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1. Introduction

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is an independent not for profit organisation founded in 2010 by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Dutch Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH). It aims to be the world's leading certification and labelling programme for responsibly farmed seafood. The ASC's primary role is to manage the global standards for responsible aquaculture that the WWF Aquaculture Dialogues has developed and those developed by the ASC itself. All ASC's standards have been developed following the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards (Standard-Setting Code) and UN FAO Guidelines. The ultimate goal of all ASC standards is to reduce the environmental and social impact of aquaculture worldwide.

ASC Vision

The vision of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is a world where aquaculture plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for humanity whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment.

ASC Mission

The goal of the ASC is to transform aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the chain.

The ASC aims to achieve its vision and mission by promoting standards for best environmental and social aquaculture performance and rewarding responsible farming practices through standard-setting and certification.

2. Purpose

This Standard-Setting Procedure (hereafter the 'Procedure') sets out steps for assuring quality and credibility of standard-setting activities that are implemented by the ASC and its relevant bodies.

3. Scope

This Procedure applies to the development, review, and revision of all ASC standards.

A separate procedure defines the process for development, review and revision of the Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR).

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4. Effective Date

The procedure will be effective from 12 November 2021

5. Referenced Documents

This document has been drafted with reference to the following documents and cites supporting documents where relevant.

- [The Deed of the ASC Foundation](#)
- [ISEAL Standard-Setting Code v6.0 \(2014\)](#)
- [FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification \(2011\)](#)
- [GSSI Global Benchmarking Tool V1 \(2016\)](#)
- ISO IEC Guide 2: 2004 Standardization and related activities — General vocabulary
- [ASC Metrics Methodology v1.0 \(2020\)](#)
- [ASC Complaint Procedure v1.0 \(2014\)](#)
- ASC Issue Log Procedure v1.0
- [ASC Standards-related Variance Procedure v1.0 \(2020\)](#)
- [Supervisor Board Regulations \(2011\)](#)
- [Terms of Reference Technical Advisory Group v.2.0 \(2019\)](#)

6. Terms and Definitions

ASC Secretariat: This generic term refers to ASC ‘executives’ or any other ASC ‘staff’ (and within the context of this Procedure; the term refers particularly to those staff operating in concert or under the scrutiny of the Standards and Science Director).

Consensus: General agreement characterised by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important stakeholder group.

NOTE – Consensus should be the result of a process seeking to consider the views of interested stakeholders, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. It need not imply unanimity (ISEAL Standard-Setting Code v6.0).

Consultation: Process of seeking stakeholder input.

Coordinator: The ASC staff member appointed by the ASC Secretariat and/or the Standards and Science Director to coordinate each standard-setting process (as per 7.6).

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Issue Log: [Internal ASC] Register of issues which may be identified within ASC documents (e.g., standard documents, implementation guidance, certification accreditation requirements and procedures) as requiring further attention. These issues may be non-substantive, substantive, or urgently substantive issues.

Issue Log Procedure: The ASC procedure ensuring that all issues pertaining to ASC documents identified internally and externally as requiring further attention be maintained in the Issue Log and in accordance with ASC Standards-setting Procedure and ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (“CAR”) Development and Revision Procedure.

Metric: A quantifiable measure for (a) performance level(s) stipulated within a given ASC standard’s requirement. In principle, metrics are numbers that provide information about efficiency, performance, progress, or quality of a process under question. In the ASC standards metrics are used to describe performance levels which can be used to describe a desired or necessary range for certification as well as lower or upper cut-off values. Metric calculation is always done based on the International system of units (‘SI units’, also known as the ‘metric system’).

Stakeholder: Individual or party that has an interest in or is affected (directly/indirectly) by any decision and activity of the ASC.

Standard: Document that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for products or related processes and production methods, with which compliance is not mandatory.

Note: once a facility decides to be certified against it, the Standard and affiliated documents become mandatory.

Standard-setting process: A general term for activities that includes new standard development, existing standard review and revision. For every new standard to be developed or current one to be reviewed/ revised, a standard-setting process is initiated (following the present Procedure).

Standard development: Activity of creating a new standard.

Standard review: Activity of reviewing a standard and analysing related comments and feedback received over time to determine whether it is to be reaffirmed, changed, or withdrawn (adaptation of ISO Guide 2:2004, 9.4).

