

Aquaculture Stewardship Council and Marine Stewardship Council

ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Audit Announcement Template

Surveillance audit

Version 1.0 (Issued 8 December 2017)



Aquaculture
Stewardship
Council



Scheme documents:

ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Standard

ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Certification and Accreditation Requirements

This document is to be cited as:

ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Audit Announcement Template v2.0

Versions issued

Version no.	Date	Description of amendment
1.0	08 December 2017	N/A – new document



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Production unit details

Name of the production unit	Veramaris LLC. Blair, Nebraska, United States.
Target species common name/s	No common name.
Species Latin name	Schizochytrium spp..
Production system	Production of omega-3 oils from marine microalgae via a fermentation process.
Location of the production unit	Fermentation production facility in Blair, NE located within Evonik of Cargill's BioRefinery campus (Land Based). Blair is >1,000 km from both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
Stock Region	Not applicable. The production unit is not harvesting natural populations of seaweeds (categories A, Bi and Ci).
Receiving water body	Not applicable.
Clients part of the production unit	Evonik of Cargill's BioRefinery campus cultures the target species under contract from Veramaris LLC.
Facilities	Veramaris LLC. fermentation production facility in Blair, NE located within Evonik of Cargill's BioRefinery campus
Unit of Certification (if different)	Not applicable.
Harvest season	Continuous.
Management system	<p>Production is undertaken, and management measures implemented, in accordance within a legislative framework defined by various international and U.S Federal and State Laws and Regulations including the following (note this is not an exhaustive list).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – International Laws: International Charter of Human Rights, UN Global Compact, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, International Labor Organization (ILO). – United States Laws: US Department of Labor Laws, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Civil Rights Act, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act. State of Nebraska Labor Laws: Nebraska Wage and Hour Act. – City of Blair Laws: Local building permits & City of Blair ordinances (Noise ordinance).
Seaweed category	C _{ii} – cultivation entirely in land-based systems: supply of seed from wild stocks NOT required or negligible.
Statement that the production unit is within scope	<p>Global Trust confirms that production unit entering assessment meets the scope requirements in Section 2 of the Seaweed Standard as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The 'target species' is a seaweed. – The production unit to be assessed is solely dedicated to seaweed production and does not impact any other production units in scope for assessment under the existing ASC or MSC standards. – While production involves a species of marine algae that is not native to Nebraska, the species is cultured in on-land facilities that are completely separated from the aquatic environment. Even were this not the case the species, being a deep sea marine microalgae, would have no chance of survival if released. – The organisation seeking certification has been in operation for at least 12 months and more than one harvest cycle. – The organisation seeking certification has available records of performance data covering the periods of time specified in the ASC-MSC Standard. – The production unit does not use mutagenic, carcinogenic or teratogenic pesticides, or any other chemicals that persist as toxins in the marine environment or on the farm or farmed seaweeds.
Production unit operators	Evonik of Cargill's BioRefinery campus cultures the target species under contract from Veramaris LLC.

Information to identify Micro family business	The organisation seeking certification is not a micro family business.
Harvest/production data	<p>TBD at audit as this is a relatively new facility.</p> <p>The Veramaris facility's initial production capacity of Omega-3 fatty acids rich in EPA & DHA is equivalent to that derived from 1.2 million tons of wild-caught fish and should meet approx. 15% of the annual global demand for Omega-3 fatty acids from the salmon aquaculture sector.</p>
History of the Production unit	The production unit itself has been in operation for many years producing amino acids for the agriculture sector. In recent years a portion of the facility has been given over to the production of Omega 3 oils for use in aquaculture feed which is the production process to be audited here. Veramaris selected Evonik's existing site in Blair, NE to take advantage of the existing fermentative production capacity at the site and the favourable site infrastructure. Veramaris' production is zero-waste with by-products being used in sustainable applications, such as biogas and cattle feed.
Other production unit in the area	Not applicable.
Main commercial market	The main seaweed products resulting from the production unit are Omega-3 fatty acids rich in EPA & DHA. The primary market within which these products are/will be sold is for use in aquaculture feed. Information on relative market share information is not available.
Any other information the CAB wishes to provide (including any specific issues within the production unit that need to be highlighted).	

Audit details

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	Global Trust Certification
	Guillermo Ganoza
	Aoife Rice
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	3rd Floor, Block 3, Quayside Business Park, Mill Street, Dundalk. Co. Louth, Ireland
Client	Veramaris (USA) LLC.
	Neil Leininger
	General Manager
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	+1 402 237-3624
	P.O. Box 197, 650 Industrial Park Drive, Blair, NE 68008, USA
Type of audit	surveillance
Estimated length of the audit and timeline	The audit is expected to take approximately 6 mandays to complete. The site visit portion of the audit will conclude on 13 August 2022 and a report will be submitted to the ASC-MSC for posting on their website within 60 days.
Team Leader	<u>Guillermo Ganoza - Lead Auditor and Technical Auditor</u> Guillermo will be responsible for leading the audit as well as auditing the technical components; this has been approved by the ASC-MSC via VR007 . Global Trust confirms that Guillermo has no conflicts of interest in relation to the production unit under assessment.
Proposed assessors	<u>Guillermo Ganoza – Social Auditor</u> Guillermo will be responsible for social components of the audit. Guillermo meets the relevant competency criteria in Annex A of the ASC-MSC CAR as follows; he has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) in a discipline related to the scope of certification, – Knowledge of the purpose and procedure of conducting audits through extensive auditing experience including in ASC. – Been trained and is competent in accordance with Global Trust procedures as needed for the role that he is undertake. – Completed a qualifying social audit qualification as specified in ASC CAR §A.4.1. – Participated in at least two audits in agriculture or aquaculture including at least two ASC social audits in the past year. – Knowledge of local labour and human rights legislation, familiarity with local customs, good spoken and written English (i.e. the primary local language) and is able (through his extensive experience) to manage relationships with workers and managers.
Site visit Date	10 – 13 August 2022
Location and date of site visit	Blair, Nebraska, USA, 10 – 13 August 2022
Stakeholders	See Form 12a attached.
Invitation for stakeholders	“A key purpose of the site visit is to collect information and speak to stakeholders with an interest in the production unit. For those parts of the assessment involving the Risk-Based Framework (RBF) we will be using a stakeholder-driven, qualitative and semi-quantitative analysis during the site visit. To achieve a robust outcome from this consultative approach, we rely heavily on participation of a broad range of stakeholders with a balance of knowledge of the production unit. We encourage any stakeholders with experience or knowledge of the production unit to participate in these meetings.”

