

MEETING MINUTES, ASC TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG)

MEETING NO. 9 (in-person)

Date: 16th and 17th September 2015

Place: MSC Offices, Snow Hill, London

Attendance: Peter Cook (PC), Dominique Gautier (DG), Jay Ritchlin (JR), Michael Tlustly (MT), Sandra Shumway (SS), Petter Arnessen (PA), Neil Sims (NS), Sabine Daume (SD)

ASC Attendance: Bas Geerts (BG), Chris Ninnes (CN), Iain Pollard (IP), Van Thanh Cao (CT). 16th Sept only: Esther Luiten (EL). 17th Sept only: Michiel Franson (MF).

Apologies: David Jarrad (DJ), Daniel Fegan (DF), David Basset (DB), Anne Laurence Huillery (AH), Sian Morgan (SM).

Observers: Boris Sulzberger (ASI), Sönke Fisher (ASI) 17th Sept only: Duncan Leadbitter (DL), Robert Lefebure (MSC), Dan Hoggarth (MSC), Wendy Banta (MSC).

1. Confirm agenda / quorum & approve meeting minutes last meeting

Chair opened meeting at 08:45. Quorum for meeting confirmed. Agenda approved.

Minutes last meeting:

- First Page; typo - “we approve the minutes from TAG 8” should be “we approve the minutes from TAG 7”

Decision: with amendment above minutes TAG 7 were approved.

Action (1): Minutes to be corrected circulated to TAG and uploaded on ASC website. (done)

2. Elect TAG Chair / Vice-Chair / new member(s)

Peter Cook has been elected as chairman of supervisory board Boston to be chair and Aldin Hilbrands as vice chair. Since it's inappropriate to be chair of TAG and SB, he has to resign being a chairman of the TAG. He would like to continue to be a member of TAG. So there is need to elect a new TAG chair. It is the role of the TAG present to elect a new chair. In advance of the meeting PC consulted ASC exec on the approach to take. PC talked to various people and Sandra Shumway has agreed to be a nominee for the position of chair. Others are free to make nominations too, but this is a starting point. PC called for nominations for positions of chair, none came forward, SS is appointed to the appreciation of the TAG group. PC also consulted on who might be interested on who could be vice chair of the TAG. Neil Sims agreed to be nominated to be vice-chair. PC asks the group whether there were any more nominations. There were no more nominations. So it was approved that NS was elected as vice chair of the ASC TAG.

Decision: To elect Sandra Shumway as TAG chair and Neil Sims as vice chair

Action (2): BG to modify TAG composition

Discussion on what else is needed on who to appoint to the TAG. ASC prepared a printout of general competencies in order to guide who to appoint. TAG members to complete the form.

Prior to, at and after the meeting some members indicated that they will resign due to several reasons related to changes in their current professional and personal life: Daniel Fegan, Anne-Laurence Huillery, Dominique Gautier, David Basset. Position David Jarrad unclear at this stage.

Decision: New appointments to TAG required. Pete Bridson appointed to TAG.

Action (3): BG to collate summary of competencies and share with TAG. Nominations for new members needed.

PC officially moved out of the position of chair and handed over to SS. Thanks to PC for leading the TAG, congratulations to SS from all at the TAG.

3. Action items List TAG

#	ACTION	STATUS	COMMENT
92	Advise on how Audit Manuals should be adjusted to be in line with the initial intent of the ADs	Pending	now too prescriptive and as such not in line with ASC's original intent (impact based and allow for innovations) BG: propose to add it as a workflow to standards harmonisation project. TAG agreed.
97	Adjust Action Item list based on TAG meeting Dec 2013	Done	No comment
98	Draft proposal for review/revision social accreditation requirements & send to TAG for voting	Pending	BG: Adjustments made to DRAFT CAR v2.0 for TAG's approval; to be approved Oct 2015
99	Update ASC's Variance Request procedure to include: - time-frames within process - creation of public VR log and setting of precedents - involvement of TAG if needed	Pending	see meeting notes agenda item #6 BG: Adjustments made to DRAFT CAR v2.0 for TAG's approval; to be approved Oct 2015
100	TAG members to look at the respective issue log for their species standard and AM and highlight potential show-stopping items in implementing the Standards on the short-term	Pending	BG: propose to add it as a workflow to standards harmonisation project. (for Salmon, Pangasius and Tilapia Standards the recent Operational Review has led to proposed changes in those standards. Other standards: TBD.

101	ASC will develop Standard Revision procedure (in accordance with ISEAL requirements).	Done	<p>BG: done. ASC approved full member of ISEAL since May 2015.</p> <p>TAG COMMENT: How important is it for the bigger buyers for ASC to be ISEAL compliant? It's a point of differentiation, not clear if the full value of inputs being realised, drives process within ASC. ISEAL is a club that will increase in value as more questions get asked about standard setters. Gives ASC something to point to. It shows that you can rely on ASC since it has ISEAL membership. Important in the sense of what it encourages us to do as an organisation. ASI - WWF has made a clear statement that it accepts ISEAL as a tool. Noted that Western Australia has put up 14 million AUD only accessible for credible schemes and one of the things is ISEAL that gives ASC this credibility.</p> <p>Action (4): Can ASC provide examples of retailers that look for the distinction that ISEAL provides?</p>
102	ASC will develop Terms of Reference for the review of the Salmon Standard	Done	<p>ASC in close contact with World's major salmon producing companies through GSI.</p> <p>For Salmon, Pangasius and Tilapia Standards the recent Operational Review has led to proposed changes in those standards.</p> <p>TAG Comment - Concern about whether there is sufficient NGO engagement since the comment relates to Industry? It was noted that it is difficult for NGOs to find enough time and may have to hire more resources to get NGOs focussed on workings of the ASC for numbers of reasons. Just difficult to find the time to focus on the detail. General agreement that it is difficult to get NGOs interested in the dialogues now e.g. the seriola/cobia standard. ASC needs to show change in the water, this will enable more focus from NGOs. Without NGO engagement it is a credibility issue, potentially that NGOs see this as an industry dialogue and perhaps too few NGO membership of the TAG?</p> <p>Action (5): ASC to help to reach out to NGOs in Europe.</p>
103	ASC will include this workflow in Terms of Reference for Harmonisation project to start a sub-project on how to include metric reporting in audit reports.	Pending	<p>BG: propose to add it as a workflow to standards harmonisation project.</p> <p>TAG Comment - to clarify - the language needs to require metric reporting.</p>
104	ASC will provide TAG comparison of Trout & Salmon standard (incl. Section 8).	Pending	<p>TAG Comment about where does boundary of certification fall between trout and salmon? There is particularly a question around Salmon and sea trout in Denmark.</p> <p>Action (6): BG to share comparison, to make a decision on when salmon and trout will be</p>