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Standard revision: Introduction of all necessary changes to the substance and presentation of a standard, which will result in a new version of the standard (adaptation of ISO Guide 2:2004, 9.7).

Theory of change (TOC): The causal pathway of change that ASC defines and undertakes to accomplish its Mission and Vision over time.

Terms of Reference (TOR): Document specifying terms and conditions for operations of an organ within the ASC or for a project (e.g., standard development, review, and revision of standard[s]).

Variance Request (VR): Request to adapt an ASC indicator/performance level to a unique local circumstance that the global ASC Standard(s) were not able to, for whatever reason, foresee during the Standard Setting Process.

7. Governance Structure and Responsibility

7.1 The Board of Trustees (Board) is the ultimate decision-making body of the ASC. It gives the mandate to develop a new standard or to revise a current one. The Board also approves the final version of any standards newly developed or revised, based on recommendations of the Technical Advisory Group.

7.2 The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) provides recommendations to the Board on the content of standards and other technical issues, including (but not limited to) further development, modification and the technical and operational interpretation of the ASC Standards and the application of these interpretations.

7.3 The Standards and Science Director approves this Procedure and non-substantive changes to the standards, following advice from relevant TAG members.

7.4 Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are formed as deemed necessary by the TAG. They will provide required detailed inputs on technical or scientific issues in question. Technical Working Groups will be dissolved once their remits are complete. Members of the Technical Working Group may be reappointed for a term of one year to support the Executive in case further clarification on scientific and technical issues is needed. Members of the TWGs commit to the

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specific TOR for the TWGs to participate in the process. TWG membership shall aim to balance interests from the standard’s key interest groups.

7.5 Ad-hoc Advisory Groups (AAGs) are convened as deemed necessary by the ASC Secretariat, TAG or Board during the standard development and/or revisions processes and comprise (an) expert(s) in a specific topic and are established to provide greater breadth and depth of scientific and technical knowledge. AAGs commit to specific TORs to participate in the process.

7.6 The ASC Secretariat coordinate and facilitate the process in terms of both logistics and content. For each standard-setting process, a staff member is appointed to be the Coordinator.

8. ASC Guiding Principles for Standard-Setting

Relevant and effective standards are critical to the ASC achieving its mission. Therefore, it is important that both the standard-setting process and the requirements themselves observe widely recognised credibility principles.

Relevance – The standards focus on key social and environmental issues identified as the result of a multi-stakeholder process and which ASC manages. ASC’s intent is to encourage technological, operational or management innovations to mitigate aquaculture operations’ impacts and to provide assurance to consumers that producers have indeed mitigated these impacts.

Improvement – The ASC standards are reviewed and revised as deemed needed or at a minimum every five years. This allows the ASC to incorporate learning from stakeholders’ feedback and from the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) programme; and to evaluate if Criterion/Indicator design and performance levels need to be adjusted to reflect new data/science, improved practices, or new technology. ASC may use indicators to gather information and/or data when the latter is absent or inadequate to define specific (best practice or performance-based) requirements, or when needed for impact monitoring.

Rigour – The standards are structured with a logical framework comprised of high-level guiding *Principles* which directly address the ASC Mission. Criteria within each Principle address issue-areas of concern, and *Indicators* within each Criterion which define the actual performance requirements to be met for the entity to be certified. The ASC strives to define global Indicators that include metrics, based on scientific evidence, written to assess the performance of certificate holders or applicants.

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These indicators are objectively verifiable and formulated in a way that facilitates consistent understanding. Rarely does a single indicator address an impact in its totality. To address an impact thoroughly, several criteria, indicators and *requirements* need to be defined.

Engagement – Stakeholder groups are proactively engaged throughout the standard-setting process, from identifying impacts to being consulted through to the decision-making and Public Consultation stages as per ISEAL Codes. Final decisions are taken by the Board, which is also multi-stakeholder.

Transparency – Key information from the standard-setting process is made publicly available on the ASC website. The information is up to date, including the TOR, received public comments and a synopsis thereof, public draft version(s) of the standards, and the final (valid) version of the standards.

