P.O. Box 19107
3501 DC Utrecht
Nieuwekade 9
3511 RV Utrecht
The Netherlands
+31 30 230 5929

www.ascworldwide.org

ASC
Aquaculture
Stewardship
Council

Meeting Minutes
ASC 4th Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting

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<u>Date:</u> Tuesday 13 and Wednesday 14 December 2011, 8:30~17:30 CET
<u>Location:</u> Rosarium, Amsterdam
<u>Present:</u> Peter Cook, Sabine Daume, Sandra Shumway, David Basset, Flavio Corsin, Petter Arnessen (PA), Dominique Gautier, Leo van Mullekom, Michael Tlustly, Bas Geerts, Sun Brage (14 Dec. 8:30-12:30), Aldin Hilbrand (13 Dec 11:30>, 14 Dec. <15:00), Marrit Rooda), Chris Ninnes (14 Dec. 8:30-12:30), Jose Villalon (14 Dec. 8:30-12:30), Ted van der Put (14 Dec. 8:30-12:30),

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James Sullivan
<u>Absent:</u> David Jarrad, Sian Morgan, Daniel Fegan, Jay Ritchelin, Neil Simms, Anne Laurence Huillery
<u>Minutes:</u> Marrit Rooda

15 **AGENDA**

[For detailed agenda see "ASC TAG_AGENDA_Meeting_13.14Dec2012_FINAL_20111208"]
DAY 1: Tuesday 13 December
1. Welcome / Opening meeting
2. Finalize TAG Terms of Reference
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3. Election TAG Chair, Vice-Chair and 2 SB representatives
4. Update ASC
5. Integrity declaration CBs
6. ASC Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements
DAY 2: Wednesday 14 December
25
7. ASC Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements continued
8. Approve Tilapia AGM
9. Nomination TAG Chair, Vice-Chair and 2 SB representatives
10. Action points / next steps
11. AOB
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INPUT PAPERS
- TAG meeting agenda "*ASC TAG_AGENDA_Meeting_13.14Dec2012_FINAL_20111208*"
- TAG Terms of Reference "*20111208_ASC TAG TOR and Rules FINAL DRAFT*"
- Tilapia AGM "*ASC Tilapia Auditor Guidance Manual – 2.0 – BG*"
35
- Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements "*ASC_DRAFT_Farm_ Cert_Accred_Reg_version1.1_20111207*"
- Meeting minutes previous meeting "*ASC_Minutes_third_TAG_meeting_Sep_12_vs20111122-DRAFT*"

40 **1. Welcome / Opening meeting**

credible environmental robust multi-stakeholder
responsible transparent worldwide education
change independent social effective open
impactful solutions efficient partnership

Meeting is opened at 08.30hrs.

Goal of the meeting
- The goal of this meeting is for the:
  1. TAG to approve: a.) Farms Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements, and b.) Tilapia Auditor Guidance Manual
  2. TAG to define next steps
  3. ASC to update TAG on AC progress to date
- It is stressed that it will most likely not be possible to develop *the* perfect documents from the beginning. ASC will start with a good set of documents, which will need adjustments based on experience gained in practice.

Agenda
- The agenda as set for this TAG meeting (see section: 'input papers') has been approved.
- TAG agrees ASC will act as Chairman for this TAG meeting since the TAG has not yet selected a Chair and/or vice-chairman.
- A consultant will be present at this TAG meeting as the expert on certification and accreditation and the author of the draft ASC Accreditation and Certification document.
- A representative will be present for part of this TAG meeting as the chair of the Technical Working Group on Certification and Accreditation.
- 2 members of ASC's Supervisory Board will be present for information exchange between TAG and SB since the TAG has not yet selected 2 representatives of the TAG to the Supervisory Board.

Meeting minutes
- The meeting minutes from the previous 3rd TAG meeting in London, 1-2 September 2011 (see section: 'input papers' for minutes) have been approved.
- It is stated that it was unclear when to read and approve the minutes. Suggests to circulate the minutes within 1-2 weeks after the meeting and seek approval from TAG by email.
- It is stated to combine all action points from the different TAG meetings into 1 master list and circulate a summary of (outstanding) action points to the TAG before a meeting.
- TAG suggests to revise the structure for writing meeting minutes to include the critical points, decisions and action items (as opposed to a verbatim report).
- TAG suggests to email action items from meeting to TAG asap after meeting (e.g. 1~2 days) and prepare meeting minutes within 1~2 weeks after meeting.

