

Terms of Reference (ToR)

PROJECT: Pilot audits for ASC Group Certification Requirements

Version 20140521

IMPORTANT UPDATE: DATES IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE NO LONGER VALID & WILL BE UPDATED WHEN PUBLIC DRAFT REQUIREMENTS WILL BE AVAILABLE.

(EXPECTED END OF JUNE 2014)

Background

Through a series of eight global, multi-year, multi-stakeholder processes (Aquaculture Dialoguesⁱ) initiated and coordinated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), more than 2,000 people participated in the development of the ASC standards for responsible aquaculture. ISEALⁱⁱ guidelines for robust and credible standard setting were respected throughout this process.

Founded in 2010 in Utrecht, The Netherlands, the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) currently hosts seven single-site farm standards for responsible aquaculture, as received from the Aquaculture Dialogues: Tilapia, Pangasius, Bivalves (mussels, oysters, scallops, clams), Abalone, Salmon, Trout, and Shrimp. The combined standard for *Seriola* and *Cobia*, is expected to be finalized beginning 2014.

ASC has developed a robust accreditation and certification framework for the actual implementation of these standards and a logo licensing program to facilitate the uptake of certified and labeled products into global supply chains. We have chosen to work with third party accreditation and certification processes to maintain the independence of the assessment of aquaculture operations.

In order to make ASC Farm Certification available for groups of farms, an addition on the ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) has been developed outlining the requirements of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for Group Certification.

The ASC requests that selected partners carry out on-farm pilot audits to test the ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements for Group Certification

Project objectives

Accreditation and Certification Requirements are provided to guide auditors and (as a secondary target audience) other relevant stakeholders through the accreditation and certification process to ensure consistent, effective and credible implementation and verification of the ASC standards.

- 1) **For ASC** the primary objective of the pilot audit is to receive practical feedback to further improve (and finalise) its draft requirements for Group Certification.
- 2) **For farms** the pilot audit can be used to get a good understanding of how their current business practices relate to the relevant ASC Standard (gap-analysis). As a result any improvements needed to meet the ASC Standards will be identified.
- 3) **For certifiers** the pilot audit will enable them to familiarise themselves with the ASC Group Certification and Accreditation Requirements, as well as enabling them to prepare draft checklists and procedures that will prepare their internal systems for a smoother ASC-accreditation process later.

Boundaries

This project is focused on the improvement of the Group Certification and Accreditations Requirements (to be added as Annex E to ASC's Farm Certification & Accreditation Requirements) as a part of the ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements. Review or improvement of other documents (e.g. standards), procedures and governance documents are not part of this project. Farms cannot be certified as a result of these pilots. Certifiers cannot certify farm groups until they have completed the ASC's relevant accreditation process(es).

Key requirements for participants

Farm

- Facilitate the work of the on-site audit team, including access to all relevant areas, staff and documentation during the audit.

- Supply requested documents and information as requested by the certifier. Prior preparation in collating required information and its availability before or at the commencement of the audit; will ensure an efficient audit process.
- Although farms cannot be certified on conclusion of the pilot audit, ASC recommends participating farms to work with certifiers they would likely contract for the formal certification audit later. The experience gained during this pilot audit will lead to increased efficiency at that stage. Please make sure the certifier you will work with intends to become accredited for the ASC, in line with your aspirations to become ASC-certified!

Certifier

- Conduct the pilot audit as if it were a full ASC Group audit by auditing all the requirements as stated in the relevant, species-specific ASC Standard and the related AM.
- Follow all certification requirements as set out in the ASC Farm Certification and Accreditation Requirementsⁱⁱⁱ (CAR), with special focus on the Group Certification Requirements' Annex E apart from the exemptions as set out in Annex 1 to these ToR.
- Provide the following documents to the ASC:
 - the full (pilot-)audit report (see ASC CAR for exact reporting requirements); and,
 - in a separate document any remarks and recommendations to the ASC as a result of testing the ASC Group Certification Requirements. A mandatory template (see Annex 2 to these ToR) is provided to allow the ASC to efficiently collate the results of several pilot audits.
- While certifiers must follow the ASC Farm CAR^{iv} they DO NOT need to be accredited against the ASC Standards (see Annex 1 to these ToR for more details).
- CANNOT certify a farm by means of this pilot audit

ASC

- Will provide all necessary documents to relevant stakeholders.
- Will provide overall project coordination.
- Will provide clarifications to participating stakeholders as requested.
- Will use received feedback to improve its Certification and Accreditation Requirements on Group Certification.

Planning

ASC will provide all relevant documents to participating farms and CABs before 15 April 2014.

