

# ASC Annual Report

## Transforming Aquaculture

Continued improvements, programme developments and driving awareness in support of our mission.

2021



## From our CEO

**As we look back on 2021 and reflect on 10 years since the first aquaculture farm achieved ASC certification, we celebrate the growing recognition for responsible aquaculture and our partners and stakeholders that continue to support our mission and challenge us to drive improvements.**

The ASC programme promotes industry best practice to minimise the environmental and social footprint of commercial aquaculture. While this past year looked a bit different, it challenged ASC's innovation to continue to promote our programme and ASC-labelled products in new ways to reach our audiences, drive improvements to our systems and invest in our organisation.

In 2021, ASC's certification and labelling programme, despite the global impacts

of the ongoing COVID pandemic, continued to grow. Farm certification expanded with strong growth in uptake and use of the ASC logo on certified products in key markets. ASC continued to have an influential and beneficial impact on the operation of the global aquaculture industry, at a time when the global seafood sector was faced with serious challenges. Supply chain services that ASC offered to the seafood industry throughout 2021 continue to be taken up and used worldwide.

ASC continued to operate 11 species-specific farm standards and a joint ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard, globally applicable where relevant fish and algae are farmed. We look towards the future with the launch of the ASC Feed Standard v1.0 addressing all major impacts of feed ingredient production and feed chain supply traceability. While no new standards for farming operations were released in 2021, work continued with revisions to the Shrimp Standard to add new species and the development of the Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) module covers all existing species recognised under ASC farm standards. We continued development and consultation of the Farm Standard and streamlining of our assessment procedures to drive further efficiencies for our farmers and certification

companies. Collectively, the work of our certification programme delivered on ASC's ongoing commitment to continuously improve standards and adapt to changes in knowledge and in the industry.

Interest in ASC certification continued globally, and in 2021, ASC-certified farms were present in 47 different countries and territories. The interest in ASC-labelled products continued to show solid growth, supported by commercial and other partners responsible for the delivery into the market. This visibility is possible through certification against the Marine Stewardship Council's Supply Chain Standard for all companies handling ASC products. This collaboration brings many benefits to our supply chain partners since 85% of them handle both certified farmed and wild products.

Promotion of the ASC programme and labelled products are critical to ASC's work. While most international and domestic events were curtailed in 2021, ASC relied on representation by our local teams. ASC delivered an increasing number of specially devised campaigns to maximise digital delivery, aimed at building awareness and understanding of the ASC logo, particularly amongst consumers. Partner-leveraged marketing campaigns, promoting the ASC to millions of consumers worldwide, were carried out in Australia, France, Japan, Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, with plans to extend to other markets, including the United States and Canada.

ASC found opportunity to strengthen and further develop our organisation. Due to the growth in demand for ASC services, we expanded our staff capacity over time. Delivering on

planned re-structuring, 2021 saw the establishment of a Brand team and the post of Senior Director of Markets and Communication, together strengthening ASC's reputation and developing marketing capabilities. Work was undertaken to expand internal and external communication and engagement, thereby strengthening ASC's culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Looking ahead, we are excited about continued improvements, programme developments and increasing awareness in support of our mission. In this, our first Annual Report, ASC shares our successes and challenges from 2021 and looks forward to demonstrating continued progress annually.



Chris Ninnes, CEO

# Contents

From our CEO	02
2021 by the Numbers	08
Programme Improvements	12
Species Spotlight	20
Driving Improvements for People & the Environment	28
Driving Awareness	36
Programme Integrity	46
Engaging Stakeholders	54
Collaboration as a Core Value	60
Financial Impact	64
Commitment to a Better Future	68

*“I think the biggest change we experienced is that the transformation to responsible aquaculture and acquisition of the ASC certification has increased income by improving quality, reduced working hours and helped to attract new farmers into the profession.”*

**Fujio Abe, Director of Shizugawa Branch of the Miyagi Fishery Cooperative, Japan**



ASC promotes certified responsibly farmed products in the marketplace through our consumer label made available to qualified users. In this manner, ASC acts to influence both the supply and the demand for responsibly produced seafood. The value added and positive impact that the ASC programme delivers has been demonstrated clearly.



Jersey Oyster Company, UK



# 01 2021 by Numbers

# 2021 by the Numbers

The world's appetite for seafood continues to grow.

The aquaculture industry is already supplying more than half of all seafood consumed worldwide, and meeting that need increases the risk of negative environmental and social impacts. ASC continues to work hard to encourage responsible farming practices and to promote the benefits of responsible aquaculture.

In 2021, ASC's efforts resulted in continued programme growth with activities dedicated to improving the accessibility of ASC certification, maintaining presence in existing markets and expanding to new ones, and providing over 21,000 ASC certified products to consumers.

- 
**1,800**  
 Environmental Improvements
- 
- 
**893**  
 Social and Community Improvements
- 
- 
**89**  
 Legal Improvements

## Our Mission

To transform aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the chain.



**58.7%**  
Increase in ASC certified volume from 2020



**1,648**  
Certified farm sites



**90**  
Countries carry ASC certified productions



**1,200**  
Logo license holders



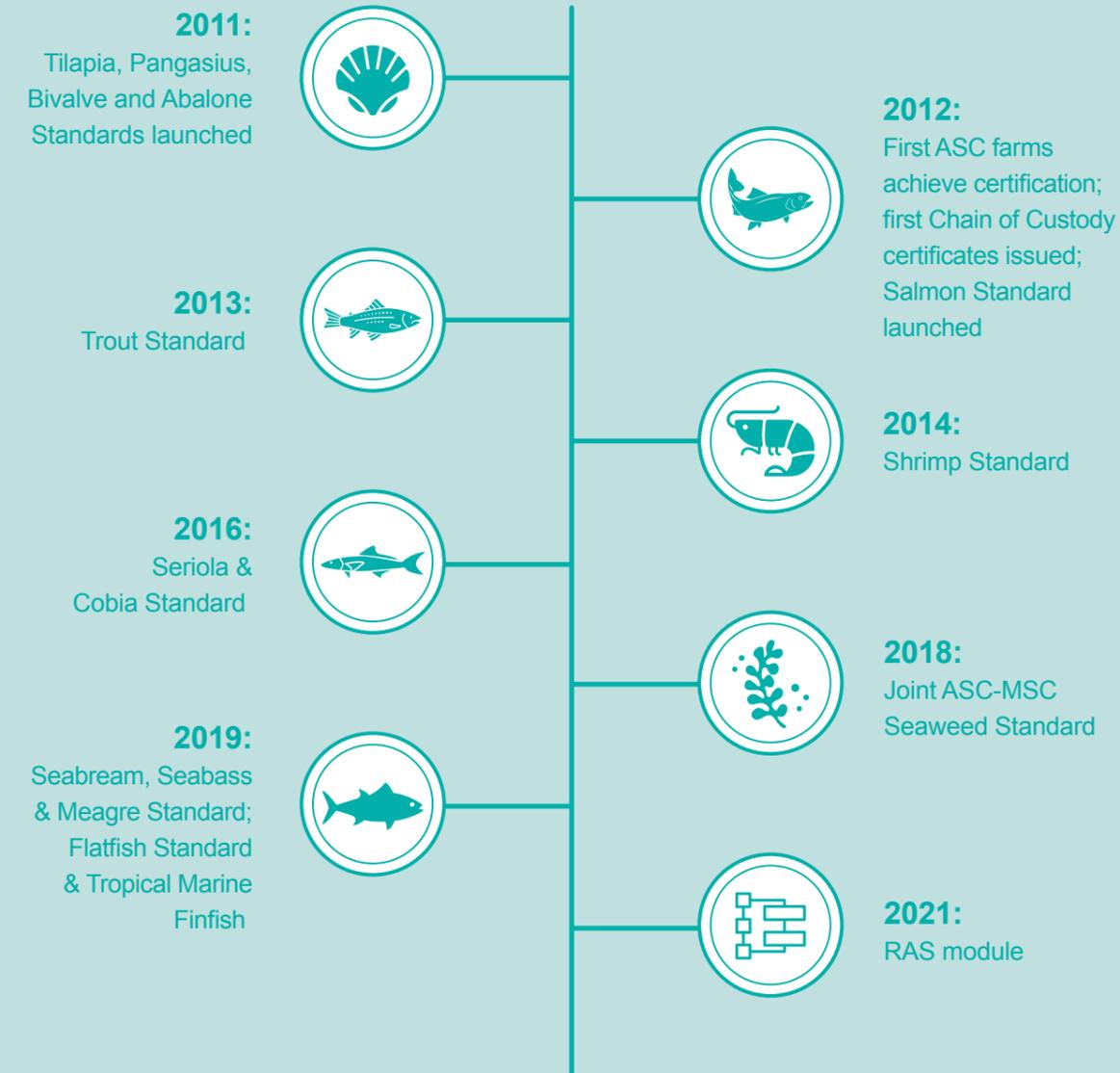
**2,706**  
Chain of Custody certificate holders

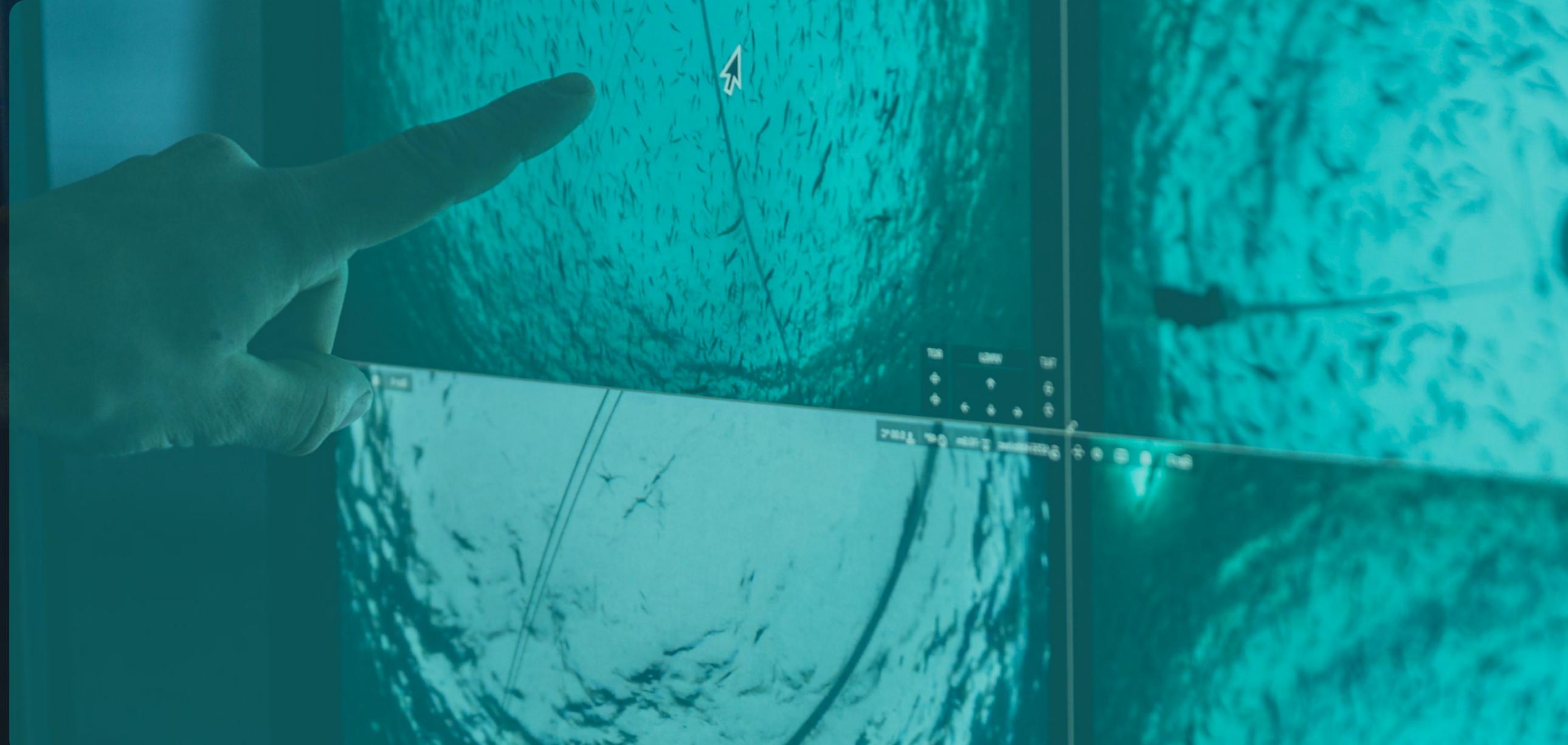


**49**  
Species in production



**21,316**  
Labelled products types available to consumers





# 02 Programme Improvements

# The change we envision

Global aquaculture production has been consistently increasing for over 40 years. This, coupled with a growing human population, changing climate, and declining harvests from wild fisheries, elevate the importance of establishing and rewarding responsible aquaculture practices.

