



# ASC Feed Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR)

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## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE REQUIREMENTS

Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) holds responsibility for this document.

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1.0	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	N/A

## ABOUT THE AQUACULTURE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (ASC)

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that operates a voluntary, independent third-party certification and labelling programme based on scientifically robust Standards.

The Standards define Criteria that help to transform the aquaculture<sup>1</sup> sector<sup>2</sup> towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility, as per the ASC Mission.

### ASC Vision

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

### ASC Mission

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

### ASC Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) is an articulation, description and mapping out of the building blocks required to achieve the organisation's vision.

ASC has defined a ToC which explains how the ASC certification and labelling programme promotes and rewards responsible fish farming practices through incentivising the choices people make when buying seafood.

ASC's Theory of Change can be found on the ASC website.

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<sup>1</sup> Aquaculture: see Definition List.

<sup>2</sup> Aquaculture sector: see Definition List.

## THE ASC DOCUMENT AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

ASC is a code compliant member of the ISEAL Alliance and implements a voluntary, independent third-party certification system<sup>3</sup> consisting of three independent actors:

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| i. Scheme Owner                       | i.e. Aquaculture Stewardship Council        |
| ii. Accreditation Body                | i.e. Assurance Services International (ASI) |
| iii. Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) | i.e. accredited CAB                         |

### Scheme Owner

ASC, as scheme owner:

- sets and maintains Standards according to the ASC Standard Setting Procedure. The Standards are normative documents
- sets and maintains the Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR). The CAR describes the accreditation requirements, assessment requirements and certification requirements. The CAR is a normative document.
- sets and maintains the Certification Requirements for the Unit of Certification (RUoC). The RUoC describes the certification requirements, that apply to the entity seeking certification, in addition to the standard requirements. The RUoC is a normative document.
- sets and maintains the Interpretation Manual which provides guidance to the auditor and Unit of Certification (UoC) on how to interpret and best implement the indicators within the relevant Standard. The Interpretation Manual is a non-normative document.

These above listed documents are publicly available on the ASC-website.

### Accreditation Body

Accreditation is the formal recognition by an independent body, generally known as an Accreditation Body (AB), that a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) operates according to international standards.

Assessment findings of accreditation audits and an overview of current accredited CABs is publicly available via the ASI-website ([www.asi-assurance.org](http://www.asi-assurance.org)).

### Conformity Assessment Body

The UoC contracts the Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) who employs auditor(s) that conduct a conformity assessment (hereafter 'audit') of the UoC against the relevant ASC Standard. The management requirements for CABs as well as auditor competency requirements are described in the CAR and assured through accreditation.

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<sup>3</sup> Third-party Certification System: see Definition List.

## **ASC Audit and Certification Process**

An ASC audit follows strict process requirements. These requirements are detailed in the CAR. Only ASI-accredited CABs are allowed to audit and certify a UoC against ASC Standards. As scheme owner, ASC itself is not - and cannot be - involved in the actual audit or certification decision of a Unit of Certification (UoC). Granted certificates are the property of the CAB.

Audit findings of all ASC audits, including granted certificates, are made publicly available on the ASC-website. These include audit findings that result in a negative certification decision.

## **ASC Logo Use**

ASC-certified entities shall only use the ASC Logo and trademarks if authorised through a signed Logo Licence Agreement.

Unauthorised logo display or use of trademarks is prohibited and will be treated as a trademark infringement.



## INTRODUCTION TO THIS DOCUMENT

The purposes of the ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements [CAR: this document] are:

1. To establish requirements for certification to enable all Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to operate in a consistent and controlled manner.
2. To establish requirements for accreditation of CABs by the ASC appointed accreditation body.
3. To provide the transparency that is required of an international certification scheme for it to have credibility with potential Stakeholders, including governments, international governmental bodies (e.g. regulatory bodies, managers), CABs, suppliers of aquaculture products, non-governmental organisations, and consumers.
4. To provide documentation to assure long-term continuity and consistency of the delivery of ASC certification.

The ASC's appointed accreditation body will set the scope of accreditation for CABs with reference to the ASC certification requirements described in this document.

The ASC certification and accreditation requirements have been developed to be in full compliance with the FAO *Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification*.

ASC is a code compliant member of the ISEAL Alliance and its operations are managed to be in conformity with ISEAL codes of good practice. More information is available on the [ISEAL website](#)

The ASC's certification and accreditation requirements are set out in two parts, which apply to all CABs conducting ASC audits:

- Part A – General certification requirements
- Part B – Operational certification requirements

Feed Mills that are certified to the ASC Feed Standard may sell products within the scope of their certificate. The requirements that apply to these sales are described in this document.

This document has been developed to address the specific needs of certification to the ASC Feed Standard. The flow and structure of this document reflects that of the ASC farm standards' CAR. CABs that already hold accreditation for ASC Farm Standards will already comply with many parts of the document.

The CAR is subject to periodic review to incorporate revisions based on developing accreditation and certification practices. As with the ASC standards, the review and revision interval is every three to five years. During this period, the ASC collects and analyses comments submitted by stakeholders.

In the interim, any issues or concerns can be raised by contacting [certification@asc-aqua.org](mailto:certification@asc-aqua.org).

All planned reviews and revisions of the CAR will be announced to invite public feedback, with relevant documents published on the ASC website.

### **Available Language(s)**

The official version of this document is English. The ASC may translate it into additional languages as necessary. In case of any inconsistencies and/or discrepancies between available translation(s) and the English version, the online English version (pdf-format) will prevail.

To request a hard copy of this document, public summaries and other related materials, please contact the Programme Assurance Team at [certification@asc-aqua.org](mailto:certification@asc-aqua.org)

**NOTE:** This document has been developed for technical use by accredited and applicant CABs, therefore casual readers may find that it is not easy to read. For general readers it is recommended that the ASC website be reviewed prior to this document.

## PART A - GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### 1. SCOPE

Part A sets out the requirements that all CABs shall implement in their own procedures and management system. Following these requirements allows them to carry out certification services for Clients that wish to make a claim that the aquaculture feed product(s) they sell are compliant to the ASC Feed Standard.

### 2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

The documents listed below are part of the ASC Certification Requirements.

For references that have a specific date or version number, later amendments or revisions do not apply. CABs are encouraged to review the most recent editions and any guidance documents available to gain further insight.

For references without dates or version numbers, the latest edition of the document referred to applies.

- a) ASC Feed Standard: See [www.asc-aqua.org](http://www.asc-aqua.org)
- b) ASC Feed Certification Requirements for Unit of Certification (RUoC)
- c) ISO 17065 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- d) ISO 19011 Guidelines for auditing management systems
- e) ISO 17021-1 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems
- f) ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: REMOTE AUDITS
- g) IAF MD 4:2018 IAF Mandatory document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for auditing/assessment purposes.

### 3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. All definitions are published in the [ASC Vocabulary Portal](#).

### 4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

#### 4.1. Requirement of Accreditation

- 4.1.1. A CAB shall have had its application to the ASC appointed accreditation body for accreditation to the scope of the certification it wishes to provide, accepted before starting to sell certification services.

4.1.2. A CAB shall only award certificates once it is accredited and only within the scope of its accreditation.

4.1.3. A CAB shall recognise that Clients with a valid certificate issued by other accredited CABs conform to relevant ASC standards.

4.1.4. A CAB shall authorise the ASC appointed accreditation body to publish the CAB's company name, full address and contact persons' details.

4.1.5. A CAB shall authorise the ASC appointed accreditation body to publish accreditation assessment reports on its website.

#### **4.2. Conformity to ISO 17065, 17021, 19011 and the ASC requirements**

4.2.1. All CABs shall conform to the requirements of ISO 17065 and all other ASC Requirements relevant to the scope of accreditation applied for or held.

4.2.2. CABs shall conform to the ASC requirements in this document in the case of a conflict with any listed ISO standards.

4.2.3. CAB audit personnel should follow guidance provided in ISO 19011.

4.2.4. The CAB shall develop procedures for ASC social audits that are consistent with the latest version of ISO 17021 and ISO 19011, making adaptations taking into account specific requirements of this CAR.

4.2.5. In cases of inconsistency between ISO 17021 and ISO 19011, the former shall prevail.

#### **4.3. Normative annexes**

4.3.1. CABs shall follow annexes in this document, as applicable.

#### **4.4. Compliance with legal requirements**

4.4.1. CABs shall comply with the legal requirements in the countries in which they operate.

4.4.2. Key CAB personnel shall demonstrate understanding of applicable legislation and regulations of the country where certification services are being offered.

#### **4.5. Certification Decision-Making Entity**

4.5.1. The CAB's decision-making entity shall authorise and justify in writing any changes to the terms of certification.

#### **4.6. Communication with the ASC**

4.6.1. CABs shall follow the communication requirements in Annex D.

#### **4.7. The ASC CAB calibration workshops**

4.7.1. CABs shall participate in the annual ASC, CAB and appointed accreditation body tripartite sessions.

4.7.2. CABs should participate in the workshops and calibrations sessions organised by the ASC.

#### **4.8. Use of the ASC and CAB trademarks**

4.8.1. All uses of the ASC trademark(s) by a CAB shall be subject to an ASC logo licence agreement.

4.8.2. The CAB shall have documented procedures for the issue and use of any logo or trademark of the CAB (ISO 17065 Use of license, certificates and marks of conformity) for the ASC program, including procedures for pre-publication review and authorisation by the CAB of all uses of the CAB's logo, claims or trademarks by ASC Certificate Holders.

### **5. STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **5.1. Mechanism for safeguarding impartiality**

5.1.1. The CAB shall have a documented structure which safeguards impartiality within the CAB and its operations.

5.1.2. The structure shall be described in the documents that establish the CAB's legal status, or by some other means that prevents change which could compromise the function of the structure to safeguard impartiality.

5.1.3. This may be through vesting authority to the impartiality structure for approval of policies, and some significant procedures such as the rules of procedure for the operation of the impartiality structure itself.

5.1.4. The impartiality structure may be an impartiality committee or equivalent structure.

5.1.5. The structure may be independent of management or combined with management function.

5.1.6. The CAB shall be responsible for:

5.1.6.1. The adequacy of the process for identifying and involving the relevant Stakeholders.

5.1.6.2. The impartiality structure itself to demonstrate the adequacy of their participation.

- 5.1.6.3. Providing all the information required for the impartiality structure to perform their job, including, but not limited to, the reasons for:
  - a) all significant decisions and actions
  - b) the selection of persons responsible for particular activities in respect to certification.
- 5.1.7. The impartiality structure shall involve all parties concerned with the development of principles and policies for the functioning of the CAB's certification system. This may include the CAB itself, regulatory authorities, NGOs, consultants, academics, feed producers, primary producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, food service providers, restaurants and consumers.
  - 5.1.7.1. This should be a high-level committee with the responsibility for ensuring impartiality and not predominantly a technical or sector-based group.
  - 5.1.7.2. The membership shall not only be selected to reflect the technical expertise of the CAB.
    - a) When necessary, it can be supported by technical experts as required
    - b) No single interest shall predominate.
- 5.1.8. Documentation for the mechanism for safeguarding impartiality shall include:
  - 5.1.8.1. Rules of procedure that establish the duties and rights of members (e.g., rule for attendance, quorum and voting).
    - a) Members shall sign declarations of confidentiality
    - b) Members shall sign annual declarations of the absence of conflicts of interest.
  - 5.1.8.2. The principle that impartiality shall be established at three levels within the CAB:
    - a) Strategies and policies
    - b) Decisions on certification
    - c) Auditing.
- 5.1.9. The impartiality structure shall conduct annual reviews that include:
  - 5.1.9.1. The current and intended activities of the CAB.
  - 5.1.9.2. The competence of key CAB personnel.
  - 5.1.9.3. The potential impartiality risks associated with the CAB's operation.
- 5.1.10. The function of the structure shall ensure that:
  - 5.1.10.1. Commercial and other considerations do not prevent the objective provision of certification services.