			applicable. Keep this open.
105	Based on this comparison (see action item 104) TAG will then decide on proposed scope by email.	Pending	No comment
106	ASC will develop Terms of Reference for the Harmonization Project to be send for approval to the TAG	Done	No comment
107	FEED PROJECT - ASC to provide regular updates (when significant) on feed project to TAG by project coordinator (e.g. Michiel Fransen). This may be done by email.	Done	BG: Done on a regular basis.
108	FEED PROJECT - Forward question from TAG to Steering Committee regarding the unit of certification and whether the whole operation needs to be compliant, or if this can be partial? TAG recommends for both.	Pending	BG: Forwarded to SC for them to consider.
109	FEED PROJECT - TAG recommends Steering Committee to make it possible for interested parties to provide input in the process (and not only through public consultation). TAG suggest to make appropriate meetings open to interested parties (as observers) and encourage some form of public participation (for example by using the opportunity such as a Brussels' meeting as 'Dialogue' (in addition to Steering Committee meetings) to collect public input.	Done	No comment
110	FEED PROJECT - Inform ASC Board: How can time bound feed commitments within the current Standards be aligned with the Feed Standard? (BG: <i>this is a TAG issue, rather than SB</i>)	Pending	BG: Current time-lines in Tilapia Standard no longer feasible (as per Dec 2014).

111	Inform ASC Board: reviewing and where appropriate revising and finalizing the Salmon standard is a main priority for the ASC and immediate time and resources should be put to this. What is the rationale that will trigger review? What are the main criteria for the review process?	Done	BG: for Salmon, Pangasius and Tilapia Standards the recent Operational Review has led to proposed changes in those standards.
112	Inform ASC Board: TAG asks the Board to keep TAG informed of issues.	Done	BG: TAG members Peter Cook and Petter Arnesen to keep SB updated on critical issues as identified by TAG and about SB issues to TAG. TAG Comment: At what point on the agenda should this happen? Suggest do it now.

4. Update on ASC's activities

ASC Executives present update on the progress of the development of ASC.

Suggestion that ASC should attend the Triannual US meeting on aquaculture that WAS is organising. ASC could potentially join with MSC to have a booth, general agreement that it would be good for ASC to present if can get on the programme and also get potential TAG members (recruit). Meeting is being held in Feb 2016.

Decision: ASC to attend meeting if possible

Action (7): ASC to consider attending meeting and make arrangements

Board Update:

a) Collaboration with the MSC. The relationship between MSC and ASC has become closer as the seaweed standard development research is taking place. There is a spirit of cooperation and, whilst not all issues have been overcome, the spirit is really positive to the extent of a joint meeting between subsets of either board recently. There is market encouragement for ASC and MSC to work more closely together. Relationship with MSC has been evolving continuously, building on existing chain of custody and logo licencing agreements. Now we have a MoU which set out a joint approach to various projects, seaweed standard setting is the first one that we're working on together. Other elements include communications and outreach. The latter will e.g. significantly expand ASC's presence towards the demand side of trade.

Dialogues founded on multi-stakeholder process; need to be careful on process of setting standard. General comment was made that we have moved on from dialogues. Was there a good reason for using seaweed? Yes, it is a good example of a combined harvest system, varying from purely wild harvesting to fully farmed and several hybrid models between those two.

b) Two members of the ASC Supervisory Board (SB) have resigned. Appointed one new member of the SB - Ms. Meghan Jeans from New England Aquarium and trying to appoint one more member of the SB to be discussed. It is noted that also Mr. Aldin Hilbrands from IDH has been appointed to the SB.

ASC Executive Presentation on Update

Why did IMO pull out of ASC accreditation? Their most experienced auditor left the company and no internal back up could step up to fill that void.

Are farms ready to take up seriola/cobia pilots? Yes, 5-8 farms have shown a clear interest to participate.

Discussion on figures of no. certified farms: Is ASC's growth as expected? Yes, although standards were launched later, growth is even better than expected, see graphs. Do we know what is driving uptake? Outreach, several different factors and differs by species. We could improve our knowledge. Why did Pangasius no. of farms fall? They chose not to stay with the ASC programme, probably based on market factors e.g. Germany demand for pangasius falling and new markets (e.g. Russia) do not require ASC certification. TAG would like more information on no. of farms compared to total production.

Decision: TAG requires further information

Action (8): For ASC to complete more research on certified farm numbers / volumes compared to total

Discussion on standards team activities. Standards team is about 50% of ASC but still small compared to MSC that has over 40 people. It would be an advantage to ASC to account for all the volunteer time (such as the TAG in-kind contributions) spent on activities.

Decision: Require better insight into volunteer-time spent working on ASC activities.

Action (9): If possible, for ASC to calculate the time the TAG spends on meetings and make sure it is presented along with other staff.

Re public consultation - sent out advisory to the TAG to advise that the consultation was going to begin - a month in advance. This was really helpful in getting stakeholders prepared for comment.

Decision: Advisories sent early are beneficial for TAG

Action (10): For ASC to continue sending out advisory to the TAG regarding consultations 1 month in advance.

