

MEETING MINUTES, ASC TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG)

Attendance: Sandra Shumway (SS, Chair), Peter Cook (PC), Dominique Gautier (DG), Jay Ritchlin (JR), Petter Arnessen (PA), Neil Sims (NS).

Via phone (part of meeting): Sabine Daume (SD).

ASC Attendance: Bas Geerts (BG), Chris Nannes (CN), Iain Pollard (IP), ThanhVan Cao (CT), Contessa Kellogg-Winters (CKW), Lyn Egan (LE). 21st Sept only: John White (JW).

Via phone: Michiel Franssen (MF).

Apologies: Michael Tlustly (MT), David Jarrad (DJ), Sian Morgan (SM), Peter Bridson (PB).

Observers: Boris Sulzberger (ASI). 21st Sept only: Phil Crocombe (ASI), Dan Hoggarth, Graham Bruford (MSC).

Day 1, 20 September 2016

1. Opening Session

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, and the meeting was declared quorate. The objectives and background of the meeting were outlined.
- 1.2 The TAG **approved** the minutes of its previous meeting, and requested the Executive to ensure that minutes were circulated within three weeks of conclusion of its meetings.

Decisions

- The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Governance

- 2.1 *Competencies.* Members were invited to verify the contact information held by the Executive and to provide notice of any required amendments. In order to ensure consistency with Board practice, members were further invited to verify, and identify any required changes for a set of ten competencies (as prepared by the Executive).

Action 1

- TAG members to confirm any required changes to competencies.

- 2.2 *Membership rotations.* The TAG noted the importance of managing membership term rotations, in a phased and structured manner; however, it was **agreed** that the current membership profile should be retained until the launch of the core standard, with a view to undertaking phasing thereafter. There was agreement that a minimum membership size of ten was desirable, and that both members and the Executive should actively proceed to recruit new TAG members, e.g. drawing from participants in the feed project. It was noted that the Executive were reviewing a long-list of potential nominations, and would give further consideration to development of a TAG membership strategy. Finally, it was reported that Messrs Jarrad and Bassett would retire from the TAG.

Action 2

- Members to confirm their intent to continue membership for next 1.5 years.
- Members to propose other potential TAG members to the Executive, by November the 15th 2017.

Action 3

- The Executive to circulate a summary note on the above considerations to all TAG members.

Action items. (reference document no. 5). See ASC revised document that includes notes.

Action 4

- Refer to other document of actions.

2.3 *Variance request process.* It was confirmed that TAG members were not generally consulted on each variance request (VRs) received by the ASC, and that TAG consultation was instead undertaken as required. The Executive considered that granted VRs did not affect the substance of the standard, but instead created informative precedents to be drawn upon CABs when faced with comparable situations. The TAG requested that it be informed of future VRs, and that consideration be given to the placement of such requests on the ASC website.

2.4 *Metric requirements (action 103).* It was reported that auditors required guidance on the requirements to determine which metrics needed to be reported. The Executive noted that data reporting should focus on those specific areas where the ASC wished to improve standards over the longer term, supported by best practice from harmonisation across species' standards.

Action 5

- ASC to provide enhanced guidance to auditors on metric reporting.

Decision

- Interim feed solution has been approved and will be published as soon as possible.

3. Presentation on Implementation Challenges (reference paper 06a and 06b)

3.1 The TAG received a presentation on implementation challenges. The following principal points were noted:

- i. that CARs (v1.0 or v2.0) were being chosen on the basis of optimum results.
- ii. that farms were not being audited at peak biomass (as discussed during operational review session).
- iii. that clarification was required on whether last or penultimate quarter monitoring needed to be carried out within farm audits.

Action 6

- For harmonisation review; clarification required on how the intention of peak biomass could be integrated in a better manner.

iv. that some parts of the production cycle were not being audited, e.g. temporary siting of salmon (nurseries). It was noted that the current Salmon standard focussed on smolt production sites and grow-outs; however there were concerns that impacts were not being fully assessed or that parts of the fish life cycle were not being audited. A chain of custody concern was also highlighted.

Action 7

- ASC investigation required to determine whether treatments were being captured at these (intermediate) sites, and whether such sites were being measured for N & P levels.

v. that work needed to be undertaken to address identified inconsistencies on the classification of major and minor non-conformities.

Action 8

- The Executive to consider how to ensure that environmental criteria were being passed and to ensure that minor non-conformities were not being raised for major issues, e.g. through setting a limit on the number of minor non-conformities.

vi. that levels of sea lice per fish were too high in certified farms, and that variances frequently deferred to government regulations, contrary to the intent of the standard. In addition, it was noted that unlicensed farms were being approved.

