**Terms of Reference (ToR)**

**for review and revision of the**

**ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0**

This document is publicly available on the ASC website.

Comments are welcome and appreciated. Form for submitting comments is in the Annex (at the end of this document)

**Document history**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Effective date** | **Description of amendment** | **Affected section / page** |
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|  |  |  |  |

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# Background information

## ASC vision and mission

The vision of ASC is a world where aquaculture plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for mankind whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment.

The mission of the ASC is to transform aquaculture towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the chain.

## ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0

The ASC shrimp standard is part of eight ASC-standards covering fourteen different species groups. Currently there are over 100 shrimp farms ASC-certified and more than 70 shrimps farms under assessment. The ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0 has been operational since March 2014.

The ASC Shrimp Standard aims to transform shrimp aquaculture towards more environmental sustainability and social responsibility using efficient market mechanisms that create value across the seafood chain.

The ASC Shrimp Standard ***applies Globally*** and includes indicators and metrics aiming to reduce the key negative social and environmental impacts of the farm (see the Standard); notably as regards to human rights and labour rights based on ILO conventions, in order to improve living and working conditions of farms workers.

## About this document

This document serves two purposes:

1. To allow ASC to make public notice of the start of the review and revision process of the ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0
2. To justify the need for a revision, the foreseen scope of the revision as well as practical information regarding the process and stakeholder outreach.

The review and revision process follows the ASC Standard Setting protocol, which means amongst others that the ToR, the first draft and the second draft of the proposed revisions will be put up for public consultation. The exact steps are described in the protocol.

# Justification for reviewing the Shrimp Standard

The following reasons are presented to justify the revision of the Shrimp Standard v1.0:

* As full ISEAL Alliance member, ASC is required to review, and revise where needed, each standard every 3-5 years. As the Shrimp Standard v1.0 has been operational since March 2014, the ISEAL-revision requires the revision process to start between March 2017 and March 2019
* The ASC Issue Log has revealed several issues that need to be reviewed in order for the standard to remain credible and defining best practice. Where needed the review will result in a revision.

The listed issues originate from various sources:

* Operational feedback (from farms, stakeholders, CABs and ASI) received via the certification process of shrimp farms against Shrimp Standard v1.0
* Stakeholder feedback on (partial) content of Shrimp Standard v1.0
* Benchmarking the ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0 against several external benchmarks (e.g. GSSI), rating (e.g. Seafood Watch) and industry collaboration initiatives (e.g. Sustainable Shrimp Platform).

# Objectives of the standard review

The main objectives of the standards’ review are:

* To assure that the standards’ content is relevant and rigourous
* To provide a higher level of consistency across the current standards where needed
* To deliver greater clarity to users of the document
* To ensure consistency of implementation by farms and CABs.

# Scope

Within scope of the Shrimp Standard v1.0 revision are[[1]](#footnote-1):

* Scope of Standard
* Principle 2
* Principle 5
* Principle 6
* Principle 7

As outlined under the Justification section, several sources have provided initial input/recommendations for items under the five sections as listed above to be reviewed during revision of the Shrimp Standard v1.0. An overview hereof is presented in Annex 1.

More information on the process and relevant documents can be found in the ASC Standard Setting Protocol and under chapter 7 ‘Process’ below.

Certification/accreditation requirements will not be reviewed under this project.

## Interaction with the Alignment Project

ASC is running a process (i.e. Alignment Project) to align the current species standards into 1 farm standard. Coinciding with the review and revision of the Shrimp Standard, the Alignment Project is progressing on Principle 1 (Legal), Principle 6 (Labour) and Principle 7 (Communities). The corresponding Principles of the Shrimp Standard (P1, P3, P4) will therefor also be revised but under the Alignment Project.

Once alignment of these three Principles has concluded, the Principles will be removed from the Shrimp Standard (and the other species standards) and the Farm Standard will replace these three Principles.

The remaining Principles, including those that are now up for review/revision of the Shrimp Standard, will be aligned within the course of 2019 and will follow a similar process. Eventually, the current species standards will be completely replaced by the aligned Farm Standard.