A world where aquaculture plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for humanity whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment.

In 2021, ASC continued to strengthen and further develop our global standards and certification programme and ensure that our impacts are meaningful and measurable.

ASC's programmes, activities, technical projects, and campaigns recognise the role of aquaculture as the fastest growing food production system and the need to minimise its footprint on the environment and local communities. ASC believes that aquaculture can be transformed towards environmental and social responsibility through the promotion and reward of responsible farming practices and influencing the choices people make when buying seafood.

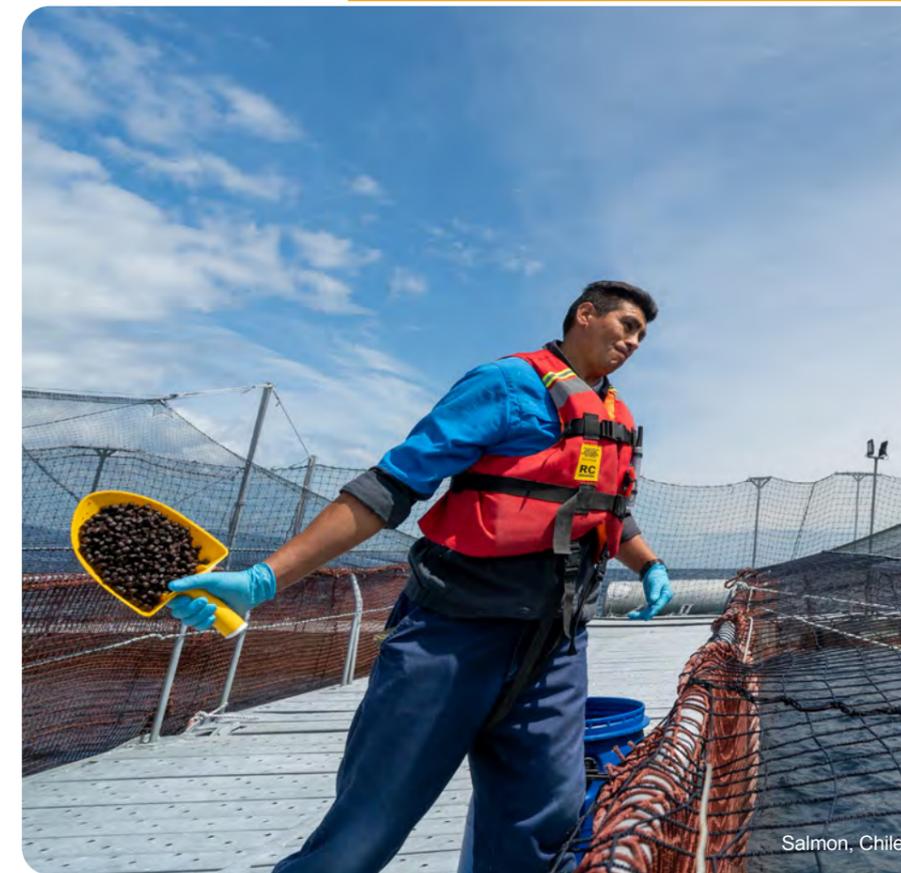
## Increasing accessibility to certification

Two key improvements to ASC Standards were brought to the public in 2021 in response to the growth and innovation of aquaculture operations.

The Shrimp Standard was revised to include additional crustacean species, expanding the scope of the standard to freshwater shrimp and crayfish, thereby increasing available species to the market. The revised standard also strengthens critical performance metrics, such as those for the use of fish meal in feed, further reducing impacts at farm level.

The Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) Module was released to reflect the growing trend of RAS within the aquaculture industry. The module

provides an add-on to our current standards and details requirements specific to RAS farms - minimising negative effects on water resources and environmentally efficient and responsible use of resources. Through the completion of these improvements, ASC is able to provide better assurance that all relevant impacts for these operations are addressed.



Salmon, Chile

## The impacts of aquaculture extend beyond the farm

With the launch of the ASC Feed Standard, we extend our approach to responsible aquaculture to the feed mills that manufacture aquafeed, as well as the suppliers of their ingredients and the production of raw materials. This is the first standard to take into consideration all major impacts of feed ingredient production and feed supply chain traceability, including all major agriculture crops such as wheat, corn and canola, in addition to soy and palm oil, and marine ingredients.

The ASC Feed Standard uses an improvement model for marine ingredients which requires feed mills to source from more sustainable fisheries over time, assess risks in their supply chains and transition to sourcing ingredients free from deforestation and

land conversion. ASC certified feed mills will have to record and report their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions; contributing to how the industry monitors and works to reduce its footprint along the entire supply chain.

ASC's principles for social responsibility are maintained through the ASC Feed Standard. Requirements to assess and reduce community impacts and ensure fair and transparent treatments of workers are further strengthened through new Due Diligence requirement throughout a mill's supply chain. With this release, ASC achieves a second pillar of the certification programme – alongside farm certification. The Standard and assurance documents will become effective in January 2023.

## ASC firms up our commitment to Monitoring and Evaluation

In 2021, ASC conducted a full review of our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework. Monitoring impacts is a key component of the ASC programme. With a certification programme that manages 11 species standards, along with a joint ASC-MSC standard for seaweed, there is an increasing need for a more consistent and rigorous approach to data collection, use, and reporting. ASC's M&E system focuses on three major results area (i) social and environmental performance of the farm, (ii) certification system effectiveness and efficiency, and (iii) market performance. Our revised M&E Framework monitors these areas through a series of indicators that measure our Growth and Reach, Strategy, and Sustainability.

The ASC M&E Framework is comprised of a series of indicators designed to measure our ability to achieve our objectives.



### Growth and Reach

We monitor indicators of growth and reach to relay information on uptake and awareness of our programme at local, regional, and global scales.



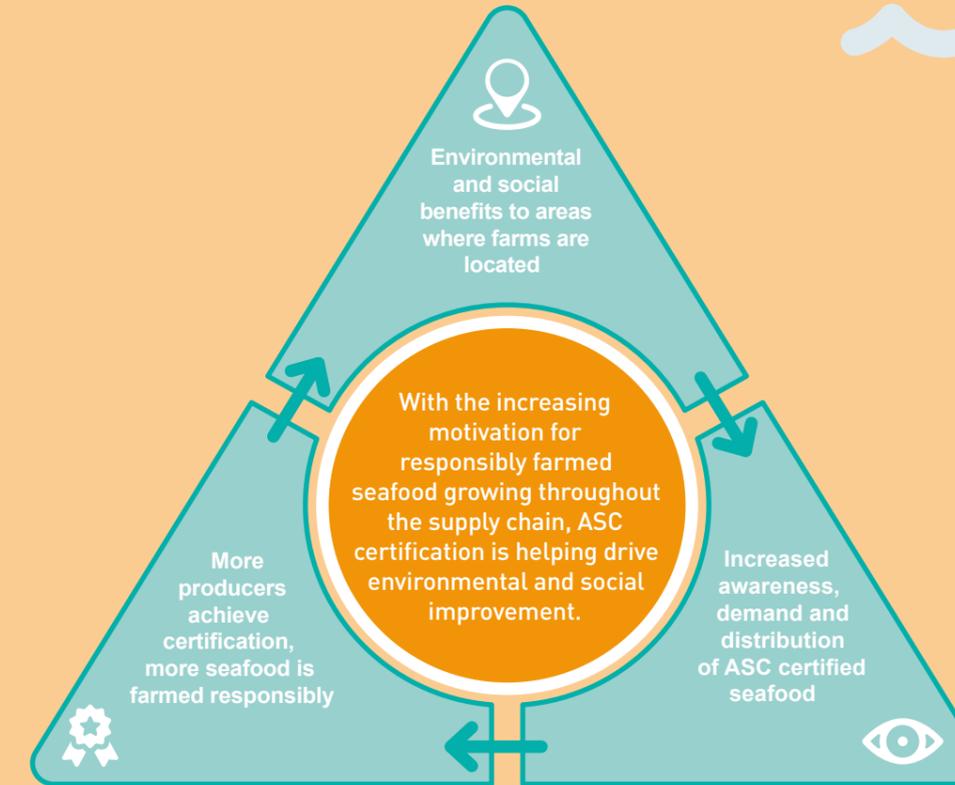
### Strategy

We monitor indicators that evaluate ASC's activities to communicate the strategies employed and their effect on programme assurance and credibility.



### Sustainability

We monitor indicators across environmental, economic, and social well being to measure ASC's ability to reach our desired outcomes and understand the effects that the programme has on its participants.



The stories and impacts captured throughout this report demonstrate ASC's work in 2021 towards the change we envision.



Improved aquaculture practices through ASC certification stimulate market demand and adoption of certified fish. ASC's market-based programme is therefore designed to create incentives to reward responsible farming practices and influence the choices people make when buying seafood.

### Focus on UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by UN Member States define 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) representing an urgent call for action. With an increasing global population and threats to food security, the rapidly growing aquaculture sector is recognized as having the potential to provide a critical contribution to meeting many of the SDGs.

ASC has completed a first-of-its-kind evaluation of its programme’s direct and indirect contributions to each of the 17 SDGs and of the 169 targets within them. The analysis identifies whether each of the SDG targets falls within the scope of ASC and assesses how well ASC’s programme perform against them. In this report, we provide a brief overview of our contribution to SDG 1 and SDG 14. The full report will be released in late 2022.

## END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE



The seven targets of SDG 1 aim to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, with the goal to reduce the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty at least by half and implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all by 2030.

#### Our Contribution

ASC standards set strict requirements on the rights of employees, including decent wages, benefits, transparency in contracts, and freedom from discrimination along with ensuring that aquaculture operations do not impact community access to resources. As farms evidence compliance with these requirements, they support and preserve fair working conditions and the application of labour rights that contribute to a reduction in poverty. ASC commits to requiring responsible employment on all ASC certified operations, where employees are rewarded fairly for their work.

#### Added Value

As a member of the Global Living Wage Coalition, ASC is working with external organisations to understand gaps between the prevailing wage and the living wage among aquaculture producers and apply the Global Living Wage Coalition benchmarks to detail mechanisms for securing living wages for employees in all production systems across the world.

## CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The ten targets of SDG 14 comprehensively address the impacts and information needs related to the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources. These cover the issues of marine pollution, management of water-based ecosystems, ocean acidification, overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, conservation of coastal areas, access for small-scale artisanal fishers to markets, and increase of scientific knowledge and research.