Action 9

- The Executive to review VRs granted on sea lice, in the light of consistency of the standard, and facility for stakeholder comment.

- vii. that clarity was required on how or whether CABs could make recommendations on de-certification.
- 3.2 The TAG noted that further review of the report on implementation changes was required, and that elements of the report could usefully inform the QA process. Additional work to review control points was also required.
- 3.3 Finally, it was noted that assistance was required with identification of standards metrics, and the triggering of additional metric reporting linked to QA. This also referred to actions on harmonisation.

4. Credibility concerns

- 4.1 *Adherence to the CAR.* The Executive reported that different versions of the CAR were simultaneously in use by the same CAB within the same region. The TAG were reminded that following its launch in December 2015, a transitional period would run until the 1st of January 2017, at which point the use of CAR v2.0 would become mandatory for all CABs. Whilst CABs could choose a CAR version within this period, the use of the CAR v2.0 reporting template was mandatory for all CABs commencing assessments from the 1st of July 2016 onwards.
- 4.2 *Witnessing of harvest.* It was reported that harvests were not witnessed and there was lack of clarity to distinguish peak biomass from harvest.
- 4.3 *Nursery transfer (production cycle data).* Potential Chain of Custody issues arose where it was not recorded that fish were briefly occasionally moved between sites within the production cycle. Whilst this was not common in all jurisdictions, it remained to determine whether this was posed an issue of UoC definition. Further examination was required on harvest time audits in nursery shelters, where issues of missing environmental data arose and to determine whether site certification, production certification or a combined certification was appropriate.
- 4.4 *Inconsistencies with Minor/Major Non-Conformities.* Minor NCs appeared to be used too frequently and clarification was required on the orderly, consistent closure of NCs. Given the number of NCs raised against compliance criteria (rather than indicators) it was possible that review of these issues could take place within the QA workstream.
- 4.5 *Consistency and rigour of granted VRs.* Issues were highlighted on the use of local regulations for accepting VRs (compliance with the regulations and equivalence of regulation with standards were noted to be two separate processes/issues.)

Decision 1

- Committee reviews each VR and the overlapping VRs to expedite the review of VRs.

5. Update on Supervisory Board

- 5.1 (reference presentation)

6. Update on ASC Standards

- 6.1 (reference presentation)
- 6.2 The TAG considered the placement of the ASC's 20% bar, and the broad aim of raising the performance of the sector, through raising standards over time. It was suggested that a review of environmental impact by species needed to be carried out to fully elaborate the impact of ASC farm certification 'in the water'. In considering the enhancement of standards, it was noted that the ASC was already committed to triennial review under the terms of ISEAL membership, and the TAG recognised that farms should operate at the highest possible level. No further action was deemed necessary in this area.
- 6.3 The TAG considered the process for ASC interim feed standard compliance with the ISEAL Assurance Code. It was noted that the ISEAL code included a provision (6.4.8), which facilitated members (e.g. ASC) to allow exceptions. '[...] exceptions are only valid until the

next standard review exercise, when they shall be integrated into the standard, or removed from use. [...]

7. Presentation on Harmonisation

7.1 Core standard presentation: 119 common indicators

7.2 The TAG noted that the BEIA example was sensible, and able to accommodate different species; however it was expected that the requirements with actual values/figures would be difficult to elaborate (contrary to BEIA requirements). Furthermore, it was anticipated that challenges may be posed by ambiguities in requirements and values between the two systems. It was agreed that a practical approach to setting of common requirements would be the formulation of general statements, followed by specific values. However, it was viewed that it was not logical to list a value requirement for all species, and that a better approach would make use of a species module, if proven critical for certain species. In general, it was agreed that a simplified list of essential indicators would be the preferred approach, e.g. through eliminating elements (e.g. checkboxes) subject to whether such elements were of primary importance/intent. The TAG agreed that it was not its role to formally request the simplification of indicators in standards created by the Aquaculture Dialogues; however it recognised that the issue should be highlighted. Other examples included that of the SAD fines.

Action 10

- TAG to propose amendments; however actual changes would need expert opinion.

7.3 The TAG expressed concerns that the outlined standards methodology in standards may hinder innovation; however, the ASC could specify the end point but not specify the methodology. Other highlighted issues included those of: consultation with indigenous communities (only a single indicator that was downgraded) which were noted to be very important in areas such as British Columbia; reference to social impacts of salmon farming (7b, page 2); and questions on use of dangerous and banned chemicals (what constituted dangerous) in the Core Standard (4.3.7). It was further noted that salmon standard requirements on indigenous rights should be retained.