Accessibility – The standards’ requirements should strike the right balance between mitigating key impacts whilst not impeding the development of sustainable and responsible aquaculture operations. The standards should not create obstacles to trade or exclude small-scale farms from market access. ASC strives to address all barriers to engagement in the standard-setting process, for instance by translating consultation materials and organising local workshops. Standards and guidance documents are translated into different languages as deemed necessary.

9. Standard-Setting Process

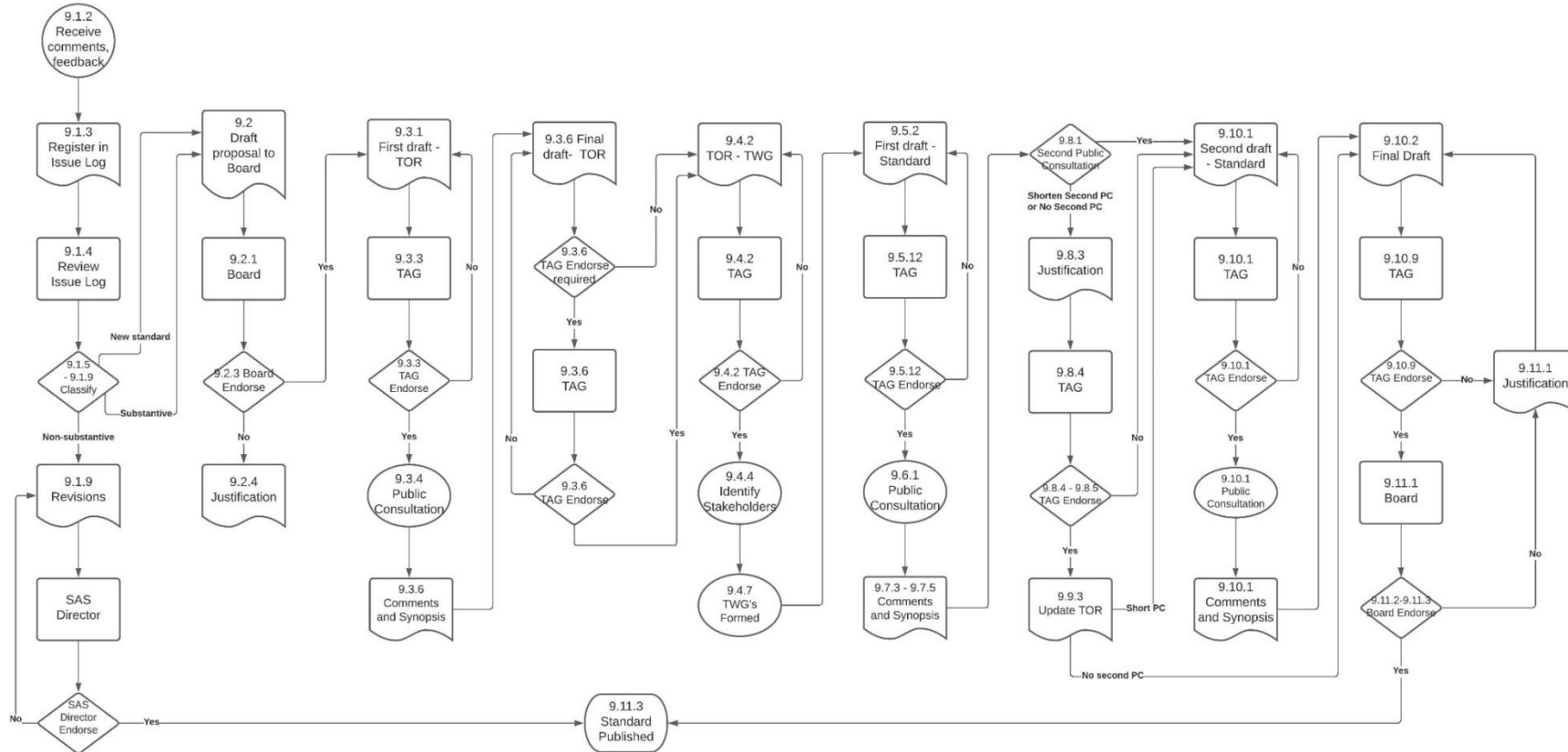
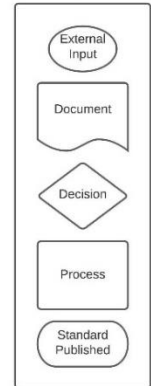
The process of setting standards at the ASC is summarised in the flowchart below. The numbers in the boxes correspond to the detailed steps in this Section 9.