#### Our Contribution

ASC’s vision is right at the heart of SDG 14 - a world where aquaculture can thrive with minimised negative impacts on the environment. This is embedded throughout ASC standards with strict requirements for improvement of environmental performance and accountability. As farms evidence compliance with standard requirements and report their performance, they ensure the protection of marine resources through limits on wildlife interactions, siting of farms in protected and sensitive habitats, limits on and responsible sourcing of wild caught fish in aquaculture feed and best practices in resource use, gear, and nutrient management. The continued growth of ASC certified seafood alleviates pressure on the oceans while delivering on market demands.

#### Added Value

The continued development of the ASC Farm Standard provides an opportunity to strengthen environmental requirements and ensure consistent application of criteria across farmed species and production systems in all habitats. ASC’s developing Improver Programme will provide a tangible path for small-scale producers, reducing barriers without compromising rigour. In partnership with Conservation International and the Ecuadorian Ministry of Environment and Water, ASC supported the establishment of Socio Manglar, which provides direct economic incentives to coastal communities for the conservation of mangroves. We aim to grow this work through research and investments from funders and supply chain partners.



Seabream, Croatia



# 03 Species Spotlight



## 12 Standards bringing a variety of certified seafood to the world

ASC works closely with producers, markets, and all interested stakeholders to ensure our standards represent the best performance across these sectors and respond to emerging needs. We maintain 11 species-specific standards along with the joint ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard defining responsible performance across 17 species groups. Each standard adheres to ASC's core principles, requiring that farms must comply with national laws and local regulations, preserve biodiversity, ecosystems, wild populations, ensure efficient use of resources, effective management of fish health, responsible treatment of employees and engagement with local communities.

In 2021, the first farm under the ASC Flatfish Standard achieved certification in the Netherlands. We celebrated growth of across all our standards with certified farms globally, bringing more environmentally sustainable and socially responsible seafood into consumer hands. Here we look at the reach of ASC certified production in 2021.



Abalone Farmer, Australia

### ASC-certified farms worldwide

- 1 and <10
- >10 and <50
- >50 and <100
- >100 and <200
- >200 and <400



### Salmon

Farmed salmon is one of the most commercially important group of species in the world, representing nearly 80% of salmon production worldwide in 2020. Norway and Chile host the majority of ASC certified salmon farms, with important contributions from Canada, Faroe Islands, and Scotland.

**549**  
Units of Certification

**52.3%**  
ASC proportion of global aquaculture production

**609**  
ASC certified farm sites

**1,685,570**  
ASC certified tonnes

**6**  
ASC certified species

**6,912**  
ASC certified products available to consumers

**1,416**  
Improvements



ASC Certified Salmon

### Shrimp

Shrimp is the most valuable traded marine product in the world today. Farmed shrimp comprise nearly 68% of global shrimp production, with the majority dedicated to the production of Whiteleg shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*). In 2021, ASC certified shrimp farms were primarily in Vietnam, followed by India and Ecuador, though shrimp farming is well established across many parts of the world, with recent expansion across Europe.

**211**  
Units of Certification

**907**  
Improvements

**274,440**  
ASC certified tonnes

**426**  
ASC certified farm sites

**2.8%**  
ASC proportion of global aquaculture production

**9,714**  
ASC certified products available to consumers

**5**  
ASC certified species

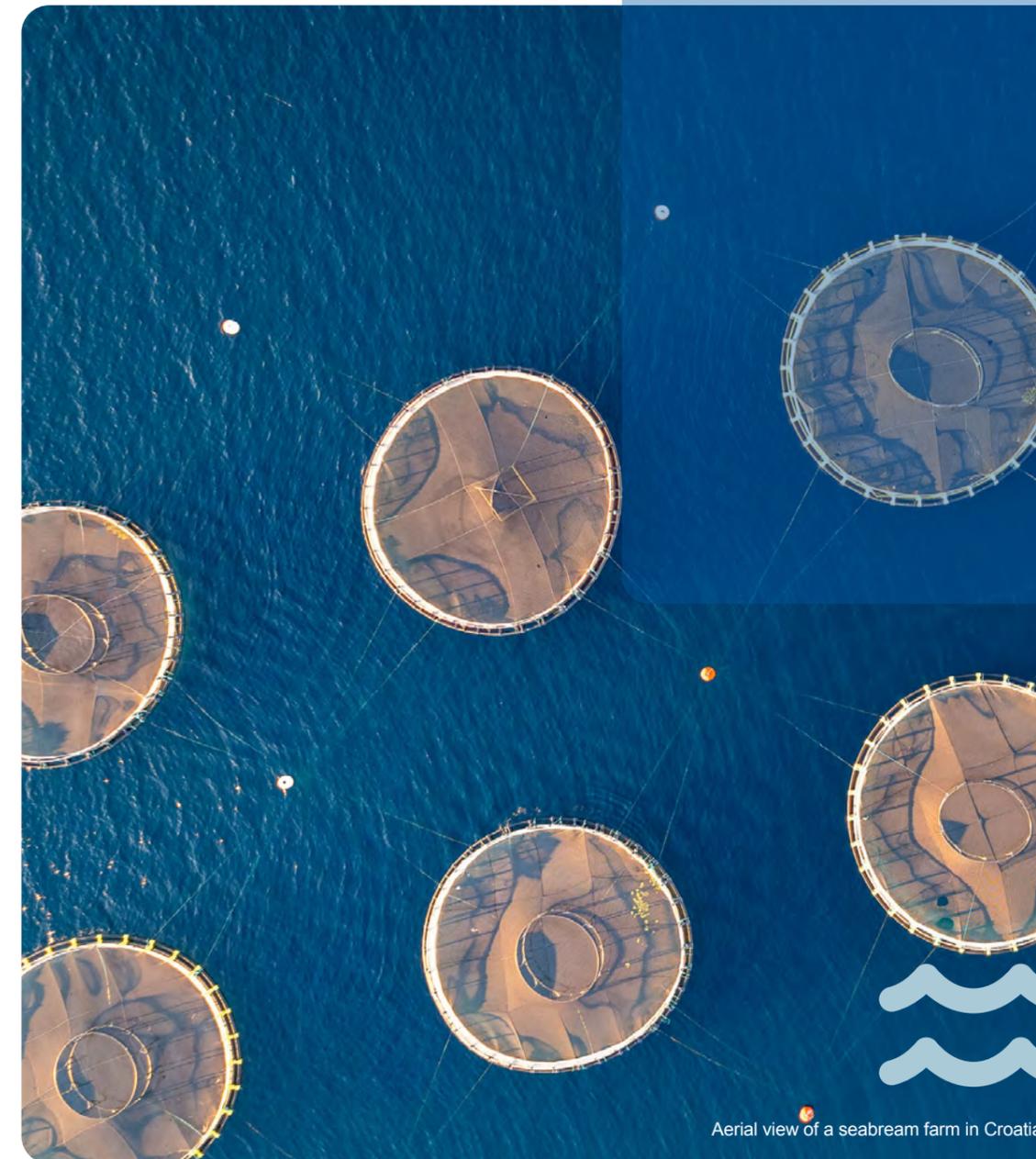


ASC Certified Shrimp

### ASC Standards at a Glance in 2021

	Units of certification (UoCs)	ASC certified farm sites	ASC certified species	ASC certified tonnes	ASC proportion of global aquaculture production	Farm improvements	ASC certified products available to consumers
Salmon	549	609	6	1,685,570	52.3%	1,416	6,912
Shrimp	211	426	5	274,440	2.8%	907	9,714
Pangasius	34	43	1	115,393	3.9%	116	1,572
Tilapia	28	39	3	222,259	3.6%	55	339
Seabass, Seabream, Meagre	41	56	4	59,074	8.6%	36	518
Tropical Marine Finfish	2	6	4	2,448	0.3%	17	6
Freshwater Trout	58	82	5	47,551	6.1%	184	1,154
Abalone	14	49	4	2,351	1.0%	34	54
Bivalve	44	302	8	166,191	1.0%	56	822
Seaweed and Algae	17	17	8	587	0.0%	NA	NA
Seriola and Cobia	13	18	5	4,471	2.5%	29	228

\*Flatfish not included, the first farm was certified in 2021.



Aerial view of a seabream farm in Croatia

ASC sets the most **robust** environmental and social standards for responsible aquaculture based on clear, **scientifically derived** and **metric-based** performance indicators.



# 04

Driving Improvements for  
People and the Environment

# Driving Improvements for People and the Environment

Improvements made by certified farms from 2019-2021 across 11 ASC Standards were marked by the reduction or closure of a non-conformance.

Farms are decreasing the numbers of necessary improvements over time, demonstrating that the biggest improvements are being made in the early phases of the certification cycle.

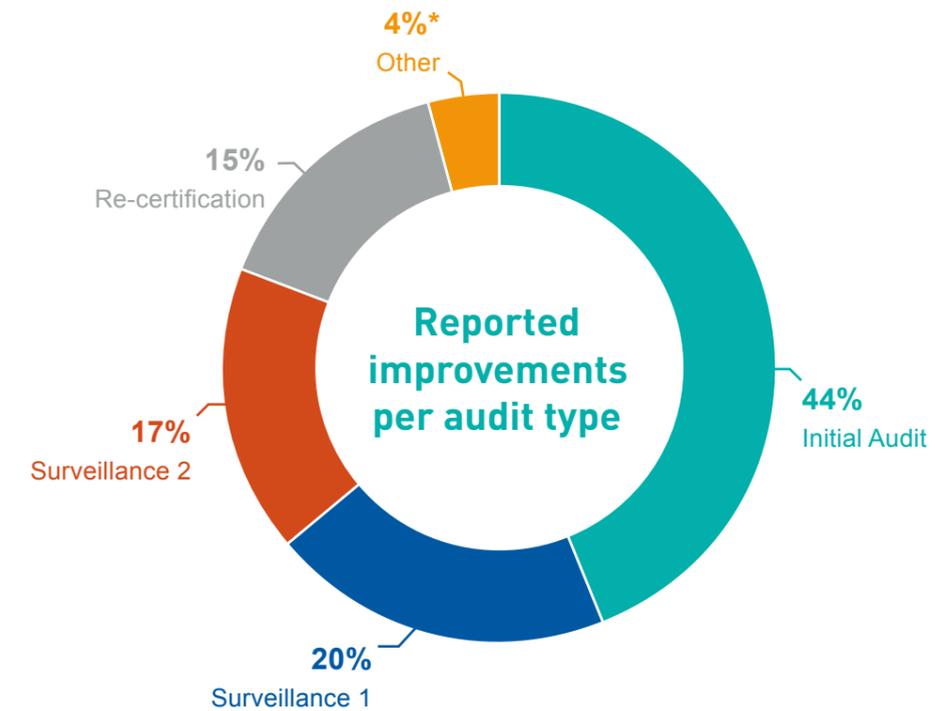
ASC certified farms evidence their compliance with legal, environmental and social requirements of ASC Standards by independent evaluators. Public assessment reports demonstrate compliance and essential improvements made. An ASC certified farm may hold their certification for three years as long as they continue to demonstrate compliance and improvements through regular surveillance audits. Where a farm fails to fully comply with a requirement, improvements must be made. In 2021, 543 ASC UoCs representing 987 farm sites had sufficient data

across the certification cycle to identify whether an improvement had been made; for 89% of those UoCs, one or more improvement was made. This sends a strong signal to the industry – while ASC Standards recognise the best performing farms across the sector, they continue to improve their performance and mitigate their impacts under the ASC programme. This analysis demonstrates some of the continuous improvements driven by ASC certification, but other types of improvements may also occur as a result of engaging with the ASC Programme.

## Environmental and Social Impacts

Farm improvements demonstrate the actions taken by farms to measure up to the rigorous requirements that define sustainable and responsible aquaculture operations as measured through the seven principles of ASC Standards. These improvements serve to signal that while ASC requirements set the strictest levels, they are achievable.

Improvements in salmon and shrimp farming were the most prevalent, though not surprising given these farms represent 37% and 26% of ASC certified farms in 2021, respectively. Across all farms, improvements to fish health management, employee welfare and social responsibility in surroundings communities were the most common impact areas improved upon.



