





ASC Farm and Feed Certification and Accreditation Requirements

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Version Control, Available Language(s), and Copyright Notice

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Version Control

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Version:	Issue Date:	Effective Date:	Remarks/changes
V1.0	1 May 2025	1 August 2025	New document
V1.1	1 November 2026	1 May 2027	**Terminology**: updated Farm Standard references to include Species Standards under the collective term "ASC Standard for Farms". **Part B Table 1 & 2:** Clarified site ownership and land rights requirements. **1.4 Scope of Certification:** Clarified Certification sub-scopes, when slaughter activities must be included, and the exclusion of processing and packing activities. **NC Grading:** Table 2.1 updated to reflect WHO antimicrobial classification for Critical NC. Table 2.2 Revised to clarify Group NCs. **Management System Auditor (MSA):** 3.4 Clarified the CAB MSA's role as Lead auditor during Group audits. Table 4.1 included MSA onboarding requirements and Table 4.3 added Programme Specific Training requirement. **Other:** Minor, non-substantive amends for clarity.

It is the responsibility of the user of the document to use the latest version as published on the ASC website.

Review and Revision

ASC shall review this document at least every three years for accuracy and relevance and shall align this document with any revisions made to the ASC Standards documents if required.

If review determines that revision is necessary, ASC shall revise this document, publishing the new version on the ASC website with the issue date, effective date and date of next review.

If review determines that revision is not necessary, ASC shall reaffirm this document, communicate publicly about the decision and rationale, and establish the date of next review.

Available Language(s)

The ASC Farm and Feed CAR document is available in the following language(s):

Version:	Available Languages
V1.1	English (official language)
	Japanese
	Korean
	Spanish
	Turkish
	Vietnamese

In case of any inconsistencies and/or discrepancies between available translation(s) and the English version, the online English version (PDF format) will prevail.

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About ASC

The Power of Seafood

A nutritious protein source and a key component of global food security, 3.3 billion people rely on seafood for at least 20% of their animal protein consumption, and between 400 – 600 million people are directly and indirectly involved with the industry[1].

With population estimates of 10 billion by 2050, and with wild caught fisheries at capacity, farmed seafood comprises almost 60% of seafood consumed as its numbers and importance continues to grow[1]. Care must be taken immediately to limit the industry's negative impacts.

Responsible seafood farming eases pressure on natural resources, protects precious ecosystems, promotes economic opportunities and addresses food security challenges, caring for seafood, people and the planet. A crucial link in the circular economy, it upcycles multiple by-product streams into much needed high-quality protein.



Our Vision

A world where seafood farming plays a major role in supplying food and social benefits for humanity whilst minimising negative impacts on the environment



Our Mission

To transform seafood farming towards environmental sustainability and social responsibility, creating value across the chain using market mechanisms, improvement incentives and delivering value-added services from farm to fork

[1] *UN Fisheries Panel (COFI36):* Aquaculture as a solution to food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty