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PROCEDURE – ASC Standard-Setting Procedure



Legend



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9.1 Assess needs for new standard or revision of existing one

Input:

- Existing standard
- Issue Log
- Variance Requests (VRs)
- Interpretations
- Learning from M&E
- ASC Strategic Plan and otherwise identified market needs

Output: Identified and justified needs for new standard or for revision of an existing one.

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

- 9.1.1** Standards are reviewed for continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting their stated objectives at least every five years.
- 9.1.2** Stakeholders are encouraged to share their feedback, concerns, or proposals to develop a new standard, review/revise an existing one or comment on processes and procedures. The [ASC Website](#) provides information on how to submit these.
- 9.1.3** Received feedback and proposals from stakeholders are logged centrally in the Issue Log.
- 9.1.4** The ASC Standards and Science Team regularly reviews the Issue Log to identify needs for standard development or review/revision using the Issue Log Procedure. Urgent issues are escalated for consideration and decision on whether an early review process is needed. Non-urgent issues are listed for the regular (timeline) review process.
- 9.1.5** Direct Board mandates can also trigger standard development and/or review/revisions.
- 9.1.6** The identified needs must be justifiable in terms of the ASC Mission and Vision, free-of-redundancy and, where reasonable, must facilitate increased alignment with other standards schemes.

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9.1.7 Substantive changes to the content of a standard requiring a change in practice will require the full standards development process unless otherwise stated in this procedure.

9.1.8 Non-substantive changes (e.g., wording, presentation, lay-out, etc.) can be implemented by the ASC Secretariat once endorsement is received from the Standards and Science Director, not more than annually. Additional consultation and governance advice may be needed for clarifications where an impact is expected/suspected.

9.1.9 Early review may be justified based on:

- a. New scientific development and its adoption as ‘best practice’ by industry;
- b. Information relevant to a particular standard’s uptake or implementation, but which was not previously considered;
- c. Changes to the operational practices in the sector relevant to the standard;
- d. Change in legislation where the ASC units of certification (UoCs) are based;
- e. Significant change in the supply chain.

9.1.10 The decision to undertake an early review should only be undertaken where this mitigates a high risk of ASC’s being unable to achieve its Mission and where this overrides the impact of frequent changes to the ASC certification programme.

9.1.11 For early reviews, where revisions are deemed necessary, an expedited process must be approved by the Board that incorporates the guiding principles in section 8.

9.1.12 For all new standards and revisions, using inputs listed in 9.1, the Standards and Science Director prepares a proposal including content of Annex 1 and submits this to the Board for consideration and decision. TAG is notified of the proposal submission.

9.2 Board consideration of the proposal

Input: Proposal including justification for review/revision or new standard (Annex 1)

Output: Decision on new standard development or regular/urgent revision of existing standard

Decided by: Board

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

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- 9.2.1 The Board may consult with the TAG to solicit their views on the proposal.
- 9.2.2 The decision is recorded and communicated to the TAG and the ASC Secretariat. If approved, the standard-setting process will start as soon as reasonably possible.
- 9.2.3 If the Board does not approve the proposal, it must communicate its decision with explanations in writing to the TAG and to the ASC Secretariat.

9.3 Develop/update Terms of References (TOR)

Input: Decision of the Board

Output: TOR is endorsed and made publicly available on the ASC website

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

9.3.1 Using information from the proposal drafted using Annex 1, a new TOR is developed. For revision of an existing standard, the TOR is updated.