8. Presentation on Seriola Cobia Standard

8.1 It was reported that the ASC had undertaken its first test of a standard, resulting in a set of proposed changes. The Forage Fish Dependency Ratio (FFDR) issue was considered by the TAG, and it was noted that further progress from the Japanese industry was desirable, e.g. it proved difficult to obtain performance data from Japanese farming operations. There were concerns on the setting of requirements without technical input, and the ASC registered resistance on Hamachi. In the absence of available data, it remained difficult to accommodate the concerns of producers and other parties. For the same reasons, it was also difficult to attain clarity on questions related to the export of Hamachi to Europe. At present, it was understood that Japanese partners may be willing to accept a standard for Hamachi; however there was some resistance for Kampachi. The TAG agreed that further discussion would be held in the light of future development on potential Hamachi and Kampachi certification.

8.2 Other challenges for this standard included the use of antibiotics, e.g. some critical antibiotics (ampicillin) were still in use in Japan. The TAG recognised the crucial importance of ensuring that antibiotics injurious to human health were not acceptable within the ASC programme. The standard indicators focussed on disease transfer, and some overlapped with the FFDR. The Aquaculture Dialogue proposals included provision to halt use of such antibiotics, and the TAG considered its potential implementation. It was recognised that wet feed was used globally, and that a number of operations only used moist feed.

8.3 Broader consideration was given, in the light of increased harmonisation of standards, to the extent to which the ASC should focus on effecting change for the most sustainable species or engage closely with industry to foster gradual improvement across species. In general, it was

considered that a pragmatic approach was to monitor the adoption of this standard over two to three years.

- 8.4 The TAB agreed that this standard, in line with all other ASC standards, would be monitored regarding its effectiveness. If stakeholder feedback identified elements of the standard to be addressed, the ASC would undertake review and revision as appropriate.

Action 11

- Update scientific, Latin names

- 8.5 Consideration was given to water quality monitoring frequency (monthly and if no change over 12 months then annually), which was dependant on previous performance, and intensity of the operation. It was noted that wild fisheries used to supply fingerlings, and that the industry was remarkably stable over the past years. The TAG considered the broader question of whether there were species which were simply not certifiable. The ASC needed to balance the safeguarding of its programme credibility with the imperatives of securing industry engagement, whilst recognising that industry engagement also facilitated improvements. It was acknowledged that the ASC needed to ensure relevant supply of certified product in order to realise the significant potential of the Japanese consumer market; however it was recognised that there was currently insufficient data available to proceed further with the Kampachi FFDR. Overall, the TAG agreed that a pragmatic approach should be adopted in line with that outlined by the Aquaculture Dialogue.

- 8.6 The TAG expressed reservations on adoption of the FFDR for Hamachi, due to lack of sufficient available information. Greater engagement from the Japanese industry was required in order to ensure uptake and thence secure environmental impacts.

Action 12

- Messaging and communication to focus on pragmatic approach which acknowledges the limitations of the wider context and the current standard, and focussed on ensuring a realistic degree of environmental impact.

Decision 2

- The TAB voted to approve the *Seriola Cobia* standard for publication, with three eligible votes in favour to approve the standard. One vote was registered against the motion due to reservations on the FFDR.

9. Presentation on Operational Review

- 9.1 **Salmon.** The TAG noted 22 proposed changes to operation of the Salmon standard. Member comments on the proposed changes would be incorporated prior to publication. It was reported that minor editorial changes were effected to the text (e.g. enhanced focus on promotion of working practice), and that some amendments were made to ensure alignment of GSSI requirements.

- 9.2 Change 7 (criterion 2.4; biodiversity focussed impact assessment) was noted to be a new addition; however it was understood to be acceptable to both NGO and industry partners. For change 8 (criterion 3.1; applicability of indicators if national/local regulations prohibited the handling of wild salmonids), it was noted that challenges arose when wild salmon was at risk. Monitoring of one of the most critical issues/impacts was considered important (e.g. of sea lice migration to the wild). The granting of Variance Requests was therefore acceptable where governments were monitoring and publishing such impacts. Overall, it was intended that monitoring was undertaken (supported by industry data) in order to ensure that informed decisions were made on the acceptable load of sea lice. The TAG agreed the importance of ensuring the monitoring of wild juveniles.

