

Seaweed operations have been associated with a number of environmental impacts, such as effects on water movement, the physical structure of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, and changes in water quality, primary and secondary productivity and native fisheries.

The ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard sets a number of requirements for sustainable and socially responsible seaweed harvesting and farming practices, thereby contributing to the health of the natural environment and supporting workers and local communities.

The standard applies globally to all locations and scales of seaweed operations, including both wild harvest and cultured seaweed production.

Addressing environmental and social impacts

The ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard addresses both environmental and social aspects of sustainability.

- Environmentally, seaweed operations must show that any impact on the surrounding natural environment is sustainable.
- Socially, seaweed operations must be managed in a socially responsible manner, care for their employees and work with the local community. Seaweed producers must also be good and conscientious neighbours.

Certified seaweed producers ensure their operations are sustainable by:



1. Maintaining sustainable wild populations



2. Minimising environmental impacts



3. Ensuring effective management



4. Promoting social responsibility



5. Strengthening community relations and interaction

Contact details

For more information about the ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard visit www.asc-aqua.org/seaweed-standard, or contact seaweedstandard@msc.org



The ASC-MSC Seaweed Standard

A joint Seaweed Standard

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) have created a joint standard for certifying global seaweed operations.

With global seaweed production increasing along with demand for certification, the MSC and ASC recognise the importance of having a standard that rewards sustainable seaweed production and provides a benchmark for improvement.

The joint seaweed standard promotes environmentally sustainable and socially responsible operations by providing incentives for improvement. Seaweed operations that meet the standards gain the right to sell their products bearing the ASC-MSC label. This gives operations a public endorsement of their responsible practices, and gives consumers the reassurance that they're making an ethical purchase.

5 guiding principles

Sustainable wild populations:

Seaweed harvesting and farming must be conducted in a manner that does not lead to depletion of the exploited wild populations. For depleted populations, harvesting operations must be conducted in a manner that demonstrably leads to their recovery. Where appropriate, stock status, harvest strategy and the genetic impact of the assessment site on the wild stock are also assessed.

Environmental impacts:

Seaweed harvesting and farming activities must allow for the maintenance of the structure, productivity, function and diversity of the ecosystem (including habitat and associated dependent and ecologically related species) on which the activity depends. Seaweed operations must also adhere to criteria related to habitat, ecosystem structure and function, species status, species management, waste management and pollution control, energy efficiency, disease and pest management practices, and introduced species management.

Effective management:

Seaweed harvesting and farming operations must have an effective management system in place that respects local, national and international laws and standards. Beyond the legal framework, operators are required to review farm/fishery specific objectives, decision-making processes and compliance and enforcement arrangements.

Social responsibility:

Seaweed harvesting and farming activities are required to operate in a socially responsible manner. Operators must ensure that workers are protected from harmful practices including child labour, any degree of forced labour or discrimination, while supported in their rights to collective bargaining, fair disciplinary practices, health and safety, fair and decent wages, and appropriate working hours. Environmental training must also be provided.

Community relations and interaction:

Seaweed harvesting and farming activities must operate in a manner that minimises impacts on other farms, activities and communities. Operations must adhere to strict requirements regulating the appropriate positioning and orientation of farms or water-based structures, identification and recovery of substantial gear, good management of noise, light and odour, and the proper decommissioning of abandoned farms or other water-based structures.



About
25 million metric tons
of seaweed and other algae are harvested annually with a value of almost \$6 billion¹

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

The expansion of seaweed farming in tropical developing countries could have large positive impacts on local poverty, ecosystem management and climate change mitigation²

World Bank Group

¹ <http://www.intrafish.com/news/1386908/asc-msc-unveil-joint-standard> ² <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/947831469090666344/Seaweed-aquaculture-for-food-security-income-generation-and-environmental-health-in-Tropical-Developing-Countries>