

ASC Technical Advisory Group Public Meeting Summary



18 – 21 January 2022 – Video conference

Attendees:

Petter Arnesen (Chair), Kevan Main (Vice-chair), Peter Cook, Halley Froelich, Crawford Review, Neil Sims, Peter Tyedmers, Claudia Venegas, Weiwei You, Rochelle Zaid, Paul Macintyre (non-voting CAB member)

Observers:

Merrielle Macleod (ASC Supervisory Board Member - TAG liaison), Scott Nichols (ASC Supervisory Board Chair), Alison Roel (MSC) only during CoC Module presentation on 18 January

Apologies:

Dane Klinger, Peter Cook only on 18 January, Halley Froelich (Days 3-4)

The 24th meeting of ASC's Technical Advisory Group was held via video conference because of ongoing Covid pandemic travel restrictions.

Day 1

The first day of the TAG meeting focussed on final reviews of assurance programme developments. The Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) and the Requirements for the Unit of Certification (RUoC) developed to provide an assurance system for the ASC's new Feed Standard were presented. TAG considered feedback from a public consultation and pilot audits held in Q3-Q4 2021 and ASC's revised documentation. Outstanding work to develop a Country Risk Scorecard for evaluating supply chain risk was summarised. The TAG unanimously voted for the **Feed CAR and RUoC** to be recommended to the ASC Supervisory Board for approval.

The ASC CoC Module, designed for use in addition to the MSC CoC Standard in the ASC supply chain was also presented for final review. Again, consultation feedback and subsequent refinements to the proposal were presented, along with anticipated impacts of the

module's introduction. Alison Roel from MSC's Product Integrity Team observed this session. TAG commended the strong engagement and diligent approach taken to the development of this product. ASC confirmed further development work was underway on the system to support the ineligibility criteria introduced within the module. The TAG unanimously voted for the ASC CoC Module to be recommended to the ASC Supervisory Board for final approval along with a 12-month transition period to allow existing certificate holders time to adapt to new requirements.

ASC briefly introduced the next development to the assurance system which will be a revision of the CAR to accompany the ASC Farm Standard in development.

Day 2-4

The focus of the remainder of the meeting was the upcoming public consultation on **ASC's Farm Standard**, aligning existing content of species standards along with new insights for some topics into a single Farm Standard. TAG were asked to consider proposals for standard content and the associated plans for consultation to ensure planned engagement would provide adequate insights to proceed with further development or finalisation of proposals.

The consultation will run from March-April, over 60 days, and seek to engage a representative sample of ASC Standards' stakeholders. TAG were provided an outline of plans and some of the tools in development to support stakeholders' engagement and help them better understand what changes may be relevant for them.

Each topic has a dedicated TAG sponsor that spoke to the proposals following introduction by ASC staff. The table below includes the topics covered and the main themes of any discussion. All Criteria were endorsed unanimously by TAG to proceed to consultation with the plans presented unless stated in the table.

Standard Criteria (topic)	Discussion summary
Criterion 2.2: Ecologically Important Habitats (2nd consultation)	Revised proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Criterion 2.3: Wildlife Interactions (2nd consultation)	Discussion focussed on incidental bird mortality and how this should be separated from elasmobranch and mammal mortality with an acceptance that bird entanglements occur. Consultation should include specific questions around how incidental bird mortality should be handled in the standard.
Criterion 2.4: Non-natives (2nd consultation)	Revised proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Criterion 2.5: Escapes (2nd consultation)	Revised proposals following the previous consultation were presented. TAG noted the difficulty of this topic and complexities in finding a solution. TAG noted the varying factors affecting different species and the uncertainty calculations associated with using percentages for escapes as part of the proposal. Further studies in the pilot phase were suggested and TAG would review feedback following consultation.
Criterion 2.6: Benthic Impacts (2nd consultation + new content)	Revised proposals for benthic impacts applicable to marine cages were presented along with an approach for a revised indicator for freshwater systems. TAG supported proposals and the whitepaper that explained the approach.
Criterion 2.7: Water Quality (1st consultation)	Proposals were presented covering lakes and reservoirs. Development of proposals is iterative as a result of the magnitude of the topic and complexities for different situation assessed. TAG highlighted their expectation that significant feedback would be received on feasibility of proposals which would be important to evaluate. *One member abstained from voting citing concerns about the direction and implications for cost and complexity.
Criterion 2.8: Salinisation (2nd consultation)	Revised proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Criterion 2.9: Biosolids (2nd consultation)	TAG questioned the ability to verify the adequacy of disposal. ASC clarified records would be needed but further proof was not expected.
Criterion 2.10: Freshwater Use (2nd consultation)	Revised proposals presented, no substantive discussion.