- 9.3 On Change 9 (criterion 3.1; timing of audit period relative to harvest period), the TAG considered the practical, commercial and logistical difficulties faced by farms in complying with audits over the course of the harvest sequence. It was noted that such difficulties primarily concerned species with longer growing cycles (e.g. salmon) and that these issues primarily concerned initial assessments. For example, it was suggested that the processing timelines for samples of peak biomass taken at harvest time, would lead to a delay in the

sale of certified product until the next harvest, and thus undermine commercial incentives for certification or programme engagement by farms. The TAG **agreed** the primary importance of undertaking peak biomass and impact measurements on site, for this species. For other species (e.g. shrimp) the majority of issues were focussed within the harvest period. It was further agreed that the consequences for certification of undertaking peak biomass measurement were not clear, and that it would be difficult to remove peak biomass from the standard. The DNV method for calculation of audit timing and test samples was highlighted.

Action 13

- Above rationale to be developed for public consultation.

Action 14

- The Executive to liaise with Kim-Andre from DNV for assistance in developing the rationale/description of earlier certification.

9.4 On Change 10 (indicator 3.2.2; on risks of establishment of non-native species within the farm's jurisdiction), it was reported that was an established history in Scotland of the release of farmed salmon to the wild authorised by the UK/Scottish government.

Action 15

- TAG to share (7) references focussed on Atlantic salmon.

9.5 For Change 11 (indicators 4.2.1 & 4.2.2; FFDRm for grow-out), it was proposed that, due to the interim feed solution, the FFDR should be lowered to 2.65 in order to retain the amber rating of MBA/SFW.

9.6 On change 12 (indicator 4.3.4; indicator updated to explicitly prohibit both feeding of whole fish and the same species and genus as the species being farmed), the TAG agreed that the language in the proposed requirement was not clear.

Action 16

- The Executive to further review the identified issues.

9.7 Change 13 (new indicator, 4.3.5; an additional indicator to specify expected commitment of feed manufacturer to marine ingredients), was developed following analyses of GSSI benchmarks, and was reported to be less stringent than existing indicators. The TAG noted that this proposed amendment caused potential confusion though its conflict with indicator 4.3.1, resulting in two answers to the same question, and suggested that the revised interim feed solution may work better with the newly proposed indicator. Under the interim feed solution, indicators 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 would be altered.

9.8 Change 14 (indicator 4.4.2 requirement amended from compliance within five years of publication of the salmon standard, to 'by June 2017'). The TAG consider whether the industry standard of the American soy association could be deemed equivalent to the RTRS (round table responsible soy); however it was noted that only a small percentage of soy was RTRD certified, primarily through virtual trading. The TAG **agreed** the proposal as presented, with inclusion of reference to the feed standard. There was no TAG discussion on Change 15 (indicator 4.6.3; on documentation of GHG emissions of the feed used during the previous production cycle).

9.9 For Change 16 (indicator 5.1.1; to ensure the health and welfare of fish, including monitoring of environmental conditions and where key performance indicators are exceeded, put measures in place to address the issue before it becomes a problem for fish health), the TAG noted that it was not clear how "effective corrective action when required" were audited, and suggested that this did not constitute a metric.

9.10 On Change 18 (indicator 8.19; requirement that suitable measures were in place to ensure that hatchery-raised seed were free from relevant/important pathogens before stocking for grow-out), it was agreed that the indicator would be removed as this issue was already addressed within footnote 8.13 of the standard. Additional reference to GSSI should be included within the footnote.

Action 17

- The Executive to remove the indicator and place additional reference to GSSI within the footnote.

9.11 Change 19 (appendix I-1, footnote 183; clarification that peak biomass in cages and the volume of harvested fish could be estimated based on auditable predictions). It was noted that some jurisdictions required peak biomass sampling.

9.12 On Change 20 (criterion 2.1 rationale, appendix I-1; benthic effects, AZE and grab sampling), it was reported that text on the measurement of benthic effects was removed due to lack of clarity for operational implementation by farms. The intent of the proposal was to provide for: confirmation of whether the AZE definition was formed correctly; monitoring of the AZE over time; and then adjustment of the AZE as required. The TAG indicated that the proposals would potentially weaken the standard relative to Norwegian regulations, and suggested that strengthen justification was required in advance of any potential implementation.

Action 18

- Peak biomass to be retained within the public consultation.

9.13 Change 21 (indicator 2.2.4 (N&P sampling), appendix I-5 (sampling methodology) and Appendix VI (reporting)) was reported to be undertaken based on analysis of feedback which indicated that weekly sampling was not necessary; however quarterly sampling was deemed to serve the same purpose. Quarterly measurements were considered to be more statistically rigorous than weekly measurements. It was noted that a brief rationale for this amendment should be made public.

