

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Feed Standard update v1.1

This ToR is publicly available on the ASC website. Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Version:	Date:	Description of amendment	Affected section
1.0	July 2024	N/A	N/A

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1. Introduction

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation 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 sector 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 humanity 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 aquaculture practices through incentivising the choices people make when buying seafood. ASC's Theory of Change can be found on the [ASC website](#).

ASC Standards are developed to deliver on the ASC Theory of Change by addressing key sustainability issues identified in the seafood sector and at the farm. Increased global demand for fish combined with rapidly growing and unregulated aquaculture practices will result in disruption of local ecosystems, negative impacts to biodiversity, wastewater, conflicts over resource use and poor working conditions. Certification against ASC Standards addresses these sustainability issues through market demand and recognition of responsible practices.

2. About this ToR document

This document describes the objectives and scope of the ASC Feed Standard update to v1.1. The output of this project will be a new version of the ASC Feed Standard (v1.1).

3. Objectives of the project

The ASC Feed Standard needs to be updated due to the planned development of ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) 3.0. Under CAR 3.0, the current Feed CAR and Requirements for the Unit of Certification (RUoC) documents will be combined into one CAR document which will contain assurance requirements for both Feed and Farm programmes. The Feed RUoC contains technical requirements for the feed mill to prepare for audit which will need to be incorporated into the Feed Standard. This will allow feed mills to see all of their requirements in one document.

This update need also provides an opportunity for changes to be made in order to address issues identified since the Feed Standard became effective. The substantive changes are limited to those which need to happen urgently, either a) to align feed to farm reporting data with the new Farm Standard requirements or b) to align with legislation requirements. A consultation is proposed to understand the impact of these changes on feed mills.

The updated Feed Standard v1.1 will become effective at the same time as the new CAR 3.0 in 2025.

4. Structure and scope of the project

The ASC Feed Standard v1.01 will be updated to v1.1 and will include the following changes:

- A. Incorporation of Feed RUoC *Section 4 - Process and preparation requirements for feed mills*; and *Annex C – Competency Requirements*.

The requirements will be included as annexes to the Feed Standard and referred to within relevant indicators.

- B. Non-substantive changes as captured through the issue log to date e.g. corrections, clarifications, spelling, etc.
- C. Substantive urgent changes as captured through the issue log:
- i. Edit GHG reporting indicator to ASC (1.21.4) and add a new GHG disclosure indicator to farms (3.4.5) requiring data specific to species group, e.g., salmonids (to align with new Farm Standard requirements).
 - ii. Edit GHG calculation in Annex 2 to require both relative mass and economic allocation methods to be used for reporting (to align with new Farm Standard requirements).
 - iii. Edit cut-off date in indicator 5.1.1 to 31st December 2020 (to align with the EU Deforestation Regulation and UN SDGs to halt deforestation).

For C. the substantive changes will be publicly consulted on in September 2024 for 60 days. ASC certified and applicant feed mills will be targeted to understand the impacts of the changes.

5. Standard revision guiding principles

Standard development follows the ASC's [Programme Development and Revision Procedure](#) and the Guiding Principles described within.

6. Governance

The following governance bodies and processes are engaged in the standard setting process:

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG): the TAG advises on technical issues, among others on further development, modification, and the technical and operational interpretation of

the ASC Standards. TAG includes both academics and representatives of different relevant stakeholder groups and meet twice a year to make decisions. The TAG reviews proposals and endorses drafts ahead of public consultation. The TAG then reviews consultation feedback and provides advice for next steps or recommendations to the ASC Board of Trustees who take the final decision to adopt revised Standards. The ASC's Programme Development and Revision Procedure guides the development process. The TAG recommendations are preferably made by consensus. If no consensus can be reached, agreement on advice by the TAG is made by a simple majority of members. In such circumstances, the TAG prepares a report to the Board which clearly indicates a summary of the minority and majority positions.

Public consultations take place by means of online surveys, regional, sectoral and/or criteria-based workshops in English as well as local languages as deemed necessary, and 1-on-1 interviews, and are supported by communication materials to promote consultations and elicit feedback.

Key ASC stakeholders in this process are:

Feed Mills	Interest in the process
Feed Mills	Understanding implications for their ability to meet the Feed Standard
Conformity Assessment Bodies	Understanding any changes in the cost and complexity of assessing Feed Mills against the Feed Standard
NGOs	Ensuring changes make necessary impacts on the environmental and social issues most important to them
Retailers	Ensuring changes reflect consumer demands on environmental and social responsibility.
ASC certified farms	Ensuring changes do not hinder ability to source compliant feed by the deadline
Agriculture Supply Chain Actors	Understanding implications for their ability to meet the Feed Standard (i.r.t. Deforestation Requirements).
Government Institutes (e.g. EU)	Ensuring that changes align with regulatory requirements and details (i.r.t. Deforestation Requirements).

7. Key milestones

Table 1 summarises key milestones in the standard revision process. The ASC website includes information on the latest opportunities for stakeholders to engage in the process. Apart from the public consultation periods, ASC welcomes inputs and comments anytime during the process, directed to the contact person listed at the bottom of this ToR.

Table 1. Major activities in the project

Activity	Outcome/Deliverable	Engagement opportunity
July 2024 Project proposal presented to TAG	Project TOR and Consultation plan endorsed	
July - August 2024 Project TOR posted on website for 30 days	Any comments received on ToR are reviewed ToR revised as necessary	Yes
September - October 2024 60-day stakeholder consultation on substantive changes	Stakeholder feedback received	Yes
December 2024 stakeholder feedback reviewed & final updates made	Updated Feed Standard v1.1 draft	
January 2025 Feed Standard v1.1 presented to TAG	TAG approval of Feed Standard v1.1	
Q1 2025 Feed Standard v1.1 presented to ASC Board	Board approval of Feed Standard v1.1	
Q2 2025 Feed Standard v1.1 published	Stakeholders can view Feed Standard v1.1	
Publication date +6 months Feed Standard v1.1 effective	Audits compulsory against v1.1	

8. Assessment of risks

ASC has identified the following risks and mitigation strategies for the project:

Table 2. Risks and mitigation measures for the project

Risk aspect	Evaluation of risk	Mitigation strategy
Transition for feed mills to meet the new requirements.	<p>The GHG reporting for both allocation methods and for species specific profiles will likely create a small extra burden on mills if they are not already reporting to this level.</p> <p>The new cut-off date for deforestation is in line with EU regulation which many mills will have to meet. The target date is not prescribed which allows mills more time to transition their supply chains if needed.</p>	The public consultation will seek to understand impacts on feed mills and whether extra time (>6 months) is needed for transition. Good communication with feed mills is necessary.

9. Contact information

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10. Comments

ASC welcomes stakeholder feedback. Interested stakeholders may forward concerns related to this revision process to complaints@asc-aqua.org.