ASC Improver Programme

The responsible choice for farmed seafood
Since the first farm gained ASC certification in August 2012, the growth of the ASC programme has been phenomenal. At the start of 2021, over 1,300 farms had achieved ASC certification, with ASC-labelled products rapidly increasing in number and market reach. Further uptake in both established as well as emerging markets is expected in the coming years.

The ASC standards set principles, criteria, indicators, and measurable performance levels for responsible aquaculture with regard to social and environmental issues. However, the implementation of these standards at the farms is a responsibility of the producers, where smaller operations may have constraints on financial or technical resources. To help bridge this gap, we have developed the ASC Improver Programme (ASC IP) to increase accessibility to the ASC certification or to improve aquaculture to more responsible practices at these small or less technified producers. The ASC IP put together a set of procedures and tools to ensure that ASC standards or practice improvements are consistently and effectively implemented by the producers.

Our objectives

The objectives of ASC’s Improver Programme are as follows:

1. To develop technical tools and supportive networks that will provide assurance and the range of services needed by producers to make improvements to their aquaculture production at scale. This will allow producers:
   a. to implement better practices and mitigate environmental and social impacts associated with their aquaculture production; and
   b. to get recognition for verified improvements against the ASC standards.

2. To engage government and stakeholder partners to facilitate the deployment of resources and support the development of efficient approaches for improvement.

How it works

The programme is developed for producers who are not yet ASC certified but want to show that they are improving their performance, using the tools and systems that ASC has designed to create a credible pathway for improvement.

Producers can choose two tracks for their Aquaculture Improvement Project (AIP):

1. AIP to ASC Certification: This track is aimed at defining a plan of 4 phases to improve performance to a level where the producer is certifiable by the end of the AIP.
2. AIP to Better Practices: This second track is designed to facilitate producers who wish to not become certified but want to improve responsible practices in specific environmental or social areas.

Key steps for an AIP as laid out in the ASC IP requirements are:

- Application and determination of eligibility
- Establishment of baseline performance through a gap analysis
- Development of a timebound action plan for improvement (maximum 3 years)
- Reporting against AIP goals following a set of essential, mandatory, and optional indicators and collection of data to report against metrics, and
- Independent verification of performance and progress.

Participation in the programme provides access to ASC trained and qualified implementers, appointed by the AIP and listed on the ASC website. It also provides access toASC trained and qualified verifiers, appointed by ASC and independent from the AIP.
What are the benefits for you?

As a producer
• Listed on ASC website as being ‘in improvement’
• Access to support tools and network
• Part of ASC’s promotional portfolio
• Recognition for transparent operations
• Make claims in relation to AIP participation

As a supplier / retailer
• Support for producer in your supply chain through tools and network
• Independent verification of progress
• Association with the ASC programme
• Make claims in relation to AIP participation

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