9.14 Change 22 (indicator 2.2.4, sampling timelines for setting water background of the farm). The Executive agreed to determine whether the sampling regime should be undertaken monthly or quarterly (in the first year) for the creation of a baseline against which long term changes could be assessed.

Action 19

- The Executive to determine whether sampling should be undertaken monthly or quarterly.

9.15 **Tilapia.** The TAG received and considered a set of proposed amendments arising from operational review of the tilapia standard. It was noted that the final proposed change (clarification of text on the feed standard for purposes of consistency with other ASC standards) on clause 5.1.3 potentially weakened the standard, and it was recommended that further review be undertaken by the Executive.

9.16 **Pangasius.** The TAG received and considered a set of proposed amendments arising from operational review of the pangasius standard. On change 10 (improvement of the consistency of feed requirements and removal of ambiguity for indicators 5.1.5 and 5.1.6), the TAG sought clarification on circumstances where fishmeal/fishoil originated from sources other than small pelagic fisheries, and whether the provisions included reference to trimming.

Action 20

- The Executive to include a footnote to state explicitly that this provision did not apply to trimmings.

9.17 The TAG noted that for change 11 (indicator 2.2.1; on the removal of ambiguity around prohibitions on sites or the expansion of farms within natural wetland or areas of ecological importance), further clarity was required on the definition of “ecological importance” and on which agencies determined such definitions. The TAG further recommended that references to ‘genus’ be replaced with ‘family’. Finally, the TAG **agreed** the above amendments to standards arising from the operational review, as presented (subject to above amendments).

Action 21

- The Executive to include an additional clarifying footnote, e.g. providing reference to the shrimp standard (2.2.2).

Decision 3

- The TAG agreed the above amendments to standards arising from the operational review, as presented (subject to above amendments).

Day 2, 21 September 2016

10. Presentation on Group and Multi-site certification

10.1 The TAG received a presentation on a project which sought to address the challenges of developing a balanced approach to increasing programme uptake, while maintaining the rigour of the programme. Multi-site and Group Certification was considered an approach to address such challenges, wherein a multi-site approach was adopted primarily for larger companies and a group approach adopted for smaller producers. Whilst there was considerable overlap between the two approaches it was considered appropriate to develop two separate work streams, each focused on its specific target group.

10.2 The TAG reviewed whether the concept to Receiving Water Body (RWB) should be included within the Unit of Certification. It was considered that a failure of the group would arise from the declaration of a major non-conformity at a site or within the management system of the group. The Executive **agreed** to circulate details of comments received by the ASC on single species unit of certification.

Action 22

- The Executive to circulate received comments with the TAG.

10.3 It was reported that group certification was not popular with NGOs, and that socially focussed NGOs saw such certification as a means to include smaller farms. There were perceptions that establishment of group certification was motivated by cost reduction and constituted a potential conflict of interest for the ASC; however it was noted by the TAG that group certification had the potential to exert pressure on farms to effect improvement.

10.4 The TAG recognised the difficulties with defining the RWB where sites were closer to open ocean. Consequently, CABs needed reference parameters and a guidance framework to assist in the definition of RWBs, e.g. through support from oceanographers or drawing upon the AZE definition. It was suggested that an existing RB definition (e.g. the California water plan) could be used as a starting point; however any developed solution would need to be practical and comprehensible for farms. The TAG broadly **agreed** the proposed definition of the RWB (noting that the definition may not give sufficient guidance on size), and recommended amendment of the project title to 'definition of a framework for defining an RWB'.

10.5 The Executive sought approval for proposed guidance. It was noted that there was no requirement that farms needed to be part of a group, and feedback was received that the RWB definition was potentially too broad. The TAG considered whether case histories could be developed, based on examples of what would be considered a RWB in different situations. It was suggested that the RWB could be designated where there were potential impacts of the farming operations included in the group. The TAG agreed the importance of ensuring that farms were assisted in defining the RWB well in advance of achieving certification. Further consideration was given to the need to define the area of potential impact based on water flows, for which the research literature suggested there was considerable variation across farms.

10.6 The Executive outlined a proposed approach for sampling size, based upon calculating the square root of the number of farms within the group (for third party audits only). The approach was complemented by definitions for low, medium and high risks within the risk assessment. NGO feedback was reported that sampling sizes were too low, and it was suggested that the ASC may need to set a minimum number of sites to be audited. However, it was noted that all sites would need to be internally audited, and that the central head office was always audited. The TAG agreed that further statistical analysis on options needed to be undertaken to determine whether the system was robust, and to inform a final decision on the setting of the minimum number of sites.

