

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Technical Working Group – Free, Prior and Informed Consent

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1. Introduction

The [TAG Terms of Reference](#) make provision for the formation of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and Ad-hoc Advisory Groups (AAG) to support the technical and scientific work of the TAG. Typically, both a TWG and an AAG will be comprised of technical experts external to ASC's governance bodies with a member of the TAG acting as sponsor to facilitate communication and understanding between the TAG and the TWG or AAG and support the ASC technical lead. ASC's Secretariat will provide logistical support to the group(s) and a technical coordinator from ASC will be appointed to provide the group(s) with the technical resources. This may include a white paper to initiate discussion and a draft Standard following TWG deliberations. An external facilitator may be appointed for complex topics. The difference between a TWG and AAG is that the AAG has a narrower focus and often operates in a shorter timeframe.

References

[ASC Programme Development and Revision Procedure](#)

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- [ASC Metrics Methodology](#)
- [ASC Complaints Procedure](#)
- [TAG Terms of Reference](#)
- [TAG Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

2. Terms of Reference

This document describes the terms of reference of a Technical Working Group (TWG) for the revision of the community engagement requirements of the ASC Farm Standard v1.0 to include the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and to be launched as part of the ASC Farm Standard V2.0.

2.1 Statement of purpose

The purpose of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is to:

- Provide recommendations on how to include the principles of FPIC in ASC standard(s) in a robust and feasible way.
- Provide inputs and guidance into credible and implementable indicators for FPIC in the ASC Farm Standard that ensure the respect of the rights of Indigenous people, and into supplementary guidance and capacity development documents for their implementation.
- Review process and results of pilot projects and public consultations and make recommendations on any changes required.

2.2 Scope and aims

While ASC is committed to including the principles of FPIC into the standards, it has not yet determined what that FPIC process would look like. The ASC Farm Standard v1.0 that was launched in May 2025 does not have a specific indicator on FPIC although it requires elements of an FPIC process, such as impact identification and meaningful engagement. ASC is currently engaged in broader discussions with industry and Indigenous leaders to develop an approach to FPIC including standard requirements, guidance, and capacity building materials. One component of this process is the convening of a Technical Working Group (TWG) to provide input and expert advice.

The TWG will be assigned the following tasks:

- Review outcomes of stakeholder dialogues so far, and results of pilot projects and public consultations as they become available.
- Support development of credible and implementable indicators for FPIC in the ASC Farm Standard that ensure the respect of the rights of Indigenous people

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- Support development of supplementary guidance and capacity development documents for their implementation.

The expected deliverables from this process are:

- A set of indicators on FPIC for the ASC Farm Standard.
- Interpretation manual content: guidance on how to conduct FPIC
- Capacity building materials for CABs, farms, and communities.

3. Membership

TWG membership shall focus on a balanced set of experts that are able to advise on the formulation of indicators and understand Indigenous people's rights. It will aim to balance interests from the standard's key interest groups and geographical representation.

All members of the TWG should support the aims of the ASC, its Vision and Mission, and commit to engage constructively.

3.1 Technical competencies required

The TWG shall include members with one or more of the following core competencies, aiming for a balance of stakeholders, including indigenous and non-indigenous participants:

- Strong understanding and experience with Indigenous rights and FPIC.
- Understanding of and / or experience with aquaculture and its relationships with Indigenous people and local communities.
- Experience in social auditing.
- Understanding of / experience in certification and standard setting.

3.2 Registered interests

ASC Technical Working Groups need to understand the interests of individual members to manage conflicts. Members are asked to declare these to ensure stakeholders and decision-makers have access to this information.

4. Reporting requirements

The TWG will report to the TAG on an annual basis. Output documents will be made available for review along with meeting minutes of the TWG meetings.

Materials made available for review will include:

- Meeting minutes
- Recommendations

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5. Duration and review times

The TWG will be active until the approval of the revised indicators and complementary materials by the TAG. The TWG will meet regularly (online) and at key moments in the process as suggested in Table 1. Amendments to this timeline may be made based on project and organisational needs. The timings and scope of each meeting will be further refined in consultation with the TWG at the first meeting and with the (external) meeting facilitator.

Table 1. Key project milestones

Planned timeline	Activity	Outcome/Deliverable
Feb 2026 - Dec 2027	Pilot(s)	Piloting of an FPIC process with Indigenous Peoples, farms and CABs in selected countries
Feb – Aug 2026	TWG meetings	Kick-off Agreement on TWG scope, objectives, and timelines Advice on first draft of indicators Advice on implementation materials Update on pilot(s)
Sept 2026	TAG meeting	Presentation of draft indicators to TAG for public consultation I
Oct-Nov 2026	Public consultation I	Public consultation on draft indicators v1
Dec 2026 – May 2027	TWG meetings	Results of Public consultation I Update on pilot(s) Advice on revision of indicators & implementation materials
June 2027	TAG meeting	Presentation of draft indicators to the TAG for Public consultation II
Sept-Oct 2027	Public consultation II	Public consultation on draft indicators v2
Nov-Dec 2027	TWG meeting	Results of Public consultation II Final indicators & implementation materials
Jan 2028	TAG meeting	Final approval of indicators
TBD	Board meeting	Board approval
TBD	Include indicators in ASC Farm Standard	New indicators included in revision of the ASC Farm Standard

6. Agreement

I agree to the above terms of reference.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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