Outstanding action items:
[For overview of action items of 3rd TAG-meeting in London see:
"ASC_Minutes_third_TAG_meeting_Sep_12_vs20111122-DRAFT"]
- All outstanding action items have been closed, accept for the following:
  o 5c: Updated Terms of Reference (ToR) has been circulated as input paper for this TAG meeting. Any additional feedback on ToR from this meeting (see next agenda item 2) will be incorporated. Final version ToR will be circulated for approval by TAG within 2 weeks after circulation.
  o 6a&7a: no self-nominations and bio's were received for the position of TAG's Chair, Vice-Chair, and 2x SB representation. Further process will be discussed as part of agenda item 3.
  o 15a&20: TAG suggest to remove CoC reference. With that TAG believes auditor qualifications overview is complete.

- o 18a: Differences in definitions across Standards will be listed. Although the Standards that have already been approved will not be (able to be) aligned until their next official revision, the TAG prefers to standardize definitions so those Standards currently under development can already implement them.
- o 19a: ASC has hired a consultant to draft up a first proposal on group certification. The subject of group-certification will be one of the priority projects for the TAG in 2012. First priority is for TAG to approve Certification and Accreditation Requirements document and market Tilapia and Pangasius.
- o 23a: TAG suggests a new word for 'Standard' at indicator level (as to not confuse with the 'Standards' documents themselves). Group approves: 'Requirement'. This will be updated in all relevant documents (Standards, Audit Manuals etc.).
- o 23.4: It is checked with ISEAL what the procedure is for updating and revising Standards documents, hereby possibly distinguishing between content- and structure related items (e.g. editorial flaws).
- o TAG 1 Vancouver meeting, point 3: TAG members are requested to suggest Asian candidates for SB. A candidate from the Asian region is suggested.

- • ASC aims for next year TAG meetings to be more virtual. Proposal is to schedule for regular web conferences and (only) 1~2 in-person meetings.
  - o It is suggested to agree on meeting calendar upfront
  - o It is pointed out inequality in financial commitments of TAG members due to higher expenses for those not living in EU and asks ASC to consider this in its TAG reimbursement policy.
  - o TAG requests ASC to give TAG members adequate notice upfront whether or not expenses will be reimbursed.

2. Finalize TAG Terms of Reference
[For TAG Terms of Reference see "20111208_ASC TAG TOR and Rules FINAL DRAFT"]
- • TAG provided the following feedback on the ToR:
  - o Revision of 3.2 has been agreed. Because there are currently 2 TAG members from the same organization, this point will come into affect with the appointment of new members.
  - o Suggestion to remove the title of "Executive Council" to indicate the Chair and Vice-Chair (see point 3.5). This is yet another title out there and might be confusing. Just refer to Chair and Vice-Chair instead.
  - o TAG members are selected based on their knowledge and expertise. Although multi-stakeholder representation is not a hard criteria, it is ASC's intention to balance this. Suggestion is to include a pre-amble to describe ASC's intention to balance multi-stakeholder representation, as well as gender and regions.
  - o Point 3.8 should be removed. Although the current TAG members have been selected from the different dialogues, they have been selected for their specific expertise (see point 3.1) and do not represent the dialogues as such. Because they have been selected for their expertise TAG members cannot have alternates.
  - o It is proposed to check on the legality of point 3.10.
  - o Revisions of 3.10: 3.10.1~3.10.4 have been agreed
  - o Proposal to make a distinction in 4.12 between the notice period for physical and virtual meetings, whereby a physical meeting will have a 3 months' notice period and a virtual meeting 28 days.
  - o Revisions of 4.15 & 4.19 have been agreed.

