable production?

## Selection of Case Studies

Establishing a logical order to the case studies builds external validity - the domain to which results can be generalised. This is a crucial step in case study design, as it focuses the selection of the case studies to address a theoretical framework based on the research questions as opposed to an ad hoc selection of cases. The replication logic is presented in figure X below.

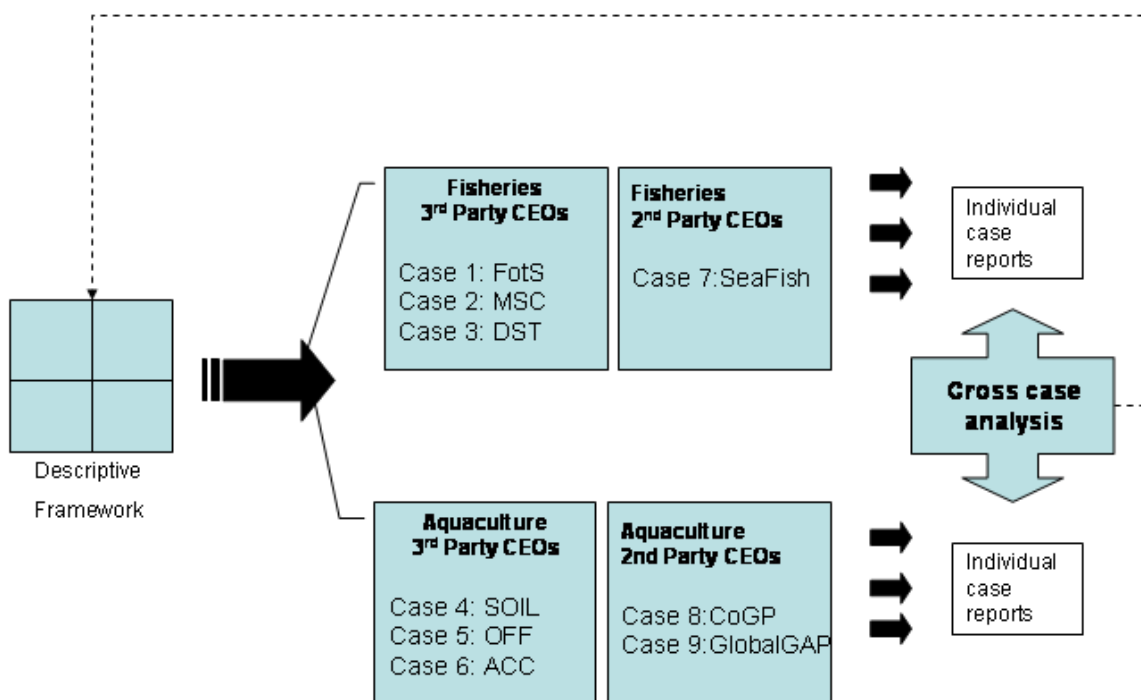


Figure X The case study replication framework.

The descriptive theoretical framework established in figure X identifies the primary mechanisms within CEOs and will be examined across the selected cases. Establishing the replication logic identifies the selection and ordering of case studies within 'spheres of interest' and sector based groups. In the first instance, case studies have been grouped into 3<sup>rd</sup> party based systems (systems that are developed independently from the commercial and industry sectors) and 2<sup>nd</sup> party systems (systems that are developed predominantly by industry or industry sponsored bodies). In a further replication, classifications have been divided along a sector based axis - fisheries and aquaculture. It is hypothesised

that the systems will address the common theoretical criteria (instruments and governance processes) in different ways according to sectoral (fisheries-aquaculture) or organisational (3rd party-2nd party) orientation.

A counter theory proposed by the study would be that there are no differences between the different systems based on sector or organisational orientation or that these differences can be explained by other means. For example the approach to the common criteria by CEOs may be differentiated by the age of organisation, finance or different governance structures. The study will also investigate the growing role and marketing of organic products, particularly in the aquaculture realm. As shown below, several case studies are organic certifiers, but are included in the broader aquaculture group. Any evidence to suggest different procedures or outcomes will be collected in the analysis.

The framework allows for the examination of a consistent set of mechanisms across all the cases (a literal replication that looks for similar results) but also allows for exploring the differences between sectors and independent or industry led initiatives (a theoretical replication that explores contrasting results for predictable reasons). The aim is to produce a robust set of case studies that maintain external validity and can be used to comprehensively analyse and assess the effectiveness of certification systems according to the research questions.

<b>Case Title</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Friends of the Sea	Fisheries & Aqua	3 <sup>rd</sup> party
Marine Stewardship Council	Fisheries	3 <sup>rd</sup> party
Dolphin safe tuna	Fisheries	3 <sup>rd</sup> party
Seafish Industry standard UK	Fisheries	2 <sup>nd</sup> party
SOIL Association	Aquaculture	3d Party and organic
Organic Food Federation	Aquaculture	3d Party and organic
Global Aquaculture Alliance	Aquaculture	3d Party
Code of Good Practice for Aquaculture (Scot)	Aquaculture	2nd Party
GlobalGAP	Aquaculture	2nd Party

Table x. Case study selection

## **Data collection and analysis**

Two methods will be used to collect a variety case study data and address the research questions.