Discussion on standard development, especially regarding the status of a sea bream and bass standard? There is some interest in ASC, why hasn't it moved forward? Want to harmonise first but it will be at the top of the agenda when a Core Standard is ready. Once core standard is available, a standard setting procedure could be completed in 1 year's time, including all mandatory ISEAL steps in those processes (e.g. public consultations).

What will be the format of the feed project pilots?

Decision: Further information required about feed project pilots

Action (11): For ASC to clarify when more information on Feed Pilots becomes available.

Is group certification addressing shrimp? Yes, it will be applicable to all species. Group certification will be different to multisite. ASC setting up TWG for it. Resistance sensed to group certification for salmon. Need for ASC to get a 'group' defined and work on it as we have constant questions on it.

One of ASC duties was to get an IT system for collecting data from audits, is this happening?

Decision: Further information about IT system for collecting audit data required

Action (12): To clarify IT status of system

Quality Assurance (QA) Current reports question CAB competency, so when does ASI get involved? ASI will get involved in every case. Suggestion that level 2 review is similar to stakeholder comment, ASI will be copied in maybe it will expose a CAB to criticism but at least it opens the transparency. MSC system is similar, the way that the comments are written they might not be so specific, but not really specific e.g. where is the shortfall? This is a learning process and it will evolve over time. Hope that it will lead to more information from CABs. Need recognition that there will be additional time by the CAB. It should lead to this process not being necessary in the future, so save time in the long-run. See this as a learning process; in a perfect scenario this work would not be necessary. Hope in a year's time that this would not be necessary, yet it is expected that even then it would be beneficial to sample and check some reports still, to make sure reporting quality won't drop. Suggestion that there are trigger levels that ASI needs to get involved so that there is not live monitoring of reports that is not the purpose of ASI. Will ASC recognise the additional costs to CABs of the review process?

Decision: A review into and clarification of areas of the QA process is required

Action (13): ASC to consider ASI's involvement in QA

Action (14): Calculation of costs of QA review process

There is frustration that QA is taking so much time. There is a group of people now to create capacity for conducting the reviews. Also extended the comment period by 2 days to allow for certainty of comments.

What's the objective of ASC regarding zonal management? Interest is driving ASC to be part of the discussions. Is there a possibility that this is adopted as part of the GAA/GGAP/ASC standard with the same wording? ASC willingness to participate recognises that these are issues with aquaculture that are not covered by farm certification. Group certification is a methodology and potentially an interface between the two.

Note after the meeting: ASC is an active member of a GAA's led project to develop a methodology for Zonal Management in Aquaculture. It was decided that it will initially focus on disease management (prevention and control).

5. Approve draft changes to ASC's Farm Certification & Accreditation Requirements (CAR v2.0)

ASC Secretariat presents the proposed changes to the ASC's Farm Certification & Accreditation Requirements (CAR), see also document 5b.

New CAR v2.0 needs approving by the TAG before publishing.

Introduction of new person in the room - Wendy from MSC on chain of custody joining the CAR discussions.

Text in the CAR proposal questioned. #2 "add a new requirement for CABs to allow the accreditation body to publish their accreditation reports" (4.1.4). (page 2 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 of the car 2.0). Unclear about use of 'requirement' vs 'shall'.

Decision: CAR proposal wording is unclear in one section.

Action (15): ASC to clarify wording of CAR proposal of said section.

Need to be explicit about level of communication necessary to stakeholders (related to #4). Helpful to have an obligation to have a stakeholder list and then records of communication. Should the farm invite the stakeholders or the CAB? MSC requirements are specific on number of media outlets etc. It's the CAB that does this. Clarify that there are two levels - farm and CAB levels. Note that farms are entering certification and none of the NGOs have ever been contacted about farms going into certification. Can ASC take on role of getting a stakeholder list identified?

And also for a central system for ASC to alert a central list of stakeholders automatically for when a) announcement of audit and b) issue of draft report. The contractor carrying out the social study is required to do the stakeholder analysis, so there would be a list of stakeholders available for the CAB. Can ASC create a system in a database to send out to a given group? What is needed; an NGO registers and gets updated on farms that enter the auditing process and then for the draft report. As an interim solution NGOs could send group email to all cabs to request to be informed of any upcoming audits.

Decision: Effectiveness of methods for stakeholder involvement is questioned, needs a plan for improvement.

Action (16): Solution for farm to have a list of stakeholders identified and information sent to them on new farms entering certification or NGOs to solicit CABs.

Was there a concern about audits being too long or too short? ASC decided to give clarification on this timing.

Decision: Clarification useful for auditors for expected audit length

Action (17): ASC to clarify length of audit

Question on Chain of Custody (CoC). One scenario that farm has certified and non-certified, for feed it could be easy. But how about a farm that has part of its operations certified but then for the other part carries out activities that are not in compliance to the standard. If a farm has documented child

labour issues since it's critical even if not dealing with the certified pond the farm cannot be certified. ASI need clarity that everything needs to be included of scope of audit and auditor needs to visit distant parts of the farm, how deep to go during the site visit? The CAR does not have answers to these questions at this time.

Decision: Guidance on extent of CoC consideration for audits required for ASI

Action (18): Further investigation by ASC about unit of certification, currently auditor has to make call as best it can.

Regarding the suggestion to include another level of conformance: Critical. Is it defined what happens down the supply chain when a critical Non-conformance report (NCR) is raised? Yes, the certified product in conformity would work its way through the supply chain but product harvested after the critical NCR will not be able to carry the ASC logo.

It seems that changing 2 categories of NCR (minor/major) to 3 (minor/major/critical) is watering down the standard. This is not the intention, rather identifying some indicators that are too important to allow the farm to continue being certified. There is TAG agreement that this seems that the standard is being watered down. Going back to the dialogue it was agreed that the standard needed to be met in full i.e. that all ASC requirements are critical. When major and minor NCRs were brought up at the end of the dialogues it was reluctantly accepted that minor NCRs, farms should be prevented from getting certified if there are major NCRs. Defining critical categories will be a difficult process. The current system clearly defines major v minor.