- 5.1.10.2. The period of time specified by the CAB for which personnel shall not be used to review or make a certification decision for a product for which they have provided consultancy time, shall be no less than 2 years.
- 5.1.10.3. No audit or certification services shall be provided to Clients if any of the products or services provided by the CAB or the CAB's personnel are still in use by the Client.

## **5.2. Confidentiality**

- 5.2.1. The CAB shall document arrangements to safeguard confidentiality (ISO 17065 4.5).

## **5.3. Complaints and Appeals**

- 5.3.1. The CAB shall have a documented procedure for handling complaints and appeals that includes:
  - 5.3.1.1. A requirement that all formal and informal complaints, appeals, concerns or objections related to the activities of the CAB, a Certificate Holder or an applicant, shall be kept on file and logged (ISO 17065 section 7.13.1).
  - 5.3.1.2. A description of involvement of the ASC appointed accreditation body and the ASC in case of appeals.
  - 5.3.1.3. Reference to the ASC appointed accreditation body's dispute mechanism, including incidents, complaints and appeals handling processes.
  - 5.3.1.4. CABs shall report all logged issues using FORM 4 submitted annually no less than forty-two (42) days prior to the annual surveillance by the ASC appointed accreditation body's visit. Copies shall be sent to the ASC and the ASC appointed accreditation body.
  - 5.3.1.5. In case of suspension or withdrawal of the ASC accreditation of the CAB, all logged issues shall be sent to the ASC appointed accreditation body and ASC as part of the suspension or withdrawal process, using FORM 4 no later than the final date of accreditation.
  - 5.3.1.6. Determining whether the complaint or appeal relates to certification activities for which the CAB is responsible.
  - 5.3.1.7. The appointment of an independent member of the CAB management who shall:
    - a) Report to top management
    - b) Be responsible for ensuring that procedures (ISO 17065 complaints and appeals) are followed.
  - 5.3.1.8. A procedure for reviewing all complaints and escalate them to the responsible CAB personnel as appropriate.

5.3.1.9. Encouragement for the complainants to submit copies of their complaints directly to the ASC at:

a) Email: [complaints@asc-aqua.org](mailto:complaints@asc-aqua.org)

b) Mailing Address:

Aquaculture Stewardship Council,  
Daalseplein 101,  
3511 SX Utrecht,  
The Netherlands

5.3.2. The CAB shall ensure that their complaints and appeals procedure is publicly available (e.g., on CAB website).

## **6. MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR CABs**

### **6.1. Internal Audits**

6.1.1. Internal audits shall be performed at least once every twelve (12) months or completed within a twelve (12) month time frame for segmented (or rolling) internal audits.

6.1.2. Internal audits shall cover all ASC Requirements in a planned and systematic manner.

## **7. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **7.1. CAB Personnel**

7.1.1. All personnel involved in delivering conformity assessment services shall be knowledgeable about the aims and objectives of the ASC.

7.1.1.1. This shall include knowledge of international agreements, conventions and treaties relevant to the ASC certification scope as appropriate to the role and responsibilities of each individual.

7.1.2. The CAB shall register all auditors working with the ASC scheme with the ASC and the appointed accreditation body.

7.1.3. The CAB shall ensure that all CAB personnel shall not participate in ASC conformity assessment services until they have the required experience, completed the required training, and demonstrated the required competencies for their role as described in Annex B.

7.1.4. The CAB shall not assign the same lead auditor to audit a UoC for more than 3 consecutive calendar years.



- 7.1.4.1. If the CAB has only one lead auditor in a given region and is not able to assign a different lead auditor, the CAB shall submit a variance request, on a case-by-case basis, explaining how to avoid the potential conflict of interest due to the familiarity with the Client and its UoC.
- 7.1.5. The CAB shall have a written procedure to confirm annually that every auditor is qualified and competent as described in Annex B and registered with the ASC as required. This procedure shall include:
- a) Performance evaluation of CAB personnel involved in the ASC conformity assessment activities
  - b) Annual calibration sessions on auditing against the ASC standards and requirements to ensure consistent practice among auditors and other CAB personnel
  - c) Record keeping of all training and calibration sessions including a record of the individuals that participated.
- 7.1.6. Audit teams shall include an ASC lead auditor.
- 7.1.7. Audit teams shall include member(s) that collectively have the following experience, expertise; language skills and cultural knowledge required to conduct an effective audit.
- 7.1.7.1. Relevant knowledge of national and local laws that apply to the operation of the UoC being audited that includes but is not limited to:
- a) Environmental laws
  - b) Occupational health and safety laws
  - c) Labour laws (both national and regional)
  - d) Laws governing ownership and use of land and water
  - e) Licenses and permits
  - f) Knowledge of Client's operations regarding the wages and working time
  - g) Cultural knowledge of the region/location where the UoC is located and of existing differences in the kinds of employees (such as full-time, temporary, contracted and migrant workers)
  - h) Applicable languages and dialects, both written and spoken, by the majority of employees in the UoC
  - i) Local building codes and bylaws.
- 7.1.7.2. Environmental and social science and technology, environmental management methods and aspects of operations that includes but is not limited to:
- a) Knowledge and experience related to the ASC Standard being audited, including risk assessment
  - b) Environmental issues in the area of the operation

- c) The management of natural resources
- d) Environmental protection
- e) The interaction of the activities, products, services, and operations with the environment
- f) Sector specific terminology
- g) Environmental aspects and impacts
- h) Methods for evaluating the significance of environmental aspects
- i) Aspects of operational processes, products and services
- j) Monitoring and measurement techniques
- k) Technologies and methods for the prevention of pollution
- l) Social aspects of applicant operations and their surrounding communities.

7.1.7.3. The CAB shall use technical experts independent of the Client to support the audit team. The area of expertise and affiliations of the technical expert shall be recorded in the audit report.

7.1.7.4. When translation services are needed to conduct the audit, the CAB shall select interpreters that are independent of the Client.

7.1.7.5. The CAB shall have procedures to determine if potential interpreters are competent and skilled in interpretation from the national or local language, into the operating language of the audit team. This shall include as a minimum:

- a) Language certificate of the operating language of the audit team if it is not native to the interpreter.
  - i. The certificate shall be at least of level B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
  - ii. The CAB may be exempted of this requirement when the operating language of the audit team is English and if/when interpreters come from countries/regions ranked high or very high by the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI).
- b) Good understanding and experience of the interpreters, with the subjects being interpreted.
- c) Detailed CVs of interpreters shall be kept on file by CABs.

## **8. CONDITIONS FOR SUSPENSIONS AND WITHDRAWALS**

- 8.1. If the CAB accreditation is suspended or withdrawn by the ASC appointed accreditation body, the CAB shall inform ASC and all the Clients affected by the scope of the suspension within five (5) days of the date of notification, regardless of the decision of the CAB to appeal the decision.
- 8.2. The CAB shall allow ASC to publish on its website the suspended or withdrawn status within five (5) days from notification.

## PART B - OPERATIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

### 1. SCOPE

- 1.1. Part B sets out requirements for CABs to use when auditing Clients and their UoCs against ASC Requirements, from the application phase, until the certification decision, throughout the certificate lifetime. It also covers additional procedures such as transfer of certificates.

### 2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

- 2.1. The documents in Part A also apply to Part B

### 3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. All definitions are published in the [ASC Vocabulary Portal](#).

### 4. INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

- 4.1. The CAB's application form shall, as a minimum, request the following information from the applicant:
- a) Applicant legal entity name
  - b) Contact information
  - c) Site(s) address(es) and geographical coordinates (WGS 84 i.e 52.082478, 5.117676)
  - d) Applicable version of the ASC standard
  - e) Activities included in the scope of the applicant's UoC such as, production, storage, transport, or packing
  - f) List of species for which they are producing feed
  - g) Whether non-aquafeed products (e.g., livestock or poultry feed) are manufactured at the same UoC
  - h) Which Production Model is intended to be used: Segregation Model, Mass Balance Model or Both
  - i) Confirmation that the applicant has implemented an Ingredient Accounting System (IAS) and if it is a Shared Ingredient Accounting System
  - j) Date of the most recent Internal Audit against the ASC Feed Standard and Feed RUoC
  - k) Whether or not the applicant outsources any activities to third parties (e.g., subcontractors for storage, transport or other activities)

- l) Declaration of open court cases related to environmental or social compliance violations or any allegations of fraud in connection with the Applicant's UoC and the ASC Requirements
- m) Declaration of any charge for, or admission to, cases in (l) within the last 36 months
- n) Declaration where in the last 12 months the UoC has had a withdrawal of their ASC certificate, or an ASC failed initial audit where certification has not been awarded
- o) Declaration of any open cases or successful prosecution in the last twenty-four (24) months related to:
  - i. Carrying out fraudulent activities confirmed by the statutory authority
  - ii. Use or involvement of Child labour, slavery, human trafficking or forced labour
- p) For multi-sites, organisational structure and relationships between the applicant and sites.

4.2. The CAB shall send to applicants the documents or the respective ASC website links for:

- a) The most recent version of the ASC Feed Standard
- b) The most recent version of the Certification Requirements for the Unit of Certification (RUoC)
- c) Links to the ASC Variance Request & Interpretation Platform to access relevant Q&A or Variance Requests
- d) Information about the use of the ASC logo and the Logo License Agreement
- e) A brief explanation of the certification process and related timelines.

4.3. The CAB shall maintain a record identifying the document(s), including the version(s), sent to each applicant and Certificate Holder.

4.4. In cases where documents are translated for the convenience of the Client, the original version will prevail, where any differences exist between original documents and translated versions.

## **5. APPLICATION REVIEW**

5.1. The CAB shall conduct an application review once a complete application form has been submitted by the client.

5.1.1. The CAB shall not accept the application if a certificate was withdrawn in the last 12 months with any CAB.

- 5.1.2. The CAB shall not accept the application if an audit was failed in the last 12 months with another CAB.
- 5.1.3. The CAB shall not accept the application from applicants that have been successfully prosecuted in the last 36 months for any of the following situations:
- a) Carrying out fraudulent activities confirmed by the statutory authority
  - b) Use or involvement of Child labour, slavery, human trafficking or forced labour.

## 6. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATION

- 6.1. The CAB shall define the scope of certification taking into account:
- a) Applicable certification type (i.e., Single site, Multi-site)
  - b) Activities and facilities under the scope of the UoC before the product changes ownership. This includes, but is not limited to, production, storage & transport
  - c) Production Model in use i.e., Mass Balance Production Model / Segregation Production Model or both.
- 6.2. The CAB shall define the certification type as either:
- 6.2.1. Single site certification which shall have all of the following elements:
- a) The UoC is formed by one (1) production site and any associated facilities which has defined location(s) and area
  - b) The Client is capable of signing a binding contract that is legally enforceable
  - c) The Client is the owner of the ASC product
  - d) The Client is the only entity authorised to sell ASC product.
- 6.2.2. Multi-site certification which shall have all the following elements:
- a) The UoC consists of more than one site
  - b) The Client has an identified central function in charge of assuring the compliance against the ASC Requirements of all sites within the UoC and sites are either owned or subcontracted by the Client.
  - c) The Client is capable of signing a binding contract that is legally enforceable
  - d) The Client is responsible for compliance to ASC Requirements at all sites
  - e) The Client is the only entity authorised to sell ASC products from all sites
  - f) All sites are located within the same country.

- 6.2.2.1. Under Multi-site certification, in every routine audit the CAB shall audit all individual sites and any associated facilities and evaluate the applicable requirements in Annex E of this document.

