

# Terms of Reference (ToR)

## *for*

### Participation in ASC Group Certification Pilot Audits<sup>1</sup>

This document is publicly available on the ASC website.

#### Document history

Version	Date	Description of amendment	Affected section/ page
1.0	November 2015	New TOR for pilot audits	n/a

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<sup>1</sup> The registration form is at the end of this document

## 1. Introduction

Group certification will enable ASC to operate as an inclusive programme, ensuring that certification is attainable for a broad range of producers, ranging from large to small-scale operations to become certified. As set out in the separate terms of reference (ToR), requirements for group management and certification need to be developed in addition to the current ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR).

Those requirements are being developed and the first draft will be put out for public consultation. As part of the public consultation process, pilot audits are an invaluable source of input to be received directly from the field, by the groups and auditors field-testing the draft requirements.

This paper sets clear terms for the pilots and is used to invite aquaculture farmer groups as well as ASC accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs), to take this unique opportunity to have your say in shaping the methodology. At the same time, you can prepare yourselves for the very first group certification audits when the methodology is finalized and officially launched.

## 2. Objectives of the pilot audits

The pilot audits have multiple practical objectives that are:

- to test applicability of the draft requirements set out in the Group Certification Methodology on both levels, group of farmers as well as the CABs (e.g. given the objectives of group certification in general, do the requirements make sense and would lead to achieving those objectives?)
- to check for gaps between the draft requirements and realities (how practical and demanding the requirements are)
- to test auditability of the draft requirements (if evidence can be obtained for the set requirements)
- to check for the amount of time needed to audit against the draft group requirements.

## 3. Pilot participants

To achieve those objectives, the ASC invites the most important actors in group certification to join the pilots. Those are aquaculture farmer groups and CABs being accredited for ASC farm certification to take part in the pilot audits.

Farmer groups can be those that are already organized in cooperatives or associations or the like, but can also be those that are not yet officially formed but having an intention to do so to collectively get certified at some point in time.

### 3.1 Benefits of joining the pilots

#### 3.1.1 For farmer groups

- Be the first ones to be familiarized with the methodology on the practical level
- Have a say in making the methodology work realistically based on their groups set-up

- Understand where their groups are vis-à-vis the draft requirements (gap analysis) with support of an external CAB

### **3.1.2 For CABs**

- Be the first ones among the accredited CABs to be familiarized with the methodology
- Early adaptation of their internal system for accreditation for group certification
- Have a say in improving the draft requirements and make them workable from the certification point of view

## **3.2 Terms for participants**

### **3.2.1 Farmer groups**

- a. Group size (number of farms in a group):
  - Upper limit: No
  - Lower limit: minimum 05 farms in a group
- b. Size of farms in the group: no limitation
- c. Species: any species that are currently in the ASC scope of certification (7) with priority set for **shrimp, trout, tilapia, bivalves**
- d. Location: in both developed and developing countries
- e. Contact person: the group must have one contact point for communication (in English) and arrangement with the ASC and the CAB
- f. Choose a CAB from the list to be provided by the ASC and agree with it on date, time and other terms for the pilot audit
- g. Certificate: **No** certificate is expected
- h. Contribute to the total cost of the pilot audit that the group is going to undertake (in-kind in terms of time to be spent for preparation for the pilot audit, receiving the audit and providing feedback to the ASC)
- i. Provide information/evidence during the pilot
- j. Provide feedback to the project using the feedback form provided by the ASC
- k. Communication with ASC is in English via [pilots@asc-aqua.org](mailto:pilots@asc-aqua.org).