Maybe a better way of dealing with this is to define what combinations should be allowed for farms to be certified. Minors are supposed to be closed out by the first surveillance audit, what about the majors? This may be easier to do than define critical indicators. Two comments - Requirement for CABs to justify their NCRs is better and to document it in the report, and a requirement for there to be an (onsite if needed) audit in order to close out conditions, in order to verify NCRs. Suggesting that major NCRs should need a re-visit to be certain, unless CAB can provide in writing in the audit report that an on-site is not essential (minor already need a site visit as this is during surveillance audit). It is subjective where the line is drawn between major and minor, better to show what happens to identify when major happens during certification and the consequential actions, or when there are minors that perhaps should be major. Needs clarification as currently unclear in the CAR.

Creating 'critical' elements would be alongside a guidance piece that will explore the application of the CAR, will include the duration of fixing NCRs and thematic things. Major being something that happens on a systematic manner, whilst minor and critical which are the most important issues for a farm to achieve in order to fulfil the objectives of the ASC standard. From industry perspective farms need to know what is major and minor.

There is no TAG support for creating critical NCRs. Better to give clearer description on the current definitions of major or minor than simply creating a new category. Would like to see more rigour on major NCRs stopping certification from happening. And better to define what happens for major when during, some grey area however systemic, ongoing perhaps should not be certified. Some

support for clarification of minor / major would be helpful for farms / companies. The thinking behind critical is to give more guidance about what is acceptable and what is not. It's not the only way, difficult to see through all options of creating minor, major etc. Trying to get some consistency going forward.

Comes down to definition and action/consequence. So need to define line between major and minor and also what happens in the case that a major or minor happens. What is acceptable on a principle by principle level? This is going to be subjective. This is why ASC has set the requirements for (lead) auditors relatively high: to have an expert's opinion on the matter.

One potential road to the solution is in the reporting format, why the CAB has ranked it as it did and that external stakeholders can challenge it. ASC then can learn from it going forward. Can't define everything.

Decision: Potential exists for different interpretations and applications between minor and major NCRs but the TAG decided that ASC should not include a new category of 'critical' non-conformities.

Action (19): Take critical off the table and instead looking at major and minor in more detail and defining them.

Clarification requested about the total number of days for certification. According to new CAR, audit period should now be 3 months. This timeframe is tight, but the new report format will help.

Comment on variance requests, started off by being really simple, now turning out to be increasingly complicated to interpret whether it is a valid request or not. Need external opinion on variance requests especially on new technology for example. Support for this going to external experts, is a good way of taking this forward. Need to know where the expertise lies and go to them. What types of variation requests are coming in? E.g. Can you use DNA markers in impact assessments? Cannot rely only on TAG only expertise for determining results of variation requests. Need to know if new methodologies coming forward meet the standard, this is rather complicated.

How many variation requests are coming through? It could be that confusion of what constitutes a variation request and level of non-conformity - major or minor. E.g. getting variation requests for near and far reaching water quality impacts - need a modeller to be able to properly work on this. Need some way to justify this.

Decision: The variance requests coming in have increasingly become more complicated and queries exist over correct application

Action (20): Would help by making the variation request public, needs to (denied and approved) happen.

Agreement on guidance document to go with the CAR, will be online and publicly produced.

Suggestion that the TAG agrees on CAR next steps. Need time to review the detail of the CAR proposal. Getting the CAR v2.0 getting signed off is important in order to move forward, plus

prepare training etc. Suggest push CAR v2.0 forward leaving major and minor definitions the same and taking out the critical NCR part.

TAG would like recognition that we still need to resolve the major v minor.

Motion to accept the CAR on the condition that the critical NCR part is removed and work continues on definitions of NCRs. Seconded. Vote 7 for, none against.

Decision: Agreement made to remove critical NCR and work on others

Action (21): Go ahead with CAR revision after removing 'critical' NCR part. ASC to come back to TAG on timeframe for solving major v minor classifications.

6. Operational review

ASC Executive presents the Project. Particularly want to discuss PTI and FFDR for salmon, antibiotics for Tilapia.

PTI discussion paper - PTI scores from the data show that there is a significant distribution. Gives an insight of the key problems. Decision of whether to get ASC certified has been driven by the site of the farm, as geographical siting seems to be an important factor for the level of lice at farms. ASC objective has been to encourage innovation and best practice but this is clearly not happening. Key points: 1) focussed on treatment frequency and not on load. Question... but isn't 'toxicity, persistence, frequency' a way of determining the load? 2) Lobster factor - question why the dialogues came up with a factor of 4.5?) PTI is not inhibiting farms to become ASC certified as farms are still being certified. But not dependent on management. Excluding whole countries from ASC certification.

TAG clarified that PTI was a critical point in the dialogues and although not perfect is important for keeping NGO support. The paper presents some policy options to address.

TAG accepts that the paper is well written and well presented. The PTI was something that came up during the dialogue to save the process, suggested by Skretting. There was some acceptance around the group that will accept it but knowing that the PTI was unlikely to work properly for all farms globally. And that would the PTI would be reviewed at a later date. Now parasites are a bigger problem than when standard's requirements were written in 2011. Industry realises now that need to stop sea lice reproducing. Using new methods to really do something about sea lice problem. Industry also putting in resources to stop sea lice issues. Farms want to get ASC certified but struggling to meet the PTI. Has to be revised in a way that makes the whole thing achievable. Want to be non-chemical. The paper is moving us in the right direction.

Not been able to review the paper properly since sent so recently. Dialogues intended to identify best practices and set standards to promote that. Trying to get verifiable data was very difficult at the time of standard setting. Reason for PTI was because so difficult to determine the environmental impacts of the parasiticide. Will take the paper and try to figure it out. Many cases in Canada where if you can move farms the parasite problem might go away. Would support message that where you site your farm matters. This needs more study on intended and unintended consequences. Some

resistance to this because of likely opposition from NGO community on it. Want to dig into detail of data provided by industry to understand it better.