## 7. CONTRACT

- 7.1. The CAB shall have a written contract with the Client representing the UoC seeking certification.
- 7.2. Prior to signing a contract, the CAB shall verify:
  - 7.2.1. That the applicant UoC is not already certified.
    - a) If the applicant UoC is currently certified, the CAB shall follow the certificate transfer requirements in Section 30
- 7.3. The contract shall be signed by the CAB and Client prior to the announcement of the audit.
- 7.4. The contract shall include a copy of the CAB complaints procedure that includes information on when and how the ASC appointed accreditation body and the ASC may be engaged in case the complaint process escalates beyond the CAB authority.
- 7.5. The contract shall specify:
  - 7.5.1. The certification timeline, including reporting timeline as specified in the Annex C, that the CAB will meet.
  - 7.5.2. That ASC retains the right to change the ASC Requirements and certification is conditional on conforming to new or revised ASC Requirements within the timeframes established by the ASC.
  - 7.5.3. That the ASC shall have full access to all audit products including audit evidence, audit findings and audit reports, including confidential annexes.
  - 7.5.4. That the Client shall submit to the ASC, accurate production and sale data using the form and in the manner specified by the ASC.
  - 7.5.5. That the Client shall allow the ASC to process and publish, excluding confidential annexes, data and information collected from the certification process for the purpose of transparency, as an integral part of the ASC certification programme.
  - 7.5.6. That ASC and the ASC appointed accreditation body shall have the right to observe audits conducted by the CAB.
  - 7.5.7. That ASC, ASC designated agents and ASC appointed accreditation body shall have the right to visit the Client's site(s) and any associated facilities within the

scope of certification. This includes visits without prior notice for the purpose of verification of the integrity of ASC certification.

- 7.5.8. That upon request, the CAB Auditor, ASC and the ASC appointed accreditation body shall have unrestricted access to data (except financial) in the Ingredient Accounting System
- 7.5.9. That the ASC appointed accreditation body shall have the right to conduct audits of the Certificate Holder, including unannounced audits, for the purpose of monitoring CAB conformity.
- 7.5.10. That ASC, ASC designated agent, ASC appointed accreditation body and the CAB, shall have the right to collect product samples or other supporting samples (e.g., raw material ingredients) to evaluate the Clients compliance, including products stored at subcontractor facilities, if applicable.
  - 7.5.10.1. This sampling may be conducted unannounced during ASC audits or at any other time.
  - 7.5.10.2. Costs incurred in testing shall be covered by the Client, for samples taken and decided by the CAB during ASC audits.
- 7.5.11. That the CAB shall have access to all audit products of the latest third-party social audit, if any. This includes, but is not limited to, audit reports, non-conformity reports, evidence of closure of non-conformities, and relevant confidential information.
- 7.5.12. That the Client has the right to raise their concerns or object to any of the proposed audit team members.
- 7.5.13. That the Client has the responsibility to inform the CAB, within fourteen (14) days of any changes made to the UoC, that may require oversight from the CAB. This can include, but is not limited to:
  - a) Inclusion of new products which introduce a significant new risk to the facility (e.g., addition of non-aquaculture feed i.e., livestock and poultry feed)
  - b) Addition of new products under the Segregation Production Model, including the distinct feed name
  - c) Changes in the number of sites (if a multi-site Client).
- 7.5.14. That the Client has the responsibility to inform the CAB within fourteen (14) days of the occurrence of any of the following situation(s):
  - a) Fatal workplace accidents
  - b) Legal compliance violations confirmed by the statutory authority on issues related to the scope of ASC standard and Requirements



- c) Recall of non-conforming ASC products due to incorrect ingredient formulation (e.g., non-permitted substances, use of non-eligible or non-permitted ingredients in an ASC product produced under the Segregation Production Model or, non-permitted ingredients used in a product produced under the Mass Balance Production Model).

## 8. AUDIT TIMING

- 8.1. The CAB shall not conduct an on-site audit until the Client has submitted all required information and documentation, and the CAB has completed the Desk Review (See 11.2).
- 8.2. The CAB shall conduct an initial on-site audit only when the Client has confirmed all of the following prerequisites:
  - 8.2.1. They have been in operation no less than six (6) months.
  - 8.2.2. They have a functioning Ingredient Accounting System (IAS) in place.
  - 8.2.3. They have conducted at least one accounting system balancing exercise resulting in accurate calculation. Records of the exercise shall be maintained.
    - 8.2.3.1. This also applies where the Shared Ingredient Accounting System is in operation
  - 8.2.4. Implementation of Code of Conduct requirements.
  - 8.2.5. Implementation of Due Diligence processes.
  - 8.2.6. Calculation of its Majority Sustainability Level (MSL) Entry Level.
  - 8.2.7. They have conducted at least one internal audit in the last 6 months against the ASC Requirements.
- 8.3. The CAB shall schedule audits only when the facilities are in operation and where possible, producing ASC product.
- 8.4. Multi-site UoC initial audits shall include all of the conditions specified in 8.2, 8.3 and Annex E for Multi-site UoC's.
- 8.5. When production is witnessed during the audit, the CAB shall:
  - a) Witness production intended for sale (i.e., no trial or mock production), and
  - b) Where possible, witness loading activities including subcontractors under the control of the UoC.
- 8.5.1. Where ASC products other than those witnessed at audit are included in the scope of the certificate, the CAB shall sample evidence of conformance for other ASC products to be added to the certificate, including, if applicable,

conformance with traceability requirements for products produced under the Segregation Production Model.

## **9. AUDIT ANNOUNCEMENT**

- 9.1. The CAB shall upload the Audit Announcement for initial, surveillance and re-certification audits to the ASC database for planned audit dates no less than forty-two (42) days prior to the audit. This includes scope extension audits adding a site to a multi-site certification.
  - 9.1.1. For unannounced audits, the Audit Announcement may be uploaded to the ASC database less than forty-two (42) days prior to the audit.
  - 9.1.2. The ASC shall not publish Audit Announcements prior to an unannounced audit
  - 9.1.3. The CAB shall upload one Audit Announcement to the ASC Database for each UoC.
- 9.2. The CAB shall upload updates to the Audit Announcement within seven (7) days of any changes to the information.
  - 9.2.1. If the changes are to occur before a planned audit, the changes shall be no less than fourteen (14) days before the audit is scheduled to begin.
  - 9.2.2. All changes will be clearly identified on the revised Audit Announcement.
- 9.3. The ASC should publish a public notice of the planned audit within five (5) days of receipt of the Audit Announcement.
- 9.4. The notice shall be in the local language(s) and English.
- 9.5. Before announcing a new audit for the same UoC, the CAB shall have submitted all required documentation related to the previous audit within the prescribed timelines in Annex C.

## **10. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 10.1. The CAB shall maintain an up-to-date list of all relevant Stakeholders to be contacted for their input per country and in relation to industry sector.
  - 10.1.1. The CAB shall perform its own research of relevant Stakeholders and additionally may make use of the Stakeholder list provided by the Client.
- 10.2. The CAB shall notify Stakeholders that are relevant for the scope and objectives of the audit and invite their participation.
  - 10.2.1. Prior to an unannounced audit, the CAB may choose to notify none, some, or all potential Stakeholders.

- 10.2.2. Independent initial Stakeholder consultation shall be performed at the initial planning stage, between Desk Review and on-site audit.
- 10.2.3. This Stakeholder consultation may be carried out remotely.
- 10.2.4. In cases where the identified Stakeholders are single entities or persons, the CAB shall maintain records of contact details and the date of consultation with the Stakeholders.
- 10.3. The CAB shall keep a list of all Stakeholders that indicate to the CAB, an interest in making a submission to the audit team.
- 10.4. The CAB shall acknowledge receipt of all written submissions.
  - 10.4.1. Verbal submissions and how they have been addressed shall be clearly explained in the audit reports.
- 10.5. Prior to the publication of the draft audit report, the CAB shall respond in writing to each Stakeholder to explain how their comments were addressed by the audit team.
- 10.6. The CAB shall have a mechanism that allows comments to be submitted at any time during the validity of the certificate, and that specifies how those comments are to be taken into consideration for the next audit.
  - 10.6.1. The CAB shall make sure that the mechanism is known to the public.
  - 10.6.2. The CAB shall retain all records related to Stakeholder consultation of each audit while contracted to the Client and for 3 years, as a minimum, after the CAB stops providing certification services to the Client.

## **11. AUDIT PREPARATION AND PLANNING**

- 11.1. The CAB shall have completed a Desk Review before conducting each audit.
- 11.2. As a minimum, the CAB shall obtain and review the following:
  - a) Required information, documents and records submitted by the Client as specified in the Desk Review Template (Annex G)
  - b) Evidence that there is a functioning Ingredient Accounting System (IAS) in place, including one accounting system balancing exercise resulting in accurate calculation prior to the initial audit
  - c) Documented procedures for Due Diligence processes, for both Ingredient Manufacturers and Primary Raw Material Producers, as required by the ASC Feed Standard
  - d) Internal audit report summary, conducted in the last 6 months, against the ASC Requirements with corrective action plans implemented as required.

- e) Due Diligence and risk assessment summaries and outcomes as required by the ASC Feed Standard
    - i. Due Diligence and risk assessments reports shall be sampled prior to audit using the Due Diligence sampling calculator as defined in Annex F
  - f) Performance data as required by the ASC Feed Standard
  - g) Other information as deemed necessary for an effective Desk Review that may include preliminary study.
- 11.3. The CAB shall review and take into consideration all of the obtained information for Social Audit Risk Assessment and audit planning.
- 11.3.1. Auditors shall review a map/layout/drawing of the facility to be audited and all areas that form part of the audit scope, to determine distance and travel time between different locations under the scope.
- 11.3.1.1. The map shall also detail product flow from receiving ingredients to dispatching feed products.
- 11.4. The CAB shall conduct a Social Audit Risk Assessment for each audit using the tool provided in Annex H when developing the audit plan and assigning an audit team.
- 11.5. The CAB shall ensure that before the end of the audit planning phase the applicant receives the following written information:
- 11.5.1. Expected scope of audit, that includes as a minimum:
- a) Name of production site(s) and associated storage areas and places (e.g., employees' living quarters) to be audited
  - b) Processes, functional departments
  - c) Shift(s) at the sites, if applicable
- 11.5.2. Provisional Audit Plan that includes:
- a) The date(s) and site(s) where the on-site and/or off-site audit activities will be conducted, including visits to storage facilities.
  - b) Approximate time (in man-hours) for each audit activity segregated in desk review, off-site activities and on-site activities.
  - c) Expected number of management and worker interviews.
- 11.5.3. Names and affiliations of proposed audit team members.
- 11.5.4. Sufficient information about the audit process so that the applicant can make appropriate preparations for the audit. This shall include:
- a) A summary list of the objective evidence, including actual performance data that may be required by the audit team

- b) An explanation of the requirement(s) for and process of Stakeholder consultation.

11.6. The CAB shall have a documented procedure for dealing with an applicant's concern about a member of the audit team proposed to carry out the audit; this procedure shall include the following elements:

- a) Consider the merits of each concern raised by an applicant
- b) Take appropriate action(s), which may include leaving the audit team unchanged if warranted
- c) Maintain records of the justification for its action(s).

## 12. AUDIT DURATION

12.1. The CAB shall determine the minimum planned duration of the audit and record this determination in the audit announcement considering the following factors:

- a) Number of sites
- b) Production area or number of production lines
- c) Whether they produce both ASC and non-ASC feed
- d) Number of ASC Feed products in scope
- e) If more than one Production Model is in use (i.e., Mass Balance Model and Segregation Model)
- f) Number of employees
- g) Use of interpreters and technical experts
- h) Desk Review time is accounted for in the total audit duration
- i) The time spent for the activities during the on-site audit
- j) The time spent for other activities as deemed necessary.

