

# Terms of Reference (ToR) *for developing* **ASC Responsible Aquaculture Feed Standard**

This document is publicly available on the ASC website.  
Comments on this Terms of Reference are welcome and appreciated. Form for submitting comments on this ToR is in the annex (at the end of this document).

#### Document history

Version	Date	Description of amendment	Affected section/ page
1.0	9 April 2015	V1.0	-
1.1	15 December 2015	Updated timelines	Section 5 on pp. 10- 11

## 1. Background information

### ASC vision and mission

The vision of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is a world where aquaculture plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for mankind whilst minimizing negative impacts on the environment. The goal of the ASC is to transform aquaculture towards an environmentally and socially responsible food source. ASC aims to achieve this by promoting standards for best environmental and social aquaculture performance and rewarding responsible farming practices through standard setting and certification.

### Introduction

Seafood accounts for nearly 20% of the global intake of animal protein. By volume, close to half of the seafood we eat is farmed, while the remainder comes from the wild. Aquaculture's contribution is expected to continue to rise while the wild-caught supply is expected to remain stable, as fisheries have reached their maximum production limits.

As with any rapidly growing industry, there are global concerns regarding aquaculture production. Specifically, they include the possible impacts commonly associated with aquaculture such as water pollution, the enhancement and spread of disease, escapes outcompeting native species, habitat degradation, and social impacts on local communities.

Within the aquaculture industry, some operators are better than others at mitigating these negative environmental and social impacts. It is important that we face the challenge of identifying the key areas where production can be improved. These changes could reduce or, ultimately, eliminate negative impacts. For such an undertaking to be successful it is important to develop market mechanisms to reward and help finance the improvements.

One solution is the creation of a set of requirements (i.e. a standard) for responsible aquaculture products that reward best practices. Certification requirements for social and environmental responsibility, when they are adopted and compliance is verified appropriately, can help reassure retailers and consumers that the impacts related to aquaculture are minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels.

Formulated feeds are an important component of the farming process for a number of key aquaculture species. Interest in the responsible use of aquafeeds is broader than managing the impacts of feed use in the farming system alone (e.g. controlling pollution from excessive use) and extends to questions about the environmental and social impact created by the production systems used to produce the various ingredients.

A wide variety of plant, animal and other Ingredients are currently used in formulated feeds with the dominant categories being various plant derived products (e.g. soy, wheat, rice, corn), fishmeal and oil and meat by-products. In addition to these main ingredient categories there are smaller quantities of additives used such as additional nutrients, pharmaceuticals and probiotics, amongst others.

The raw material production creates both environmental and social issues, at both the raw material production and processing points of the supply chain. These can include habitat loss,

overharvesting, loss of threatened species, pollution and exploitation of workers, amongst others.

### **About this document**

This document provides an overview of and guidance for both the ASC and stakeholders to review and possibly revise the pangasius, salmon and tilapia standards. It explains:

- (i) why this review is needed (sections 1&2),
- (ii) the objectives in reviewing these standards (section 3),
- (iii) scope of the review (section 4),
- (iv) stakeholder groups that are affected by this review and how to reach out to them in order to ensure a credible review/revision process (section 5),
- (v) detailed steps of the process (section 7),
- (vi) decision making procedure (section 8) as well as
- (vii) potential risks of the outcome of the review/revision together with measures to deal with those risks (9).

In normal circumstances, the TORs for the initial development of the standards would be updated. However, this document is developed anew since the standards were not originally created by the ASC but through the 'Aquaculture Dialogues', a multi-stakeholder process facilitated by WWF. However, this document is closely linked with the TOR for the development of a Core standard.

This TOR is open for a one-month public comment period. Comments on this TOR should be submitted in the form provided in the Annex and sent to the ASC contact person indicated on the form. On conclusion of this period the document will guide the operational steps of this process and any changes will be documented in the 'history table' on page 1).

## **2. Justification of need for the standard**

There is also growing NGO and public body awareness of the problems involving the sourcing of feed ingredients and their environmental impact. Increasingly questions are being asked of feed manufacturers, retailers and food service companies about their commitment to reducing the environmental impact of their sourcing policies for feed and farmed fish. While important developments have been made with the transparency of this sourcing, a consistent approach is difficult to identify given the inconsistencies of the 'asks' contained in certification programs.