What is being proposed in policy options is to take a more practical approach that drives change through the industry. What to find solutions that will address the problem. What we are saying right now is that there is logic in the analysis and that PTI needs to be reviewed. Would like to improve what we've got rather than changing it.

Question about how we see salmon farming going in the future. Should it be closed containment? Need to have better control over sea lice than there is today. Looking at it from the perspective of finding solutions. Current situation will always be starting point.

Discouraged from regional variability. Know that parasites are regionally based but mandate was for one single standard. Now there is new information we could have a regional option. Great that there is new data. Good that ASC can collect new data. Helps to drive change. Let the certification and market place lead the way. Good that rest of industry want to get certified. Big fan of simplification, need clear requirement that farms can understand and make connection

Why aren't the actual numbers in the current standard? Numbers weren't available at the time. Unknown impact of quantity of parasiticide.

We have seen lots of innovation so far via the Standard and want it to continue. As we move through systems and change, this might be a case that we can justify regional solutions. Maybe original requirement in the dialogue to have a global requirement isn't applicable anymore in this instance.

TAG opinion split about the lobster factor being double counting. The relationship between daphnia and lobster not accurate since lobsters are very different and particularly susceptible to chemicals. Highly susceptible to chemicals at specific times so the lobster factor is important. Agree that if there is new data then needs looking at in more detail.

What is the proposal to change the standard? Need some time to digest and send back comments.

A proposal tabled that this will go out to public consultation and set up a working on it. To approve the proposal in the discussion paper, seconded. Motion is that we move forward on the recommended option proposed on the paper and that we move onto a 30-day consultation period to give the paper a bit of an airing to let stakeholders view it and comment on it.

Some disagreement need to be an understanding of how we meet the intended outcomes - less chance of resistance, less chemicals in the water and less change of impact on wildlife. Prefer the approach that there are outcomes that we want to get and to decide how we are going to achieve these goals with a minimum number of indicators.

Is there any harm in putting the paper out and see where we go? As long as we're not saying that this will be the choice. ASC could take out the recommendation. Prefer to leave the

recommendation in the paper so know what we're intending to do. In favour of putting out the information but not suggesting that we endorse it.

ASC can we put draft language together to be clear that this is for comment

Vote passes the motion but on the condition that the discussion paper is revised to clarify that the purpose is for comment not approval, target date is the Monday 28th. Finalise the covering letter beforehand and circulate it for comment before it goes out.

Decision: Motion passed for draft PTI paper to be distributed

Action (22): ASC to revise the paper and put out for public comment

ASC introduced the issue of FFDR - salmon. Produced with the assistance of Pete Bridson. The fundamental challenge for FFDR scores was that they were 'cast in stone' during the dialogues. Proposals propose to revise the standards downwards. The decreases are not as large as possible, but they are decreases that don't impact on the status of any of the arms, which currently hold ASC certification. This moves it in the right direction and will make ASC acceptable with NGO expectations.

General TAG agreement that this should go ahead. Agree that the FFDR scores are quite lenient in comparison originally. NGO community would support lowering of the values.

ASC adds that the Pacific salmon that are grown are different to Atlantic in their feeding characteristics. Should we have different levels for the Pacific salmon?

Some disagreement about having different species FFDRs. It's important to focus on sustainability of raw materials. Reducing it to these levels is not a problem but we cannot at some point in the future that this will be a show stopper, the main thing has to be on the sustainability of the fish resource.

Proposal to reduce FFDRs for meal and oil be adopted, seconded, motion passed by majority vote. One TAG member objecting on the basis that the reduction in the FFDR is not large enough.

Decision: Agreement that FFDR scores don't in all cases accurately reflect NGO expectations and for this to be addressed

Action (23): For ASC to change FFDRs in salmon as per proposal.

There is not an agreement to produce new FFDRs for Pacific Salmon species. ASC needs to carry out more research on this and re-present it.

Decision: Acknowledgement that regional and species variance exists across FFDR for Pacific salmon, further research required before changes considered

Action (24): ASC to do more research to determine strategy to propose on this.

ASC proposes that a requirement added to the Tilapia standard to prohibit use of antibiotics that are critical for human medicine. Tilapia was not included in the dialogue as it was the first one. Move to accept this as proposed. Seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Decision: Motion passed for update of tilapia standard relating to antibiotics considered critical for human health (WHO), is present in other standards

Action (25): To go ahead and update the tilapia standard with requirements not to use antibiotics critical for human medicine as per ISEAL standard setting code.

Clarification requested whether the Operational Review information will be provided on the website? TAG needs more time to review the ASC proposals on responding to stakeholder feedback on the op review.

Some discussion on the Operational Review but the group will review the operational review document over the next week and get back to the ASC.

Decision: Clarification surrounding Operational Review requested

Action (26): ASC to send excel worksheet and TAG group to collect the feedback. Will need to address these comments and move forward on them.

Some comments would need further discussion. What are the timeframes for feedback? For every stakeholder comment we need to look back to the original goals and see if there is new information in order to determine.

General comment on the Operational Review. Where the idea that 'let the auditor decide' disagree that the auditor can decide on equivalence of methodology. Leaving this open to the auditor decide is not the preferred option. Need more rigorous vetting of new approaches. The goal is demonstrating no change to standards' intent, if you want to do this in one way or another then that's ok.

Variance request committee researches this in more detail. Need these to go to variance committee. MF - whenever new methods come up need to vet them individually. There is a problem when installing obsolete methods in the standard. We don't list methods for everything; don't know what all possible methods are. Focus should be on metrics ('the what') rather than the method ('the how').

Auditors have been good at determining what they know/can do and what they don't/can't. Then provide this to the committee asking for approval. Allowing for generic options is a good thing. If method has been approved once then should be allowed for all. Don't want to conflate innovation and impact assessment. It will help once variation requests are made public. If auditor not confident then it goes to variance request. Needs to be justification of the science. Rather than putting justification in the report. Once the variance request has been published they are available to everybody. List of approved methods, list of methods not approved, when new methods come up go to variation. ASC will prepare log book of variation requests, should be document that CABs use before submitting new variation requests.