12.2. The CAB shall record the actual time spent for off-site and on-site audit activities in the audit report.

12.2.1. The CAB shall provide justification in the audit report if the audit took more or less time than was determined in the audit announcement.

### 13. AUDIT METHODOLOGY

- 13.1. The ASC auditor should use the ASC Interpretation Manual for the ASC Feed Standard.
- 13.2. ASC reserves the right to request the CABs to use ASC's own audit tools and methodology for the ASC audits covering areas not specified in this document.
- 13.3. The CAB shall conduct a Desk Review (Annex G) based on information and documents provided by the Client to inform the applicable risk assessments and audit planning prior to the on-site audit.
- 13.4. The CAB shall consider outcomes of the Desk Review and Social Audit Risk Assessment to determine audit effort for each type of UoC. This includes (but is not limited to):
  - 13.4.1. Number of employee interviews, and types (individually or in group).
    - a) The number of interviews with management and staff functions shall be in addition to the number of worker interviews calculated in the Social Audit Risk Assessment Calculator (Annex H).
  - 13.4.2. Visit to relevant local Stakeholders to corroborate evidence, if necessary.
  - 13.4.3. Visit to employees' living quarters if provided to employees.
- 13.5. The CAB shall verify the accuracy of the sites' location.
- 13.6. The lead auditor shall cease the audit process in cases when it is confirmed that:
  - a) The Client suggested bribes to any member of the audit team
  - b) The Client presented forged documents as audit evidence
  - c) The Client threatened any member of the audit team.
- 13.6.1. In any of these cases the CAB shall classify the audit as failed for initial audits or withdraw the certificate.

13.7. The CAB shall follow Annex E requirements to audit a Multi-site UoC.

## **14. AUDITING OF DUE DILIGENCE PROCESSES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS**

14.1. The CAB shall assess the methodology and outcome of the Due Diligence processes.

14.2. The CAB shall take into account the results from previous audits to decide on an increase or decrease of the sample of Due Diligence reports.

14.3. The CAB shall verify that Code of Conduct requirements are implemented by the Client.

14.4. The CAB shall verify that ingredient manufacturers are approved as per the Client's defined procedures and that these procedures meet relevant ASC Requirements.

## **15. AUDITING THE INGREDIENT ACCOUNTING SYSTEM (IAS)**

15.1. The CAB shall verify, through sampling (at least 5%), the ingredients allocated as Eligible Ingredients in the IAS are in fact Eligible Ingredients.

15.2. The CAB shall verify the calculations performed to balance the IAS are accurate and working effectively.

15.3. The CAB shall verify the accuracy of the latest balancing summary of the last accounting period.

15.4. Where the Shared IAS is in use, the CAB shall:

15.4.1. Verify the eligibility of all participating production sites (as described in the relevant section of the Feed RUoC document).

15.4.2. Verify at each participating production site, calculations performed to balance the IAS are accurate and working effectively.

15.4.3. Determine if non-conformities raised against the Shared IAS of any one participating site have an impact on the eligible volume calculation for all sites involved in the Shared IAS.

## **16. AUDIT METHODOLOGY FOR PRODUCTION MODELS**

### **16.1. Making changes to Production Models in operation**

16.1.1. The CAB shall determine if an on-site evaluation is required where the Client requests to:

- a) Change from one Production Model (Segregation or Mass Balance) to another, or
  - b) Add a Production Model.
- 16.1.2. The evaluation may be conducted during a surveillance audit or at any convenient time and cost as agreed with the Certificate Holder.
- 16.1.3. The Client certificate shall be updated to reflect an addition or change in Production Model.
- 16.2. Auditing the Segregation Production Model**
- 16.2.1. The CAB shall verify whether the Client's traceability procedures are effectively implemented by conducting a backwards traceability test during the audit.
- 16.2.2. The CAB shall conduct a traceability test as follows:
- a) Using the ASC template
  - b) Selecting a product that has been produced and sold by the UoC under the Segregation Production Model.
  - c) Considering:
    - i. The flow of Eligible Ingredients into ASC product produced under the Segregation Model within the UoC, from receiving to dispatch. Particular consideration should be given to handling of bulk or liquid material.
    - ii. Traceability documentation and records at each stage of receiving, production, transportation & storage activities under the scope of the UoC, including storage and transport activities conducted by subcontracted parties if still under the ownership of the UoC.
    - iii. Production records of product produced under the Segregation Production Model and how product can be linked from each document (e.g., through batch codes, lot codes, etc.).
    - iv. Control of rework.
- 16.2.3. The CAB shall determine in the audit report whether or not the traceability and segregation system can confirm that all products produced, identified and sold under the Segregation Production Model contain only Eligible Ingredients.
- 16.2.4. The CAB shall raise a major non-conformity where a traceability test exercise fails, (e.g., there is a lack of data to perform the test).
- 16.2.5. Upon detection of the major non-conformity, the CAB shall instruct the Client to stop identifying, labelling, dispatching and selling this product as a Segregation Production Model product.



## 17. AUDIT METHODOLOGY OF SOCIAL REQUIREMENTS

- 17.1. The ASC social auditors shall follow processes as described in the latest version of ISO 17021-1 and ISO 19011 related to conducting audits (section 9.4 in ISO 17021-1: 2015).
- 17.2. In addition to 17.1, the following shall be implemented by the audit team:
- 17.3. Opening meeting:
- a) The auditors shall invite senior management of the UoC and key relevant personnel, including worker and/or trade union representatives to attend the opening meeting.
  - b) Attendance shall be documented for all those present at the opening meeting.
  - c) The auditors shall state that:
    - i. Employee interviews shall be conducted in a private place, individually and/or in groups
    - ii. The place shall be determined by the auditor(s) during the course of the audit
    - iii. Interviewed employees shall not be discriminated against or be put in an unfavourable position for taking part in interviews, irrespective of the nature of their job
    - iv. The auditor may consider additional employee interviews, if necessary, after review of records
    - v. To provide additional confidence and a method of communication, employees shall be provided with contact information of the CAB and the ASC, and this contact information shall not be taken back from employees by the Client after the audit
    - vi. Management, supervisory and clerical staff shall not attend workers' interviews.
  - d) The auditor shall inform the Client that audit evidence collected during the audit will relate solely to requirements of the applicable ASC Requirements. Audit evidence can consist of documents, records, pictures, and other multimedia.
  - e) The auditors shall confirm if there are any changes to information previously provided that may affect the scope of the audit and reconfirm all documents that will be verified during the audit.
  - f) The auditors shall determine if there are sub-contracted employees at the site(s) within the scope of the audit or certification, and if so: the number of such employees and the work being performed on the day of the audit.

- 17.4. Walkthrough and visit to working areas and facilities within the UoC:
- a) Auditors shall review travel arrangements and make necessary adjustments to the audit plan on the basis of availability of transport to ensure full audit coverage within the assigned audit time.
  - b) The visit and walkthrough shall include all work areas irrespective of the presence of employees in the area on the day of the audit, living quarters, on-site hospital/clinic, kitchens, dining areas (if provided), the perimeters of production and storage units, common toilets, common areas like on-site grocery stores, prayer halls and any other areas as appropriate.
  - c) During the visit and walkthrough, auditors shall:
    - i. Identify potential employees that they will speak to later
    - ii. Identify all hazards and potentially dangerous areas of work
    - iii. If possible, collect information (e.g., pictures of notices) to later corroborate information provided prior and/or during the audit
    - iv. Distribute the CAB, ASI and ASC contact information to employees that they speak to so that employees may communicate with those organisations at any time.
  - d) The visit and walkthrough shall be implemented for every on-site audit.
- 17.5. Document and records review:
- a) When drawing samples for records review, the auditor shall consider:
    - i. Different types of employees (full time, contractual, seasonal, migrants)
    - ii. Different types of payment methods (hourly rate, piece rate, monthly rate) as appropriate.
  - b) Auditing of personal records (e.g., time sheet and pay records) shall be based on risk and the sampling plan as outlined in the Social Audit Risk Assessment (Annex H)
  - c) For each interviewed employees, his/her personnel records and related documents shall be reviewed
  - d) Personnel information and records shall only be reviewed on-site, unless allowed by legislation of countries of parties involved – the Client and the CAB
  - e) Other documents as deemed necessary at auditor's discretion.
- 17.6. Conducting interviews:
- a) The CAB shall have and implement procedures for deciding how much time to allocate for interviews, depending on types of UoC, issues being

audited, types of interview (group/individual) and place(s) where the interviews are to take place<sup>4</sup>.

- b) Auditors shall interview as a minimum the following functions:
  - i. Senior management of the UoC
  - ii. Worker and/or trade union representative(s)
  - iii. Workers:
    - A. Number of worker interviews is calculated using the Social Audit Risk Assessment calculator (Annex H)
    - B. Auditors shall stratify worker interviews based on their tasks and background (gender, type of work – permanent/temporary, type of labour – migrant, and the likes)
    - C. Number of worker interviews, justification for stratification shall be documented in the audit report
  - iv. Other relevant personnel playing a role in implementing ASC social requirements in the standard (e.g., in the area of health & safety, human resources, finance, etc.).
- c) Auditors shall develop a list of relevant topics for interviewing each function based on results of the Desk Review
- d) Auditors shall use professional judgement, common sense, knowledge and experience to take the decision, which may be taken on the spot, regarding approach to conducting interviews (individual or group)
- e) Auditors shall use appropriate skills to ensure confidentiality while speaking to employees during the visit and walkthrough and at workplaces
- f) The CAB shall maintain records of all interviews during an audit as part of audit evidence
- g) All personal employee interviews shall usually take place on-site; however
  - i. Off-site interviews shall take place if or when there is a perceived threat or pressure to employees by any party for providing information or there is a lack of a location at the audit site that allows employees to speak confidentially.
- h) All employee interviews shall take place in a quiet, private area away from management offices and without the presence of management representatives or those in supervisory roles
- i) Casual interviews shall also take place during the physical tour of the workplace, during meal and rest breaks
- j) Interviews may be conducted in the presence of a trade union member, with the permission of the employee, and if the CAB auditor feels employee/s is/are comfortable with this arrangement

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<sup>4</sup> It is a common practice to allocate 15 minutes for individual interviews and 30 minutes for group interviews.

- 17.7. Closing meeting:
- a) A pre-closing meeting with the management may be held for the purpose of:
    - i. Discussing audit findings and clarifying any divergent views or opinions
    - ii. Reviewing any information the UoC may provide to demonstrate conformance with the ASC Standard
    - iii. Avoiding differences of opinion that may lead to the UoC contesting audit findings at the closing meeting
    - iv. Saving time at the closing meeting where only key findings, opportunities for improvement, best practices and other matters are discussed.
  - b) The closing meeting shall be attended by senior management of the UoC and personnel responsible for time and pay records, those responsible for meeting health safety and environment requirements, human resources and administration, those responsible for key functions and workers and/or trade union representatives
    - i. If senior management is not available for the closing meeting this shall be documented in the audit report
    - ii. Attendance shall be recorded for all those present at the closing meeting.
  - c) The result of the audit shall be communicated in a language understood by those present and, if necessary, translated into a language spoken by workers' representatives / trade union members
  - d) Depending on the result of the audit and the type of non-conformities raised (if any), auditors shall inform the follow up activities as appropriate
  - e) Auditors shall remind the Client of timelines they need to meet for providing and implementing root cause analysis and corrective actions
  - f) A copy of non-conformities that were raised shall be provided to the UoC.