These inconsistencies make it very difficult to develop environmentally friendly feeds in a cost efficient way that can be used by farmers universally. But, perhaps more significantly, these inconsistencies also dilute the supply chain pressure and resulting market incentives that can and should stimulate producers to reduce the potentially damaging environmental impact of the feed they make. A consistent 'ask' to feed ingredient suppliers from the aquaculture industry is needed. It would have the added value of improving the prospects considerably for MSC (and other wild capture certification schemes) certifying feed fisheries; an area in which there has been limited progress to date.

This project will develop the means to make this consistent 'ask' through the production of a global standard that addresses the sourcing, development and distribution of feed for the aquaculture industry.

### 3. Objectives of the standard

The purpose of the ASC Responsible Feed Standard is to provide a means to significantly reduce the environmental and social impacts created by the production of ingredients used for aquaculture feed.

Furthermore, the standard also aims to provide an incentive and workable goals for ingredient producers that want to improve their production processes.

#### **Scope**

##### Geographic scope to which the Standard applies

The ASC Responsible Feed Standard will apply to all locations and scales of aquaculture feed manufacturing plants globally, although it is most likely that the Standard will initially be of interest to those who produce commercial extruded diets destined for ASC certified aquaculture farms.

##### Unit of certification to which the Standard applies

The unit of certification for the ASC Responsible Feed Standard is the feed mill.

##### Scope of ingredients – overview

The scope of the ingredients will be defined further in the standard.

#### **Deliverables**

The project will have the following deliverables:

1. A single ASC Responsible Feed Standard
2. A single ASC Audit Manual for the Responsible Feed Standard
3. Auditor training for auditors accredited to certify feed mills against the ASC Responsible Feed Standard.

#### 4. Stakeholder mapping

This Responsible Feed Standard development process will reach out to the below identified stakeholder groups:

- Feed mills producing aquaculture feed
- Aquaculture farmers
- Ingredient supplying industry to feed mill
- Retail industry
- Civil society organisations with focus on both major areas of the standards – environmental and social
- Scientists
- Conformity assessment bodies (CABs), especially those having audited and certified the farms.

The table below outlines major stakeholder groups, their respective relevance and interest, their key issues, and how the ASC is going to engage with them.

The ASC will also monitor participation of stakeholders over the life cycle of the Responsible Feed Standard Setting Process to strive for balanced and effective stakeholder participation.

Main stakeholder groups	Relevance (why they should participate in the process)	Interest in the process and standards	Outreach strategies for participation in revision	Communication means	Participation goal
<b>Feed Mills</b>	Together with farms, potentially most directly affected group. In order for the feed mill standard to be effective, requirements in these must be possible in practice. Feed mills can provide these practical insights.	Applicability and achievability of the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- direct contact with feed companies</li> <li>- where necessary, translation of certain process documents (e.g. this TOR, draft standards, synopsis, final standards)</li> <li>- local/regional workshops, where and when necessary</li> <li>- participation in pilot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In person (face-to-face, telephone, workshops)</li> <li>- E-mail newsletter (if possible)</li> <li>- Website (if possible)</li> <li>- Webinars (if possible)</li> <li>- Through trade associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feed company engagement both during the standard development process and after the release of v1.0</li> <li>- Certified feed mills in all active countries and regions</li> </ul>
<b>Aquaculture farms</b>	Together with feed mills, potentially most directly affected group. In order for farms to be certified, an effective feed standard must be place.	Applicability and achievability of the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- direct contact with farms in the system</li> <li>- where necessary, translation of certain process documents (e.g. this TOR, draft standards, synopsis, final standards)</li> <li>- via Conformity assessment bodies (CABs)</li> <li>- local/regional workshops, where and when necessary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter (if possible)</li> <li>- Website (if possible)</li> <li>- Webinars (if possible)</li> <li>- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)</li> <li>- Through trade associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both audited (certified and in assessment) and non-audited farms in all three species</li> <li>- Farms in all active countries and regions</li> </ul>
<b>Ingredient supplying industry to feed mills</b>	Potentially directly affected group. Some of the standard requirements will put criteria for the ingredient supplying industry.	Applicability and achievability of the standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- where necessary, translation of certain process documents (e.g. this TOR, draft standards, synopsis, final standards)</li> <li>- via social ngo's where possible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter (if possible)</li> <li>- Website (if possible)</li> <li>- Webinars (if possible)</li> <li>- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)</li> <li>- Through (local) social /</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased uptake of the criteria and the improve performance on environmental and social issues that are defined in the</li> </ul>