9.3.2 The TOR includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. Proposed scope of the standard (e.g., species, production system) and intended geographic application;
- b. Justification of the need for the standard or review;
- c. Impact issues and clear social and environmental outcomes that the standard seeks to achieve and the linkage between this and the ASC Theory of Change;
- d. Assessment of risks and possible unintended consequences from implementing the standard, factors that could have a negative effect on ASC’s ability to make the change, and possible measures to address those factors and consequences;
- e. Stakeholder map identifying key stakeholder groups;
- f. Where possible, participation goals for each key stakeholder group are set and monitored over the process;
- g. Reference to major steps/milestones, including:
 - For new standard developments, two rounds of public consultation on draft versions (the first round must be 60 days, the second round may be reduced to 30 days with appropriate rationale included in the TOR);
 - For standard revisions a minimum of one 60-day consultation

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- Related decision-making;
- Timelines;
- Opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

- h. Organisational structure (i.e., TWGs) to be followed for the process, with clear decision-making authority and responsibility, recruitment requirements, and processes for members of those bodies;
- i. Decision-making process;
- j. An outline of how stakeholders can file a procedural complaint (on the standard-setting process of the standard in question) by referring to the public ASC Complaints Procedure
- k. Date of official publication of the TOR on the ASC website;
- l. Details of any non-substantive changes introduced since last substantive revision.

9.3.3 Once prepared by the Secretariat, the TOR will be submitted to the TAG for their endorsement.

9.3.4 Endorsed TOR will be announced (e.g., press release) and published on the ASC website for a 30-day public consultation. Relevant stakeholders directly notified include:

- a. Organisations that have developed similar international standards;
- b. For revisions, stakeholders engaged in previous standard-setting activities;
- c. ASC-certified entities/UoCs to which the standard, or proposed revision, is or could be relevant.

9.3.5 Depending on the (intended) geographic application of the standard(s) in question, the TOR may be translated into relevant languages to encourage participation and contribution from the most affected stakeholder groups.

9.3.6 At the end of the 30-day consultation period, the Coordinator will prepare a summary of comments, evaluate these considering in particular the scope and intended sustainability issues to be addressed, and share this with the TAG, and Board where significant change is recommended. If needed, the TOR will be adjusted and updated on the website, indicating the changes (e.g., document’s history table). Acknowledgement and notification will be sent

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to those who have commented on the TOR. The received comments will be published on the website.

9.3.7 The TOR should be reviewed regularly and updated during the active period (e.g., the development of revision phase), to reflect the progress of the standard-setting process.

9.4 Establish the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and Ad-hoc Advisory Groups (AAG)

Input: Endorsed TOR

Output: Organisational structure of the standard-setting process is established and operational

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

9.4.1 The Secretariat coordinates the recruitment process for relevant working groups (TWGs/ AAGs and internal structures).

9.4.2 The TOR for TWGs is prepared by the Secretariat and endorsed by the TAG.

9.4.3 Ad-hoc advisory groups are formed as needed throughout the process. AAGs are approved by the Standards and Science Director. The TOR will be updated accordingly.

9.4.4 The TOR will be published on the website and identified stakeholders are notified.

9.4.5 Interested stakeholders can send their application to the contact point of the process as indicated in the TOR.

9.4.6 The TWG members' composition shall aim to balance interests from the standard's key interest groups.

9.4.7 The TAG will approve the final members' list of the TWGs.

9.5 Prepare preliminary draft of the standard/revision

Input:

- Endorsed TOR
- Established organisational structure for the standard-setting process

Output: First draft of the new/revised standard

Drafted by: TWGs and ASC Secretariat

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9.5.1 The primary responsibility to draft the (new or revised) standard lies with the ASC Secretariat, guided by the relevant governance body (as determined under Section 7). The Secretariat also provides support as required, especially in terms of consistency in language used, structure, formatting, etc.

9.5.2 The (new or revised) standard has the following structure, as the minimum:

- a. Purpose and scope, including geographic scope;
 - i. Clearly and explicitly states all the defined social and environmental outcomes sought.
- b. For the defined sustainability outcome in the ASC Mission, there are:
 - i. *Principles*: high-level guiding goals needed to contribute to the ASC Mission;
 - ii. *Criteria*: impact areas of concern that together address the Principle;
 - iii. *Indicators*: defined requirement to be assessed at audit;
 - iv. *Performance level (if applicable)*: Specific performance levels to be reached.
- c. Other information on the first pages must include:
 - i. The date that the standard will come into effect and the transition period in case of revision;
 - ii. The planned date (year) of the next review;
 - iii. the formal status of the document (e.g., stage of development, version number, who approved it and when);
 - iv. The standard’s official language(s) and the specification that, in case of inconsistency, ‘the English version will prevail’;
 - v. Statement encouraging feedback and comments on the standard content by stakeholders;
 - vi. Mechanism to handle comments and feedback (e.g., standard email, contact point, how comments and feedback are handled);
 - vii. Contact details of the ASC secretariat.