Improvements required by farms to comply with ASC Standards decrease the longer the farm is in the certification programme, with 44% of all improvements during the

time period required during the initial audit, down to 15% for a recertification. Details on analysis and methodology are provided in the back of this report.

\*Other includes scope extensions, certificate transfers, and follow-ups.

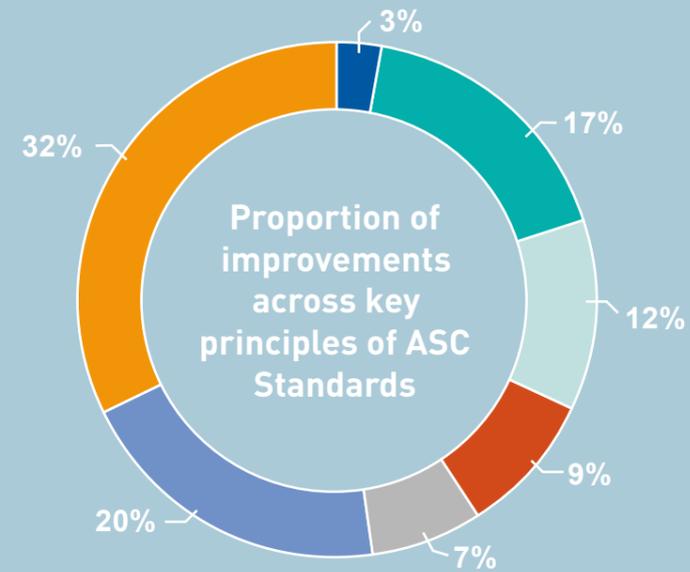
In 2021, ASC certified farms made **2,780 improvements** across **11 standards**

**65% (1800)**  
Improvements on environmental performance

**32% (893)**  
Improvements on social responsibility

**3% (87)**  
Improvements on legal compliance

### Principles of Legal, Environmental, and Social Sustainability



- Comply with all applicable national laws and local regulations
- Preserve the natural habitat, local biodiversity and ecosystem
- Preserve water resources and quality
- Use feed and other resources responsibly
- Preserve the diversity of the wild population
- Ensure the good health of their fish, including no unnecessary use of antibiotics or chemicals
- Ensure social responsibility towards their employees and local community

Improvements were made across all seven of ASC's principles of sustainability. The majority of improvements were made to meet requirements of social responsibility and fish health.



#### Fish health management

Managing the health of farmed species is a delicate process that addresses environmental stresses on the fish and treatments for parasites and diseases. Nearly one-quarter of the improvements made were related to the management of sea lice and other pests. Actions taken often include the applications of non-chemical treatments, review and improvement of pest management plans, as well as regional pest management actions plans across farms in a shared region. Approximately one-fifth of actions led to the removal of the use of copper-based nets, as evident in the certifications for Mowi and Bakkafrøst.



#### Worker wellbeing

Worker wellbeing addresses the issues around worker's rights, discrimination, conflict resolution and living conditions on site. Nearly one-third of the improvements raised resulted in safer living conditions, safe and clean sanitation facilities, and better access to cleaner water. Farms implemented regular internal inspections, drafted procedures for reparations and provided mechanisms for workers to report damage to facilities. Almost 40% of improvements required actions to improve training, education and policies surrounding antidiscrimination.



#### Working hours and overtime

A critical aspect of workers' rights is maintaining and applying a fair system that avoids abuse of working hours and overtime. Audit procedures ensured that these requirements are assessed not just during regular working hours, but under peak operations times, such as during harvest. This ensures the respect and fair salaries provided align with hours worked for various types of work. Actions taken by farms resulted in improved shift planning, salary review and corrections.



Pangasius Farmer, Vietnam



### Community relations

Access to resources, respect for cultures and traditions, community engagement and conflict resolution are fundamental aspects of social responsibilities of a farm. Improvements across community relations resulted in increased communications and information sharing with local communities. In nearly one-fifth of actions, farms completed or revised their Participatory Social Impact Assessments (pSIA), leading to validation and sharing of findings with interested stakeholders. The COVID pandemic had severe impact on community engagement, and subsequent improvements resulted in virtual events and scheduling for future meetings, and one-third of improvements setting a process for regular meetings with local community representatives.



### Health and safety

Health and safety requirements demand that workers are trained in effective practices, procedures and policies, provided protective gear, and that workplace assessments for safety risks are maintained. Creating a safe workplace environment extends beyond farm employees to also protect sub-contractors. Improvements made by farms have demanded reciprocal changes to be implemented by subcontractors, thereby extending the benefits of ASC's social responsibility criteria beyond the farm.



### Waste management

Responsible management of waste ensures effective procedures and policies exist and evidence is available for the proper disposal and recycling of non-biological wastes. One-third of the improvements made were related to the management of chemical waste at the farm, and one-fifth on handling of effluent waste; the actions resulted in increased staff training, facilities and equipment repairs and improvements, and revisions to waste management plans.

Corrective actions are required by farms to comply with each ASC Standard against requirements for legal, environmental, and social sustainability.

Improvements were made against every key principle across most ASC standards.

The highest numbers of actions required to demonstrate improvement under a species standard against the sustainability principle are represented in green in the table.

Preserving natural habitat, biodiversity and ecosystem, and social responsibility were the impact areas most commonly improved on.

Principle/Standard	Abalone	Bivalve	Freshwater Trout	Pangasius	Salmon	Seabass, Seabream & Meagre	Seriola & Cobia	Shrimp	Tilapia	Tropical Marine Fish
Comply with all applicable national laws and local regulations	0	0	5	7	41	1	1	27	5	0
Preserve the natural habitat, local biodiversity and ecosystem	6	11	10	29	253	4	6	138	4	9
Preserve water resources and quality	0	0	28	10	140	2	4	133	14	1
Use feed and other resources responsibly	3	7	4	16	81	3	2	141	6	1
Preserve the diversity of the wild population	1	1	22	14	81	2	3	53	6	0
Ensure the good health of their fish, including no unnecessary use of antibiotics or chemicals	4	1	52	17	360	2	1	106	7	1
Ensure social responsibility towards their employees and local community	20	36	61	26	384	19	12	317	13	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1340</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>915</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>17</b>

ASC certified salmon and shrimp prepared



# 05 Driving Awareness



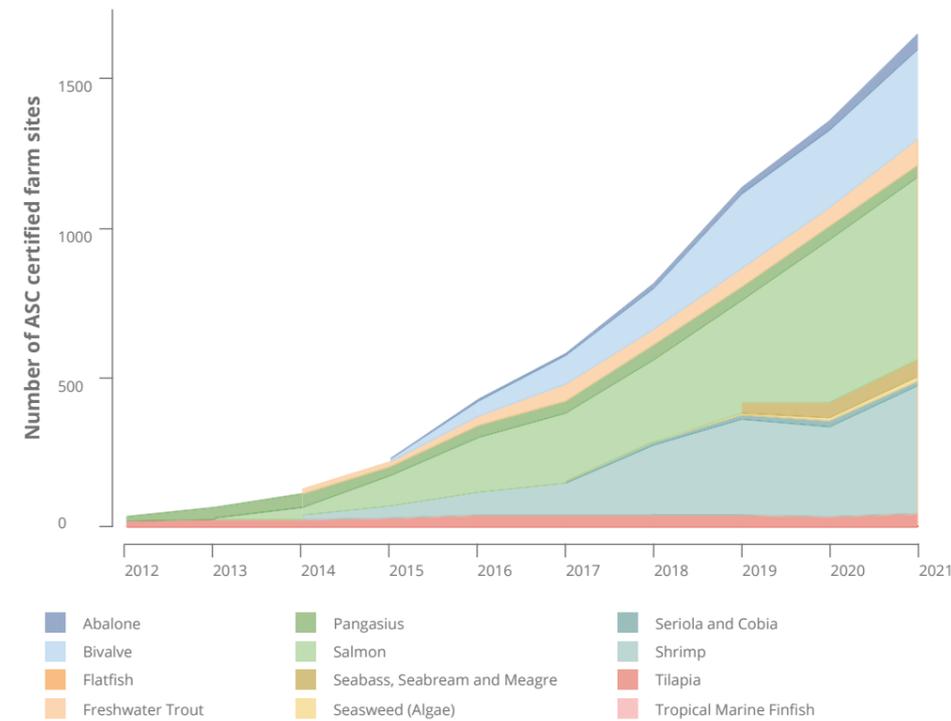
# ASC certified seafood originates from countries around the world

In 2021, ASC experienced a 20% growth in the number of certified farm sites from the previous year, increasing the global production of seafood that meets the social and environmental sustainability requirements of ASC standards to over 2.5 million tonnes. Key producing countries contributing to this volume included Norway and Chile (each with over 800,000 tonnes of salmon), Vietnam (with over 200,000 tonnes of shrimp) and Ecuador (with 120,000 tonnes of shrimp), critical to meet the increasing demand for ASC certified products.

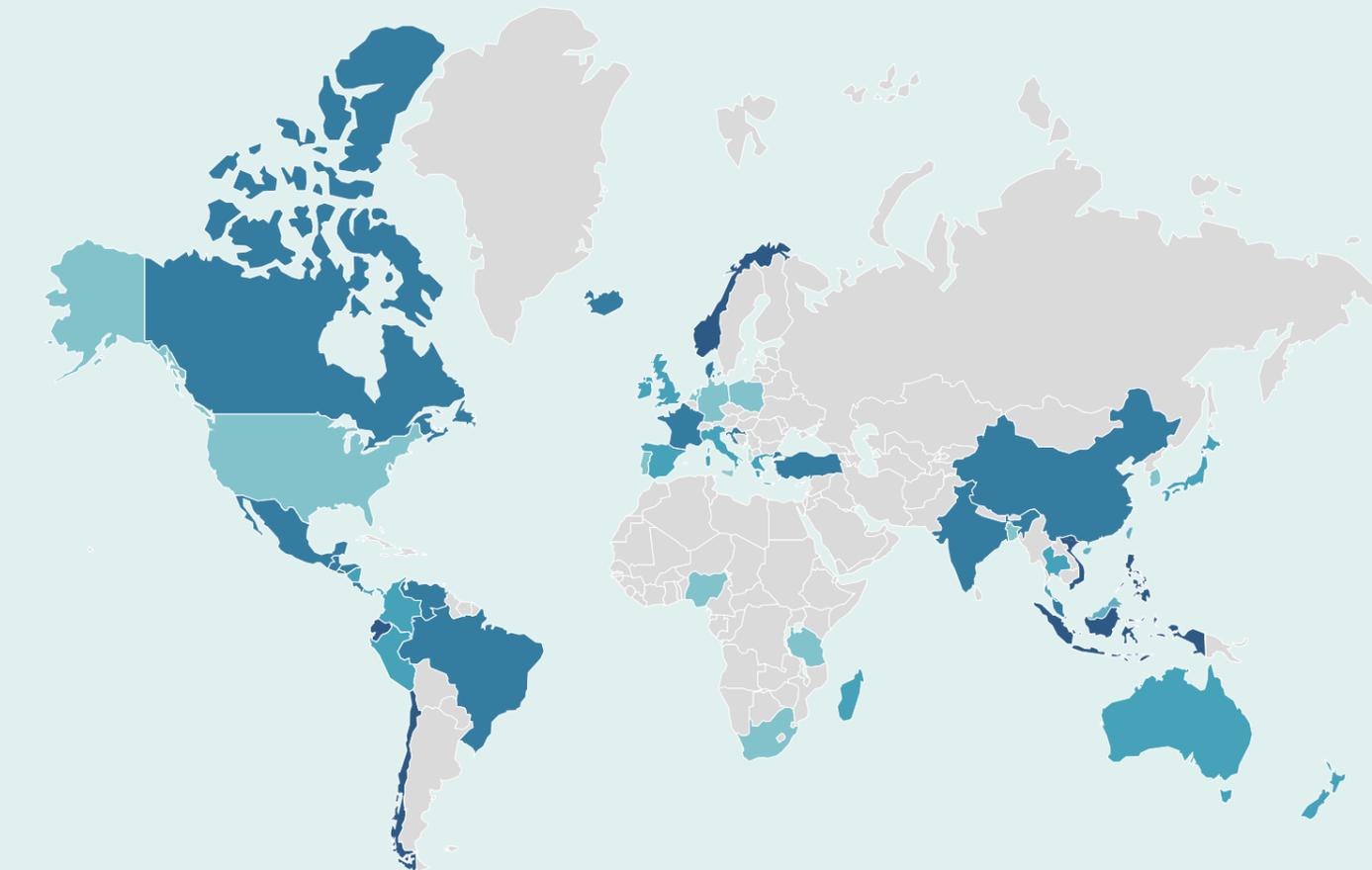
Growth in Chilean salmon certification was largely in response to US markets increasing demand for ASC certified seafood while growth in key shrimp producing countries of Ecuador and

India were driven by demands from both US and European markets. Continued growth of key species across other producing countries, including Scottish Salmon for the UK and French markets. Interest in domestic supply solidified following the logistical and transport challenges experienced during COVID-19 pandemic. This is evidenced by growth in bivalve production in China, seaweed production in Republic of Korea and red seabream production in Japan, the latter two achieving ASC certification providing local supply to domestic retail and brands.