## **18. SAMPLING AND TESTING**

### **18.1. Sampling and testing of Ingredients and ASC Feed products**

- 18.1.1. The ASC may request CABs to collect feed ingredient and product samples or other substances<sup>5</sup> during ASC audits to verify a UoC's conformance to the ASC Feed Standard. In this case the CAB shall:

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<sup>5</sup> Requests for samples are based on a risk assessment to be developed by ASC. The tests will be focusing on verification/confirmation of the accuracy of the Certificate Holders product declarations. The sample requests to CABs will primarily take place when ASC staff or their agents are not available to collect the samples.

- a) Use the laboratory assigned by the ASC
  - b) Charge the cost to the Client if the test results confirm the UoC conformance.
- 18.2. The CAB may decide to collect samples at its discretion based on observations and evidence collected during the audit. In this case the CAB shall:
- a) Use one of the ASC listed laboratories<sup>6</sup>.
  - b) Charge the cost to the Client.
- 18.3. In both cases the laboratories assigned shall be ISO 17025 accredited and use an accredited test method for the test required.
- 18.4. The CAB shall make all the necessary arrangements with the assigned laboratory to collect and deliver samples according to the ASC sampling procedures<sup>7</sup>.
- 18.5. The CAB auditor shall decide from which batches, production dates the samples will be taken.
- 18.5.1. Any of the following criteria may be considered to inform this decision:
- a) Random sampling
  - b) Based on observations and evidence collected
  - c) Auditor professional experience
- 18.6. The CAB auditor shall manage sample conditions as follows:
- 18.6.1. Only samples from the same product may be composited.
- 18.6.2. Traceable seals or tamper proof bags shall be used to maintain the integrity of the samples.
- 18.6.3. Triplicates of each sample shall be prepared for confirming results if needed and stored by the laboratory.
- 18.7. Sign off sample forms shall be used, confirming the following information:
- a) Sample identification and seal number(s)
  - b) Type of sample and approximate weight
  - c) Substances to be tested for
  - d) Date and time of collection

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<sup>6</sup> The ASC provides a list of ISO 17065 accredited laboratories within ASC producing countries that have relevant scope for the analysis required.

<sup>7</sup> ASC provides guidance on the process to take samples with the "ASC Sampling protocol". This protocol explains to auditors how to collect, pack and label the sample when it is not collected directly by the ASC listed labs.

- e) Intended date, time and place of dispatch/delivery to the ASC listed Laboratory.
- 18.8. The CAB shall record in the audit report the following information:
- a) If a sample was taken during the audit
  - b) Justification for sampling
  - c) Whether sampling was announced or unannounced
- 18.9. The Client may decide to test the duplicate samples at its own cost, to dispute the test results. In this case the CAB shall
- a) Request the testing of duplicate samples by the same laboratory for the parameters in the previous test being disputed
  - b) If the second test results support the Client 's position, a third test for the same parameters shall be conducted by another ASC listed laboratory in the same country. The Client may select the ASC listed laboratory if there is more than two in the country
  - c) Both the CAB and the Client shall accept the results of the third (final) test.

## 19. REMOTE AUDITING

- 19.1. The CAB shall follow the most current versions of ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: REMOTE AUDITS and IAF MD 4:2018, and IAF Mandatory Document for the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) when conducting remote audits or remote evidence collection.
- 19.1.1. The CAB shall conduct a feasibility and risk analysis as described in this document before carrying out remote audits or remote evidence collection.
- 19.2. The CAB may collect evidence remotely to:
- a) Complement on-site audits
  - b) Witness production activities
  - c) Interview management staff
  - d) Review data, documents and records
  - e) Conduct site tours
  - f) Review video recording or photographs (i.e., sampling activities).
- 19.2.1. Management staff interviews and review of data, documents and records may be performed remotely in any audit as part of the evidence collection.

- 19.3. The CAB may only conduct remote audits for Surveillance audits:
- 19.3.1. CABs shall not conduct remote audits under any of the following conditions:
- a) The Certificate Holder is suspended
  - b) Initial audits
  - c) The previous audit was a remote audit
  - d) The Certificate Holder received more than 5 major NCs in the previous audit.
- 19.3.2. In addition to the above, the CAB may conduct remote employee interviews only under all of the following conditions:
- a) The social auditor does not need an interpreter to conduct the interview.
  - b) The number of workers to interview as an outcome of the “ASC social risk calculator” is less than 12.
  - c) The country risk is ‘medium’ or ‘low’ according to the ASC Country Social Index.
  - d) Employees identity and confidentiality can be assured by the social auditor through appropriate ICT.
  - e) Employees have accepted the CAB’s intention to conduct the remote interview
- 19.4. Auditors conducting remote audits or remote evidence collection shall be trained by the CAB on how to collect evidence remotely as described in ISO 19011:2018.
- 19.5. The CAB shall evaluate Clients’ local legislation and regulations related to confidentiality, security and data protection, which may require additional agreements from both sides because of the use of ICT.
- 19.5.1. The CAB shall document in the audit report this evaluation and determination on the need of additional agreements.
- 19.6. The CAB shall test the ICT selected for the remote audits in advance of the audit
- 19.6.1. The CAB shall record the ICT tests results and determination to continue or not with the remote audit.

- 19.7. Evidence in the form of video, photograph, or live streaming shall be verified as being relevant to the specific UoC under remote evaluation. (e.g., geotagging)

## 20. AUDIT EVIDENCE

- 20.1. The CAB shall verify all audit evidence relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria, including information relating to interfaces between functions, activities and processes.
- 20.2. The CAB shall collect audit evidence by appropriate sampling considering:
- a) Size and complexity of the UoC
  - b) Number of products produced by the UoC annually
  - c) Number of employees
  - d) Number of inputs and suppliers used by the UoC.
- 20.3. Audit evidence may be in the form of pictures, multimedia, notes, and other means.
- 20.4. The CAB shall record the audit evidence evaluated for each ASC standard indicator and applicable ASC Requirements in the audit report.
- 20.4.1. In case new evidence emerges after the completion of an audit, the CAB shall clearly describe the circumstances of the new evidence in the audit report.
- 20.5. The CAB shall retain audit evidence for the entire period that the Client is certified by the CAB and minimum three (3) years after the certification contract is terminated.
- 20.6. Within seven (7) days of receipt of objective evidence related to the Certificate Holder's non-conformance from ASC or the ASC appointed accreditation body, the CAB shall determine timelines and actions to be taken based on the provided evidence.

## 21. AUDIT FINDINGS

- 21.1. Auditors shall evaluate audit evidence to determine whether the UoC is in conformance with each ASC standard indicator and applicable ASC Requirements.
- 21.2. The CAB shall grade non-conformities as minor, major or critical, according to the definitions in the ASC Vocabulary List and clearly justify the grading in the audit report.
- 21.3. Requirements for all non-conformities**



- 21.3.1. The CAB shall set the non-conformity Detection Date as the date of the closing meeting when the non-conformities are presented to the Client.
- a) Changes in grading of non-conformities after the closing meeting shall not alter the Detection Date
  - b) For non-conformities raised after the closing meeting or between audits, the non-conformity date shall be the reporting date to the CAB. The non-conformity closure timelines shall be calculated from this date.
- 21.3.2. Critical and major non-conformities shall not be downgraded after the CAB certification decision making entity has confirmed the grade.
- 21.3.3. If the Client decides to continue with the certification, the CAB shall provide information to the Client highlighting the next steps to close non-conformities
- 21.3.3.1. The CAB shall cancel the certificate if a Certificate Holder decides not to close non-conformities and not continue the certification process during the period of validity of a certificate.
- 21.3.4. For each non-conformity the CAB shall request and confirm with the Client:
- a) a root cause analysis
  - b) an action plan with corrections and corrective actions that address the root cause
- 21.3.5. The CAB shall review and agree proposed root cause and action plan within fourteen (14) days from reception.
- 21.3.6. The root cause analysis and action plan shall be included in the draft audit reports for public consultation.
- 21.3.7. The CAB shall close non-conformities if there is sufficient objective evidence showing:
- a) effective implementation of the corrections
  - b) effective implementation of the corrective actions addressing the root cause.
- 21.3.8. The CAB shall record in the final audit report the evidence evaluated to close or extend a non-conformity.
- 21.3.9. The CAB shall record in the next audit report the actions taken by the Client and the evidence evaluated to close extended non-conformities.
- 21.3.10. The CAB may decide to perform an on-site revisit to evaluate the effectiveness of corrections and corrective actions.
- a) Where on-site revisits are required, these shall be scheduled to occur within the timeframe allowed for the closure of non-conformities.

- b) Revisits should wherever possible be undertaken by the original auditor/audit team. Where this is not possible, the visit must be undertaken by a qualified auditor with the competencies related to the category of the outstanding non-conformities (Social and/or Technical).

21.3.11. The CAB may extend the non-conformity closure timeframe according to the maximum deadlines in 21.4.1, 21.5.2.2 and 21.6.3 d. i if the CAB has received sufficient objective evidence demonstrating that conformity was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the Client.

#### **21.4. Minor non-conformities**

21.4.1. Minor non-conformities can be extended once for a maximum period of 12 months after the Detection Date.

21.4.2. The CAB shall classify an initial audit as failed if minor non-conformities are not closed or extended within three (3) months from the date of detection.

21.4.3. For minor non-conformities detected during the period of validity of a certificate:

21.4.3.1. The CAB shall upgrade a minor non-conformity to major non-conformity if not closed or extended within three (3) months from the date of detection.

21.4.4. The CAB shall upgrade a minor non-conformity to a major non-conformity where the same minor non-conformity is raised against a particular indicator or requirement in two consecutive audits.

#### **21.5. Major non-conformities**

21.5.1. The CAB shall classify an initial audit as a failed audit if major non-conformities are not closed within three (3) months from the Detection Date.

21.5.2. For major non-conformities detected during the period of validity of a certificate:

21.5.2.1. The CAB shall suspend the certificate if not closed or extended within three (3) months from the date of detection.

21.5.2.2. Major non-conformities may be extended once for a maximum period of six (6) months after the Detection Date.

21.5.2.3. The CAB shall raise a major non-conformity where review of the Ingredient Accounting System:

- a) Indicates insufficient evidence to verify the Eligibility Status of an ingredient identified as eligible
- b) Indicates insufficient evidence to verify the accuracy of input volume of an Eligible Ingredient or output volume of ASC Product
- c) Is demonstrated to be overdrawn at end of the 12-month accounting period.

- 21.5.3. The CAB shall raise a major non-conformity against the traceability requirements where a traceability test exercise of a product produced under the Segregation Production Model fails, (e.g., there is a lack of data to perform those tests).
- 21.5.4. The CAB shall raise a major non-conformity when the Client does not comply with any contractual requirement specified in part B, section 7.5 of this document.
- 21.6. Critical non-conformity**
- 21.6.1. The CAB shall raise a critical non-conformity when either:
- a) Employees' lives are evidently at risk
  - b) Sale of non-ASC products as ASC Compliant Product
  - c) Sale of Non-eligible Ingredients within a Segregation Production Model product
  - d) The Ingredient Accounting System is demonstrated to be overdrawn at 2 consecutive audits.
- 21.6.2. The CAB shall require that critical non-conformities raised at initial audits shall be satisfactorily addressed by the Client:
- a) Prior to certification being granted
  - b) Within three (3) months of the Detection Date or a full re-audit shall be required.
- 21.6.3. In the case of a critical non-conformity raised during the period of validity of a certificate:
- a) Auditors shall inform the CAB's certification decision making entity about the detection of a critical non-conformity within 24 hours of detection
  - b) The CAB shall suspend the certificate within 24 hours of the critical non-conformity being verified by the CABs decision making entity
  - c) The Certificate Holder shall close the critical non-conformity within a maximum of three (3) months from the Detection Date
  - d) The CAB shall withdraw the certificate if the critical non-conformity is not closed within the three (3) months period
    - i. An extension of fourteen (14) days may be granted to close out the critical non-conformity in exceptional cases
    - ii. Extension of time and justification to close critical non-conformities shall be documented in the audit report.
- 21.6.4. The CAB shall conduct an on-site evaluation to close the critical non-conformity.
- 21.6.5. The decision, justification and conclusion of this closure shall be made clear in the audit report.