9.5.3 Standard Indicators must:

- a. Be based on scientific evidence and use metric requirements to assess performance, except:
 - i. Where metrics cannot be defined, or do not provide enough assurance that impacts are systematically managed, ASC will include practice-based requirements that define

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desired outcomes and/or management system requirements that provide necessary assurances such that certified entities can achieve performance levels into the future

- ii. Where specific metric performance levels are set, the ASC Metrics Methodology should be used. However, when data are absent or inadequate, ASC may accept that performance levels be set at levels based on expert opinion or other rational argument consistent with ASC's Theory of Change. The justification for use of alternatives to the ASC Metrics Methodology, and the logic for the setting of performance levels, shall be documented in the standard;
 - iii. When information is absent, inadequate, or necessary for impact monitoring, ASC may set indicators to gather information in order to develop improved indicators at a later stage;
 - iv. ASC may establish indicators which, if absent, would negatively affect ASC's ability to deliver on its Mission. The justification for use of indicators critical to ASC's Mission, and the logic for the setting of performance levels, shall be documented in the standard.
- b. Meet or exceed existing regulatory requirements;
 - c. Respect and consider traditional knowledge where appropriate; the validity of which is objectively verifiable.

9.5.4 All original intellectual sources of content must be cited or attributed in the respective sections of the standard.

9.5.5 No particular technology, methodology or patented item is favoured.

9.5.6 Language use in the standard must be clear, specific, objective, and verifiable.

9.5.7 Sufficient guidance must be provided to support consistent interpretation, either as part of the standard or contained within a separate document.

9.5.8 If, after its release, a standard requires adaptation to local context, the standards-related Variance Request procedure will be used.

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9.5.9 The TAG endorses the first draft of the standard before it is displayed for public consultation on the ASC website.

9.6 Organise first round of public consultation

Input:

- First draft of standard (or of revised standard)
- Consultation Plan

Output: Received comments from interested stakeholders

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

9.6.1 Once the TAG has endorsed the first draft, the Secretariat will announce (through press release, ASC website announcement and via ISEAL) the public consultation period, including methods for stakeholders to submit their comments and feedback.

9.6.2 Public consultation shall be open to all stakeholders and shall aim to elicit balanced feedback consistent with the issues addressed (the subject matter) within the standard and its geographical scope.

9.6.3 In case of workshops, webinars: date, time, duration, target groups and language must be clearly specified and communicated. Evidence of these activities should be made public via the ASC-website.

9.6.4 The main objectives of feasibility assessments, if conducted, are:

- a. Validating if the presumed outcomes of the standard can be achieved;
- b. Testing the standard's feasibility and auditability.

9.6.5 Depending on the proposed geographic application of the standard and available resources, the draft standard may be translated into relevant language(s) to enable wider participation of the most affected stakeholder groups.

9.7 Prepare and publish comments received and prepare the second draft

Input: Received comments and feedback from stakeholders

Output:

- Synopsis publicly available

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- Original stakeholder comments publicly available
- Second draft of standard (or of revised standard)

Implemented by:

- ASC Secretariat
- Relevant governance body (see Section 7)

9.7.1 After the first round of public consultation period is closed, the Secretariat will compile all received comments and organise them per subject matter.

9.7.2 The Secretariat will objectively analyse the received comments and prepare written responses to stakeholders. These responses will include (but not be limited to) details as to how issues are intended to be addressed in the next draft; as well as providing justification when issues raised are deemed not applicable and/or will not be incorporated in the next draft.

9.7.3 The Secretariat will discuss consultation feedback comments with the relevant governance bodies and prepare a written synopsis of the first round of public consultation, which will be made public on the website along with original comments. Those stakeholders who have submitted comments will receive notification of the public synopsis or report of public consultation.

9.7.4 The original comments (including the name of the company/organisation) will be published together with the synopsis. The Secretariat will arrange them per subject matter. Personal names of stakeholders may not be public for anonymity purposes.