Comment that generally prefer not to defer to national standards. National water quality, fine if nothing on the farm has changed. Not hard to test fines on the farm.

Danish comment that they cannot meet the Salmon standard. With Tilapia, if the water quality going out is better than going in then the indicator doesn't apply. We are meant to be measuring impact, if you're not having any additional impact then you shouldn't have a problem. Also do we really want to promote production in pristine water quality places.

The dialogues came up with using EU water quality calcifications not wanting to add to poor water quality problems. Did not want to exclude specific countries. If farm is not added to the problem, less impact. Clarifying natural and other eutrophication. As a principle do we set absolutes or measure impact of the farm? EU water quality, where it's 'degraded' then shouldn't be certifying farms in that area. Proposal that we go to Danish situation to see whether it's consistent with the standard. However, it seems that the farms are not the obstacle to better water quality. Will also have this problem with barramundi and other species.

Decision: More information on water quality targets is needed, but is something to be sorted during harmonisation and not during the Operational Review

Action (27): For water quality to be addressed in harmonisation, not Operational Review, update to Op Review document

Acoustic deterrent should remain outside of certification. Reluctant to review this indicator.

AZE. Confusion between default 'cube' and the AZE that are modelled to the real. Since not everyone has modelled their AZE use the given one. Certified farms should define their own AZE and work from that. If you don't have your own AZE then use the default. Farms should define their own. Map and monitor their actual zone of effect. How to determine your AZE, could be more guidance on this.

Decision: Inconsistencies exist over AZE modelling

Action (28): ASC to develop more guidance on expectations regarding setting AZEs on farms.

On counting accuracy it is achievable based on normal technology. ASC receives constant comments that salmon industry cannot make the 2% accuracy. The machinery they have on farms means they can meet the standard. There is a related issue that the number of escapes is impossible to establish. Suggestion to review this in more detail to clarify to auditors.

Decision: Differing opinions in group and industry regarding accuracy of salmon counting machinery, indicates further information and clarification of the standard required

Action (29): To include clarification of the Salmon standard requirements on counting accuracy in the operational review.

Point out that regulation preventing the handling of wild salmonids. If you can't even test with wild salmon then you shouldn't have a farm there. E.g. if national regulations prevent sampling of wild salmon.

Sentiment that the critical points in the life cycle are critical points and need to be audited. Need to monitor at the critical times. Sampling has to happen at the critical times. During lifetime of certificate need to audit the critical times.

7. TAG members as ASC ambassadors?

Credible, multi stakeholder, being effective and it's a tool, want to bring clients in a cost effective way. ASC still minor organisation. Small team with modest capacity. Asking whether the TAG would be interested in being ASC ambassadors. TAG in general agreement. Discussion on what ASC can do and what the TAG needs for this to happen?

Reasons for going through all these efforts is to get ASC logo on products. Natural incentive to promote ASC, but how exactly can we get the message out. There is more that can be done at the NGO end. TAG members often give ASC presentations, important that have absolute latest information.

What helps is to tell stories about how ASC has helped, experiences of getting ASC certified. E.g. the process has helped us to tighten up on 'X'. Expectation / misconceptions that auditors are like tax inspectors and don't contribute to the process also puts people off entering into the process.

Important to have documentation proving that ASC relates to changes in practices and improvements in social and environmental situations. Quotes from actual farmers helps.

There are quotes / testimonials on the website. Happy to share those, let them to tell the story. Working on M&E to get the story in order. Have to show that we deliver on impacts. Need data.

Need to know about the environmental impact. Can use ASC as way of demonstrating no environmental impact to stakeholders.

Decision: General agreement that more could be done to emphasise the benefits of ASC to stakeholders

Action (30): ASC to develop the following:

- a) one of the easiest things is to have a poster readily available that you can send to folks to take with them to conferences and put up to show as a reference.
- b) getting more articles published about the general need for aquaculture certification.
- c) circulate a monthly update of the general presentation

8. Feed Project Update and Feed Shortage Issue

ASC presents update on the ASC Feed Standard Development Project, see document 08a - Update Feed Project.

On make-up of the feed dialogue TAG if missing animal ingredients better to have expertise than balance. Is the lack of interest in animal (by-)products a barrier? Should we go ahead with those that are interested? Rendering is a problem for animal welfare. If we're the best feed standard out there we need to address these issues or ASC aquaculture will receive all the worst, problem animal feed, not ideal and may lead to future problems.

ASC is not an animal welfare standard. We want to encourage the use of recycled products. Comparison is to illegal by-products in the fishery offcuts or IUCN species. Overall reticence that renderers are saying 'we're doing it right why do we need to change?' Government regulation is enough. Could ask renderers to check on certain, given criteria. This something we can ask renderers e.g. don't use antibiotics critical for human medicine. Thing is that the volume of product needed is rather insignificant for renderers. As such their interest in changing their practices based on whatever we may put in our standard is expected to be minimal, if at all.

Suggestion that it is possible and have ability to test residues, this can help to minimise impacts, consistent with other standards. Using chicken meal, feather meal and some problems can be traced back to the chickens used (industry can do this already).

On thinking about scope need to be mindful about what is the sphere of influence of ASC and of aquaculture. We have to take a pragmatic view of how far this can extend with regard to animal by-products. We can call out the issues in the standards. Draw attention to it. We can link into others that are working in these areas, e.g. the well-established food safety standards, could be a useful approach. One of the reasons we have partnerships in place and other aquaculture certification schemes at the table is that we can draw on their leverage too, particularly with some who work with agriculture and animal husbandry. ASC does not have the ability to go down the chain.

Chicken is one example about how there are other issues. Eg. An agricultural company wants to clear massive areas with endangered species, whilst we focus on detail in fisheries there are much larger impacts elsewhere. Need to raise awareness and highlight inconsistencies.