Main stakeholder groups	Relevance (why they should participate in the process)	Interest in the process and standards	Outreach strategies for participation in revision	Communication means	Participation goal
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local/regional workshops, where and when necessary</li> <li>- participation in pilot</li> </ul>	environmental ngo's	standard
<b>Retail</b>	Continuous supply at reasonable price. Credible, attainable standards.	Price and availability of products is important. Retail likes to make sure relevant issues will be covered by the ASC certification program while not raising costs of implementing changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct contact with these companies (e.g. through ASC Outreach colleagues)</li> <li>- Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter</li> <li>- website</li> <li>- webinars</li> <li>- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)</li> <li>- Trade press</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Companies trading any of the three species</li> <li>- Companies in all countries and regions involved in producing or buying ASC-</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental NGO's</b>	The Responsible Feed Standard is aimed at reducing the environmental impact of production of the main ingredients in aquafeed.	The standard must contribute to addressing key environmental concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct contact with these organisations</li> <li>- Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter</li> <li>- website</li> <li>- webinars</li> <li>- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between 1 to 5 engo's (who could be regarded as representatives of engo's at large. This should include local organisations to the extent reasonably possible) actively participating</li> <li>- A wider group to provide input during public consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Social NGO's</b>	The Responsible Feed Standard is aimed at reducing the social	The standard must contribute to addressing key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Direct contact with these organisations</li> <li>- Face-to-face meetings at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter</li> <li>- website</li> <li>- webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Between 1 to 5 sngo's (who could be regarded as</li> </ul>

Main stakeholder groups	Relevance (why they should participate in the process)	Interest in the process and standards	Outreach strategies for participation in revision	Communication means	Participation goal
	impact of production of the main ingredients in aquafeed.	environmental concerns.	or around conferences/trade fairs	- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)	representatives of sngo's at large. This should include local organisations to the extent reasonably possible) actively participating - A wider group to provide input during public consultation
<b>Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)</b>	Standards' content directly relates to CABs' internal processes/documents.	CABs need to be able to build a viable business model based on credible assessments of the standards	- Direct contact with these organisations - Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs	- E-mail newsletter - website - webinars - In person (e.g. workshops)	- 1 or 2 CABs (who could be regarded as representatives of CABs at large) actively participating - A wider group to provide input during rounds of public consultation
<b>Scientists / Academics</b>	ASC aims to bring together today's state of the art in aquaculture feed and sound scientific evidence.	Providing scientific data where decided needed.	- direct contact with scientists - where necessary, organise discussions with them - Where necessary, have them do specific research on identified topics.	- E-mail newsletter - website - webinars - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)	- Research potentially related to farms across all active countries and regions
<b>Governments (incl. UN)</b>	Cross check potential legal implications of proposed changes.	For governments it is important to be assured that standards are not	- direct contact with government officials (or through consultants) - where necessary, organise	- E-mail newsletter - website - webinars - In person to the extent	- related to farms across all active countries and regions related to



Main stakeholder groups	Relevance (why they should participate in the process)	Interest in the process and standards	Outreach strategies for participation in revision	Communication means	Participation goal
		imposing trade barriers.	<p>discussions with government officials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Where necessary, have them advise on solutions for identified legal topics.</li> </ul>	needed (e.g. workshops)	the three species
<p><b>Other aquaculture standards/schemes (e.g. GlobalG.A.P., BAP)</b></p>	<p>In order to facilitate the uptake of sustainability initiatives at large, it is important for schemes like the ASC and others, to be as aligned as possible. Hence the MoU between the ASC, GG and BAP.</p>	<p>To provide input into the process on future plans, which may not yet be available in the public domain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Since the ASC has a MoU in place with BAP and GG, there is regular contact between the 3 organisations, as well as 1:1 with either of those.</li> <li>- Like in other projects (e.g. ASC Feed Standard development), we will invite both organisations as observers to relevant meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E-mail newsletter</li> <li>- website</li> <li>- webinars</li> <li>- In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)</li> <li>- As observers in relevant meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- related to all species the ASC is applicable to and to farms across all active countries and regions</li> </ul>

## 5. Process of standard development

The table below lists the steps for the standard setting process.