# Process & documents

The table below lists the main steps for this revision process – a more detailed (general) process description can be found in the ASC Standard Setting Protocol.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Activity:** | **Output:** | **Timeline** | **By:** |
| 1 | Present project proposal and justification to SB | Concept ToR & project proposal approved by SB | April 18/19 2018 | Project Lead  & SB |
| 2 | Development of detailed ToR | Draft ToR open for consultation | November 2018 (**consultation for 1 month**) | Project Lead & TAG |
| 3 | Finalization ToR | ToR v1.0 | End 2018 | Project Lead & TAG |
| 3 | Development Draft 1 | * Draft 1 Shrimp Standard v1.1 * Background Document | March 2019 (**consultation for 2 months**) | Project Lead & TAG |
| 4 | Development Draft 2 | * Draft 2 Shrimp Standard v1.1 * Background Document | August 2019 (**consultation for 2 months**) | Project Lead & TAG |
| 5 | Presentation of final draft to TAG for endorsement | Final draft – Shrimp Standard v1.1 | December 2019 (TAG meeting) | Project Lead & TAG |
| 6 | Presentation of final draft to SB for endorsement and sign-off | Final draft – Shrimp Standard v1.1 | January 2020  (SB-meeting) | Project Lead  & SB |

The actual review and proposed revision of the items within scope will be detailed in a Background Document. This document will present detailed information for each item under review and/or new content to be added. The document will also make a suggestion on revised/new standard content.

Together with this Background Document, two drafts of Shrimp Standard v1.1 will be made public for consultation. Both drafts will include revised content as is proposed in the Background Document.

For the entire project, following documents will be produced, and made public via the ASC website:

**Related to ToR:**

1. ToR (draft & final)
2. Overview of stakeholder comments received on draft ToR and ASCs’ response

**Related to Draft 1:**

1. Background document\* for Draft 1 of Shrimp Standard v1.1
2. Draft 1 of Shrimp Standard v1.1
3. Overview of stakeholder comments received on draft 1 and ASCs’ response

**Related to Draft 2:**

1. Background document\* for Draft 2 of Shrimp Standard v1.1
2. Draft 2 of Shrimp Standard v1.1
3. Overview of comments received on draft 2 and ASCs’ response

9. Final **ASC Shrimp Standard v1.1** (after sign-off by SB).

*\* Please note that the Background Document for Draft 1 and Draft 2 are one and the same. The Background Document will have 2 sections – one for each Draft.*

# Governance structure, working approach and decision-making procedure

The following table outlines the roles & responsibilities of the various ASC governance bodies for this particular project.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ASC Supervisory Board | * Final decision making body * Project approval * Project sign-off |
| ASC Technical Advisory Group | * Project overview, including overview on TWG’s/external experts * Development & endorsement detailed ToR * Endorsement of Draft 1 and 2 prior to each consultation round * Endorsement sign-off document to SB * Endorsement final draft to SB |
| Steering Committee | * n/a |
| Technical Working Group | * Ad-hoc TWG(s) will be formed where deemed needed. * TWG(s) findings are reported back to TAG |
| External experts | * Consulted where deemed needed |

**Reporting requirements:**

* A dedicated webpage on the ASC website will be constructed to provide a means to communicate relevant documents.
* Minutes of the TAG-meetings are published on the ASC-website

**Decision-making procedure:**

* External Experts and TWG’s advice to TAG
* TAG advices SB on standard content by means of the final draft
* SB is the final decision-making body

TWG and TAG strive for consensus. Where views differ and consensus can’t be find, various views are documented and escalated to the final decision body (SB).

**Meetings:**

* The ASC strives to work in a cost and time-efficient manner and has a preference to work primarily via e.g. teleconference and e-mail. Meeting schedules will be set to allow participation at reasonably convenient times.
* Need for in-person meeting(s) will be decided as the process progresses.
* TAG meets on regular set moments.

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# Stakeholder participation and mapping

The ASC process for reviewing this standard follows the ASC Standard Setting Protocol. It will require two public consultation rounds and other stakeholder engagement opportunities to ensure effective stakeholder participation.

The ASC will monitor the participation of stakeholders throughout the standard setting process to ensure balanced and effective stakeholder participation.

Table 1 (below) presents an overview of identified stakeholder groups and how engagement with each group is expected.