Action 23

- The Executive to further elaborate the two options for sampling in a simple picture representation to the TAG for decision.

11. Presentation on feed standard development

- 11.1 The TAG received a presentation on the development of the ASC feed standard. No formal decisions were sought from the TAG. The standard would include requirements for feed Mills, marine ingredients, terrestrial plant ingredients and terrestrial animal ingredients. It was anticipated that, ultimately, ASC certified farms would be required to use ASC compliant feed. The presentation also outlined an interim exemption for marine raw ingredients, and it was noted that the Executive continued to work on multispecies guidance. It was further reported that IFFO had entered a process to attain ISEAL membership; however progress to date was limited.
- 11.2 Consideration was given to the validity of estimated future volumes, based on GSSI commitments and on certification plans. It was not anticipated that ASC programme growth would exceed the supply of sustainable wild capture fish, nor was it anticipated that fish oil volumes would increase or that fish oil would be used within salmon production in the future. The TAG noted that further analysis was required. The Executive extended an invitation to members to join feed standard development meetings, and the TAG requested periodic updates from the Executive.

Action 24

- The Executive to provide a specific update on the project (including arrangement of an information update webinar) for the TAG and circulate.
- 11.3 The TAG considered whether GMO feed would be explicitly accommodated within the standard. It was confirmed that, under ISEAL requirements, a consultation period of 30 – 60 days would be required. Under the exception rule, the standard could be adopted, provided that a public consultation was undertaken at the next standard revision. Further consideration was given to whether the requirement could be suspended until the launch of the feed standard, and to the viability of the interim solution. In order to ensure wider programme credibility, funding, and continuous improvement of farms, it was considered not viable to effect any interim lowering of the bar. The alternative option of limiting the number of farms was considered to be broadly preferable.

12. Presentation on Quality Assurance (QA) project

- 12.1 The TAG received an update presentation on progress attained within the Quality Assurance project. It was noted that care needed to be exercised to provide guidance on the standard (not the certification), and to focus on interpretation rather than the assessment. The Executive highlighted an ASI user forum focussed on interpretation, which was used by the MSC to collect interpretations and subsequently effect revisions to the standard at appropriate intervals. The forum was reported to be transparent and available to all CABs.

Action 25

- The Executive to liaise with ASI to determine whether the forum tool could be used in conjunction with the VR system.
- 12.2 The Executive confirmed that the QA team checked: initial reports of all CABs; reports on new species; and reports on new regions. Scrutiny levels were adjusted in light of report findings. ASI undertook corrective action against CABs for those instances where quality levels did not improve to acceptable levels. Finally, it was confirmed that there was a fixed set of L2 QA control points, and the Executive agreed to circulate this information to the TAG.

Action 28

- ASC to share L2 QA control points with TAG members.

13. Presentation on finfish standard

- 13.1 The TAG received an update presentation on a project which aimed to explore approaches to broaden the scope of the ASC programme to include additional finfish species. It was confirmed that pilot studies would be undertaken by qualified ASC staff and that costs would thus be reasonable for participating farms. The TAG considered the current status of the grouper snapper barramundi dialogue (GSB), which was confirmed to be an ISEAL compliant process.
- 13.2 Reservations were expressed on the development of a minimalist standard for seriola and cobia. It was considered preferable to develop a more robust standard, which addressed measurable impacts, and which could be used for other marine fish, e.g. sea bass. It was suggested that such an approach could be used for the GSB standard, net-pen and land-based production, and that the trout standard could be used as a basis for development of the sturgeon standard.
- 13.3 The Executive confirmed that the 2020 Olympics presented a potential opportunity for the Bluefin tuna standard; however this would be confined to closed-cycle supplied fry, and it was noted that there were potential issues with ranching. Overall, it was currently undecided whether the ASC would seek to engage the tuna standard with this Olympics.

14. Presentation on Seaweed

- 14.1 The TAG received an update presentation on the development of the ASC-MSC Seaweed standard. Consideration was given to the definition of quantitative metrics for farm performance and their consistency with existing descriptions within the scoring guidelines. It was **agreed** that indicator 2.3 (population recovery) should be removed and placed as an overarching theme at the start of the standard description. The TAG further suggested the inclusion of additional metrics, and agreed that P3 be clarified (through the removal of references to 'national') to ensure its applicability only to farms.

Action 27

- Reference to 'national' to be removed from P3 to ensure applicability onto to farms.

