
ASC Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholder Consultation Summary Report

Terms of Reference for Catfish

September 2023

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1. Background

ASC currently manages eleven standards covering seventeen species groups. These standards were developed through stakeholder dialogues over several years. ASC is currently in the process of integrating all species-specific standards into one ASC Farm Standard and no further species-specific standards will be developed.

The ASC Farm Standard will provide greater consistency and harmonise requirements across all farmed seafood species currently certifiable against ASC standards. It is expected to become effective in 2025 and the first version will cover the 17 species groups currently certifiable against the ASC standards. Additional species are going to be included in the ASC programme based on consumer demand, market development opportunities or producer interest.

With the Species Extension Project: Catfish, ASC seeks to include multiple catfish species within the ASC Farm Standard, allowing for the expansion of the portfolio of species currently covered by ASC.

In 2021 several species were approved by the Board for consideration. In particular, the following catfish species were selected for inclusion - with additional species of catfish potentially added to the list in future:

- **Claridae spp.**
 - African catfish (*Clarias gariepinus*)
 - Claresse (Hybrid of *Heterobranchus longifilis* X *Clarias gariepinus*)
 - Vundu (*Heterobranchus longifilis*)
- **Ictalurus spp.**
 - Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)
- **European/Wels catfish** (*Silurus glanis*)

The inclusion of additional species in the ASC Farm Standard is a process that needs sufficient scientific data and producer input for the development of a white paper and for setting species-specific metrics according to the [Standard setting procedure](#) and [Metrics Methodology](#).

1.1 Objectives

The Species Extension Project - Catfish will add catfish species to the scope of the ASC Farm Standard by adding species-specific metrics and, if needed, additional indicator requirements. The development will follow the ASC Standard Setting Procedure.

The objective of the stakeholder consultation regarding the Catfish Terms of Reference (TOR) is to acquire further insights into the project and obtain overall approval.

1.2 Approach for TOR feedback

To elicit feedback on the Catfish TOR, ASC engaged catfish producers and various stakeholder groups. The primary targets included:

- Academia and research institutions
- Catfish aquaculture farms of related species, inclusive of farm trade bodies and representative organisations
- Civil society organisations, both environmental and social non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Retailers/brands
- Suppliers of farm inputs and service providers, such as feed producers, broodstock suppliers, and consultants
- Industry stakeholders, including retailers and processing/trading companies

ASC developed an initial stakeholder map based on the historical interest expressed by specific stakeholder groups. Personalised emails were sent to solicit feedback on the TOR, as well as communications about the TOR through social media channels and on the ASC website. The consultation was open for 30 days from 1 September 2023 – 30 September 2023.

The engagement with catfish stakeholders involved the distribution of a questionnaire designed to gather insights and to solicit general feedback on the opportunities and concerns prevailing in this sector.

2. Participation

2.1 Forms

The focus of this stakeholder consultation was to engage those whose expertise and viewpoints are crucial to ensure the credibility of the ASC Species Scope Extension Project: Catfish. Within the identified key stakeholder categories three stakeholder groups provided feedback:

- Environmental and social NGOs
- Farms (producer) or association thereof (non-certified)
- Feed mills

Some of these respondents provided feedback via the [Data Submission Portal](#) and others via the [New Species Request Form](#).

3. Summary of feedback

3.1 Feedback

Key Theme	Summary of Consultation Feedback	ASC Response/Next steps
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New catfish species request	ASC received a request to include an additional catfish species, specifically <i>Heterobranchus bidoralis</i> , within the project's scope.	ASC agrees with the feedback received and will include this species in the project.
Environmental and social impacts about the proposed species	Two out of three respondents agreed that they had no specific social and environmental impacts to convey to ASC regarding the proposed species, specifically <i>Heterobranchus bidoralis</i> and <i>Clarias gariepinus</i> .	The comments have been received and noted. The input is valued and will be taken into consideration as the process advances.
Further comments	Consensus among all respondents indicates that there are no additional comments requiring the attention of ASC regarding the proposed inclusion of catfish species within the scope of the ASC Farm Standard.	The comments have been received and noted. The input is valued and will be taken into consideration as the process advances.
Data input	Certain respondents contributed valuable data inputs that can aid in the continued development of the whitepaper and metrics for the project.	This information is not incorporated in the TOR consultation but is useful for inclusion in upcoming stakeholder consultation(s) focused on the project's content.

3.3 Next steps

A final, full 60-day consultation on the resulting Scope Extension Project: Catfish will be conducted before the final product is presented to the ASC Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG will provide a formal recommendation to the ASC Board to adopt the inclusion into the ASC Farm Standard.

Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
TOR	Terms of Reference

Appendix 1: List of individual participants

Organisation (Stakeholder)	Contact Person
Social NGO	Sunday Elebiju
Producer or association of producers	Georg Kloos
Feed mill / trader /supplier	Niels Jeuken