## 22. AUDIT REPORTS AND REVIEW

- 22.1. ASC audit reports shall follow the format and requirements of the ASC Audit Report Template.
- 22.2. Each audit report, draft and final, shall receive a technical review that conforms to the following criteria:
  - 22.2.1. The review shall be conducted by an individual who was not involved in the audit and meets the following criteria:
    - a) Is a qualified ASC Feed auditor or for any other animal feed manufacturing programme which includes environmental and social criteria, OR
    - b) Has conducted technical reviews for other animal feed programmes which include environmental and social criteria.
  - 22.2.2. The review shall be conducted before submitting the draft report to ASC for publishing.
  - 22.2.3. The review shall focus on completeness of each section of the report and accuracy of required information
    - a) Each non-conformity shall be reviewed for its grading justification based on the presented evidence.
    - b) The review shall confirm relevance of the root cause analysis, correction, and corrective actions as well as evidence provided to close non-conformities.
- 22.3. The lead auditor shall address all issues of concern raised by the technical reviewer.

## 23. CERTIFICATION DECISIONS

- 23.1. The CAB shall make certification decisions based on the evaluation of the audit evidence as to whether or not the applicant is in conformity with the requirements of the ASC Feed Standard and other applicable ASC Requirements
- 23.2. The CAB shall make a certification decision within six (6) months from the date of the audit closing meeting. (Non-conformity Detection Date).
  - 23.2.1. The CAB shall conduct a full re-audit if above timeframe is exceeded.
    - 23.2.1.1. The CAB shall inform the Client of the reason(s) for the re-audit.
- 23.3. The CAB shall not grant a positive certification decision if there is:
  - a) An open major or critical non-conformity

- b) Any open and not extended minor non-conformity
  - c) An open variance request.
- 23.4. The CAB shall consider all audit evidence when taking certification decisions.
- a) This shall include audit evidence gathered prior to, during and after an on-site audit
  - b) This shall include audit evidence gathered as the result of information submitted by Stakeholders.
- 23.5. The CAB shall post all certification decisions, including changes in scope, suspensions, cancellation and withdrawals on the ASC database within fourteen (14) days of the decision.
- 23.6. The CAB shall retain the right to delay or postpone its decision on certification to take account of new or additional information, which, could affect the outcome of the certification decision.
- 23.6.1. Additional information includes but not limited to inputs provided by Stakeholders.
- 23.6.2. Any delays in the proposed timeline for the decision on certification due to the consideration of new or additional information shall be explained in the final report.
- 23.6.3. Delays of more than fourteen (14) days shall be publicly communicated no later than the planned date of determination, using an ASC provided template.
- 23.7. The CAB shall issue certificates with a maximum validity period of three (3) years from the certificate issue date.
- 23.8. Certificates, which are not registered and published on the ASC website, shall not be valid.

## **24. CONTENT OF CERTIFICATES**

- 24.1. The CAB shall issue a certificate in English, which as well as the requirements in ISO 17065, Clause 7.7 shall contain:
- 24.1.1. The ASC logo, which shall be no smaller than the logo of the CAB.
  - 24.1.2. The unique ASC Certificate Number generated by the ASC database.
    - a) An issue number (for re-issued or renewed certificates).
  - 24.1.3. The certificate issue date.
  - 24.1.4. The date of expiry.

- 24.1.5. The name and address of the CAB.
- 24.1.6. The legal name and registered address of the Certificate Holder.
- 24.1.7. The name and physical address of sites included in a Multi-site UoC.
- 24.1.8. A description of the scope of the certificate, including a general description of the type of products covered by the certificate.
- 24.1.9. Reference to the specific standard against which the Certificate Holder has been evaluated.
- 24.1.10. Confirmation of the Production Model in use: Segregation Production Model, Mass Balance Production Model or both.
- 24.1.11. ASC product which is sold under the Segregation Production Model shall use a distinct feed name and be listed on a schedule / annex to the certificate.
- 24.1.12. A description of the activities and facilities covered in the scope of the UoC.
- 24.1.13. A reference to the ASC database of registered certificates (specific URL to be announced) for the full list of products covered by the certificate.
- 24.1.14. A clear statement to the effect that the certificate shall remain the property of the issuing CAB, all copies or reproductions of the certificate shall be returned or destroyed if requested by the CAB.
- 24.1.15. The disclaimer stating: "The validity of this certificate shall be verified on [www.asc-aqua.org](http://www.asc-aqua.org)".
- 24.1.16. The CAB's authorised signatory.
- 24.1.17. A disclaimer stating: "This certificate itself does not constitute evidence that a particular product supplied by the Certificate Holder is ASC compliant. Products offered, shipped or sold by the Certificate Holder can only be considered covered by the scope of this certificate when the required ASC claim is clearly stated on invoices and shipping documents".
- 24.2. The CAB may issue certificates in other languages as well as the English version providing, they bear a disclaimer in at least 10-point font that the certificate is an unverified translation of the English certificate, and in case of differences the English version shall take precedence.

## **25. INFORMATION FOR CERTIFICATE HOLDERS**

- 25.1. The CAB shall inform the Certificate Holder that:
  - 25.1.1. It has the right to claim that, subject to the scope of its certificate, its operation is certified in accordance with the specific ASC standard.

- 25.1.2. It may make claims or label on its ASC Feed products as per the ASC Claim User Guide.
- 25.1.3. It is eligible to apply for an ASC Logo License Agreement.
- 25.1.4. It shall not make any claim about ASC certification on public materials without a valid ASC Licensing Agreement.

## **26. SURVEILLANCE AUDITS**

- 26.1. The CAB shall carry out surveillance audits to monitor the Certificate Holder's continued conformance with the ASC Feed standard and other certification requirements as, follows:
  - 26.1.1. At least annually with a window of three (3) months before or after the anniversary of the initial certification decision date.
  - 26.1.2. No fewer than two (2) surveillance audits during the three (3) year certification cycle.
  - 26.1.3. Two (2) surveillance audits shall not be carried out with less than six (6) months between them.
  - 26.1.4. For social aspects, the CABs shall follow instructions included in the Social Audit Risk Assessment for surveillance audits (Annex H).
  - 26.1.5. Surveillance reports shall conform to Annex C.
  - 26.1.6. Stakeholder consultation may be undertaken during surveillance audits.
  - 26.1.7. During the three-year term of the certificate, the CAB shall plan and conduct surveillance audits in such a way that all ASC standard indicators are audited at least once during those surveillance audits.
- 26.2. The CAB shall assess during surveillance audits:
  - 26.2.1. All metric indicators, including mass balance calculations at every audit.
  - 26.2.2. All indicators and requirements relating to Due Diligence.
  - 26.2.3. Social indicators as prescribed by the Social Audit Risk Assessment Calculator (Annex H).
  - 26.2.4. Implementation of corrective actions against outstanding non-conformities.
    - a) The CAB shall verify closure of outstanding non-conformities and record the associated evidence within the report.
  - 26.2.5. Legal and regulatory compliance including any changes that have occurred in legislation or regulations since the last audit.

- 26.2.6. Any complaints or allegations of non-conformity with ASC requirements.
- 26.2.7. The UoC's traceability systems and requirements in section 16.
- 26.3. The CAB may conduct, additional to the two (2) surveillance audits, follow-up audits of Certificate Holders for one or more of the following reasons:
  - a) The number and nature of complaints from the ASC, another CAB, a Stakeholder
  - b) The number and nature of other issues that the CAB determines shall be investigated
  - c) The reporting of open cases with the statutory authority related to fraudulent activities that may affect the ASC standard requirements.
- 26.4. Follow-up audits shall comply with the reporting requirements of surveillance audits in Annex C.
- 26.5. The CAB may limit the scope of a follow-up audit to specific topics relative to the reason of the follow-up audit.
- 26.6. The CAB may extend the scope of the follow-up audit or plan a full audit if there are doubts on the continued compliance against the ASC standards.

## **27. UNANNOUNCED AUDITS**

- 27.1. The CAB shall conduct unannounced surveillance audits on at least 5% of its single site Certificate Holders on an annual basis.
  - 27.1.1. This number may include unannounced audits determined by the ASC Social Audit risk assessment.
- 27.2. The CAB may conduct a regular surveillance audit without prior notice to the Client (unannounced audits).
- 27.3. In this case, the CAB shall upload the audit announcement of the surveillance audit to the ASC Database according to the timelines in section 9.1.1 and 9.1.2.
- 27.4. In the case of expedited unannounced audits, the CAB shall upload the Audit Announcement within 24 hours of the CAB decision.
- 27.5. The CAB shall develop a risk assessment to select the Certificate Holders that will receive an unannounced surveillance audit.
  - 27.5.1. The risk assessment shall include, but not be limited to, the threats and thresholds detailed in Table 1.



- 27.5.2. If the majority of Clients are categorised as low risk, the CAB shall complete the minimum number of unannounced audits with low risk UoCs selected randomly, or when there is an opportunity to conduct them in conjunction with other audits.
- 27.6. The CAB shall notify unannounced audits to Certificate Holders no earlier than 48 hours before the audit.
- 27.6.1. Exceptions of five (5) days notification can be made for UoC's which require complex logistics to access the site (i.e., rental or arrangement of boats, helicopters, planes).
- 27.7. The CAB shall plan a second unannounced audit if the Certificate Holder refuses the unannounced audit but has an acceptable justification (e.g., responsible staff is not available, poor weather conditions, etc.).
- 27.7.1. The CAB shall suspend the certificate if the Certificate Holder rejects for a second time, the opportunity to undergo the unannounced audit.
- 27.7.2. The CAB shall lift the suspension only when an unannounced audit is executed, and any major and critical non-conformities are closed.

**Table 1. Threats evaluation matrix for unannounced audits**

Threat	Threshold		
	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
<b>1. Records management weakness.</b>	All required records are retained and organised as per legal requirements, applicable ASC standard and own regulations.	Not all required records are found due to missing records, or they are not organised for retrieval.	Required records are not retained or found.
<b>2. Subcontractors including subcontracted sites and subcontracted services (related to the operations of the unit of certification).</b>	Either: 1) No subcontracted sites or services are used in the unit of certification; or, 2) Performance requirements for subcontracted sites and services are defined. The performance of all subcontracted sites and services meet the defined ASC requirements and are monitored by the Client. All records are retained by the Client .	Records of the Client monitoring the performance of subcontracted sites and services are not complete. The performance of subcontracted sites and services is found to be in compliance with relevant ASC requirements.	Records of monitoring the performance of subcontracted sites and services are incomplete.

<b>3. Record of NCs raised by the ASC CAB and response.</b>	No open NC(s).	Open minor NC(s).	Any suspension of certificate within the past 3 years due to not complying with ASC Requirement(s).
<b>4. Complaints resolution weakness.</b>	All complaints regarding the UoC have been responded to and resolved within timelines	Complaints regarding the UoC are addressed but not in a timely fashion as specified in complaint procedure	Evidence is found that complaint responses and resolution related to the UoC is intentionally delayed or avoided, OR A complaint related to the UoC has escalated to legal actions.
<b>5. Traceability weakness</b>	Only the Mass Balance Production Model is in Scope of Certification.  OR  there is no non-conformity raised against the traceability requirements.	Segregation Production Model is in use but there is an effective tracking system implemented AND products are clearly identified, segregated and traceable as required in the traceability requirements.	There is a non-conformity raised against the traceability requirements.
<b>6. Country risk assessment score</b>	Operations located in a country that is above 62 on Transparency International's latest list.	Operations located in a country that is between 32 and 62 on Transparency International's latest list.	Operations located in a country that is 31 or less on Transparency International's latest list.

