



RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS (RAS) MODULE

Consultation Summary

August 2020



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Project Objective

Certification of aquatic products from open and semi-closed systems like sea-cages, ponds or flow-through systems was the initial focus of the ASC standards. In recent years the number of recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) has significantly increased. The ASC has developed a RAS module to adapt the ASC standards to ensure that the main impacts from RAS are assessed. This module will be operational until the aligned ASC Farm Standard, which will include RAS specific indicators, becomes effective.

Purpose of consultation

The purpose of this consultation is to ensure that the RAS module is being drafted having considered the views of a representative group of stakeholders, and to maintain transparency and raise awareness of the developments within the ASC programme.

Proposal

The RAS module summarises the key environmental and social impacts associated with RAS and addresses these impacts using existing indicators from the ASC's species-specific standards. This ensures auditability. To become certified, RAS farms will need to comply to the relevant species-specific standards and the additional list of indicators covered in the RAS module. These indicators cover:

- Water resource use,
- Water discharge,
- Waste disposal,
- Energy use.

Furthermore, requirements for the recording of species-specific data in regard to fish welfare are also proposed. The collection of this data will be used in the Alignment Project and to help better inform decisions.

Consultation Questions

All stakeholders, especially RAS farmers, scientists, and Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) are encouraged to provide feedback to the proposed RAS module. Auditability and applicability are the main areas of concern. Stakeholders are also invited to suggest any additional considerations which should be included in RAS assessments.

Next steps

The RAS module is being considered as an interim solution until the ASC Farm Standard becomes effective. It will thus be operational as soon as possible (January 2021).

All comments received during this public consultation will be published online and considered in the development of the final module by ASC.