Stakeholders that do not wish or are not able to be interviewed at the site visit may send written information to the team. [CAR, 17.6.6.1]

Chain of Custody information

Identify if the following risks are currently or potentially applicable	Description of risk factor if present.	Describe any traceability, segregation, or other systems in place to manage the risk.
a. The possibility of mixing or substitution of certified and non-certified product, including product of the same or similar appearance or species, produced within the same UoA.	No risk. The facility only produces the product to be assessed.	
b. The possibility of mixing or substitution of certified and non-certified product, type of production/harvest, including product of the same or similar appearance or species, present during production, harvest, transport, storage, or processing activities.	Possible risk downstream in chains but not prior to entry to Chain of Custody. The facility only produces the product to be assessed.	
c. The possibility of subcontractors being used to handle, transport, store, or process certified products.	Unclear. To be determined at site visit.	
d. Any other opportunities where certified product could potentially be mixed, substituted, or mislabelled with non-certified product before the point where product enters the Chain of Custody.	As above, the facility only produces the product to be assessed such that there are no opportunities for certified product to be mixed, substituted, or mislabelled with non-certified product before entry to the Chain of Custody.	

CVs of audit team

Lead, Technical and Social auditor – Guillermo Ganoza

Guillermo Ganoza is a vastly experienced auditor in various types of social and agriculture standards including multiple ASC Social Audits going back to 2013. He also previously participated as the Social Auditor during the initial audit of the Veramaris facility.

Overall, Guillermo has:

- At least a post-high school diploma in a discipline related to the scope of certification (BSc in Forestry Engineering) and ≥ 2 years' experience relevant to the operation (e.g. +9 years conducting ASC Social Audits).
- Has passed the ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard Social Online Training.
- Has passed the ASC Traceability module.
- Has completed an appropriate Lead Assessor training course (ISO 9001 Course Lead Auditor, 2017).
- Has >>25 days site visit experience for social compliance.
- Has undertaken a large number of audits alongside ASC Lead Auditors.
- Has conducted >>5 ASC audits and been a member of aquaculture audit teams for >>10 audit days.

Since 2007, he has been involved in sustainable programmes in coffee, cocoa, grapes, blueberries, flowers, hazelnuts, apples, honey and quinoa including Rainforest Alliance, Fair Trade USA, Sustainably Grown, Equitable Food Initiative (EFI) and Veriflora across Latin America. He has also performed social audits for the ASC Salmon, Seriola and Cobia, Shrimp, Tilapia and Bivalve Standards as well as an ASC-MSC social audit. Overall, he has a deep understanding of the internal, social and environmental management systems of producer organizations.

VR007 – ASC-MSC response



Aquaculture
Stewardship
Council



Sam Dignan
Global Trust Certification Ltd.

Sent by email

Date: 12/5/2022

Dear Sam,

I write with reference to your submission on 9/5/2022 of a request for variation to the ASC-MSC Seaweed Certification and Accreditation Requirement (CAR) to allow:

An assessor to act as a Lead Auditor and Technical Auditor for ASC-MSC category Cii for land-based facilities based on his extensive experience as an auditor including as a Social Auditor and as a Lead Auditor in other auditor schemes.

As you are aware, the CAR procedures relating to A.3.2.b.i state:

For audits involving farmed seaweed only (production categories Cii and Cii in Table 2 of the Standard), the individual shall have:

- i. Undertaken at least two satisfactory audits as an acting audit team leader, shadowed by and under the supervision of a competent team leader.

These are integral to ensuring all ASC-MSC accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in a consistent and transparent manner. The ASC-MSC intends that these requirements be met across all seaweed operations and CoC certificate holders, except in exceptional, well-justified circumstances, as part of the ASC-MSC programme.

ASC-MSC notes the factors presented supporting your request, including:

- It is difficult to find competent auditors that meet the ASC-MSC competencies requirements specified in Annex A of the Seaweed CAR.
- ASC-MSC's clarification via Interpretation 4 is that the intent of this requirement is that an auditor has the skills needed to evaluate the operation and understand its functioning
- The assessor in question is a vastly experienced auditor and lead in all kinds of social and agriculture standards, and has a deep understanding of the internal, social, and environmental management systems of producer organisations
- The assessor was part of the assessment team of the initial audit.
- The assessor in question has been active team member of several ASC aquaculture farm audits.

Given the rationale provided, the ASC-MSC is willing to grant a variation to the CAR.

With the following conditions:

- This variation shall not be taken as precedent for similar situations in the future.

If you have any questions regarding this response, please do not hesitate to contact the Seaweed Accounts Manager

Marine Stewardship Council
cc: Assurance Services International

Template information and copyright

This document was drafted using the 'ASC-MSC Seaweed (Algae) Audit Announcement Template'. According to the template instructions, the Audit Announcement Template may be formatted to comply with the CAB corporate identity as long as the structure and content of the various template sections is followed.

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