## 28. RE-CERTIFICATION AUDITS

- 28.1. The CAB shall start the re-certification audit planning with the Certificate Holder at the latest four (4) months before the expiry date of the existing certificate.
- 28.1.1. In case of potential discontinuation of the re-certification contract due to reasons on the CAB side, the CAB shall inform the Certificate Holder of its intention no later than four (4) months before the expiry date of the existing certificate.
- 28.2. Exact timing of the audit shall remain the responsibility of the CAB, in consultation with the Certificate Holder.
- 28.2.1. The CAB shall ensure that the audit and re-certification decision will be completed before the expiry date of the current certificate.

- 28.3. For re-certification audits the CAB shall:
- 28.3.1. Take into account the previous surveillance report, progress on non-conformity closure, and inputs from Stakeholders.
  - 28.3.2. Consider and maintain records of any changes to the scope and operations of the UoC.
  - 28.3.3. Follow the instructions included in the Social Audit Risk Assessment for re-certification audit (Annex H).

## 29. EXTENSION OF CERTIFICATE VALIDITY

- 29.1. The CAB may extend the validity of a certificate once by up to three (3) months in cases where:
- 29.1.1. The CAB issued the current certificate, **and**
  - 29.1.2. The Certificate Holder has submitted their application to the CAB for re-certification and the application has been accepted by the CAB at or before the current certificate expiry date.
- 29.2. The CAB may extend a certificate only for cases when:
- 29.2.1. There is no production on-site for the planned re-certification audit **or**
  - 29.2.2. There are conditions outside the control of the CAB or the Certificate Holder that prevent the execution of the audit.
- 29.3. The CAB shall register the extended certificate details in the ASC database before the expiry date of the current certificate.

## 30. TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATE

- 30.1. For Clients applying for an audit with a new CAB within twelve (12) months from the expiration date of its last certificate, the new CAB shall:
- a) Request that the preceding CAB provides a list of any non-conformities open at the time of certificate expiration
  - b) The preceding CAB shall send these non-conformities to the succeeding CAB within fourteen (14) days upon request
  - c) If the preceding CAB does not reply in the above required timeframe, the succeeding CAB may continue with the audit planning.
- 30.2. Principles for a transfer of a valid certificate**
- 30.2.1. A decision to transfer a certificate shall be voluntary by the Certificate Holder.

- 30.2.2. ASC certificates shall only be transferred once within the period of validity of a certificate.
- 30.2.3. The CAB shall conduct a full audit if the certificate has been transferred more than once during the certification cycle.
- 30.2.4. ASC certificates shall not be transferred in any of the following situations:
- a) The certificate is suspended
  - b) Critical and major non-conformities have not been closed
    - i. All critical and major non-conformities shall be closed to the satisfaction of the preceding CAB before the certificate may be transferred
  - c) The parties involved in the transfer cannot agree on the transfer date
  - d) Relevant documentation about the Certificate Holder (all records, audit evidence, including reports and history of non-conformities, confidential annexes) is not being made available to the succeeding CAB by the preceding CAB.

### **30.3. Certificate Transfer procedure**

- 30.3.1. Once the holder of a valid certificate has informed their current CAB that they are applying for a certificate transfer with another CAB, the transfer of the certificate shall be conducted following these steps:
- 30.3.1.1. The preceding CAB, in consultation with the Certificate Holder, shall transfer all the information related to the Certificate Holder which is not publicly available on the ASC website within fourteen (14) days upon receipt of request from the succeeding CAB:
- a) This shall include the status of open non-conformities, all evidence of closure of non-conformities detected in previous audits, and confidential annexes.
- 30.3.1.2. The succeeding CAB shall conduct a desk review of all the available information and decide either:
- a) To carry out a transfer audit within three (3) months after the agreed transfer date according to the requirements for a surveillance audit, or
  - b) To follow the Certificate Holder's surveillance audit planning
    - i. As part of the desk review, the justification and rationale of this decision shall be recorded.
- 30.3.1.3. The succeeding CAB shall propose a transfer date to the preceding CAB and the Certificate Holder. On this agreed transfer date, all rights and obligations for maintaining the certificate shall pass from the preceding to the succeeding CAB.

- a) Both CABs shall keep a record of the agreed date.
- 30.3.1.4. The succeeding CAB shall issue a new certificate on the agreed transfer date as follows:
  - a) The expiry date of the succeeding certificate shall remain the same as the expiry date of the preceding certificate
  - b) The scope of the succeeding certificate shall remain the same as the scope of the preceding certificate.
- 30.3.1.5. The preceding CAB shall cancel the existing certificate on the agreed transfer date via the ASC Database.
- 30.3.1.6. All open minor non-conformities and associated actions, together with timelines that are applicable to the preceding certificate, shall remain applicable to the succeeding certificate.
- 30.3.1.7. The results of any accreditation body assessment regarding the compliance of the Certificate Holder to certification requirements shall be applicable to the succeeding CAB.
- 30.3.1.8. The preceding and succeeding CABs shall update the ASC database according to the instructions issued by the ASC.

#### **30.4. Certificate Transfer when the issuing CAB is losing or terminating its accreditation**

- 30.4.1. The procedure in 30.2 and 30.3 above shall be followed with the following changes:
  - a) Suspended certificates may be transferred
  - b) Certificates with open major non-conformities may be transferred, and non-conformities shall be closed in accordance with requirements as set out in this document.

### **31. CHANGES IN SCOPE**

- 31.1. The CAB shall be responsible for determining whether or not a proposed change in scope requires an on-site audit. This includes:
  - a) Physical change that impact working and living conditions
  - b) Contractual reporting conditions described in clause 7.5.13 and 7.5.14 of this document
  - c) Addition or change to the Production Model in operation, particularly the addition of the Segregation Production Model for ASC products where this Model has not been previously assessed

- d) Any other change to the certified operation determined by the CAB as requiring an on-site audit.

31.2. All on-site audits for changes of scope shall conform to Part B of this document.

31.3. If the CAB decides that an on-site audit is not required, the CAB shall record the justification for this decision. An updated certificate with the required changes to scope shall be issued by the CAB to the Certificate Holder and submitted to ASC.

31.4. The CAB shall register any changes in scope to an existing certificate in the ASC database within seven (7) days from the decision to change the scope.

## **32. SUSPENSION, CANCELLATION OR WITHDRAWAL OF CERTIFICATION**

32.1. The CAB may suspend, cancel or withdraw a certificate for a contractual or administrative reason, including breaches to the contract requirements in section 7.

32.2. The CAB shall withdraw a certificate if the Certificate Holder conducts any of the following activities:

- a) Suggests bribing any member of the CAB
- b) Presents forged documents as evidence to the CAB, ASC or appointed accreditation body
- c) Threatens any member of the CAB.

32.3. The CAB shall withdraw a certificate if the Certificate Holder is successfully prosecuted for:

- a) Carrying out fraudulent activities confirmed by the statutory authority.
- b) Child labour, slavery, human trafficking or forced labour

32.4. The CAB shall inform the ASC of any suspensions, withdrawals or cancellation of certificates within seven (7) days of the decision via the ASC database.

32.5. Suspended, withdrawn and cancelled certificates and related information will be updated on the ASC website.

32.6. The date of the suspension or withdrawal shall be the date the decision was taken by the CAB, whereas the date of cancellation shall be the date that the Certificate Holder informs the CAB and/or the ASC of its decision on cancellation.

32.6.1. If a certificate is suspended or withdrawn or cancelled, the CAB shall immediately instruct the Certificate Holder:

- a) Not to sell any product produced from the date of suspension, withdrawal or cancellation as ASC compliant or with the ASC logo, trademark or claim
- b) To advise existing or potential customers in writing of the suspension, withdrawal or cancellation within four (4) days of the suspension, withdrawal or cancellation date
- c) The suspension deadline and the actions needed to lift the suspension.

32.7. The CAB shall set a deadline of a maximum of six (6) months for the Certificate Holder to complete the actions required to lift the suspension.

32.7.1. A suspension deadline shall not be extended.

32.8. If the actions are not satisfactorily completed by the Certificate Holder by the set deadline, the CAB shall withdraw the certificate.

32.9. Before lifting the suspension, the CAB shall verify that the Certificate Holder followed the CAB's cessation of claims instruction described 32.6.1 and record this verification in the suspension lifting record.

32.10. The CAB shall record in the ASC database, the decision to lift a suspension within seven (7) days of the decision date.

### **33. CERTIFICATION INFORMATION ON THE ASC DATABASE**

33.1. CABs shall be responsible for keeping their data entries on the ASC database up to date.

## Annex A - ASC VOCABULARY

Follow this link to the [ASC Vocabulary Portal](#)



## Annex B - AUDITOR QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

All auditors shall possess the attributes described in clauses 4, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.2.a in ISO 19011:2018.

**Table A – Feed Auditor qualifications and competencies**

**Auditors** evaluating **feed** requirements in ASC audits shall possess the following qualifications and competencies.

Qualification/Competency	Requirement
1. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The individual shall have at least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two (2) years) obtained in a discipline related to the scope of certification; (e.g., feed manufacturing / Milling / Animal Nutrition); OR</li> <li>b) In exceptional cases practical experience<sup>8</sup> can be regarded as equivalent. These cases shall be documented.</li> </ul>
2. Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The individual shall have at least three (3) years of experience relevant in a feed / animal nutrition related discipline in a production / manufacturing environment.</li> <li>b) The individual shall have experience in conducting or auditing risk assessments. (E.g., food/feed safety, environmental risk assessments).</li> </ul>
3. Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Unless accompanied by an independent interpreter, the individual shall be a fluent speaker and reader of the language(s) used by managers, administrators and workers of the UoC being audited.</li> <li>b) The individual shall communicate effectively through an interpreter.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Experience can take the form of positions held, (For example, positions in quality assurance, production, feed safety, product inspection, plant manager, etc.). It could also be previous experience in auditing.

	<p>c) The individual shall have knowledge of the technical language employed in the manufacturing / production of feed products.</p>
4. Audit training	<p>a) The individual shall have successfully completed a Lead Auditor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that has a minimum duration of thirty-seven (37) hours. The certificate shall specify the course content and duration. Successful completion shall be indicated on the certificate. The Lead Auditor training course shall cover: applicable standards on quality auditing, auditing techniques, focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) and reporting, it shall also include a practical case study, AND</p> <p>b) The individual shall have undertaken and successfully completed an ASC approved auditor training course or courses in relation to specific standard and certification requirements, as required by the ASC, AND</p> <p>c) The individual shall complete the ASC training for new requirements as specified by the ASC within the deadlines set by ASC.</p>
5. Audit Experience	<p>a) The individual shall initially have completed a minimum of ten (10) days of on-site audit experience in conducting audits (either for, animal feed, (e.g., GlobalG.A.P CFM, GMP+, BAP,) food safety or environmental third-party certification audits); <b>OR</b> The individual shall have actively participated in at least two (2) ASC feed audits as a trainee, AND</p> <p>b) The individual shall have undertaken at least one (1) satisfactory ASC audit witnessed by the CAB's competent ASC feed auditor before final sign-off;</p> <p>c) The individual shall be witnessed by the CAB's competent feed auditor at least once every 3 years to maintain ASC auditor qualification.</p>

**Table B – Social auditor qualifications and competencies**

**Auditors** evaluating **social requirements** in ASC audits shall possess the following qualifications and competencies.