**A decade of growth for ASC farm certification**



## ASC certified species are produced worldwide



- 1 and <100
- >100 and <10,00
- >1,000 and <10,000
- >10,000 and <100,000
- >100,000 and <1,000,000

# ASC labelled products in markets globally

By the end of 2021, the availability of ASC certified products grew by 10% from the previous year, bringing over 21K types of ASC labelled products to consumers, with over 275K tonnes of products sold.

Global retail markets continued to demonstrate a strong preference for seafood, with salmon and shrimp dominating 70% of ASC labelled product weight, and the demand rising for other important regional species, such as trout, seabass and seabream.

Western European consumers, retailers and brands have been traditionally receptive for responsibly produced and labelled products, including seafood. ASC continues to value our core markets in Germany, Netherlands, and Belgium. Along with rapid growth over the last three years in France, with volumes doubling between 2019 and 2021, we also witnessed strong uptake of ASC labelled products in Southern European markets such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

2021 was a key year in both the UK and US, with strategies focused on working with market partners to drive preferences for ASC and with suppliers

to ensure certified supply of key species: Scottish salmon for the UK and Chilean salmon and shrimp (e.g. from India and Ecuador) for the US. These markets represent strong potential for continued demand and growth of responsibly farmed seafood. The US market doubled their volume of labelled product, demonstrating the US as an important global market in driving change.

Recognition of sustainably produced seafood is building in important seafood markets in Asia (China and Japan), as demonstrated through ASC's secured-collaboration with key modern retailers and e-commerce in China. In Japan, we see companies' recognition of the UN SDGs as a signal to source labelled seafood as a means of contributing to the goals. These newer markets present opportunities for continued growth and expansion of ASC Certification.



## 50% of ASC labelled product volumes are consumed in Netherlands, Germany and France



### Sustainability Commitments

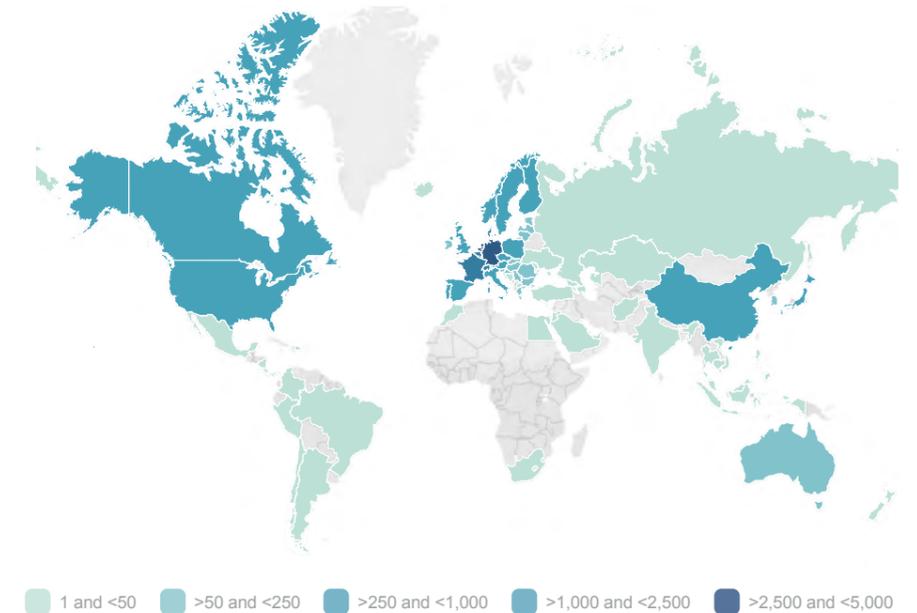
ASC worked with retail partner Olé supermarkets in China to develop consumer facing promotional materials demonstrating Olé's commitment to sourcing ASC labelled products. Olé and ASC have also helped to build the supply chain of ASC certified Chinese seafood products in their supermarkets in order to adapt to Chinese consumption habits and improve participation in the sustainable seafood movement.

### A Sustainability Journey

ASC certified red seabream (*Pagrus major*) is sold at the Toyosu Market, where the live fish is shipped from the Dainichi Farm (ASC00225) and prepared by a wholesaler for fresh delivery to restaurants.



### ASC labelled products available to consumers worldwide



1 and <50   >50 and <250   >250 and <1,000   >1,000 and <2,500   >2,500 and <5,000



**2,706**  
Chain of Custody holders in 2021



**91**  
markets where ASC labelled products are found



**275k**  
tonnes of ASC certified product sold in 2021

# Increasing the awareness, value and demand for ASC Certified Seafood

ASC's successful communications targeted at businesses have resulted in visible market growth, which in turn drives increasing farm production. ASC is now looking to increase creative efforts focused on engagement with consumer audiences. Over the last couple of years, we have continued to further invest in marketing and communications as a key pillar in our strategy, with the aim of building ever-greater consumer awareness of the ASC to drive consumer demand in both our developed and developing markets.

In some mature markets, like the Netherlands, we have already proven that increased awareness of the ASC brand has translated into higher purchasing intent for ASC products than for other labels. Building awareness is achieved through a number of tactics and channels across mature and developing markets. This requires distinct messaging of our key values to resonate with regional and global audiences, often through time-limited, location-specific campaigns and continuous corporate communication.

Campaigns are a powerful engagement opportunity, creating a significant impact. Our partners have

included retailers, fishmongers, top brands, NGOs, zoos, aquaria, and museums. Together we have hosted events, competitions, promotions and tasting sessions, delivering educational and entertaining campaigns for consumer engagement. Targeted campaigns in 2021 across China, Japan, United States and the United Kingdom secured retail commitments supporting the growing market pull for ASC. In European markets, our seafood campaigns involved 84% of the market share of retailers in the Netherlands and 60% in France, generating more than 1.2 billion audience impressions across media and social channels, instore communications, retailer catalogues and magazines and online events.

Our work in 2021 contributed to a solid foundation with great results suggesting growing demand for ASC-certified seafood. While our campaigns across the world are numerous, the examples provided highlight the depth and breadth of work across corporate and consumer engagement to drive incentives for more responsible aquaculture production.

In 2021, by collaborating with over 230 commercial and non-commercial partners, we have empowered consumers to be confident that their seafood choices are helping to protect fish and the environment for future generations.

## ASC facilitates consumer awareness through partner reward and collaboration.

The Australian Campaign was launched with the Sustainable Seafood Awards recognising the growing importance of responsibly farmed seafood to consumers. Presented live from the Taronga Zoo, ASC celebrated the winners:

KB Food Company and Bidfood. The former received ASC's Best Responsible Seafood Award "Best Product" for their Yellowtail Kingfish. Bidfood took ASC's Best Seafood Importer Award.



## Engagement across media platforms

We are constantly looking at new and innovative ways to deliver content to key audiences to further drive our mission. To do this, we develop a stream of topical and engaging content across social media channels, print, online media, and our website.

Topics that generated the most engagement with LinkedIn users included updates to Standard improvements, farms achieving ASC certification and innovations in aquaculture – generating 400,000 impressions in 2021. Through our Instagram and Facebook platforms we shared recipe ideas, 'truth or myth' features and stories from ASC-certified farms, and the people who work on them. ASC's global Facebook following grew by 14% from 2020.

ASC's global website enjoyed steady traffic, with content on certified farms, suppliers, recipes

and information on the Standards drawing the most interest among visitors to the site.

Across online media outlets, ASC received over 2,800 mentions with a majority covering ASC positively, with some neutral and some minor negative mentions.

We have already developed a strong foundation across these global communication channels and expect to further build on this work in the years to come. As we continue to grow, we anticipate increased exposure and interest in ASC. We look forward to the challenge ahead of us to reach and engage new audiences, while providing relevant and interesting content for ASC's existing followers.



### Building Relationships

In 2021, ASC successfully launched the New Way to Seafood in the US – its national consumer marketing campaign focused on strengthening the value of the ASC logo. Committed partners such as the Global Salmon Initiative, Seafood Nutrition Partnership, SSP, MOWI and others will be critical in the successful delivery of this campaign in the years ahead.



### Bewuste Visweek | Think Fish Week

For the ninth consecutive year in the Netherlands, and the seventh year in Belgium, our joint marketing campaign Think Fish Week is an engagement highlighting stories from our farms, demonstrating the impact of ASC and MSC certifications and the values of partnerships. The campaign engages audiences across multiple platforms. Working with local culinary influencers, consumers received “a good story on your plate” – coupling the stories of the impact of our labels on the environment and the lives of farmers and local communities with recipes featuring certified seafood.

### Stronger Together



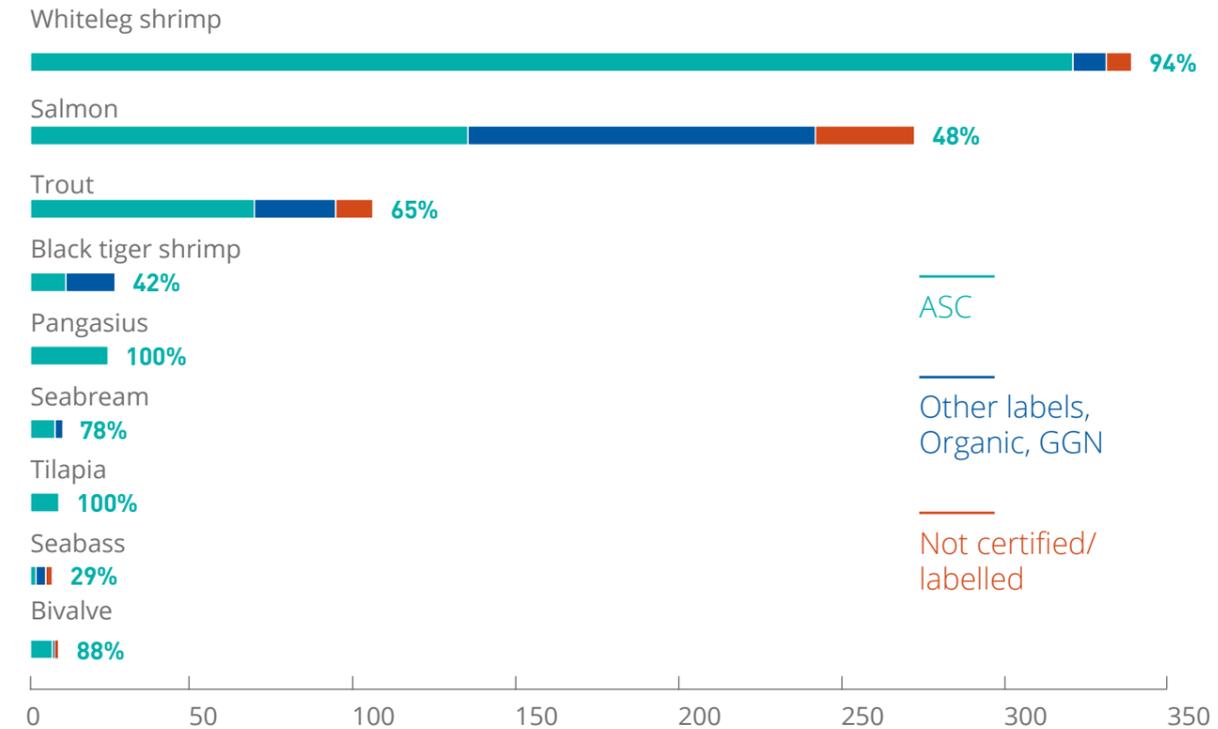
In 2021, ASC teamed up with the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) to organise five consumer campaigns across eight countries on three continents. On average, 11 to 22% of the population has seen or read something about the campaigns in all eight countries. In post-campaign consumer surveys, we see an uplift in consumer recognition of the ASC label of as much as 6%.