**Table 1: Stakeholders mapping**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Main stakeholder group** | **Relevance (why they should participate in the process)** | **Interest in the process and standards** | **Outreach strategies for participation in revision** | **Communication means** | **Participation goal** |
| Aquaculture farms of related species  (including farm trade bodies / representative organisations / Artisanal and small scale farmers) | Most directly affected group.  In order for standards to be effective, requirements must be possible in practice. Farms can provide these practical insights. | Attainable standards that create added value when farms get certified. | - direct contact with farms  - where necessary, translation of necessary documents (e.g. this TOR, draft standards, synopsis, final standards)  - via Conformity assessment bodies (CABs)  - local/regional workshops, where and when necessary  - participation in pilot | - E-mail newsletter (if possible)  - Website (if possible)  - Webinars (if possible)  - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)  - Through trade associations  - Through local civil society organizations  - Workshop in remote areas in producers’ countries will be provided if any of the mentioned means above is not available. | - Farms in all active countries and regions of the related species |
| Communities (around farms growing related species) (This group may be represented by NGO’s, see below) | Directly affected group. Some standards requirements are about local communities. | Standards that take care of reducing negative impacts of adjacent farms on their livelihoods. | - where necessary, translation of certain process documents (e.g. this TOR, draft standards, synopsis, final standards  - via social NGOS’s where possible  - local/regional workshops, where and when necessary  - participation in pilot | - E-mail newsletter (if possible)  - Website (if possible)  - Webinars (if possible)  - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)  - Through (local) social / environmental NGOs | - People living around certified farms in all active countries and regions |
| Industry (retails, processing/ trading companies) | Indirectly affected group.  Credible standards that do not challenge their continued and consistent supply, and  yet help strengthen their reputation. | Attainability of standards that do not create high costs for certified products.  Facing end consumers, retail likes to make  sure relevant issues will be covered in standards. | - Direct contact with these companies (e.g. through ASC Outreach colleagues)  - Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs | - E-mail newsletter  - website  - webinars  - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops)  - Trade press | - Companies trading related species  - Companies in all active countries and regions |
| Civil society organisations – \_both environmental and social (NGOs) | Experience/knowledge of and insights in issues that will be in the standards | Key environmental and social concerns are addressed in the standards. | - Direct contact with these organisations  - Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs | - E-mail newsletter  - website  - webinars  - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops) | - Both local and international NGOs |
| Governments (including inter-governmental agencies) | Alignment with national and international sustainability development goals (SDGs) | No impose of technical barriers to trade (TBT) in standards | - direct contact with government officials (or through consultants)  - where necessary, organise discussions with government officials  - Public consultation workshops | - E-mail newsletter  - website  - webinars  - In person to the extent needed (e.g. workshops) | - Representatives of governments where related species are widely farmed |
| Scientists/Academics | Knowledge and their scientific approach | Standards are science-based | - direct contact with scientists  - where necessary, organise discussions with them  - Where necessary, have them do specific research on identified topics | - E-mail newsletter  - website  - webinars  - In person to the extent possible (e.g. workshops) | -Scientists/researchers of the related species |
| Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) | Besides farmers and local NGOs, CABs have practical insights on field implementation of standards | Auditability of the standards and reasonable auditing costs | - Direct contact with these organisations  - Face-to-face meetings at or around conferences/trade fairs | - E-mail newsletter  - website  - webinars  - In person (e.g. workshops) | - Both ASC accredited and non-accredited CABs  - CABs familiar with the related species |

# Assessment of Risk

At this stage the ASC can only identify generic risks in terms of changes to the current standards in case of revision. These risks will be further elaborated once it becomes clearer regarding the direction of proposed changes. This TOR will again be updated accordingly.

**No 1: Intended Identified risk**

Auditors will need to be retrained to safeguard consistent implementation of any changes. It may prove difficult to have all auditors (re)trained in time, especially if an in-person training is required.

**Strategy for managing risk No 1:** Development of training materials and planning of training will be planned as far in advance as reasonably expected and may involve on-line delivery.

**No 2: Unidentified risk**

Resistance by audited farms (certified and in assessment) leading to the possibility that certified farms would leave the programme due to the changes, or some farms would be willing to join the programme. Farms would have to adjust their practices to meet changes to the standards, and possibly additional resources used to meet future compliance (e.g. training for workers, efforts to find new inputs suppliers, and lower productivity and practices).

**Strategies for managing risk No 2:**

To avoid risk No 2, the ASC engages various stakeholders in its standard setting, review and revision processes to make sure that the standards or changes are applicable and accessible. Besides, the ASC is also committed through other policy developments (e.g. group certification, harmonization and quality and assurance processes) that will be launched soon will also contribute to reducing implementation and certification costs for farmers, especially the small holder. The ASC is also willing to offer training for farms to raise their awareness of sustainable and responsible farming and reduce impacts of the sector as a whole, providing that funds are available to implement this strategy.

# Contact information

* Key contact person: Marcelo Hidalgo – Standards Coordinator
* Email: [standards@asc-aqua.org](mailto:info@asc-aqua.org)
* Address: HNK, Weg der Verenigde Naties 1, 3527 KT Utrecht, Netherlands

# Annex

Annex 1 - Scope of review content

1. The review of Principle 1, Principle 3 and Principle 4 coincides with the Alignment Project. More information under ‘Interaction with Alignment Project’. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)