Qualification/Competency	Requirement
6. Social auditing qualification	<p>The individual shall have one or more of the following qualifications or equivalent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Has successfully completed a SAAS approved 5-day SA8000 basic auditor course, OR</li> <li>b) Has successfully completed the Verité five day “EICC Labour &amp; Ethics Lead Auditor Course”, OR</li> <li>c) Is an APSCA-approved auditor with category Certified Social Compliance Auditor (CSCA)</li> </ul>
7. Social auditing experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The individual shall have participated as an active audit team member in at least two (2) third party audits in manufacturing. AND</li> <li>b) The individual shall have participated as an active audit team member in at least five (5) third party audits for one or more of the following schemes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amfori (Business Social Compliance Initiative - BSCI)</li> <li>• Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code</li> <li>• Fair Trade USA</li> <li>• Fairtrade International (FI)</li> <li>• Goodweave (Rugmark)</li> <li>• International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) – Code of Business Practice</li> <li>• Social Accountability International (SAI) SA 8000</li> <li>• Worldwide Responsible Apparel Producers (WRAP) – Code of Conduct</li> </ul> </li> <li>c) The individual shall have undertaken at least one (1) satisfactory social audit under the supervision of the CAB’s competent social auditor for any of the schemes in 7 (b) above or the ASC social component.</li> </ul>

	d) The individual shall be witnessed by the CAB's competent social auditor for the ASC program or for any of the schemes in 7 (b) above, at least once every 3 years to maintain the ASC social auditor qualification.
8. ASC Social Auditor Training	a) The individual shall have undertaken and successfully completed an ASC Social Auditor training course, or courses in relation to specific standards, as required by the ASC.
9. Competencies	<p>a) The individual shall have knowledge of local labour and human rights legislation</p> <p>b) The individual shall have familiarity with local customs</p> <p>c) The individual shall speak and read the primary local language, unless an independent interpreter makes up part of the audit team</p> <p>d) The individual shall be proficient in the language of the audit (at least at level B2 according to the <u>Common European Framework of Reference for Languages</u> (CEFR), if the language is not native to the social auditor</p> <p>e) The individual shall be able to manage relationships with workers and managers.</p>
10. Continuous professional development	<p>a) The individual shall conduct at least 3 social audits per year</p> <p>b) The individual shall take part in ASC annual social auditor calibration session</p> <p>c) The individual shall attend update training or session on topics related to ASC social requirements.</p>
11. Qualifications for ASC feed auditors evaluating social criteria	<p>ASC feed auditors evaluating ASC social criteria allowed by the "ASC social audit risk calculator" shall have the following qualifications:</p> <p>a) The individual shall maintain their ASC feed auditor qualifications.</p> <p>b) The individual shall have undertaken and successfully completed an ASC Social Auditor training course, or courses in relation to specific standards, as required by the ASC.</p> <p>c) The individual shall have participated in at least two (2) ASC social audits under the supervision of an ASC social auditor to gain experience in employees interview techniques and employees file sampling.</p> <p>d) The individual shall have undertaken at least one (1) satisfactory ASC social audit, witnessed by a competent ASC social auditor, before final sign-off.</p> <p>e) The individual shall be witnessed by a competent ASC social auditor for the ASC program, at least once every 3 years to maintain the ASC social auditor qualification.</p>

**Table C – Lead Auditor qualifications and competencies**

In addition to the requirements of tables A OR B **lead auditors** leading ASC audits shall possess the following qualifications and competencies.

Qualification/Competency	Requirement
12. Audit Training	<p>a) If the lead auditor is a social auditor, the individual shall have successfully completed a Lead Auditor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that have a minimum duration of thirty-seven (37) hours. The certificate shall specify the course content and duration. Successful completion shall be indicated on the certificate. The Lead Auditor training course shall cover: applicable standards on quality auditing, auditing techniques, focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) and reporting, and it shall also include a practical case study.</p>
13. Auditor Competency	<p>a) The audit team leader should have acquired additional audit experience to demonstrate the competencies described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Plan the audit and assign audit tasks according to the specific competence of individual audit team members.</li> <li>ii. Develop and maintain a collaborative working relationship among the audit team members.</li> <li>iii. Manage the audit process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making effective use of resources during the audit</li> <li>• Achieving audit objectives</li> <li>• Directing the audit team members, technical experts and interpreters</li> <li>• Coordination and collation of audit findings</li> <li>• Preventing and resolving conflicts and problems that can occur during the audit as necessary.</li> </ul> </li> <li>iv. Represent the audit team in communications with the Client.</li> <li>v. Prepare the audit report in conjunction with the audit team.</li> </ul>

## Annex C - AUDIT REPORT REQUIREMENTS

### General Requirements

- C1. Audit reports shall be written in English and in the most common language spoken in the areas where the operation is located.
  - C1.1. The CAB may submit only a report in English for audit reports of UoCs located in countries evaluated as Very High in the latest report by the EF English Proficiency Index.
- C2. Audit reports may contain confidential annexes for commercially sensitive information.
  - C2.1. The CAB shall agree the content of any commercially sensitive information with the applicant, which shall be submitted separately to the ASC and be accessible to the appointed accreditation body upon request, as stipulated in the certification contract.
  - C2.2. The public report shall contain a clear overview of the items which are in the confidential annexes.
  - C2.3. Except for the annexes that contain commercially sensitive information, all audit reports will be public including unannounced audit reports.
- C3. The CAB is solely responsible for the content of all reports, including the content of any confidential annexes.
- C4. The CAB shall submit to the ASC, audit reports or summaries of non-conformities for failed audits or audits that resulted in the suspension, cancellation or withdrawal of a certificate.
  - C4.1. The CAB shall submit as a minimum, a summary of non-conformities in English of each failed audit within 28 days from the date of the closing meeting or last on-site date.
  - C4.2. The ASC shall keep these reports published for 12 months and make them available upon request after this period.
- C5. The CAB shall include a record of changes if a published final report is updated or corrected.
- C6. Audit reports shall contain accurate and reproducible results.

### Reporting Deadlines\* for certification and re-certification audit reports

- C7. Within forty-two (42) days of the completion of the audit the CAB shall submit a draft report written in English and the national or most common language spoken in the area where the operation is located.
- C8. Within seven (7) days the ASC should post the draft report to the ASC website.

- C9. The CAB shall allow Stakeholders to comment on the report for twenty-one (21) days.
- C10. Within twenty-eight (28) days of the close of comments, the CAB shall submit the final report to the ASC written in English and the national or most common language spoken in the area where the operation is located.
- C11. Within seven (7) days the ASC should post the final report to the ASC website.

#### **Reporting Deadlines\* for surveillance audit reports**

- C12. Within twenty-eight (28) days of completing the audit, the CAB shall submit a summary of the non-conformities detected during the surveillance audit in English.
- C13. Within ninety-eight (98) days of completing the audit, the CAB shall submit a final report written in English and the national or most common language spoken in the area where the operation is located.
- C14. Within seven (7) days the ASC should post the final report to the ASC website.

\* Refers to calendar days

## Annex D - COMMUNICATION WITH THE ASC

### **D1. Language**

D1.1. All CAB communication with the ASC shall be in English.

### **D2. Forms**

D2.1. CABs shall use the ASC database to submit Client and CAB information relevant to the Certification Process.

D2.2. Requests for interpretation of the ASC Requirements and requests for variance to these normative requirements shall be made by CABs via the [Variance Request & Interpretation Platform](#).

### **D3. Public Information**

D3.1. The CAB is responsible for control of all confidential information submitted to the ASC on forms that specify public disclosure.

### **D4. Format**

D4.1. Information shall be submitted in the formats specified by the ASC



## Annex E - ASC CERTIFICATION FOR MULTI-SITE UoC

### **E1. Scope**

- E1.1. In addition to the requirements in this document, this annex shall be used by CABs to audit multi-site UoCs.

### **E2. Initial Audit**

- E2.1. The CAB shall conduct an initial audit of multi-site Clients as follows
- a) All sites shall be in operation and where possible producing ASC product
  - b) All sites meet the conditions specified in part B, Section 8 of this document 'Audit Timing' and associated pre-requisites.
  - c) Include on-site visits of ALL sites in the unit of certification.
  - d) Employee interviews conducted according to Social Audit Risk Assessment (Annex H).
  - e) Files and records shall be sampled at a rate to be established by the CAB taking into account that threats and risk level of the unit of certification are yet to be identified and assessed at the end of the initial audit.

### **E3. Sites**

- E3.1. Only sites that are in operation shall be included in the unit of certification of a multi-site applicant.
- E3.2. Sites that are certified under an existing ASC certificate may be exempted from the initial audit if:
- a) The site has been the subject of an audit within the last 6 months, and
  - b) Any major or critical non-conformities are closed in the specified timelines.
- E3.2.1. The CAB may decide to audit any site that conforms to these conditions if it determines that it is necessary to demonstrate conformity with ASC Requirements.
- E3.3. Sites may be removed from the scope of an initial audit by the CAB at the request of the Client.
- E3.3.1. Removed sites and reason(s) for removal shall be included in the audit report.
- E3.3.2. Audit findings of sites removed after the initial on-site audit shall be documented in the audit report.
- E3.3.3. Sites that are removed from the scope of an initial audit may only be added to the scope of the certificate at a surveillance, recert or scope extension audits fulfilling the requirements of section 8 (Audit Timing), section 10 (Stakeholder Engagement) and Annex C (Audit Report Requirements) applicable to initial audits.
- E3.4. Sites may be removed from the scope of an existing certificate by the CAB
- a) due to a major non-conformity that is not closed out in due time, OR
  - b) due to not complying with applicable local regulations as notified by the Client.

- E3.5. The CAB shall follow requirements in section 32 (Suspension, cancellation and withdrawal of certification) of this document when removing sites from a certificate.
- E3.6. Reason(s) of site removal from a certificate shall be documented in the next audit report.
- E3.7. Sites removed from a certificate may be added to the scope of the certificate once the CAB confirms that:
- a) all outstanding non-conformities are closed following an agreed timeframe between the multi-site Client and the CAB and
  - b) the site complies with applicable requirements.
- E3.8. New sites may be added to an existing certificate only after an on-site audit has been conducted by the CAB without any open major or critical non-conformities.
- E3.9. The CAB shall prepare a map of the location and boundaries of each site that are included in the unit of certification.
- E3.9.1. The map of all sites within the unit of certification shall be included in the audit report.
- E3.9.2. The location and name or ID of each site in the unit of certification shall be appended to the certificate.
- E3.9.3. If the sites included in the scope of a certificate are different from the sites in a subsequent audit (due to removed or newly (re-)included sites), the CAB shall update the map of the unit of certification.
- E3.9.4. The map shall:
- a) be included in the audit report
  - b) include all sites within the unit of certification
  - c) clearly indicate all sites that were removed from and newly added to the scope of the audit or certificate.
- E3.10. The CAB shall update the certificate with an up-to-date list of all sites and their associated facilities (e.g., offsite storage) within the unit of certification and their locations each time a site is added or removed.

## Annex F - DUE DILIGENCE SAMPLING CALCULATOR

A separate excel file is available on [the ASC website](#)

## **Annex G - DESK REVIEW (INFORMATION OF UNIT OF CERTIFICATION/ LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS/ CAB'S REVIEW)**

The CAB shall use the excel file for Desk Review. This is located on [the ASC website](#).

The format of the file may be altered to suit the operating system used by the CAB; however, its content shall remain unchanged.

## Annex H - ASC SOCIAL AUDIT RISK ASSESSMENT

The CAB shall follow instructions in the ASC Social Audit Risk Assessment calculator and outcomes for planning audits. The tool is excel-based and available on [the ASC website](#).