- o Proposal to re-write 5.11: *"Changes to the TAG's ToR may be proposed by the TAG to the SB for approval and vice versa. Both Tag and SB shall agree on any proposed changes to TAG's ToR".*
- o Proposal to re-write 7.11: *"Subject to the provisions of the Deed and Supervisory Board Regulations, and in mutual agreement with the TAG, the ASC Supervisory Board may follow or not follow the advice of the TAG. The Supervisory Board will either accept TAG advice or will inform TAG in writing (which will be public) why the advice was not accepted."*
- ACTION: feedback will be incorporated into next version and send to TAG by December 23. TAG will give final approval on ToR by January 16, 2012.

3. Election TAG Chair, Vice-Chair and 2 SB representatives

- No self-nominations for the position of Chair, Vice-Chair, and SB representatives have been received. It is the intention to have informal nominations at the 2nd day of this TAG meeting (see section 9 'Nomination TAG Chair, Vice-Chair and 2 SB representatives' of these minutes).

4. Update ASC

[For update presentation see *"ASC_TAG-Meeting_Amsterdam_20111213.pdf"*]

5. Integrity declaration CBs

- TAG advises against an integrity declaration for CBs. ASC has identified requirements for accreditation, including safeguarding impartiality, independence, and confidentiality (which are inherent to ISO65 and IAF Guidance). ASI accredits CBs. As such ASI is responsible for confirming CBs comply with ASC requirements. ASC should not interfere in this. In addition, an integrity declaration letter from the CB to ASC would not be enforceable because the contract is between the CB and ASI (not ASC).
- Instead, the TAG advises for ASC to discuss with ASI on how to monitor CB performance.

6. ASC Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements

[For Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements *"ASC_DRAFT_Farm_Cert_Accred_ Reg_version1.1_20111207"*]

- ACTION: All TAG members are requested to send their feedback on minor remarks (spelling, lay out, wording etc.) on the Certification and Accreditation requirements document by email to ASC by Friday December 23.

Clarification on structure of document:
- The structure of the Certification and Accreditation Requirements follows the structure of the draft ISO Guide 17065. This allows for easy reference for CBs because their systems most often follow this structure as well.
- The process of accreditation is not included within in this document as it is the responsibility of ASI.
- ACTION: ISO copies are shared with TAG (ISO 65, ISO 19011, IAF Guidance ISO 65, ISO 17065) for TAG to better understand what the requirements are upon the basis of which the Certification and Accreditation document was structured.

Unit-of-certification:
See section 17.1. of Farm Certification requirements and Accreditation Requirements
- TAG agrees to the proposal for unit-of-certification for single site and cluster of sites (note: group certification is still under development).

- In addition, TAG recommends to define boundaries for the size of a cluster of sites in order to prevent a cluster from becoming too big. Because it is difficult to standardize requirements for this among species, the TAG recommends to set maximum limits per Standard. These will be added to the Certification and Accreditation Requirements document as an Annex with reference in article 17.1.1.2.e.ii.
- ACTION: Standard representatives will create sub-working groups to define the max. limits for a cluster of sites for their specific species in relation to article 17.1.1.2.e.ii.
- See also Section 9 'Parking lot' → Parallel Production. There was no consensus at this early stage to allow for this principle, but the group did see the logic as why this may be an interesting approach to have more farms choosing to become certified.

Non-conformities:
See section 17.7. of Farm Certification requirements and Accreditation Requirements and the definitions of Major and Minor (page 25).
- TAG approves the proposal for non-conformities.
- It is pointed out that currently some Standards and their Auditor Guidance Manual prescribe how to measure compliance and deal with possible non-conformities. Ideally there is a clear distinction in structure between Standard, Auditor Guidance Manual, and Certification Requirements whereby; the Standard lists the criteria for farmers, the Auditor Guidance Manual explains to auditors how to check compliance, and the Certification Requirements describes the audit requirements and how to deal with non-conformities. In this case the Standard and Auditor Guidance Manual include specific requirements on non-conformities that should have been in the Certification Requirements document. Within a next revision of the Standards and Auditor Guidance Manuals this will be harmonized. Until then, the Standard and/or Auditor Guidance Manual will be leading over the Certification and Accreditation Requirements document.