- 14.2 The TAG noted that P3 (on effective management for farms) was more difficult to apply to farms than fisheries, and sought clarification on whether single farms in RWB should be involved in the national farm management plan.

Action 28

- The Executive to review the applicability of indicators for single farms and develop guidance as to when those indicators (compatible to area based management) applied to farms.

- 14.3 Concerns were highlighted on the non-metric nature of the requirements, which were generally focussed on processes, contrary to the ASC's general intent. Additional consideration was given to potential misuse or abuse of the precautionary approach in P3. It was agreed that the approach would be removed as an indicator, and placed within the preamble.
- 14.4 On 3.4, it was clarified that the requirement was intended to address issues not covered elsewhere, and it was noted that the requirement was also present in the FAO code (6.5). The TAG recommended that the text should be removed and placed within the guidance. The TAG further reviewed Principles 4 and 5, and noted technological developments which had longer-term potential to assist with social requirements. Finally, it was noted that seaweed business models were ongoing and remained subject to finalisation.

15. Presentation on Monitoring and Evaluation

- 15.1 The TAG received an update presentation on the development of the ASC Monitoring and Evaluation workstream. The Executive confirmed the definition of 'impacts' (rather than reference to 'effectiveness') arose in order to attain consistency with the ISEAL code and World Bank terminology.

- 15.2 Consideration was given to the status of ASC-WWF discussions. A range of factors (qualitative and quantitative) were being considered within discussions on cost-benefit analysis, and it was noted that issues with securing data from farms posed a significant challenge for progression of the studies. It was recognised to be important to secure professional support for the conduct of a survey. The scope of the work was primarily focussed on salmon and shrimp. The Executive also confirmed that it had engaged in discussions with other parties (including IDH) on the conduct of impact assessments; however there were few existing satisfactory assessments for the ASC to draw upon.
- 15.3 The determination of main indicators was considered by the TAG. The Executive confirmed that the ASC would proceed with its own list of indicators. Over the longer-term, it was anticipated that audit/farm data would automatically be drawn from audits to support tracking and trend analysis. The TAG **agreed** the importance of ensuring the monitoring of high-level metrics, and suggested that information on the Monitoring and Evaluation workstream should be published more widely (beyond the ASC website) to facilitate the ASC's engagement with new partners.

16. Presentation on Parasiticide Treatment Index

- 16.1 The TAG received an information update presentation on work undertaken on the development of the Parasiticide Treatment Index (PTI). It was reported that the Technical Working Group on sea lice first met in May 2016, and would hold its second meeting at a conference on sea lice to be held in Ireland in September 2016. It was anticipated that defined proposals would be submitted to the TAG following the September meetings. Clarification was sought on the justification for considering this issue, as it represented a potential departure from the principle of global application, which could impact upon ASC credibility. It was agreed that the working group would further consider this question.

Action 29

- Technical Working Group to consider rationale and impact of this work.

- 16.2 It was reported that this work was of interest to a range of different groups, and consideration was given to the question of a single applicable reference point across locations. Ecosystems in Chile, the US west coast, and the east coast of Canada had differing levels of presence or absence of wild salmonids, and other environmental circumstances. Whilst it was recognised that different systems may require locally appropriate numbers, there were concerns that the adoption of a regional approach would undermine the intent of the ASC's global standard. It was noted that these issues were transparently open throughout the public consultation, and that different perspectives were accommodated for within the dialogue.

- 16.3 The TAG noted the concerns of some stakeholders where VRs were approved while these issues were under discussion by the TWG. Consideration was given as to whether a more cautious approach was required, e.g. the ASC could decide not to approve VRs in such cases or to pause certification/standard development until full solutions were developed. However, it was recognised that farms had undertaken significant investments to date and should not be unduly disadvantaged by the length of the development process. Overall, the TAG agreed that such VRs could be considered appropriate where CABs presented valid cases within assessment reports, open to challenge through public consultation. Otherwise, the ASC faced the risk of creating sub-standards for regions.

Action 30

- The Executive to provide clarification to the TAG regarding the email exchange on this VR, including confirmation of the timing sequence of timing.

Action 31

- The Executive to pass to the working group the TAGs comments on the PTI text.