Farms and CABs will sign and return the signed ToR (this document) to ASC before 30 May 2014.

It is expected (depending on the size/complexity of the farm and size/experience of the audit team) that an on-site pilot audit will take 2 - 5 days. In addition, farms and certifiers will need time to prepare for the pilot audit and certifiers will need time to process their findings into the required formats for the audit report and any observations regarding the suitability of the AM (see ASC's CAR for the audit report format and Annex 2 of this ToR for feedback on the AM).

ASC requests to receive all feedback from the pilot audits no later than 30 October 2014. If you believe this is not possible for you or your client, please contact ASC at pilots@asc-aqua.org a.s.a.p. to determine whether alternative arrangements can be made.

The ASC will process all feedback, seek necessary clarifications and submit the Group Certification Requirements revisions through ASC's governance bodies: the ASC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the ASC Supervisory Board (SB) in Nov 2014.

ASC's TAG and SB will approve revised CAR by Jan 2015.

All registered partners will be notified in case of any revision of the planning above.

Documents will be(come) available as follows:

CAR Requirements	Desk Reviewed CAR, Annex E available for pilot testing	Testing period (planned)	Feedback deadline farms / CB's	Final version CAR (planned)
Group Certification Requirements included in CAR	15 Apr 2014 - <i>draft</i>	1 Jun – 30 Oct 2014	30 Nov 2014	Feb 2015

Costs

Farms and certifiers will not be financially compensated for these pilot audits by the ASC and will need to arrange their own funding.

Co-funding opportunity (Shrimp, Tilapia & Pangasius only)

Pilots related to Shrimp, Pangasius and Tilapia and for which at least 50% of the cost of the pilot is co-financed by the private sector may receive co-funding by IDH, The Sustainable Trade Initiative. For information on how to apply, please contact Mr Roy van Daatselaar:

vandaatselaar@idhsustainabletrade.com

Confidentiality

ASC will use the pilot audit feedback forms to further improve its CAR. Client and farm-specific information will not be disclosed, unless all related parties (farm/certifier/ASC) have confirmed their approval in writing first. If pilot partners publicly disclose information (e.g. announces that it participates in these audits), the ASC will be allowed to refer to that to third parties, without prior approval from pilot partner.

To evaluate the pilot audit information will require ASC's operational staff, ASC's SB and ASC's TAG access to the collated audit material. The ASC may require external consultant(s) to assist in the processing and evaluation of the pilot information. Any consultant and all members of the ASC's staff and governance will be bounded by confidentiality arrangements, such that they will not distribute or disclose any pilot related information to any third party.

Documents will be electronically stored at the servers of ASC.

Reporting requirements

- Certifiers will provide **3 separate reports** to the ASC (1 with farmer's feedback, 1 with CB's feedback).
- All 3 reports must be in the formats as specified in this ToR (see appendix 2)
- All communication to and from ASC (mail, reports etc.) will be **in English**.
- All reports will be sent to ASC **via e-mail (soft-copy)** to: pilots@asc-aqua.org
- Feedback by farms and CB's may be sent to ASC when available, but no later than 30 Oct 2014.

Company Name :

Address + Place :

Country :

Phone : (incl.country code) +(0).....

Mobile phone : (incl.country code) +(0).....

E-mail address :

Company website : www.....

Date (DD/MM/YYYY) : / / 2014

Signature :

Name : Mr / Mrs

	If you are a Certifier, also provide contact details of PARTNERING FARM(s) <i>One farm as main contact on group's behalf will do</i>	If you are a group of farms, also provide contact details of PARTNERING CERTIFIER
Planned audit date	<i>(or inform ASC as soon as available)</i>	
Company name		
Farm name		n/a
Farm full address (including country) OR location description		n/a
Contact person	Mr / Mrs	Mr / Mrs
Phone contact (+ country code)	+	+
Mobile phone contact person	+	+
E-mail address contact person		
Company website	www.	www.

Appendix 1 – Requirements CABs

All requirements within the ASC's Farm Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) will be applicable as requirements for certifiers or auditors, **with the exception of** the ones listed in this appendix.