### **3.2.2 CABs**

- a. Any CAB accredited for ASC farm certification
- b. Appoint 1-2 auditors to the pilot(s), who have experience in group certification for other schemes (MSC group certification, GlobalG.A.P., BAP pilots, organic, etc.). Auditor(s) with experience in group certification in other commodities are accepted provided there must be an audit team member with aquaculture experience
- c. Agree with the group(s) on date, time and other arrangements that are not covered in this TOR for the audit
- d. Send audit quotation(s) to the ASC for the group(s) that they are selected for the pilot(s)
- e. Prepare and implement the pilot audit plan
- f. Contribute (in-kind) to the total cost of the pilot audit that the CAB is going to carry out
- g. Timely inform the ASC of the progress of the pilot (agreement with the group(s), time/date, etc.)
- h. Write pilot audit report using the report template provided by the ASC
- i. Provide feedback to the project using the feedback form provided by the ASC

- j. **Not** to issue an ASC certificate as the result of the pilot audit
- k. Not to disclose any information obtained during the pilot audit to other parties rather than the group itself and the ASC.
- l. Communication with ASC is in English via [pilots@asc-aqua.org](mailto:pilots@asc-aqua.org).

### 3.2.3 ASC

The ASC coordinates the group certification project that includes these pilot audits. With regard to the pilots, the coordination entails:

- a. Provide all necessary background information and documents to relevant parties
- b. Support the Technical Working Group (TWG) to screen and select pilot applicants
- c. Seek and coordinate funding for the pilots to the extent possible
- d. Provide clarifications to participating parties as requested.

### 3.2.4 ASI

It is important for ASI as the appointed accreditation body to observe a pilot audit and provide information/answer questions related to general accreditation process, as well as input for improving the draft requirements.

ASI's participation in the pilot audit is self-funded.

### 3.3 Selection criteria

- Applications will be processed on a first come, first served basis
- Total number of pilot audits: **05**  
Priority will be given to another species in case more than one application are received for the same species.

## 4. Procedure

#	Who	Detail	Tentative timeline
4.1	Interested parties (Farmer groups, CABs)	Send application to ASC	01.01.2016 – 15.02.2016
4.2	TWG/ASC	Select groups and CABs and transparently communicate the selection decision and justification to all applicants	Towards end of Feb. 2016
4.3	ASC	Share the list of selected farmer groups with the selected CABs and the other way round	End Feb. 2016
4.4	Selected CABs	Update ASC on planned pilot audits	First half of Mar. 2016

4.5	ASC	Send relevant documents to selected groups and CABs (draft requirements, report template, feedback forms, etc.)	Mid Mar. 2016
4.6	Groups, CABs	Pilot audits take place	Mar – Apr 2016
4.7	Groups	Send feedback to ASC	2 weeks after the last day of the pilot
4.8	CABs	Send pilot audit report and feedback to ASC	Within 4 weeks after the last day of the pilot
4.9	ASC	Publish feedback as part of public consultation*	June 2016

\* Pilot audits reports will not be published but shared with the TWG for further consideration for the final version of the Group Certification methodology.

## 5. Confidentiality

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

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

Documents will be electronically stored at the servers of ASC.

### Contact information

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Registration form for participation in the pilot audits is attached.

**REGISTRATION FOR GROUP CERTIFICATION PILOT AUDIT**  
(Please fill in this form and send to ASC at: [pilots@asc-aqua.org](mailto:pilots@asc-aqua.org))

**Detail of Participating Partners**

<b>Detail</b>	<b>Farmer group</b>	<b>CAB</b>
Name	<i>For organised groups: enter name</i>  <i>For unorganised groups: leave this field blank</i>	
Contact person (name/function)		
Phone		
Mobile		
Email		
Address	<i>Of the group management</i>	
Species applied for the pilot		N/A
Number of farms (will be) in the group		N/A
Area(s) where the farms are located		N/A
Production systems		N/A
Other certification(s) obtained (if any)		N/A
Species accredited for certification	N/A	
Number and name of auditors for the pilot(s)	N/A	<i>Specify who has what experience in aquaculture and group certification</i>

Date (DD/MM/YYYY) : ..... / ..... / 2015

Signature : .....

Name : Mr / Mrs .....