Where do our responsibilities start and where do we have concerns over. What do we have control over. Getting to the point where we can't have any influence. Suggest that our responsibility ends at the ingredients level. If we put requirements in the standards that the auditors cannot verify then this undermines the credibility of the label. Need to make credible steps. Is it appropriate for TAG to make suggestions to the feed dialogue. Yes.

Has there been identification of main antibiotics coming through the ASC feed chain? Not really any research, just a few discussions. Violet blue might be a problem, depends on which country taking place. Suggest going back to dialogue suggesting you need to check for any contaminants in the animal feed coming through. Concern that we are going down the road of feed safety. If so we need to be consistent with everything else. It's not meant to address food safety, this is an environmental concern. Certification schemes are already doing a lot of work on this. Encourage us to work with others rather than replicating ourselves.

We could easily take a position on why we're not including poultry sustainability and take this back too. Should we create a statement on this? Just looking for TAG comment, take note of the discussion and pass it on.

Decision: The extent of ASC's responsibility for feed and its wider impacts and how/whether they should be addressed requires guidance

Action (31): ASC to write up the discussion and share it with the feed dialogue

A statement along the lines of "we are concerned about antibiotics and other dangerous chemicals (like violet blue), since we're working with the rendering plant we need to make sure that antibiotics are not being used. Why only focussing on antibiotics? Why not talking also about environmental protection i.e. no clear cut forests. Could get a statement together. Traceability for all feed ingredients must be there. Differences in global production, EU may be ok, Asia could be a completely different story.

Batch control and traceability can solve this. What's the difference between what's aspirational and best practice. Having aspirations in a standard is good, we can put a statement in about where we are now and where we want to be. Sends a signal to all in the industry that these are the issues that need discussing.

Define what we're responsible for and what we're concerned about. What are the core ethos that the ASC has? What we ask our farms to do these farms should ask others to do. Cover some areas of slave labour, impact on endangered species, legality etc. Get a statement from renderers. Concern over mission creep, we're getting back out there stretching.

If we're asking fishers to do something why not asking animal renderers to do the same. Reason is because of NGO advocacy on the issue. Accepted more broadly about fisheries, not asked about for animal production. Need to recognise that we are more aspirational in fisheries because the conversations been had over last decades. Animal feed is becoming an issue. It's hypocritical to ask fishers to do x, aquaculture y and then agriculture much lower or nothing at all. Should ask for statements from suppliers. Willing to compromise.

We wouldn't be saying we don't care what goes on, we're setting a statement on aspirations. Don't forget we need to get a decent supply of feed to aquaculture in order to make the environmental improvements we need. Suggesting need a well structured questionnaire. Getting into the habit of asking the question. Acknowledging we cant control it. May create a poultry dialogue later down the line. Set metrics on residues, set statements on slave labour etc. and aspirations. Concept of risk assessment might be a good one to put the onus on feed producer, create a document for them that brings together all these questions. We can combine several of these ideas. Combine with tests, aspirations and highlight gaps. FSC seems similar to this using a risk assessment approach that ASC could learn from.

Renderers say that we have government control, so we have legal compliance and this is enough, but we don't think that it is. Worry that legal compliance would leave a hole in the less developed

countries. Also don't want factories dumping untreated effluent. Sometimes however you need to rely on minimum regulations set by authority.

Decision: Pass on feedback from TAG discussion to the Feed Dialogue

Action (32): ASC To follow-up and reflect discussion back to animal product working group and steering committee.

On the suggestion that GAA, ASC and GlobalGAP will each create separate standards, the TAG asks whether we can't have one feed standard? How far apart are the other differences? Why are the other requirements irreconcilable. Not partial to having one standard. Allows options. This is creating more complication for the feed buyer. Would like to have one standard for feed sourcing, common elements of responsible feed. Different schemes have different aspirations around fishery sustainability, e.g. ASC aiming for MSC.

A practical element about having physical facilities for storing feed i.e. there are only a limited number of silos. This is something that is on the feed dialogue agenda.

Inviting TAG members to join the working group is a good thing. Sending regular updates good. When get to a point of sticking points or questions then sharing them with the TAG To discuss them would be a good thing. Would like to know that TAG is giving what is needed. Please let the group know.

ASC introducing the problem with ISEAL certified shortage of feed. (8b and see presentation slides)

Are the MSC numbers accurate? Probably not, but this is the best that MSC could supply. What we're looking for from take is to consider the policy options. Push the ISEAL deadline backwards and not changing any of the intermediate standards. Allowing practice to continue in feed mills. Not adding any difficult problems for the producers to take on-board whilst the feed standard is being finalised.

What are the implications outside of this to us including what ISEAL think. Need to figure out how this will affect our credibility and need statement to stakeholders, outreach.

Decision: More research needed on reputation risk of pushing back the ISEAL deadline.

Action (33): To check potential impact of pushing back the ISEAL deadline on stakeholders.

Boils down to the concern that there is a loss of credibility if we're moving the goalposts. However, targets were put in place without any idea of the ability of fisheries to get MSC compliant. Have to accept that we haven't been able to create the incentives for change as rapidly as expected. What does the NGO community think?

There are fisheries going into certification to meet this requirement. There are feed producers switching to meet FS scores. Something needs to be done, agree that this was a guess when the dialogues were written. Standards do need to be updated regularly, so this not such a big issue.

Need more clarification of what volumes of certified feed are available. What is status of feed going into supply chain now?

Reducing number of choices to source fishmeal meeting FS scores. Are we putting the standard back in time as well as reducing our interim standards, whilst fisheries are falling in status, then we're in a credibility problem. There is a further complication. The FS methodology is a cut-down MSC assessment only uses the approach for whitefish and not taking into account the shifting baseline common to pelagic fisheries. Methodology is flawed of FS.

How about using IFFO? They don't assess fisheries, they assess facilities. Do we have a reasonable assessment of the fishery? An alternative to FS? There is a need for another tool to risk assess these fisheries. One discussion is with MBA to extend their approach to feed fisheries. Could work with them. Probably not realistic in this timeline but could be useful for the feed dialogue.