Activity	Deadline	Output	By:
Publish first TOR	Q1 2013	TOR	ASC Secretariat
Establish Steering Committee	End October 2013	Operational Steering Committee	ASC Secretariat
Call for TWG members	Q1 and Q2 2014	Reaching out to stakeholders for TWG participants	ASC Secretariat
Briefing of TWG participants	4 & 5 September 2014	Briefing event	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee
Endorse the draft for public consultation	End April 2015	Draft for consultation	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee
Public Consultation – 1 <sup>st</sup> draft revision	End June 2015 – beginning September 2015	Initial draft published on ASC website  Announcement sent to relevant stakeholders (direct and via publications in relevant media)  Comments from external stakeholders	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee & stakeholders
Process comments from external stakeholders into 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft version + start preparation for pilot testing (developing draft audit manual and find partners)	October 2015 – April 2016	Summary of comments + reaction to it and list of anonymous organization-based comments published on website	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee
Public Consultation – 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft version + pilot testing	May 2016 – June 2016	Second draft published on ASC website  Announcement sent to relevant stakeholders (direct and via publications in relevant media)  Comments from external stakeholders	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee & stakeholders
Processing feedback 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft version	July 2016	Summary of comments + reaction to it and list of anonymous organization-based comments published on website	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee

Activity	Deadline	Output	By:
Processing feedback into final version	July 2016 – October 2016	Final version for approval	ASC Secretariat & Steering Committee
Approve the final draft by TAG + SB	November 2016	TAG approved final version	TAG and ASC Board
Adjust Audit Manuals	TBD		ASC Secretariat
Developing Training materials	TBD		ASC Secretariat
(re)training internal staff	TBD	Training sessions executed	ASC Secretariat
(re)training trainers	TBD	Training sessions executed	ASC Secretariat
(re)training auditors (including ASI staff)	TBD	Training sessions executed	ASC Secretariat
Transition requirements (for CABs, for farms)	TBD	Requirements published on ASC website.  Announcement sent to relevant stakeholders (direct and via publications in relevant media)	ASC Secretariat

## 6. Decision making procedure

A Steering Committee (SC) will be formed according to the decision of the ASC's Supervisory Board (SB). The ASC secretariat will coordinate the project throughout.

### Steering Committee responsibility

The TWG has the task to:

- Provide overall management oversight of the Feed Project;
- Report to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of ASC;
- Draw membership for the Technical Working Group from a balanced multi-stakeholder pool;
- Supervise pilot-audit period of the Feed Standard and the Audit Manual.

### Steering Committee membership:

Members of this Steering Committee are expected to be available and willing to share relevant knowledge and expertise on related feed aquaculture issues, and actively participate in contributing solutions. Members must demonstrate affinity with the ASC's objectives.

The membership of the Steering Committee must reflect a balanced representation of areas of relevant expertise and background.

The Steering Committee has the prior approval in writing of the ASC Supervisory Board in accordance with the ASC Deed. The Steering Committee will select from among its members a Chair who will be main point of contact with the Executive and the ASC Technical Advisory Group.

### Reporting requirements

- The Chair shall ensure minutes of all proceedings at meetings of the Steering Committee are kept, including the names of those members of the Steering Committee present at each such meeting, and all views, advice, recommendations and opinions of the Steering Committee.

- Chatham House Rules will be applied for all public documents related to this project.

### **Decision-making procedure**

The Steering Committee strives for consensus. If SC is unable to reach consensus, it will apply the principle of 'majority voting' and will report the different options, the number of votes for each option and a summary of each of the points of view. SC will share its advice with the TAG. TAG will advise ASC's Supervisory Board (SB) for the SB to take a final decision.

### **Expenses**

Upon request and at the explicit discretion of the Secretariat, members of the Working Group may be paid all reasonable travelling, hotel and other expenses properly incurred by them in connection with their attendance at meetings of the Working Group or otherwise in connection with the discharge of their duties.

### **Meetings**

The ASC strives to work in a cost and time efficient manner and has a strong preference to work primarily via teleconference and e-mail. If attendants come from different time zones the participants will determine meeting times in such a way that all participants can attend at convenient times. In person meetings are part of this project.

## **7. Assessment of risks**

At this very moment the ASC can only identify generic risks. These risks will be further elaborated once it becomes clearer regarding the direction of the standard development. This TOR will again be updated accordingly.

### **Identified risk No 1**

Resistance by feed mills to undergo audit assessment and accomplish certification.

### **Strategies for managing risk No 1:**

In order to avoid risk No 1, the ASC engages various stakeholders in its standard setting, review and revision processes to make sure that the standards are applicable and accessible.

The ASC is also willing to offer training for feed mills to raise their awareness of sustainable and responsible farming and reduce impacts of the sector as a whole, providing that funds are available to implement this strategy.

## **8. Contact information**

Project direction:	ASC Foundation
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