9.7.5 Concurrently, the Secretariat and TWGs continue working on the next draft considering relevant comments received and as per the synopsis.

9.8 Decide on second public consultation

Input:

- Synopsis
- Second draft standard

Output: Decision to have a regular second 60-days consultation, or not

Decided by: TAG

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- 9.8.1** The second round may be shortened from 60 days to at least 30 days if:
- a. There are no objections or substantial comments in the first round;
 - b. There is sufficiently balanced participation by key stakeholder groups (participation goals achieved).
- 9.8.2** For revisions with low impact on standard users (to be determined by the relevant governance body), the second public consultation may be skipped.
- 9.8.3** Consensus on shortening or skipping the second round must be reached within and among the TWG(s). A proposal to suggest that the second round of public consultation may be skipped, or for a shortened period, shall be submitted to TAG. Unless a proposal is made to TAG, a regular 60-days second round of public consultation will take place.
- 9.8.4** The TAG decides to accept or reject the proposal. In case of rejection, the TAG must communicate its decision in writing to the Secretariat.
- 9.8.5** The TAG endorses the second draft of the standard (or revised standard) before it is put up for public consultation on the ASC website.

9.9 Organise second round of public consultation

Input:

- Second draft
- Decision on the second round

Output: Received comments from interested stakeholders

Coordinated by: ASC Secretariat

- 9.9.1** The second public consultation round is then announced and implemented as per the above 9.6 steps.
- 9.9.2** If the consultation period is shortened the TOR for the standard-setting process is updated accordingly.

9.10 Prepare and publish comments received and prepare the final draft

Input: Received comments and feedback from the second round

Output:

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- Second synopsis publicly available
- Original stakeholder comments publicly available
- Final draft endorsed by the TAG

Implemented by:

- ASC Secretariat

9.10.1 The Secretariat repeats steps 9.7.1-9.7.5.

9.10.2 The Secretariat makes sure that final draft is complete in terms of content, presentation as well as other details as mentioned in the above 9.5 steps.

9.10.3 When proposing the effective date of a new standard, the time needed to operationalise the standard (e.g., guidance documents, training, translation etc.) needs to be considered to offer a realistic timeframe. The standard (or new version of) should become effective not more than 12 months following approval.

9.10.4 Regarding the local/regional interpretations, consideration should be given to:

- a. Fundamental climatic, geographic, or technological factors;
- b. Local economic conditions;
- c. (Stricter) regulatory conditions;
- d. Cultural factors.

9.10.5 Should it be deemed that local/regional interpretations will be necessary, procedures must be developed to provide guidance for the interpretation work (i.e., how to consider the local conditions while remaining consistent with the intent of the standard across the regions, what and how stakeholder groups should participate in standard interpretation).

9.10.6 The length of the transition period depends on the extent of changes introduced and time needed for adaption.

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9.10.7 Additional public consultation should be carried out for new or revised standards where:

- a. Substantive unresolved issues persist even after the second round, or
- b. Insufficient feedback is received, especially from the most affected stakeholder groups.

9.10.8 The final draft together with a proposed transition period (in case of revision) are submitted to the relevant governance body for endorsement.

9.10.9 The TAG decides whether further public consultation is needed. Where this is the case, repeat the step 9.6 or 9.9; respectively until remaining issues are resolved or engagement with stakeholders cannot realistically be expected to achieve consensus.

9.11 Approve the final draft

Input: Final draft by the relevant governance body

Output:

- The final draft is recommended by TAG for approval by Board
- The final draft is approved by Board

Approved by: TAG and Board

9.11.1 TAG will review the final draft and recommend it for approval by Board. TAG will record and report minority views where consensus is not achieved. If the TAG does not recommend the final draft, it must communicate its justifiable position in writing to the Board, TWGs and to the Secretariat.

9.11.2 The Board may consult with the TAG before approving or not the final draft. If the Board does not approve the final draft, it must communicate its justifiable position in writing to TAG.

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9.11.3 Once approved, the new/revised standard is promptly made available on the website. An announcement is made communicating the standard’s release to stakeholders, in particular certification accreditation bodies (CABs) and certified enterprises (UoCs).