Full text of ASC CAR can be found in the download centre at the ASC website: http://www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASC%20Farm%20Certification%20and%20Accreditation%20Requirements_v1.0.pdf

The following CAR requirements are **not** applicable - *if no further text is added, the mentioned requirement will **not** apply:*

- Generic:
 - 'Audit' shall be read as 'pilot Audit'
 - it must be made clear to all stakeholders contacted for the purpose of these pilot audits that this is a pilot audit and will not lead to the certification of the farm as a direct result of this pilot audit
 - [...] Although ASC strongly encourages certifiers to do so, certifiers do not need to hold accreditation for ASC, nor does it need to be an applicant
 - In the CAR an 'ASC Database' is referred to. This database is not operational yet. Communication with ASC will be done by e-mail instead. For this pilot audit project the dedicated e-mail address is: pilots@asc-aqua.org
- 4.10 → no separate contract is needed (signing this ToR suffices)
- 4.12
- 6.1.2.2 & 6.1.2.3 → ASC's Standard specific training is not mandatory for these pilots
- 6.1.4.1 → no written procedure is needed
- 7.1 → 'Applicant' should be read as 'aquaculture operation (farm) which participates as pilot partner'
- 7.1.1.2 a, b, d
- 7.3 → although this pilot audit will be performed as if it were an official audit, this audit will not lead to certification of the aquaculture operation (farm). Nevertheless, certifier shall include the pro forma 'certification decision' in his audit report.
- 7.3.4 (7.3.4.1, 7.3.4.2)
- 7.4 (7.4.1, 7.4.1.1)
- 7.5 (7.5.1)
- 7.6 (7.6.1, 7.6.2)

- 8.1
- 16.1.1 → 'ASC lead auditor' shall be read as 'lead auditor'
- 16.1.2.3 → If auditor has substantial, proven social auditing experience for other schemes, this requirement may be waived for these pilot audits.
- 17.2.1
- 17.3.1.1
- 17.4.1 → if both farm and certifier have signed their ToR (with clear reference to each other) this requirement does not apply
- 17.5 → this part (eligibility and CoC) must be audited 'as if' the farm were to be certified. However no products will be allowed to enter the supply chain as ASC certified, as a result of this pilot audit.
- 17.6.2 → reports resulting from these pilot audits will not be posted
- 17.8 → if Certifier raises any non-conformity a corrective action plans will be drafted. These will not be binding for the farms at this stage.
- 17.9 → Certifier shall not make an official certification decision as a result of this pilot audit, but will (for the sake of completeness) draft a proposed certification decision.
- 17.9.3 (17.9.3.1)
- **17.9.4 → IMPORTANT!! Certifiers are not allowed to grant certificates as a result of this pilot audit**
- 17.11 → no certificate will be granted
- 17.12 → no certificate will be granted
- 17.13
- 17.14
- 17.15
- Annex B – Table A:
 - B2 → all trainings and competences apply, unless specifically excluded in this annex.
- Annex B – Table B:
 - B18 applicable, except: 'The individual has conducted at least five (5) ASC audits or have been a member of an audit team for ten (10) audit days, for equivalent aquaculture audits at more than one (1) production facility.'
 - B21
- Annex C:
 - C2 → translation into other language(s) not necessary for pilot audit
 - C3

- C4.3 → although the audit report for pilot audits will not be public, the Certifier will need to report 'as if' it were an actual audit.
- C6.2 → Pilot audit reports will NOT be posted at the ASC website
- C6.3 → 10 days' public comment period not applicable for pilot audit reports
- C6.4
- C6.5 → Pilot audit reports will NOT be posted at the ASC website
- Table C1 → Findings → although no certification decision may be taken as a result from this pilot audit, the Certifier will write the audit report 'as if' this was an official audit report. Including whether certification would have been granted as a result of the audit findings
- Table C1 → Decision → see above at 'Findings'
- Table C1 → Determination of the start of the CoC → see above at 'Findings'
- Annex D:
 - D3.1 → no information resulting from these pilot audits will be disclosed publicly.
- Form 3 → not applicable, pilot audits will not be publicly announced

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Appendix 2 – Mandatory reporting formats

For each of the pilot audits the ASC shall receive 2 electronic documents from each Certifier, which shall follow the formats as described below:

1) The Audit Report (in Word)

- a. Format: see document ‘ASC Farm Certification and Accreditation Requirements’, Annex C – Aquaculture Audit Report Requirements, Table C1

2) Suggested improvements to ASC’s Group Certification Requirements (= Annex E).

These shall be provided by CAB and/or farm(s) in track changes in the provided Word document.

Both reporting documents should be sent to pilots@asc-aqua.org

as soon as available, but no later than 30 Oct 2014.

ⁱ www.worldwildlife.org/what/globalmarkets/aquaculture/aquaculturedialogues.html

ⁱⁱ *global association for sustainability standards*; www.isealliance.org

ⁱⁱⁱ www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASC%20Farm%20Certification%20and%20Accreditation%20Requirements_version%201%200_20120314_DEF%20%282%29.pdf

^{iv} www.asc-aqua.org/upload/ASC%20Farm%20Certification%20and%20Accreditation%20Requirements_version%201%200_20120314_DEF%20%282%29.pdf