Standard Criteria (topic)	Discussion summary
Criterion 2.11: Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (2nd consultation)	There was considerable interest in the 'Chicken-based concept' produced to evaluate when Energy Efficiency Management Plans would become mandatory for farms. Further discussion would be offered out of session.
Criterion 2.12: Material Use, Waste and Pollution Control (1st consultation)	Revised proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Criterion 2.13: Feed (1st consultation)	In discussion on this proposed Criterion TAG identified several issues where changes were required prior to consultation. These included the consideration of seaweed, wet feed and feeding of other species. TAG voted out of session to endorse a revised proposal following the meeting.
Criterion 2.14: Fish Health (1st consultation)	Frequency of veterinarian visits required was held to be too infrequent and should be increased to monthly.
Criterion 2.15: Parasite Control (including Salmon Standard Revision – Sea lice) (2nd consultation)	TAG noted their support for the TWGs recommendations for regional sea lice approaches. TAG discussed the exemptions from proposed sampling requirements and advised these were clarified. Sanctions for exceeding sea lice limits were also discussed and would be addressed by the TWG. Intermediate site treatments were confirmed to be out of scope of the limits discussed as part of this indicator.
Criterion 2.16: Antibiotics and other veterinary drugs (2nd consultation)	TAG discussion noted the importance of this issue for stakeholders. The approach proposed was supported but note was taken of the potential challenges in application and achieving the reduction of antibiotic use over time. The TWG also highlighted this issue.
Criterion 2.17: Hatcheries and Intermediate Sites (1st consultation)	TAG considered a new proposal for assessing intermediate sites, extending the scope of the ASC Farm Standard. This would rely on internal audits. The changes would imply additional investment for many farms so requirements should be carefully evaluated.
Criterion 2.18: Area based management (ABM) (1st consultation)	A TAG sponsor was sought for this new topic that would be presented for consultation.
Principle 1 and Principle 3 (additional consultation)	An additional consultation was proposed on changes made to Principles 1 and 3. Additional changes were made to ensure alignment with the Social Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) benchmark which is increasingly recognised. TAG questioned the planned consultation questions on overtime requirements and additional clarification was provided.
Annex 1: Species performance levels	Proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Annex 2: Data recording and submissions	Proposals presented, no substantive discussion.
Annex 3: Risk Management Framework (RMF) <i>RMF will be an online tool (app) that farms can use to assess and address their risks regarding environmental and social impacts. This will be required in several parts of the standard.</i>	Discussion around the competency of those using the RMF. TAG noted the scope includes environmental, social and health and safety risks all of which may require different skills in risk assessment.
Critical Indicators	Revised proposal for assigning critical indicators for most serious issues where special sanctions may be needed was presented. This focussed on only forced and child labour, requiring remediation where issues found. TAG recommended addition of a third issue fraud/forgery. It was agreed to add a question about this to the planned consultation. Clarification regarding the implications of critical non-conformities for certificate suspension was agreed to be added to provide additional clarity for auditors.

Next steps

TAG will next meet formally in July 2022 to consider the feedback received in the public consultation and revisions proposed.