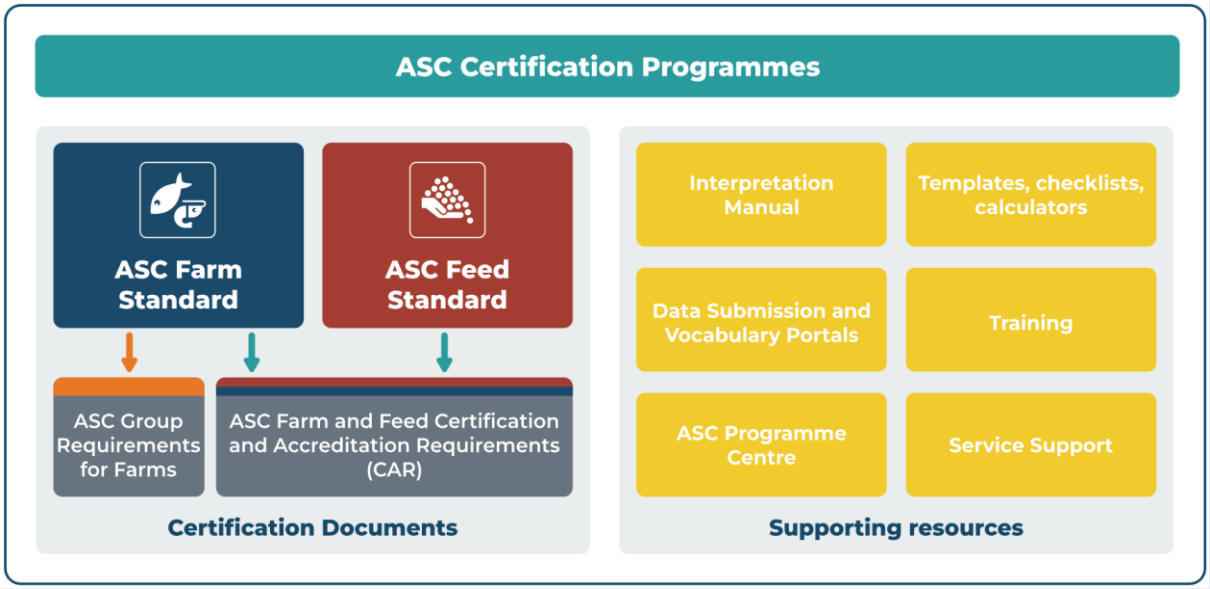
Transforming Seafood Farming

ASC is accelerating the transformation of the farmed seafood industry by:

Championing Change – raising awareness of what needs to change and collaborating to create pathways for the change required to accelerate positive impact on people and planet, fish and farms.
Making Change – developing and implementing the world's leading independent certification and improver programmes for responsibly farmed seafood.

Our supply chain partners choose ASC certification for the most robust standards and the highest assurance ensuring traceability and transparency throughout the supply chain. By choosing ASC labelled seafood, consumers in over 100 countries are contributing to a sustainable future.

ASC Certification Programmes



ASC Certification

ISEAL Community Membership

ISEAL is a global membership organisation for ambitious, collaborative and transparent sustainability systems, that drives collective efforts to tackle the most pressing sustainability issues and create a world where markets are a force for good.

The ASC Certification Programme is ISEAL Code Compliant. The ISEAL Code is a globally recognised framework that defines best practices for effective and credible sustainability systems.

Certification Programme

The ASC Certification Programme is a voluntary third-party certification programme consisting of the following independent actors:

Scheme Owner: Aquaculture Stewardship Council

As scheme owner, ASC sets and maintains standards and associated assurance documents and their underpinning procedures, as well documents and resources that support the implementation of the Certification Programme.

An overview of all documents and the latest version can be found on the ASC Controlled Document Master List.

Conformity Assessment Body: Provide certification services in accordance with the requirements of this scheme.

The legal entity responsible for the **Unit of Certification** (UoC), contracts a Conformity Assessment Body (CAB) that employs auditor(s) that conduct an independent 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 document and are assured through accreditation.

Integrity Services Provider and Accreditation Body: The Integrity Services Provider is appointed by ASC to oversee the integrity of the programme.

Integrity services and accreditation are currently provided by Assurance Services International (ASI). Findings of ASI assessments and an overview of currently accredited CABs are available on the ASI website.[2]

[2] http://www.asi-assurance.org/s/

Audit Process

An ASC audit follows strict process requirements. These requirements are detailed in the CAR. Only ASC accredited CABs are allowed to audit and certify a UoC against ASC standards.

As scheme owner, ASC is not involved in the audit or certification decision of a UoC.

As part of the ASC commitment to transparency, all findings, audit reports and certificates are publicly available on the ASC website. These include audit findings that result in a negative certification decision.

Certificate

All ASC certificates are available on the ASC website for verification. Issued certificates are the property of the CAB.

Each certificate specifies the standard (i.e., ASC Farm Standard, an ASC Species Standard or the ASC Feed Standard.) and the sub-scope of the certified UoC as applicable:

- **ASC Farm Standard**: Animal group and species name;
- **ASC Species standard**: Species name and where applicable, the RAS Module
- **ASC Feed Standard**: Production Model Type.