9.11.4 If reasonably requested, the Secretariat will provide hard copies of the standard and related documents at cost.

10. Records

10.1 For each standard-setting and revision process the following records are retained:

- a. The TOR for the process;
- b. The TOR for process bodies (TWGs);
- c. All stakeholder comments received; including a synopsis or synopses of how the comments were considered by the Secretariat and original ASC responses to stakeholders comments;
- d. Stakeholder participation monitoring;
- e. The draft of standards (or of revised standards);
- f. Decision(s) and justification(s) for either shortening or skipping the second round of public consultation; and/or the decision to opt for additional (third or more) public consultations;
- g. Announcements (press release) for launching and communicating upon the process, for each consultation round as well as for the final standard (or revised standard);
- h. Minutes of meetings of the governance bodies.

10.2 Records will be available on the ASC website for five years after the standard (or revised standard) has come into effect.

11. Maintenance

11.1 This Standard-Setting Procedure is open for public comments. Interested stakeholders are invited to send any comments to standards@asc-aqua.org.

11.2 Comments received, together with feedback and advice from each process will be considered when reviewing and revising the procedure.

11.3 Reviews shall take place at least every five years.

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11.4 Those stakeholders who have sent comments will be notified so that they know that their feedback is considered.

12. Complaint Mechanisms

12.1 There are two types of complaint in the context of standard-setting:

- a. Content-related;
- b. Process-related.

12.2 Content-related complaints regarding ASC standards are considered as stakeholder comments or feedback taken into consideration when the standards are reviewed and revised as described in step 9.1 above.

12.3 Process-related complaints on how standard is developed or reviewed/revised are handled according to the ASC's Complaints Procedure, which is available on the [website](#).

12.4 Records of any complaints concerning the standard-setting process will be retained by the ASC Secretariat for at least 6 years. Interested parties can request a copy of these records, including decisions taken in conjunction with such complaints.

13. Contact Information

Standards and Science Team

Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)

Daalseplein 101,

3511 SX Utrecht, the Netherlands

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14. Amendment History

Date:	Version:	Summary of Amendment:
17.11.2014	1.0	Release new document
	2.0	Revision to reflect ISEAL Standard-Setting Code v6.0 the ASC 2019 governance review and current ASC practice. Non-substantive changes to improve document clarity also incorporated.

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15. Annex 1: Content Needed for Proposals for New Standards or Revisions of Standards

- a. A justification of the need for a new/revised standard, including an assessment of how the proposed standard will meet that need ;
- b. For revisions, a justification for the need for revision including outcomes consistent with ASC standards’ attributes outlined in section 8;
- c. Detail any previous proposals, discussions or governance decisions relating to the proposed document;
- d. Specification of aims and objectives of the standard, referring to the contribution to delivery of ASC’s strategic plan;
- e. Clearly state the environmental, social, or economic impacts the standard seeks to address and intended outcomes;
- f. Explanation of how the aims and objectives contribute to ASC’s Mission;
- g. Describe how the proposed standard relates to other ASC normative documents and analysis of the likely impact it will have on them;
- h. Include an assessment of risks in implementing the standard and how to mitigate these, including identification of factors that could negatively impact on the ability of the proposed standard to achieve its objectives; unintended consequences that could arise from its implementation; and possible mitigation measures that could be taken to address these potential risks
- i. The results of a stakeholder mapping exercise or updated version of an existing stakeholder map to identify all stakeholders that will be affected by the new normative document and the potential impacts the latter may have on them;
- j. Consultation Plan including stakeholder participation goals to establish clear targets for stakeholder engagement (see Annex 2);
- k. Recommendation for whether feasibility testing should be completed;
- l. The potential resources including budget for the proposed standard development process.

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16. Annex 2: Content Needed for Consultation Plan

A Consultation Plan shall be developed to guide stakeholder engagement throughout the standard development process, including (but not necessarily limited to):

- a. Consultation objectives;
- b. Stakeholder map identifying stakeholder groups, their interest/concerns/expertise in focus of the standard; their geographic locations, languages spoken, barriers to engagement
- c. Participation plan including strategies to communicate and engage each identified group with particular focus on the most affected and under-represented/hard-to-reach stakeholder groups;
- d. Deliverables;
- e. Translation needs.

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