Stakeholder consultation in audit process:
See section 7.2.2. of Farm Certification requirements and Accreditation Requirements
- TAG feels stakeholder inclusion is important in the audit process. Therefore the TAG recommends to develop a reasonable mechanism (e.g. balancing costs and through-put time versus impact and credibility) to allow for stakeholders to provide information and voice concerns to the auditors to be included in the audit process. Suggestion is for CBs to publically announce the audit through the ASC website and publish a summary of the audit report (including the input from stakeholder consultation and how this was dealt with).
- ACTION: A proposal is drafted for this to be included within the Certification and Accreditation Requirements document in section 7.2.2.

Document is fish-centric; also make fit for non-fish species, like shellfish:
- ACTION: All TAG members to send input with specific examples of where the Certification and Accreditation Requirements document might be discriminatory against non-fish to ASC to incorporate and adjust.

Transparency of audit results:
See section 17.9. of Farm Certification requirements and Accreditation Requirements
- The intention of the ASC is to be as transparent as possible, while at the same time respecting commercial sensitivities. TAG recommends the requirement for a public audit report with confidential annexes, whereby the negotiation on what is 'commercially sensitive' information and thus confidential is between the CB and the client. In a future revision ASC would like to move to an audit report template. For now ASC will provide a list of minimum requirements for the audit report and leave it up to

the experience of the CB – in dialogue with ASC where necessary – to determine what is included within the audit report and confidential annexes (e.g. as long as it does not conflict with the requirements of the Standards; in some Standards there are mandatory regulations to make certain

230 information public).

- In addition to the public audit report with confidential annexes, the TAG recommends for a public audit summary report of 1~2 pages in conventional (non-technical) language for communication purposes understandable by laymen.
- Whether or not the audit reports from clients who failed certification will be made public remains to be

235 decided. The Supervisory Board did decide to record the fail results in aggregate.

- ACTION: Incorporate audit report requirements into Certification and Accreditation Requirements document

Auditor qualifications and training:

240 See Section 16. of Farm Certification requirements and Accreditation Requirements.

- The intention of the ASC in its auditor qualifications is to find a balance between instructions and skill; by not being too prescriptive and trusting on the skills and experience of the

245 auditor, and vice versa.

- Concern is raised that audit teams will be too big and therefore costly for farmers. → Requirements no longer prescribe min. number of auditors in team; can be 1 auditor as long the auditor meets all qualifications. In addition ASC aims to have multiple

250 CBs within 1 country in order to encourage competitive pricing for clients.

- Concern is raised that finding competent auditors in southern countries might prove to be more difficult and for that raison ASC might want to be more descriptive. Practice will tell.
- It is staTed that proof of social audit experience to be demonstrated by *witnessing* one social audit is not sufficient enough. Propose to change 16.1.2.3.a.i to *"Auditing experience is defined as having*

255 *performed at least one audit…"*.

- ACTION: It is suggested to re-phrase 16.1.2.3.a.ii within the same meaning and send a proposal for this to ASC by 23 December.
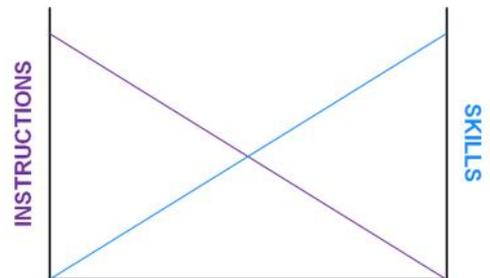
Competitiveness, impartiality, conflict of interest:

260 - The requirements for safeguarding impartiality, independence, and confidentiality are inherent to ISO65 accreditation.

- ACTION: ISO 65 is compared against ASC values with respect to environmental and social issues and transparency to see if there is anything missing, and if so, send suggestions to ASC by 23 December.

265 **Next steps:**

- ACTION: ASC aims to incorporate all discussions and feedback into the Certification and Accreditation Requirements document version 1.2 and send to TAG by December 25. TAG will give final approval by January 16, 2012.