Examples of certificate and Sub-scope are listed below:

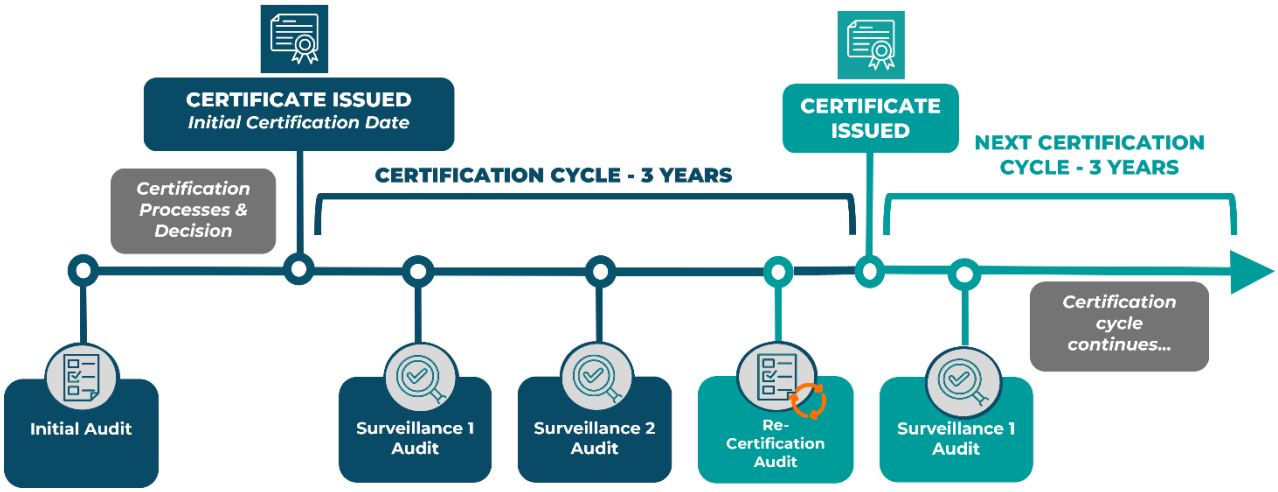
- **ASC Farm Standard**, Sub-scope: Finfish, Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- **ASC Farm Standard**, Sub-scope: Crustaceans, White leg shrimp (*Penaeus vannamei*)
- **ASC Freshwater Trout Standard**, Sub-scope RAS Module, Rainbow trout (Oncorhynchus mykiss)
- **ASC Shrimp Standard**, Giant tiger prawn (Penaeus monodon)
- **ASC Feed Standard**, Sub-scope: Segregation Production model
- **ASC Feed Standard**, Sub-scope: Mass Balance Production Model

Certification Cycle

The certification cycle defines the validity period of an ASC certificate and shall be three years. The first three-year certification cycle shall begin on the date of the initial certification decision. Each subsequent certification cycle shall begin on the three-year anniversary of the initial certification decision date.

A certification cycle shall consist of one initial certification audit or re-certification audit and two surveillance audits conducted within the cycle to confirm ongoing conformity with ASC requirements.

The certification cycle defines the required sequence of audits and certification decisions that a CAB shall apply in accordance with this Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR) document.



ASC Chain of Custody Certification

Once ASC certified seafood is produced by a certified UoC, every company that owns or handles the ASC certified products must be covered by valid ASC Chain of Custody (CoC) certification. This includes any processing or packing conducted while the product is owned by the UoC. This assures consumers and seafood buyers that ASC labelled products come from certified farms. ASC uses the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Chain of Custody (CoC) Standard, plus the ASC-owned CoC Module, to verify the origin of seafood sold as ASC certified. This process benefits companies that handle both ASC and MSC certified seafood by allowing them to do a combined audit. CoC certification covers activities beyond farm production, such as processing and packing. For more information see Chain of Custody Standard - ASC International or contact info@asc-aqua.org.

ASC Label and Claims

ASC certified entities shall only use the ASC label, claim, and trademarks if authorised through a signed ASC Licensing Agreement.

Unauthorised label display or use of trademarks is prohibited and will be treated as a trademark infringement. For more information see ASC's Label User Guide or contact licensing@asc-aqua.org.

ASC Assurance Net

The independent actors and processes described above are interlinked to provide the most robust and reliable assurance system, supported by ASC's transparent processes and stakeholder participation. The CABs conduct strict audits to verify conformity against the ASC standards. ASI assesses the CABs to confirm that certification was granted following the requirements and with integrity. Both CABs and ASI may conduct these activities unannounced, and all the evaluation results are publicly available for interested stakeholders who may provide additional information to the certification process. Working closely with assurance partners, ASC monitors conformance across the supply chain.