### High demand for ASC certified goods in the German market is a clear sign of the high level of trust in the ASC.

A market analysis was conducted in 2021 to understand responsible sourcing of the supply of farmed fish at German retailers. Of 809 products reviewed across nine retailers, 72% were ASC certified; and only 7% did not have any accompanying sustainability logo. This revealed that both ASC certified species represent the range of products across German retailers and that there is strong preference for the ASC logo.

Number of ASC labelled products compared to other products available per species



*“Providing sufficient fish, not only now, but also to future generations. That is our main goal. The ‘Think Fish Week’ helps us to raise awareness among our customers to help us achieve that”*

**Ruth Broekaert,**  
ALDI Belgium  
Corporate  
Responsibility  
Director



# 06 Programme Integrity

# Programme Integrity

**Programme Assurance provides stakeholders confidence that the ASC Standards are effectively implemented and audited.**

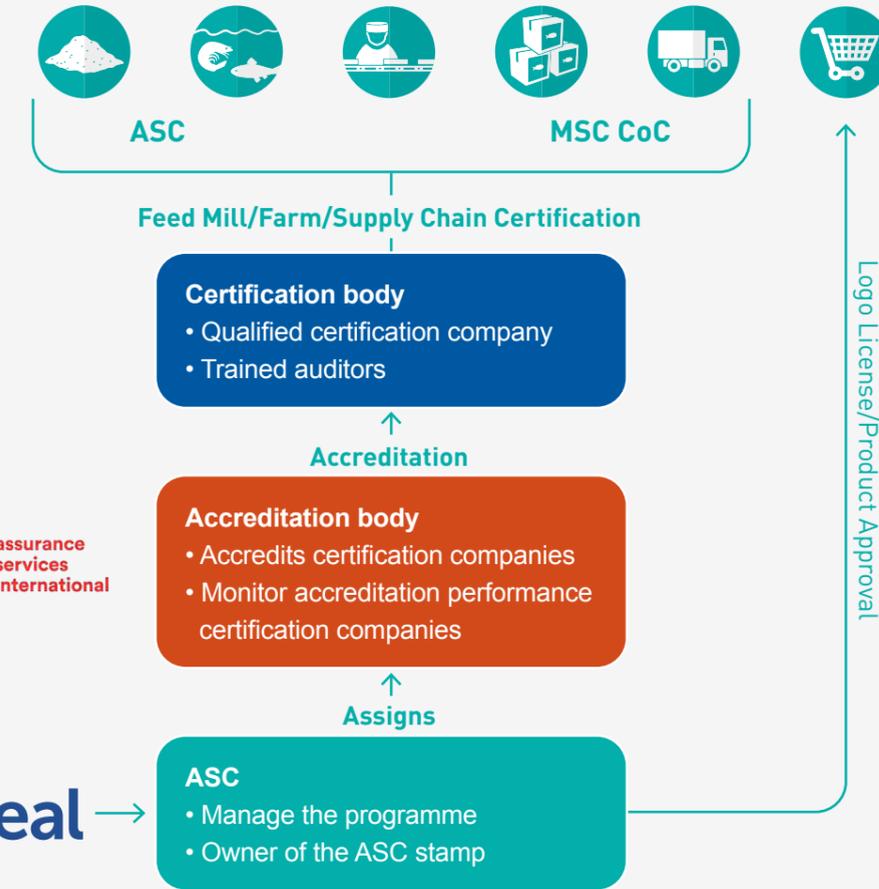
ASC's Assurance Programme is achieved through a comprehensive approach to deliver trust to customers and stakeholders in the claims that accompany our label. ASC works with Assurance Services International (ASI), our accreditation body, to closely monitor operations from application through the entire certification cycle for compliance to ASC Standards and MSC Chain of Custody, along with Logo License Agreements. ASC, together with ASI, take a risk-based approach, setting annual performance targets to evaluate farm and certification bodies performance to ensure programme integrity is maintained. In 2021, assessments conducted covered 92% of defined targets.

Assessments are conducted across set targets for evaluating Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) performance to achieve a comprehensive approach to mitigating risks. In any event where farm or CAB performance or integrity of certification may be compromised, ASC, ASI or stakeholders may raise an incident for further investigation, which may also be evaluated through the assessment process. In 2021, onsite assessments were limited due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID; however, the ability to conduct audits remotely allowed CABs and farms to avoid a lapse in certifications.



*“During the course of 2021, ASI maintained its commitment to demonstrate the highest credibility and perform impactful activities to ensure the robustness of the ASC scheme. ASC CABs’ performance continues to head in a positive direction.”*

**Francisco Padilla, ASI’s ASC Program Manager**



ASC develops, maintains, and implements certification and accreditation requirements for UoCs and trained auditors. ASC adheres to the practices required by ISEAL's Assurance Code, setting mechanisms to guarantee that our certification requirements are complied with by certified farms, supply chain actors, and qualified certification companies. To maintain

our integrity, ASC relies on a third-party certification system. Independent CABs evaluate farms and supply chain actors against standard requirements and grant certification. Certification services may only be provided by accredited CABs as approved by ASC's accreditation body ASI.

**In 2021, the number of CABs in the programme grew to 14, representing 184 auditors worldwide qualified to evaluate farms against ASC's strict environmental and social requirements.**



67 assessments of CAB performance were conducted in 2021 across defined target areas and to address incidents; some assessments may achieve multiple performance targets.

### Incidents Raised in 2021



Incidents are actively identified through risk-based reviews of public audit reports, stakeholder input, supply chain reports, evaluations of CAB performance and reconciliation from product volume reports. In 2021, 32 incidents raised across various subjects resulted in 15 assessments conducted. Some incidents were resolved without an assessment.

### Assessments conducted against risk areas in 2021



ASI conducted assessments against CAB performance across different risk areas identified through annual target setting. These assessments evaluate CAB performance under various circumstances, such as new auditors, multisite audit, assessments for species or regions, where social or environmental risks may be high, and others.

Accredited CABs play a critical role that reaches beyond farm certification by ensuring that only compliant product enters the supply chain as ASC-certified. With our commitment to transparency, any change in a farm's certification status is publicly reported. In many cases, certificate holders elect to self-report issues that compromise their compliance and voluntarily cancel their certificates.

CABs are equally held to high standards with the risks of loss or suspension to their accreditation. In 2021, one CAB was suspended for their inability to adhere to prescribed timelines in ASC procedures; once reconciled through improved processes, the suspension was later lifted. ASI continually monitors activities to ensure continued compliance.

### Suspended or cancelled certificates in 2021

In 2021, 28 certificates were suspended or cancelled, nine of which were voluntarily, in eight certificates the farms were unable to take effective action to close non-conformances, seven farms exceeded antibiotic treatment allowances, two failed compliances with benthic requirements, and two failed audits.

## Secure and reliable supply chain

With the increasing demand for seafood, its high value and complex supply chain, risks of fraud are real and present. ASC's Logo License Agreements (LLA) permit use of the ASC label on products using seafood from certified farms. Where integrity of certified product is compromised through risks to the supply chain, ASC may cancel or terminate agreements.

Assurance services developed by ASC combat risks through use of innovative technologies. Trace Element Fingerprinting (TEF) allows traceability of products to the source farms by evaluating products against a database of known samples. Trace element patterns of plants and animals reflect the region in which they are grown through uptake of trace elements from the soils, underlying geology, groundwater, surrounding environment and available food from the region of origin. This allows us to examine a sample from an export market or retail product against known references to determine from where the sample originates.

TEF has proven effective in verifying ASC-certified seafood back to its farm of origin with over 95% accuracy in farmed shrimp. As ASC expands the application of TEF, we are expanding our reference samples across ASC-certified shrimp farms in Vietnam and India and ASC-certified salmon farms in Chile.

*“Transparency plays an important role in our sustainability strategy, and we understand that our progress in achieving our sustainability goals requires evaluation. ASC offers a credible and reliable method to do so. We believe that choosing this certification as our benchmark it provides the opportunity to offer our clients, and society in general, the security that we are operating in a responsible way and, at the same time, we provide a high quality product.”*

**Ventisqueros,  
Global Salmon Initiative  
(GSI) member**

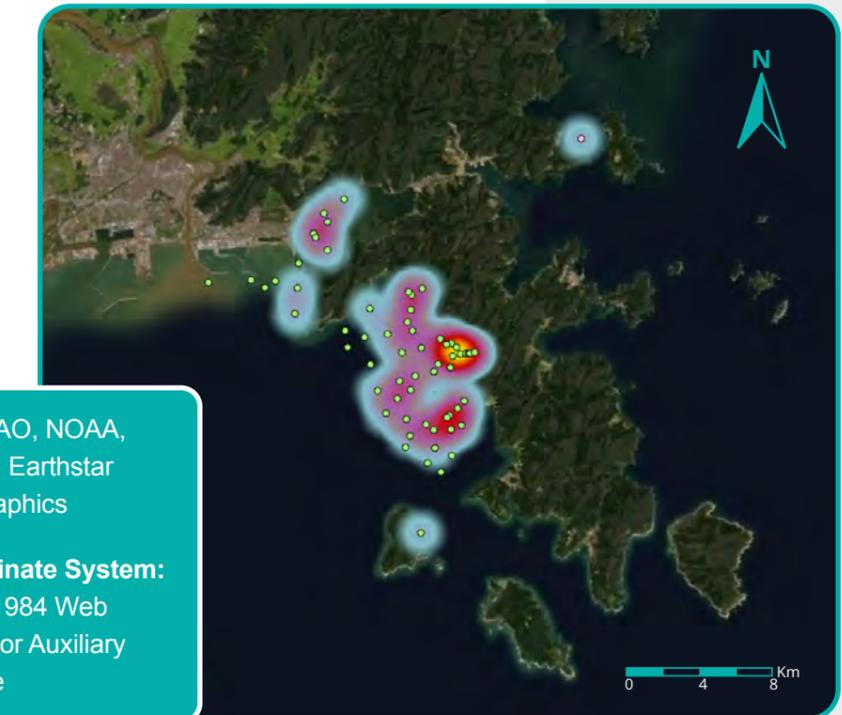
## Geospatial data add assurances in farm operations

ASC maintains strict requirements on farm siting to ensure that operations do not have significant negative impacts on surrounding habitats, biodiversity, ecosystems, and communities. But just how are we able to ensure this?

