

ASC Farm Standard (Principle 2) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

March 8 – May 7, 2021 Public Consultation



ASC Farm Standard

March 2021



Contact Information:
Aquaculture Stewardship Council
Daalseplein 101, 3511 SX Utrecht
The Netherlands

+31 30 239 31 10

www.asc-aqua.org

ASC Farm Standard - Principle 2 – FAQs

1. What is the Scope of the forthcoming ASC Standard?

Linked to the ASC Vision, the Scope of the ASC Farm Standard (hereafter “the Standard”) addresses the key negative environmental and social impacts associated with the aquaculture industry. An ASC-certified farm contributes to the ASC Vision by reducing, mitigating or eliminating such negative impacts.

2. What does the ASC Farm Standard cover?

The Scope of the Farm Standard is encompassed within three Principles that apply to every Unit of Certification (UoC).

- **Principle 1** - The UoC operates legally and applies effective business management,
- **Principle 2** - The UoC operates in an environmentally responsible manner,
- **Principle 3** - The UoC operates in a socially responsible manner.

Principles 1 and 3 underwent public consultation [March 14 – May 14, 2019](#).

3. What is the structure of each ASC Farm Standard Principle?

Each Principle consists of **multiple Criteria** – each Criterion defines an outcome that contributes to achieving the outcome of the Principle. Each Criterion consists of several **Indicators** – each Indicator defines an auditable state that contributes to achieving the Criterion outcome.

Several indicators in the Standard require a specific Metric Performance Level (MPL). The applicable MPL is either directly defined in the indicator, or listed in Annex 2 ‘Metric Performance Levels’ [[This Annex -- Under Development -- is not open for consultation during the March 8 - May 7, 2021 Consultation Round](#)].

Both Principles and Criteria include Rationale statements providing a set of reasons (backed by reference notes if needed) as to why the Principle or Criterion is needed

4. Which Criteria (issue areas) will be covered in the Farm Standard’s Principle 2 (‘P2’)?

Principle 2 of the Farm Standard is dedicated to ensuring environmentally responsible operations. Collectively, the impacts of farm activities will be covered by the following 17 Criteria (*recognising that there may be refinement following public consultation*):

- Compliance with Applicable Environmental Regulations
- Ecologically Important Habitats
- Wildlife interactions

- Non-native species
- Escapes
- Benthic ecosystem structure and function
- Water Quality
- Salinisation of soil and groundwater
- Biosolids
- Freshwater Use
- Energy Use
- Waste and Pollution
- Feed
- Animal Welfare
- Parasites and Pathogens
- Antibiotics and Veterinary Drugs
- Hatchery, Fingerlings, Broodstock and Seed

5. Which criteria and their respective indicators are open for consultation now [March 8 – May 7, 2021]?

The criteria below are subjects during the March-May 2021 public consultation:

- Compliance with Applicable Environmental Regulations,
- Ecologically Important Habitats,
- Wildlife interactions,
- Non-native species,
- Escapes,
- Benthic ecosystem structure and function,
- Salinisation of soil and groundwater,
- Biosolids,
- Freshwater Use,
- Energy Use, and
- Antibiotics and Veterinary Drugs.

The remaining criteria are undergoing *further development* and will be provided for public consultation in September 2021.

6. What is the *intended outcome* of Principle 2?

Aquaculture is a varied industry, both in terms of species cultured and production-systems used, as to the type of marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems in which farms are sited. As a result, a wide range of impacts are identified, some relevant to practices of all farms, others to more specific situations or to certain species. The ASC Farm Standard defines these key impact areas for all main culture systems and applies specificity where needed. The defined measures to minimise identified impacts are under continuous influence of new insights and development, constantly redefining what “least impact” means.

The intended outcome of Principle 2 is that ASC-certified facilities operate in an environmentally responsible manner, by ensuring that:

- I. The farm's siting and operation does not impact wider ecosystem functioning.
- II. Resource use is optimised.
- III. Any discharged outputs do not exceed ecosystem absorption rates.
- IV. The aquatic species cultured do not harm native species and/or ecosystems.