ASC adds another layer of assurance by designing tailored tools that support additional verification of conformity. These tools evaluate the conformance of ASC products in different stages, for example, antibiotic residues and provenance (TestASC), verification of production cycles and remote sensing (MapASC), and complete tracking of products in the supply chain (TraceASC).

Group Certification

ASC Group certification provides a more efficient option to certify multiple sites where there is a centralised internal management system in place which assures conformity across all sites. The internal management system requirements are described in the ASC Group Requirements for Farms document.

One of the key benefits of this type of certification is that a sample of sites is selected for the CAB audits, thereby reducing the audit time compared to auditing and certifying each site individually. The CABs also assess the robustness of the internal management system and can increase or decrease the sample size based on risk.

Variance Request Process

Clients may encounter circumstances in which ASC Requirements need to be adapted while maintaining their original intent. To address this need, ASC has developed a Variance Request (VR) Process.

The ASC Variance Request (VR) Procedure sets out the steps for submitting, processing and publishing VRs. The procedure ensures that VRs are processed consistently and that outcomes are clear and replicable.

All VRs are evaluated for inclusion during the development or revision of ASC Requirements. To ensure transparency, all VRs and related procedural documents are publicly available on the ASC's Variance Request and Interpretation Platform.

Question for Interpretation Process

Clients, CABs, ASI and stakeholders may encounter circumstances in which the language or intent of an Indicator or requirement requires interpretation or clarification. To address this need, ASC has developed the Question for Interpretation (QA) process. In contrast to VRs, QAs provide temporary additional guidance, interpretation and information between revisions of ASC Requirements.

The ASC Question for Interpretation (QA) Procedure sets out the steps for submitting, processing, and publishing QAs. The procedure ensures that QAs are processed consistently and that the outcomes are clear and replicable.

All QAs are evaluated for inclusion during the development or revision of ASC Requirements. To ensure transparency, all QAs and related procedural documents are publicly available on the ASC Variance Request and Interpretation Platform.

ASC Data Submission Requirements

ASC collects data as part of the ASC Certification Programme and related services. These data are essential for demonstrating ASC's impacts, supporting assurance and programme development, transparency, delivering client and partner services, and meeting research needs. ASC establishes data submission requirements based on clear, justified needs and adheres to a strict data sharing policy. The data to be submitted are specified in the ASC Data Submission Procedure.

Document Structure and Vocabulary

Document Structure

The ASC Certification and Accreditation Requirements (hereafter 'the CAR') is structured as follows:

- Part A – General Requirements which are defined requirements for CABs to implement in their own procedures and management systems.
- Part B – Operational Requirements which are defined requirements for CABs to follow while auditing Clients and their UoCs against ASC requirements.

Vocabulary Use

Intentional language is used in this document to ensure clarity in the following areas:

Modal Verbs

- 'Shall' denotes a requirement
- 'Should' denotes a recommendation
- 'May' denotes a permitted course of action
- 'Can' denotes a possible course of action

Appropriate vs. Adequate

- 'Appropriate' refers to what is suitable or proper for a particular need.
- 'Adequate' refers to what is sufficient to meet a need.

'And' vs. 'Or' in Lists

- 'And' implies inclusiveness (all items are required).
- 'Or' implies exclusiveness (only one of the items is required).

Calendar Day v's Working Day

- Unless otherwise stated, the term 'day' refers to a calendar day. Where working days are intended, this shall be explicitly stated.

Supporting Documents

Supporting documents are available through ASC's Controlled Document Master List:

- ASC Farm Standard and associated Interpretation Manual
- ASC Feed Standard and associated Interpretation Manual
- ASC Species Standards and associated Audit Manuals
- ASC Programme Development and Revision Procedure
- ASC Question for Interpretation Procedure
- ASC Variance Request Procedure

Terms and Definitions

All definitions are published in the ASC Vocabulary Portal. The first instance of a term is highlighted in **bold**.

Whenever the term '**Client**' is used in this document, it applies to both the 'applicant' and the 'Client', unless otherwise specified.

For the purposes of this document, the term '**ASC Standard for Farms**' collectively refers to either the *ASC Farm Standard* or the relevant *ASC Species Standard,* unless otherwise specified.