Through the provision of accurate location information, ASC's Geographic Information System (GIS) programme uses information from the location and boundaries of certified farms to provide critical assurance and analytical functions. Analysing data on farm locations against publicly available data layers, such as those depicting historical mangrove coverage, designated

protected areas, habitat types, and areas of indigenous rights, ASC can ensure that our farms minimise their impacts on natural environments and local communities. [ASC's GIS Portal](#) provides support and information for producers, CABs, and various stakeholders. As we collect more accurate location information, spatial analysis will expand the way we interpret the role of aquaculture in the world, reaffirm the importance of responsible operations, and demonstrate the impacts of ASC certified production.

This image provides a look at the density of ASC certified farms (62 bivalve farms and 1 salmon farm) in Japan that are sited in designated Protected Areas.



Esri, FAO, NOAA, USGS, Earthstar Geographics

**Coordinate System:**  
WGS 1984 Web Mercator Auxiliary Sphere



# 07 Engaging Stakeholders

# ASC Engagement with Key Audiences

Initially developed through extensive stakeholder dialogues, ASC's standards and certification systems rely on understanding and reflecting stakeholder priorities along with solid science.

In improving our programme, ASC remains committed to listening to stakeholders and ensuring we continue to be the best global aquaculture certification programme. Through targeted efforts, ASC seeks consensus on mitigating aquaculture's key negative environmental and social impacts, ensuring our programme is supported and implemented by all our stakeholders. To ensure that we maintain a balance of views and interest, we make sure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input through consultation and with representation in our governance system and contribute to the relevance and effectiveness of the programme.

ASC holds public consultations inviting and encouraging stakeholders to provide feedback for all Standard revision and major assurance system improvements. With every consultation, ASC sets goals to ensure representation across stakeholder groups, countries, and types and scales of aquaculture operations. In 2021, ASC conducted public consultations on four key programme improvements. Consultations met overarching participation goals, though we aim to improve representation of producers across all ASC certifiable species.



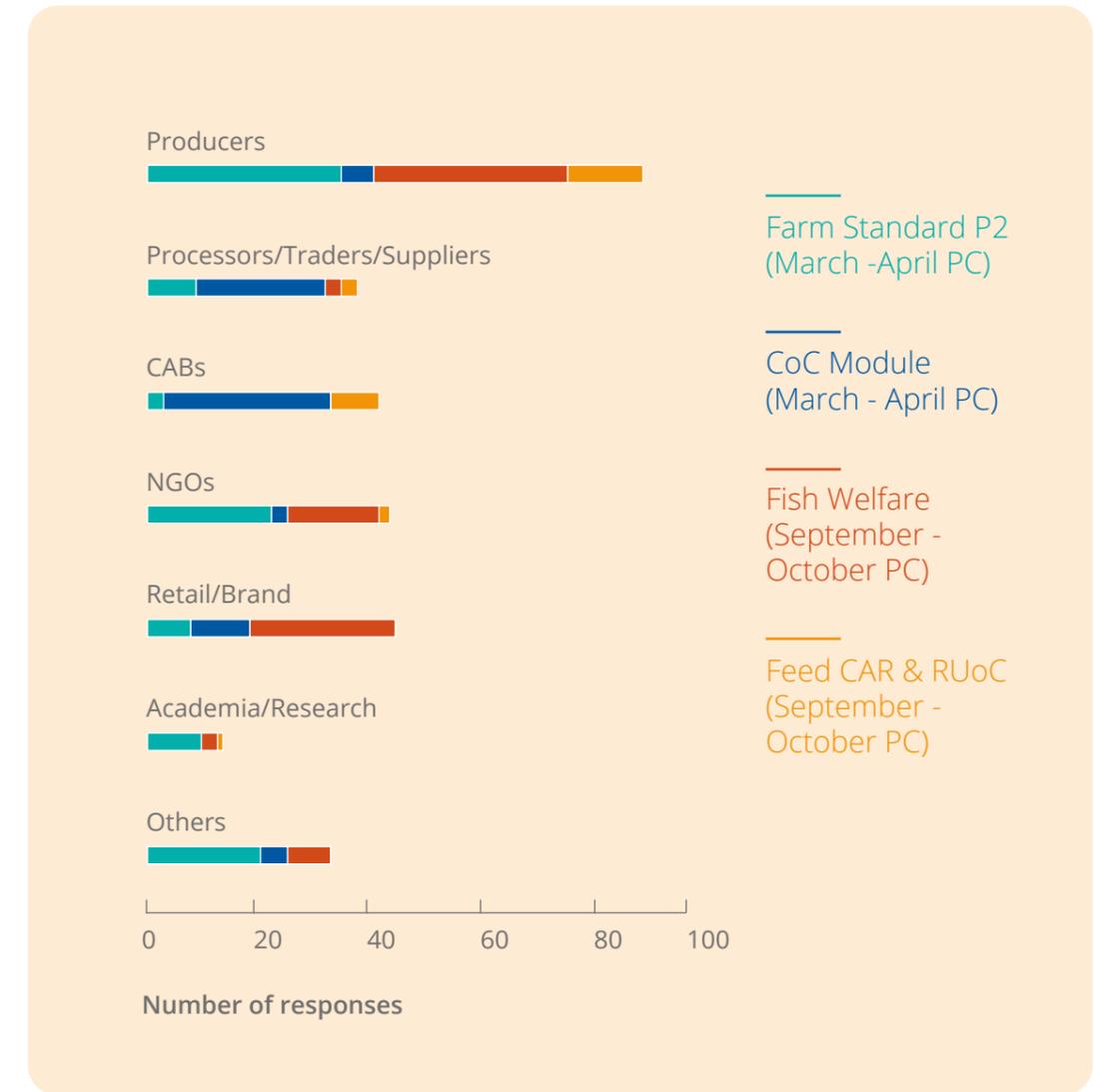
ASC is ISEAL Code Compliant. Our system has been independently evaluated against ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice - a globally-recognised framework for effective, credible sustainability systems. More information can be found at [isealalliance.org](http://isealalliance.org).

Stakeholders from **35 countries** provided feedback through ASC's consultations in 2021.

## Ensuring every voice is heard

Maintaining globally applicable standards means that our consultations must be accessible to all stakeholders, and we seek to continually improve our methods. Public consultations are translated into the dominant languages used by identified stakeholders where resources allow. We solicit feedback through a mix of online surveys, workshops, meetings, one-on-one engagement with local staff, offline submission of surveys, emails, and letters. Surveys utilize filters allowing audiences to target their topics and questions of relevance to them. Following each public consultation, we monitor engagement and evaluate methods employed to identify and deliver improvements.

ASC received feedback in our 2021 public consultations across all main stakeholder groups. While the number of responses varied by topic, we received between as many as 110 to 29 responses during a public consultation. Responses can be from individuals, organisations or large associations representing many sector groups. To fully understand representation across stakeholder constituencies, ASC evaluates feedback alongside respondent information to develop a complete picture of engagement.



## Consultations conducted in 2021



### ASC Farm Standard

Principle 2 captures criteria dedicated to the mitigation of environmental impact of aquaculture operations. This considers the farms impacts on fish health, biodiversity and ecosystem protections, efficient use of resources such as feed, water and energy, and disposal

of waste and related pollutants. Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on indicator language, data requirements and draft concepts for the continued development of the Farm Standard.



### Fish Welfare

The ASC Fish Welfare project aims to identify key impacts of aquaculture on farmed aquatic animal welfare and develop new best practice indicators for ASC's Farm Standard. The objective is to expand the current indicators in ASC's existing standards to a more comprehensive set of best practices across all species

currently within the ASC's scope. The consultation provided an opportunity to review proposed requirements to improve first the welfare of farmed fish that take advantage of industry developments and research covering issues of water quality, stocking density and slaughter.



### CoC Module

ASC is developing a new suite of assurance activities and tools to reflect global best practice and to incorporate innovation through use of technology. The module, as an addition to the MSC's Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard, addresses emergent issues such as seafood

fraud, food safety and use of substances such as antibiotics. Stakeholders were invited to review the additional requirements, which are needed in part due to inherent differences in producing farmed versus wild seafood, such as controlled environments and human-managed inputs.



### Feed CAR & RUoC

The Feed Standard Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) and Requirements for the Unit of Certification (RUoC) are structured to follow the certification process of a feed mill from initial application, through the audit process, to certification decision, and strengthen surveillance and certification

requirements. These feed assurance documents are aligned with the farm CAR and RUoC to ensure uniformity with deviation only where necessary to implement specific Feed Standard requirements. The consultation provided an opportunity to evaluate the documents and new elements of the Feed RUoC that complement the Feed Standard requirements bringing a consistent approach to feed mills.

## STAKEHOLDER SPOTLIGHT: The Global Salmon Initiative (GSI)

From 0 to 60% in under 10 years - GSI member companies hit the ground running on ASC uptake

When GSI launched in 2013, the companies set an ambitious goal to be 100% ASC certified across all members' farms by 2020. A goal considered unachievable by many. Yet, as a pre-competitive CEO-level initiative committed to advancing environmental improvements across the salmon sector, GSI set these ambitions to unite efforts and establish a framework for progress which went beyond 'business as usual' and deliver measurable impact in improving the sustainability performance of the sector.

From zero ASC certified farms in 2013, GSI members have since achieved ASC certification across 60% of GSI members production, as of September 2022. In 2021, this resulted in over 600,000 tonnes of responsibly sourced ASC-certified salmon reaching the marketplace from GSI producers alone, and that number is growing.

In support of their goal, GSI has established a dedicated ASC Taskforce that meets monthly – that is over 100 meetings since 2013! This knowledge-sharing platform provides an opportunity for companies to share common queries on the standard and the audit process,

and most importantly collectively problem solve via best-practice sharing on how to meet ASC's rigorous performance criteria. While each member is on their own journey towards certification, GSI facilitates ways to unite the companies and work with the supply chain to make environmental improvements more quickly than if companies were working in silos.

While there is no denying ASC is a significant investment, and a steep learning curve, the members have realized that as they better understand and implement the Standard, their efforts both improve environmental and social sustainability performance, but also improve operational efficiencies delivering more long-term benefits.

GSI's work over the past near-decade has been an asset in strengthening the longer-term impacts that can be realized through certification. As a collaborative representing over 40% of the global farmed salmon sector and a key stakeholder to ASC, GSI can help establish best-practices in responsible production across all aspects of operations – from fish welfare, to employee rights, neighbours and preservation of surrounding ecosystems. GSI has been a leader in aquaculture by offering a transparent framework to ground stakeholder engagement in, and demonstrate a shared commitment to efficient, responsible farming practices.

*“For GSI, sustainability is never static, and we must always be finding ways of improving. We believe the ASC Standard, with its shared belief in continuous improvement, and evolving requirements that cover components of our industry – from production, feed, welfare and climate – it can help constructively challenge the industry to continually do better. And we're up to the challenge.”*

**Sophie Ryan,  
Executive Director, GSI**





# 08 Collaboration as a Core Value

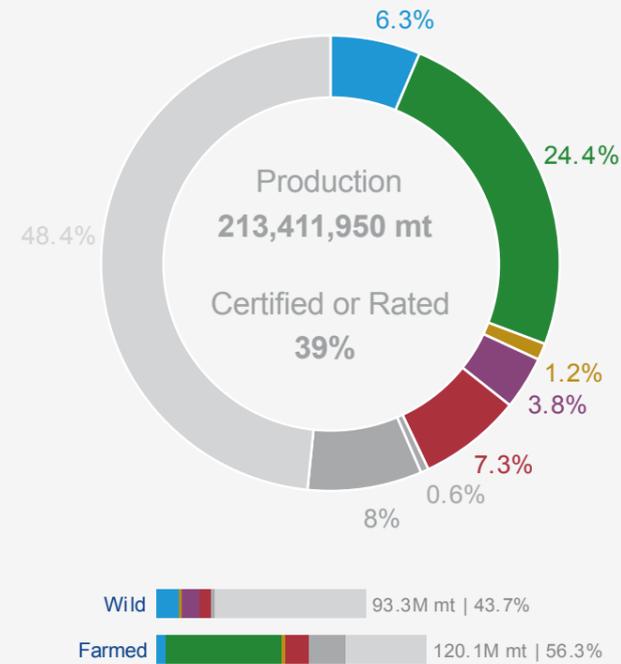
# Collaboration as a Core Value

The ASC has always recognised that the challenges facing the global aquaculture industry can be tackled more effectively if close collaboration can be achieved with like-minded organisations. Over the years, ASC has contributed work in this area through collaborations in small and large projects and continued to make progress throughout 2021.

