

## **Terms of Reference for the formation of the Technical Working Group on ASC Certification requirements for sampling and testing.**

### **1. Background**

#### **The ASC**

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.

For more information please visit <https://www.asc-aqua.org/about-us/about-the-asc/>

### **2. CAR Review**

As a full ISEAL Alliance member, ASC is required to review, and revise its standards every 5 years. The last revision of the CAR was issued in December 2015 with version 2.0. Subsequent additions to the CAR were the requirements for multi-site certification (v2.1 in August 2017) and group certification (v2.2 in April 2019).

During the implementation of the ASC certification program, there were detected some areas not currently addressed in the ASC certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) or ASC standards, showing the need to include requirements covering these areas to increase the rigour of the certification program.

The next CAR review is intended to go to public consultation in August-September 2020 to be issued in 2021 first quarter.

### **3. Sampling and testing at ASC audits**

The current ASC standards and the coming ASC feed standard include several indicators which rely on feed information related to its composition in terms of nitrogen, phosphorus, marine species, fishmeal/oil content and protein level.

Group certification requirements in the current CAR v2.2, clause F 3.4 asks CABs to develop procedures on how to decide whether to and how to take samples of products.

ASC Shrimp Standard limits the use of antibiotics for products sold as certified and also requires feed sampling if farms want to claim that the feed used is GMO free.

Additionally, there are several metrics indicators among the ASC standards, which require farms and CABs the sampling and testing of different parameters in water, sediments and sludge.

The following table describe some examples of the products and standards where are required values or monitoring on several parameters to demonstrate compliance against the respective ASC indicators.

Product / Matrix	Standard	Parameters
Seafood	All	No Banned antibiotics No critically important antibiotics No GMO
	Shrimp	No Antibiotics
Water	All (except bivalves) Shrimp, Tilapia, Trout, Salmon Tilapia and trout	Dissolved Oxygen Saturation Nitrogen and Phosphorus Dissolved solids, Chlorophyll, turbidity, pH, conductivity.
	Shrimp and tilapia	Well water conductivity
Sediments	Salmon	Redox, Sulphides, Bentic fauna
	Bivalves	Sulphides
	Trout	Macroinvertebrates
Sludge	Trout	Phosphorus
	Shrimp	Conductivity
Soil	Shrimp	Conductivity
Feed	All	Fishmeal, nitrogen and phosphorus content
	Shrimp	GMO content, protein

Finally, as part of investigation of incidents related to the presence of antibiotics in ASC certified shrimps, it where collected and tested feed and aquaculture inputs.

#### 4. Scope and objectives Technical Working Group (TWG) for sampling and testing

The main objective of the TWG is to develop aligned requirements for CABs and Units of Certification for sampling and testing aquaculture products and other elements already established in the ASC standards and as a toll to evaluate compliance during audits.

The development of such requirements will require the input from external professionals with expertise in food/aquaculture industry and certification processes which need sampling and testing as tool to demonstrate compliance.

These requirements should cover at least the following:

- Frequency based on risk
- Number of samples
- Sample preservation and chain of custody
- Testing methodologies
- Laboratories accreditations
- Results confidentiality

#### 5. TWG members

The TWG needs to collect expertise among their members to provide practical, realistic and auditable requirements which bring robustness to the certification program.

The technical working group should be formed by 4 to 6 members having together the following expertise

- 4 years in Food industry implementing procedures for product sampling and testing
- 4 years implementing aquaculture certification schemes

## 6. TWG plan

The following table describe the expected timelines for the TWG and deliverables

Activity	February		March		April		May	
Invitation to TWG potential members	x							
Background paper and Draft requirements structure		x						
TWG first meeting					x			
Requirements first draft					x			
TWG second meeting						x		
Final draft						x		
Submission to the ASC TAG							x	

## 7. Meetings:

- Preparation for meetings will require the review of background documents.
- 2 meetings will be conducted via teleconferences (skype or gotomeeting). Duration 2 hours.
- Meetings schedules will be consulted with the TWG members in advance.
- Meetings will be conducted with at least ¾ of members. Members not able to attend can provide input on tables per subject.

## 8. Conditions

The participation in the technical working group is voluntary. Your names will be published on our website unless instructed otherwise by you.

## 9. Contact information

If you are interested in participate in this technical working group please send your CV together with a paragraph which describes your motivation to be part of this TWG to:

efrain.calderon@asc-aqua.org