How about FIPs? Could be a tool to show progress towards? There are 5 FIPs from SFP currently, not a promising outlook. Finding someone who is a modeller on this. As if these stocks have declined due to environmental factors then it would be ok to source from these fisheries. There are some good P1 experts in the region that could carry out the analysis.

Is the ASC feed standard going to fix this problem? Yes, it will figure out which one is realistic.

What happens if we don't do this? Farms will lose their certification. Don't want to get into precedent about changing the standard because in future could lead to weakening of standards. This is a natural progression of the standard review proves.

There is a motion to move to accept policy option one and that the wording be circulated for final approval, seconded. Passed by majority vote.

Decision: To push back ISEAL deadlines as proposed by ASC executive.

Action (34): ASC to create proposal for public comment to change ASC standards on feed as per ASC proposals to push back deadlines.

ASC Secretariat brings the TAG up to date regarding the ASC Responsible Feed Project.

It is being flagged that the TWG-Animal Ingredients struggles with finding indicators that start more responsible practices regarding environmental & social issues in rendering facilities.

Decision: It is being agreed that more collaboration with other schemes covering these ingredients (e.g.: globalg.a.p.) is required in order to set more strict requirements.

Decision: it is also agreed that aspirational goals should be included in standard, but that more responsible practice can begin with a limited set of requirements.

Action (35): the provided feedback will be incorporated into the overall feedback on Draft 1 of the ASC Responsible Feed Standard.

It is being discussed how the TAG can stay best informed on the progress of the Feed Standard development.

Decision: TAG requests to stay informed via occasional updates and/or when milestones are reached.

Action (36): Feed Project secretary will inform TAG via occasional updates and/or when milestones are reached.

Requirement for origin of FM/FO within the Pangasius and Tilapia Farm Standards.

Within the Pangasius and Tilapia Standard it is required that fish meal/oil coming from whole fish fisheries (reduction fisheries) must come from ISEAL certified fisheries (i.e.: MSC certified reduction fisheries) within 5 years after release of the Standards. This timeline has passed but currently there is no availability of MSC certified whole fish FM/FO. This results in a gap in certified supply between now and when the Feed Standard is available, and all feed origin related requirements will be moved to this standard.

ASC Secretariat presented a preferred solution to extent the timeline and keep the intermediate solutions as mentioned in the Tilapia and Pangasius standard operational. This will allow Pangasius and Tilapia farms to remain in the program, and will not change purchasing requests to the feed mill between now and when the ASC Responsible Feed Standard is released.

Decision: TAG agreed with this proposal.

Action (37): ASC Secretariat will prepare a public statement, and will inform certified farms & CAB's about this decision.

9. Quality Assurance / IT-platform

ASC Secretariat presents the QA framework and gives an update on its progress. Next to the checks on report completeness/quality, also more attention will be given to quality assurance within the CAR (e.g. reporting format) and in the training courses for auditors.

It is asked how the Salesforce platform will incorporate QA-work. It is explained that the Salesforce platform will have multiple functions eventually, including this QA-work. Up to that moment, QA work will remain manual work.

10. Harmonisation

ASC Secretariat informs TAG on the Harmonisation progress.

It is being raised that "target requirement list" misses the "impact requirement".

Decision: It is decided that discussions regarding the impact requirement are not for the harmonization work, but can be considered for indicator evaluation after the harmonization.

There is discussion on what is “core” and what is considered “guidance”. Important elements of the standards, as well as species-specific elements (e.g.: PTI-score for Salmon) should not be moved into the guidance document.

Decision: Species-specific requirements should not be moved into the guidance document. It should also be noted that the harmonization setting-process will have public consultation period(s) in order to receive feedback on the proposed harmonization.

There is discussion on how to deal with farms certified against the current standard, and the release of the harmonized standard. Will there be a transition period?

Decision: It is not yet clear how the transition process will work, but it is clear this period is needed. The most likely process is that the transition process will occur at the point of re-certification (after the first 3 year f certification).

It is asked who takes the final decision on the Harmonized Standard and how the Technical Working Groups will be formed.

Decision: The final decision maker is the SB, which will be advised by the TAG. The TWG will start of as a relatively small group of 3-4 people (within TAG and outside TAG) and extent if needed to more people.

11. Group Certification / Multi-site

ASC introducing group certification (Document 10_Brief update on Group Certification).

Experience from the group is it focussed on applicability to smallholders? No but this will be major advantage. Regarding sampling tolerance level. Implication that smallholders are more risky. Risk assessment approach might be a solution.

We have requirements for single farms. Maybe we can take lessons from individual farm certification and bring it to the group certification discussion. ASC recognises internally whether the methodology is applicable to smallholders or all companies. So we look at group certification as being applicable to smallholders. And then giving slightly. Come up with a risk assessment approach.

Unclear on how this would this work for Salmon? Not only about the company, group and the entity but also the environment that they live in. eg. Watershed. Important to define terms really carefully. Eg. Single entity, what does this really mean? Are we applying just for smallholders? As the principle seems to lead things this way. ISEAL does not specify about size of operations.

Decision: Further information is required regarding how group certification for salmon will be applied

Action (38): ASC to investigate what Group certification would look like for Salmon.

12. Any Other Business

GSSI launching benchmark on Oct 8th, ASC not having the feedback and concern about engagement with ASC. ASC has a summary report. Are the standards applicable? Are the standards rigorous enough? Governance part, not fully in alignment but working on that via the CAR revision. We still do not have clarification. External factors pushing the ASC in given directions.

Decision: Prepare detailed plan for addressing GSSI alignment issues.

Action (39): ASC to set up a meeting with GSSI and plan for alignment.

Discussion on ASC Policy, role of TAG and dynamics going forward. Suggesting that ASC exec comes to TAG with requests for help. There should be some clear definition of time expectation needed in these discussions. Can get some expectation, ASC can do its best to give time expectations on inputs.

Action (40): ASC executive to come up with ideas for more TAG engagement along with more specific timeframes.

Chairperson closed the meeting

[end]