Yin - strengths and weaknesses of data sources.

An internet based search followed by a site visit will collect organisational documents relating to instruments and governance processes. The first step is to examine in detail the organisations web sites for primary information, followed by secondary sites such as the media, journals and grey literature. This information will be collected, categorised and managed using NIVIO.

Open interviews will be the instrument to collect information not available in documentation such as governance issues, context based information, and relations between organisations. Interview techniques are an important instrument to collect qualitative data and will be conducted on site and face to face with managers. The interviews will be predominantly unstructured to allow for depth of information, but will be guided by questions that relate to the documentation search and identification of specific gaps. Information will be recorded digitally and transcribed, categorised and managed using NIVIO.

All sources of data that are collected will be added to a database that identifies the source, collection date, classification, length and comments relating to the data. The database will be stored in a backup system and will identify all pieces of information used to assess the research questions.

Data analysis will use a combination of qualitative techniques. NVIVO will be used to sort, categorise and code the data and build up analysis across different nodes based on the descriptive framework. In addition, the data will be queried using other qualitative techniques such as logic models and matrices. All data will be stored and referenced in the ensuring analysis.

## **Addressing Quality in Qualitative Research**

Construct validity; internal validity; external validity; & reliability

The issue of generalisability in qualitative research is a frequent debatable topic. On generalisability: "most writers suggest that qualitative research should be judged as credible and confirmable as opposed to valid and reliable" (Merriam 1985). Likewise, it has been argued that "rather than transplanting statistical, quantitative notions of generalisability and thus

finding qualitative research inadequate, it makes more sense to develop an understanding of generalisation that is congruent with the basic characteristics of qualitative inquiry" (1985). After all, criticizing the case study method for being non-generalisable is comparable to criticizing a hammer for not being able to do the washing up. This is the point raised by Flyvberg (2001) in examining the different intellectual virtues as described by Aristotle: *episteme* (epistemic of scientific knowledge); *teche* (technical, production, craftsmanship) and *phronesis* (context based judgement, decision making and ethics). It is important to recognise that case study research and its outcomes is predominantly (but not always) viewed through *phronesis* as opposed to *episteme*.

The above protocol contains the research questions and theory, and approach developing the multiple case studies. This protocol outlines the method for investigating the structure, governance and dynamics of eco-labelling and certification organisations (CEOs).

# Case Study Report

The case study report answers the following two research questions:

- I. How are the primary fishery and aquaculture certification systems *designed* in order to differentiate 'sustainable' or 'organic' products from other like products in the market? What are the instruments used in this process?
- II. What processes are in place for the certification body to build legitimacy and credibility? How is the certification process governed to ensure quality and effectiveness?

The case study report will be structured in two ways in accordance with Figure X. The first section will focus on the **individual case** describing the history, processes, instruments and challenges faced by the individual eco-labelling organisations. As identified in Miles & Huberman (1994) **description** is "making complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts". The initial case analysis, by focusing on each unique system, builds a detailed and holistic description of the operation of certification and eco-labelling programs within their contexts. Whilst several contextual scenarios will overlap, (e.g. overlapping of sectors in fisheries or aquaculture initiatives, or overlapping 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> party systems) each case offers a unique insight to the approach taken in market based management programs.

Clearly, there are overlaps and common issues across the certification and ecolabelling organisations (CEOs). For example, there are similar patterns in separation of verification functions from standard setting function, in auditing labelled production, or in sectoral competition. Examining across cases increases generalisability, digs deeper into theoretical propositions, and develops improved explanations of this policy phenomena. As stated in Miles & Huberman (1994) examining across cases faces the issues associated with the particular and the universal, highlighting the generic processes that occur across cases.

Certification and Ecolabelling does not occur within a vacuum, and organisations are competing within a market for delivering sustainability harvested and farmed seafood, and against initiatives from industry, retail, and NGOs. Stepping back from the individual case and examining across cases draws in this wider, critical context. Cross case comparison and analysis will be supported and facilitated by coding from the NVIVO software and make use of cross case display techniques such as partially ordered displays, matrices, and logic models.



The individual case study reports will be structured according to the following template:

1. Aims, Objectives and Scope of the CEO
2. Case Study History - Description of the initiation, growth and development of the initiative.
3. Governance, decision making and consultation structures
4. Standards and standard setting procedures
5. Verification and chain of custody
6. Awarding the label, licensing and marketing
7. Post labelling procedures - auditing, corrective actions and review
8. Organisational challenges and opportunities

(European Commission, European Governance - A White Paper, 2001).

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D'Souza, C. D., Taghian, M., Lamb, P. and Peretiatko, R. (2007). "Green decisions: demographics and consumer understanding of environmental labels." International journal of consumer studies **31**: 371-376.

Gulbrandsen, L. (2006). "Creating markets for eco-labelling: are consumers insignificant?" International journal of consumer studies **30**(5): 477-489.

Jacquet, J. L. a. P., D. (2007). "The rise of seafood awareness campaigns in an era of collapsing fisheries." Marine policy **31**: 308-313.

Nilsson, H., Tuncer, B. and Thidell, A (2004). "The use of eco-labelling like initiatives on food products to promote quality assurance - is there enough credibility?" Journal of Cleaner Production **12**: 517-526.

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