- 16.4 Consideration was given to three discussion points raised by a TAG member not in attendance at the meeting:
- i. When do a large number of minor nonconformities constitute sufficient grounds not to issue a positive certification decision? It was reported that the ASC planned to review whether to set a maximum number of minor nonconformities; however, auditors could effect

- improvement by identifying root causes and only raising a nonconformity against these (rather than one for every compliance point).
- ii. Are observations permissible and could these be changed to areas for improvement? It was confirmed that this was the case, provided that such observations did not lead to the provision of consultancy advice.
 - iii. Timing of quality review; it was suggested that a more timely review from the QA group was desirable.
- 16.5 No other business was raised and the Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

SUMMARY

#	Actions	By
Action 1	TAG members to get back to ASC on competencies, TAG members asked to complete 10 credits to distribute across the competencies. This will be consistent with the Board. ASC interpreted previous one, TAG members to check through and get back to ASC with any changes	TAG members
Action 2	TAG members to propose other potential TAG members to ASC and to state their commitment to staying for another 1.5 years. This will be challenging and maybe need a strategy for this. Suggestion that feed project is a potential source of members. DEADLINE November 15 th	TAG members
Action 3	ASC to send out note on (Rotation scheme) to rest of TAG members	ASC
Action 4	Refer to other document of actions (Remaining open items from the existing action list)	all
Action 5	ASC to provide more guidance to auditors on metric reporting	ASC
Action 6	<i>(On harmonisation review)</i> Suggestion for clarification about why and how peak biomass can be missed. Issues like a storm are ok, but just for convenience is not sufficient.	ASC
Action 7	ASC need to investigate what is happening, are treatments being captured at these sites? Are these sites being measured for N & P?	ASC
Action 8	ASC need to ensure that environmental criteria are being passed and that minors are not being raised for majors. Maybe a limit can be put on the number of minors?	ASC
Action 9	Look into VRs granted on sea lice, deferring to previous VRs and stakeholders are not able to comment on VRs.	
Decision 1	Committee still reviews each VR and the overlapping ones just make the review of the VRs faster.	VR Committee
Action 10	<i>(On harmonisation - simplifying the indicators.)</i> TAG propose changes but the actual changes will need expert opinion.	TAG
Action 11	On <i>Seriola/cobia</i> standard. Update scientific, Latin names	ASC

Action 12	Use language to bring the message home (the world is not perfect, the standard is also not perfect but best can be done now to create some impacts instead of no impacts at all)	ASC
Decision 2	Vote to approve Seriola Cobia standard for publication: 3 eligible votes in favour to approve the standard. One vote against based on reservation on FFDR. Motion passed	TAG
Action 13	<i>(On change # 9 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> Explanation to be spelt out in rationale for public consultation, it is not visible to the public.	ASC
Action 14	Reach out to Kim-Andre from DNV for spelling out this rationale/description of earlier certification.	ASC
Action 15	<i>(On change # 10 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> TAG to share (7) references focused on Atlantic salmon	TAG
Action 16	<i>(On change # 12 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> Need to revisit this issue.	ASC
Action 17	<i>(On change # 18 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> Put the GSSI text in the footnote, take out this indicator.	ASC
Action 18	<i>(On change # 20 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> Peak biomass can still be included in public consultation	ASC
Action 19	<i>(On change # 22 in Operational review for Salmon)</i> ASC to check if it is monthly or quarterly.	ASC
Action 20	<i>(On change # 10 in Operational review for Pangasius)</i> Simpler to add a footnote saying that this provision does not apply to trimmings	ASC
Action 21	<i>(On change # 11 in Operational review for Pangasius)</i> Put a footnote referring to something like the shrimp standard (2.2.2)	ASC
Decision 3	Motion to accept operational review standards having taken into account TAG comments made during the session. Motion made. Seconded. All 4 in favour. Motion passed.	TAG
Action 22	ASC to share with the TAG the list of detailed comments on MS and Group certification. For example auditors, they have a conflict if they are auditing less. This is happening already and whatever the outcome	ASC
Action 23	ASC to provide the two options for sampling in a simple picture representation to the TAG for decision	ASC

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Action 24	ASC to provide a specific update on the Feed project for the TAG and circulate. Will also host a webinar.	ASC
Action 25	ASC to follow the ASI forum tool up with ASI to see if this is possible to use in conjunction with the VR system	ASC
Action 26	ASC to share L2 QA control points with the TAG members.	ASC
Action 27	P3 seaweed standard can take out national, make sure applies to farms only	ASC
Action 28	Look at applicability of those indicators (P3 Seaweed) for single farms and set out guidance as to when those indicators (compatible to area based management) apply to farms (number of farms, e.g.)	ASC
Action 29	Question (on justification for regional PTI) will be passed on to the TWG.	ASC
Action 30	ASC to get back to TAG regarding email exchange on this VR, what was the sequence of timing?	ASC
Action 31	ASC to pass on TAGs comments/guidance on PTI wording to the sealice group	ASC

[End]