7. Do every criteria apply to every UoC?

The various Criteria within each of the Principles apply either to every UoC (e.g.: Criteria related to legal compliance or labour) or only to UoCs that operate a specific culture-system (e.g.: Criteria related to marine cage culture or pond culture). Resulting from this, the Standard can establish multiple Scopes at Criteria-level. A specific Scope is defined under each Criterion's title.

8. What process has taken the drafts to this point?

ASC launched a dedicated review across all of its current Standards to revise existing requirements, identify gaps and align content. The process aims to develop a comprehensive approach that would ensure consistent definition and application across all species and culture systems. Technical working groups were convened on select topics to further advise the development of criteria.

Revised Rationale, Intent and indicators were developed for review and endorsement by ASC's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) prior to public consultation. Further refinement across all criteria, associated guidance, definitions and species-specific requirements, will be completed following feedback from the public consultation.

The primary goal is to develop a single farm-level standard; the aim is to provide a higher level of consistency and harmonise the applicability, criteria & requirements across all farmed seafood species currently targeted by ASC. In doing so there will be expanded requirements for some production systems.

9. How will stakeholders' feedback be used?

All feedback received will be reviewed by ASC's Standards and Science staff. Revisions to Criteria will be made where credible evidence supports changes. Additional research will be undertaken as needed and the TAG -- with support for the relevant Technical Working Groups (TWGs) -- will provide their endorsement before final revised proposals are presented for a final public consultation in March 2022.

All feedback from this round of consultation will be published by ASC on the Alignment webpage once compiled after the public consultation period ends.

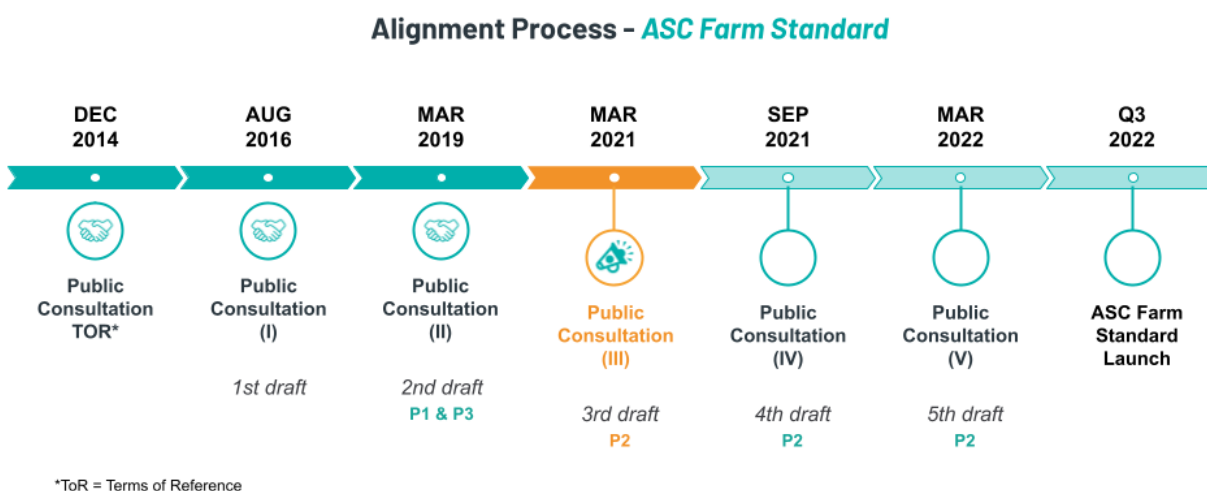
10. Are we introducing new requirements?

In some cases. With our goal of alignment, requirements may be introduced for some species and culture systems that are absent from current species standards. Further, evaluation of the efficacy and auditability of some requirements has resulted in additional modifications where change will allow ASC to drive further improvements in environmental responsibility.

11. Will the ASC Farm Standard still recognise the importance of species and culture system contexts?

Yes. Species specific annexes will detail the specific metrics to be achieved based on species produced and culture systems.

12. What is the timeline for this 'alignment' process?



13. Where can I find more information?

If you want to read more about the Alignment process and this particular public consultation regarding the forthcoming ASC Farm Standard, please [Click here](#).

14. How can I participate and provide feedback?

ASC would welcome and encourage all interested stakeholders to take part in our Survey, please [click here](#):

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