270 **7. Approve Tilapia AGM**

- It was decided to rename the 'Auditor Guidance Manual' (current and future) to 'Audit Manual', because the term Auditor Guidance Manual no longer matches with the intent of the document:
  - o Guidance is too voluntarily

o   It now also contains instructions for the farmer

275 • ACTION: rename the document (and all other AGMs, current and future) to: Audit Manual
     • Feed trials → it is explained that farms will carry out feed trials. Since volumes for trials are modest, farms will not be able to demand 'ASC compliant feed' with all its possible feed suppliers. Group agrees with allowing feed trials, but fish harvested from ponds for which farmer has used non-compliant feed may not be sold as ASC-Certified. Fish harvested from ponds at the same farm

280 which has been fed with compliant feed, can still be sold as certified. Challenge for the farm is proving it segregates certified and non-certified (compliant / non-compliant) at the farm and throughout the supply chain. CB will have to determine the need for Chain of Custody at farms.
     • ACTION: an instructional text to include in Audit Manual for Tilapia will be drafted.
     • Time of Sampling (2.5.1, instructional text in grey box, note 2) → add text 'at the day of the audit'.

285 • ACTION: This is changed in the Audit Manual
     • ISRTA → in current Audit Manual there is still reference to ISRTA
     • ACTION: replace ISRTA by ASC Tilapia Standard

8. Nomination TAG Chair, Vice-Chair and 2 SB representatives

290 • Individual TAG members were asked to share their interest in taking on any of these positions. The following members expressed a interest and/or availability:
     o   Petter Arnesen: Chair and SB representative
     o   Sabine Daume: Worried about time commitment, but willing to consider if no other nominations
     o   Peter Cook: Willing to take up Chair or Vice-Chair position and is willing to be SB representative

295 but points out financial constraint (relative higher travel costs because located in Australia) and major time difference with EU and US.
     o   Sandra Shumway: Worried about time commitment, but willing to consider position of SB representative if no other nominations.
     o   David Basset: SB representative, not position of Chair because of 'insufficient in-depth technical

300 knowledge' to lead this group of technical experts and time commitments
     • ACTION: Those TAG members that have expressed a positive interest, and those TAG members not present but wishing to put themselves up for nomination, are required to send a short bio to ASC by January 16, 2012. ASC will set up a suitable e-voting tool for selection and open the voting procedure by January 23. TAG members are then requested to vote within 2 weeks before February 6. The results

305 of the voting will be forward to the SB for final decision making. TAG will be informed of this.

9. Action points / next steps
Action points:
See TAG Action List (version 22 December 2011)

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Next steps, short term (critical for launch/opening accreditation):
     • Finalize TAG Terms of Reference (16 January, 2012)
     • Finalize Farm Certification Requirements and Accreditation Requirements (16 January, 2012)
     • Finalize Tilapia Audit Manual (16 January, 2012)

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Next Meetings:
(Calls will last 2 hrs. Exact times Telco's will be determined based on availability as indicated by participants via Doodle-poll)
     • 10 Jan   Telco

320   • 6 Mar   Telco
        • 23/24 April   In Person (ESE, Brussels)
                → **remark: 24 is exhibition day at ESE → not desirable for TAG meeting for those**
                who come to Brussels to meet with their clients and prospects
        • 5 Jun   Telco
325   • *7 Aug*   *Telco   - date to be reconfirmed in March*
        • *9 Oct*   *Telco   - date to be reconfirmed in March*
        • *TBD*   *In Person (TBD)*

        Parking lot:
330   • The following issues were parked for a future meeting:
                o Group certification
                o Parallel Production and Partial certification of farmers (e.g. can farmers be partially certified whereby part of their sites/volume is certified and part is not (yet)?)
                o Impact measurement and monitoring and evaluation program (e.g. how to collect, analyze and
335   report impact data for farmers?)
                o Feed 'dialogue' (e.g. harmonize approach to feed across all Standards)

10. AOB
        • TAG recommends to the Supervisory Board to include the criteria for multi-stakeholder representation in
340   its selection/election process.
        • TAG recommends to the Supervisory Board that ASC itself shall be compliant with FAO Guidelines.
        • TAG recommends to the Supervisory Board to reconsider the 1-year validity period for certification because it believes the gains do not outweigh the impracticalities and higher costs involved. A relative same level of assurance can be achieved through a 3 year certification with annual surveillance periods
345   against significant lower costs.
                o <u>ACTION</u>: a motion will be written to support this recommendation to be approved and forwarded by the TAG as a strong recommendation to the SB.

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