ASC's CEO Chris Ninnes continues to chair the Certifications and Rating Collaboration, which unites five global programs working together to coordinate their tools and increase their impact so that more seafood producers move along a clear path toward environmental sustainability and social responsibility. In 2019, the Collaboration launched the Sustainable Seafood Data Tool, providing a snapshot of global seafood rated and certified by Collaboration members. The interactive tool consolidates data on seafood production from six global certification and ratings programs, providing NGOs, policy makers, businesses, and other interested stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of seafood sustainability. In 2021, the tool was completely redesigned, with improvements made to its functionality. The tool now effectively allows users to interact with the charts, filter the data, and isolate organisation specific datasets, illustrating collective impact and the performance of top countries and species to enhance the usefulness of the tool.

*"It has been a valuable and informative process to collaborate with ASC over the past few years to explore how we can mutually support responsible aquaculture and in particular aquaculture improvements,"*

**Dave Martin, Program Director at Sustainable Fisheries Partnership**



The Sustainable Seafood Data Tool draws on publicly available data from FAO coupled with member data. The methods applied may result in reduced volumes across member programmes.



Seabream farmer, Croatia

Building from the work undertaken in the context of the Certification and Ratings Collaboration, ASC led the "Integration of seafood certification and jurisdictional assurance models" project co-funded by the ISEAL Innovations Fund, with support from the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO. In partnership with the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) and Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program (SFW), the three-year project set out to explore opportunities for collaboration and integration around three main areas:

- Integrating data to improve performance assessments,
- Creating a multi-scale approach to farm improvement, and
- Developing a verification model of non-certified farms sourcing products with ratings into the market.

While project partners share the same goal of improving aquaculture practices, the differing scope and reach of these various programmes complicate the landscape for producers and the market. Therefore, the project explored the sharing of data between organisations that largely operate at different levels, including farm, regional and national. Among the project learnings, this work has further defined opportunities that will contribute to landscape improvements, mechanisms and lessons for Aquaculture Improvement Programme (AIP) uptake, and continued collaboration opportunities with project partners.

Visit the [Certification and Ratings website](#) and [ISEAL Innovations Fund Project Page](#)

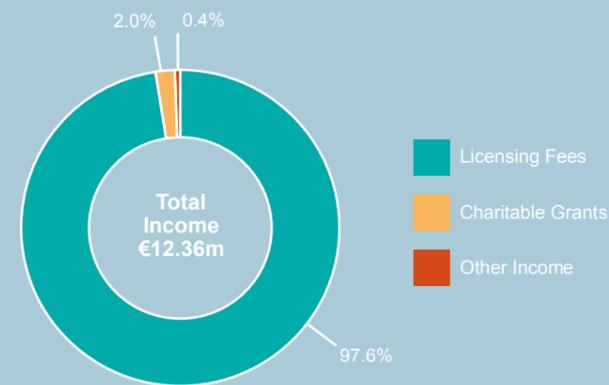


# 09 Financial Impact

# Financial Impact

As an independent, not-for-profit organisation, ASC receives funding from two main sources - licensing fees for voluntarily use of the ASC logo and charitable grants. In 2021 ASC continued to experience robust growth in income from logo licensing. This, together with tight control of expenditure, meant that ASC was able to cover its baseline operating costs from its own generated income, while meeting some discrete project costs from donated funding and continuing the creation of a financial reserve. The success of the business model so far

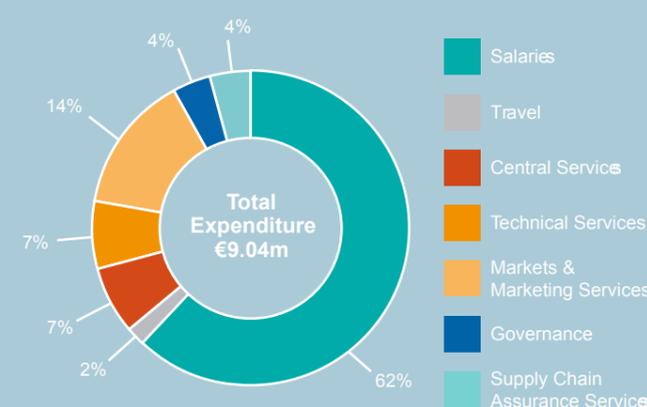
has been encouraging. However, as expenditure rises to service existing needs and meet new ones, so too does the need to ensure the financial resilience of the organisation. To overcome this, ASC will continue to seek philanthropic support, explore new initiatives through our value-added services and engage in time-bound projects that are additional to operational activities.



## Logo Licensing

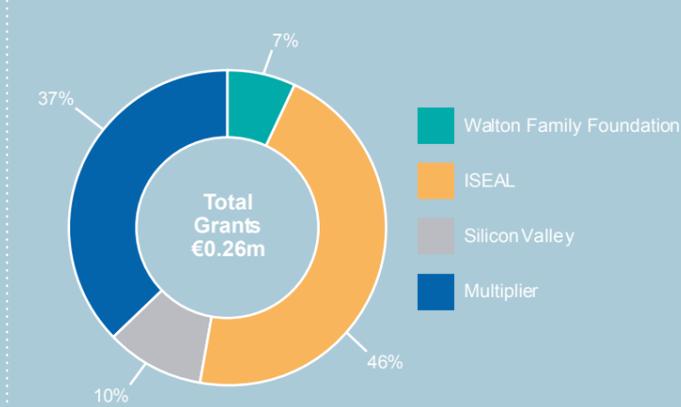
ASC's traditional income sources from fees applied to the voluntary use of our logo for companies in the supply chain certified against the Chain of Custody Standard, who have signed a Logo License Agreement with ASC International. The logo serves as a symbol to retailers and consumers that they are sourcing the most responsibly produced farm raised seafood.

ASC ensures independence by requiring the use of independent conformity assessment bodies to conduct farm certification and chain of custody audits and does not receive income from the assessment of fish farms and supply chain partners.



## Our Spending

More than half of our expenditure in 2021 supported our operations to implement the activities and initiatives demonstrated throughout this report. Without competent and experienced staff, ASC would not experience the stability and growth that we celebrate from 2021. Remaining expenditure is spread across our programs, recognizing the important and complementary roles that our marketing, communication, technical, assurance and governance systems play. Collectively, these activities are key to ASC's continued success.



## Charitable Grants

ASC has been a fortunate recipient of charitable grants promoting a range of activities in support of responsible aquaculture. These activities contribute to research on impacts, developing new requirements, piloting our Improver Programme, and supporting operational activities, among others. In 2021, we continued project activities under a 3-year grant through ISEAL Innovation Fund, supported by the Swiss Secretariat on Economic Affairs (SECO), through which we collaborated with partners in piloting an Improvement Programme.

The ASC is a registered charitable organisation in the UK and Netherlands. Aquaculture Stewardship Council consolidated financial statements include the results of Aquaculture Stewardship Council Limited (charity registration number 01150418 and company registration number 08172832), ASCI Limited (company registration number 07788176), Stichting Aquaculture Stewardship Council Foundation (KvK 34389683) and ASCI Netherlands BV (KvK 74368249).



Shrimp Farm, Thailand



# 10 Commitment to a Better Future



# Commitment to a Better Future

Looking forward, ASC's work will be supported by our strategy revision taking place in 2022. With clear progress across all aspects of our programme, we will continue our focus on achieving a strong global certification programme, improving farm production through engagement with producers, further developing the ASC certification across markets, raising awareness of the ASC, working collaboratively, and strengthening our institutional development.

In 2022 and forward, we anticipate strong uptake on ASC labelled products in the US, UK, and Southern European markets, with continued investments across all markets. We are developing new and innovative ways for data submissions, use and sharing as we move towards implementation of the ASC Feed Standard and developing Farm Standard; with these new standards meeting increasing market expectations. ASC campaigns will continue concentrating

on raising consumer awareness on the value of ASC. Improved supply chain assurances, fish welfare requirements, and tools for calculating greenhouse gas emissions will further increase relevance of our programme in contributing to responsible aquaculture. And finally, the further development and piloting of ASC's Improver Programme bridges the gap between traditional production and certification providing a mechanism for continuous improvement and allowing the producer to show meaningful and measurable change in a transparent manner.

**We are thankful to all ASC certified farms, Chain of Custody clients, customers, colleagues, and funders for their continued support of the ASC programme and shared commitment to transparency that was critical to the delivery of this report's contents and our developing work moving forward!**

## How You can Help



### Get certified

Commit to making improvements to farming and feed operations and contributing responsible products to the supply chain



### Look for the label

Not all farmed seafood is the same. Our certification ensures yours meets the highest standards



### Provide input

Share your expertise and provide comment on farm audits, pilot projects and our standards in development or review



### Share our stories

Join us in spreading the word and encouraging more responsibly produced seafood for the world

## Methodology Notes

ASC data maintained by our programme, and used in this report, are collected through several mechanisms. Public audit reports produced by conformity assessment bodies (CAB) detail species produced, farm sites and Unit of Certification, harvested product volumes, and farm performance related to environmental and social indicators during the production cycle. Data from these reports, along with producer data submissions, are used to verify farm compliance against the requirements within our standards and to monitor and evaluate our programme's performance. ASC certification volumes represent the total reported in any given month for all valid certificates. Product and markets data are obtained from supply chain actors with MSC Chain of Custody certification and logo license agreements. Product numbers are based on active (in market) consumer-facing (to the consumer available) products that bear the ASC label. All figures for 2021 represent the complete year and pulled as of 1/1/2022.

Unit of Certification are the operations covered by an ASC certificate. It includes all production or harvest sites such as production ponds, and all storage, transport, slaughter, or processing operations (including subcontracted operations) under control of the client up to the point where the product enters further into the chain of custody (CoC).

Analysis conducted on environmental and social improvements relies on annually reported non-conformity (NC) data recorded by CABs during the certification cycle. Where a farm fails to fully comply with an ASC Standard requirement the CAB raises a non-conformance, signalling to the farm that improvements must be made to fully meet the requirement. Non-conformances are reported as compliant, not compliant, not applicable, or not audited, by the CAB. Non-conformances are graded as minor or major, depending on the severity of the issue and the steps to be taken in order to close it. All NCs

reported were allocated to an impact area as aligned across ASC's seven principles of sustainability and cross-referenced to whether improvements had been made in 2021 compared to NC's raised in previous audits (in 2019 or 2020) for the same indicator. An improvement was evidenced by the reduction or closure of a non-conformance, resulting in an action taken and summed by ASC Standard across impact areas. Percentage of improvements are the result of the number of NCs that improved in 2021 compared against the total number of NCs raised in the previous audits (2019 or 2020) for the same indicators. In total, 40,203 indicators were assessed covering 543 Units of Certification (the number of UoCs with sufficient data between years to identify whether an improvement was made) representing about one-third of total UoCs in 2021 across 11 ASC standards (excluding ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard). For additional details on methodology or to request ASC data, please contact [data@asc-aqua.org](mailto:data@asc-aqua.org).

### To reference this report:

**Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC). 2022. Annual Report 2021: Transforming Aquaculture. [www.asc-aqua.org](http://www.asc-aqua.org)**