Part A - General Requirements

Scope

Part A sets out the requirements for the Conformity Assessment Body **(CAB)** to follow when undertaking certification activities relating to the ASC certification programmes.

Normative Documents

The documents listed below are a mandatory part of the ASC Farm and Feed Certification and Accreditation Requirements (CAR). For references without dates or version numbers, the most recent edition of the document referred to applies.

- ISO/IEC 17065 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services
- ISO 19011 Guidelines for auditing management systems
- ISO 9001 Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: REMOTE AUDITS

1. General Requirements

Requirements for Accreditation

1.1 The CAB shall not provide certification services related to ASC standards until its application for accreditation has been approved by ASC's Integrity Services Provider. Certification services start from the point at which an audit is announced against the relevant ASC Standard.

1.2 The CAB shall only accept single site certification applicants and **no more than five** applicants while in application for accreditation.

1.3 The CAB shall not award ASC certificates within the scope of its accreditation until the CAB is accredited. This includes issuance of any form of 'letter of conformity' (e.g., for smolt supply).

1.4 The CAB shall recognise that Clients with a valid certificate issued by another accredited CAB conform to that applicable ASC standard.

Conformity to ASC Requirements

1.5 The CAB shall conform to this document if there are any contradictions[3] or differences with any listed ISO documents.

1.6 The CAB shall adhere to all reporting timeframes according to **Appendix 3, Table 3.2.**

Compliance with Legal Requirements

1.7 The CAB shall comply with all applicable legal requirements in the countries in which it operates.

CAB Calibration Workshops

1.8 The relevant CAB personnel should participate in workshops and calibration sessions organised by ASC.

1.9 The relevant CAB personnel shall attend ASC's Annual Programme Managers Event.

[3] It is not intended that these requirements contradict or exclude any requirements from ISO/IEC 17065.

Use of ASC Trademarks

1.10 The CAB shall have a signed ASC Certifier Licensing Agreement to use the ASC trademark or label through licensing@asc-aqua.org.

Maintenance of the ASC Database

1.11 The CAB shall use the ASC database to submit Client and CAB information relevant to the certification process.

1.12 The CAB shall maintain the ASC database to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date with:

A) Client & UoC information, including Key contact details.

B) Auditor details.

C) CAB details.

D) Certification and audit details.

Communication with ASC

1.13 All CAB communication with ASC shall be in English.

Confidential Information

1.14 The CAB shall be responsible for the management of confidential information obtained from the Client during the certification process.

1.15 The CAB shall ensure that any confidential information obtained from the Client that is uploaded to the ASC database is done using the appropriate method.

2. Structural Requirements

Mechanism for Safeguarding Impartiality

2.1 In addition to maintaining ISO/IEC 17065, the CAB shall ensure that:

A) The mechanism for safeguarding impartiality includes:

i. Documented procedures that establish the duties and rights of impartiality committee members[4] and the requirement for all members to sign an annual declaration of the absence of conflict of interest.

ii. The principle that impartiality shall be established at three levels within the CAB:

a. Strategies and policies

b. Decisions on certification

c. Auditing.

B) The mechanism identifies and minimises the risk of impartiality, where products or services previously provided by the CAB or the CAB's personnel and are still in use by the Client.

C) The mechanism specifies the period for which CAB personnel shall not be used to review or make a certification decision for a Client for whom they have provided consultancy; this shall be no less than **two years.**

D) There is a process to annually review potential risks to the impartiality of the CAB's operation, including impartiality of key CAB personnel[5].

E) The CAB and any part of the same legal entity and entities under its organisational control shall not offer or provide consultancy to its clients.

[4] e.g. rules for attendance, quorum, and voting.
[5] Key CAB personnel include but is not limited to: Auditors, Technical Reviewers, Certification Decision Makers, Interpreters, and Technical Experts.

Complaints and Appeals

2.2 In addition to maintaining ISO/IEC 17065, the CAB shall ensure that the documented complaints and appeals process:

A) Includes evaluation of all formal and informal complaints, appeals, concerns or objections related to the activities of the CAB or the Client.

B) Is publicly available.

C) Includes a description of involvement of ASC's Integrity Services Provider and ASC; in cases where appeals or complaints escalate beyond the authority of the CAB.

3. Management System Requirements for CABs

Internal Audits

3.1 Internal audits shall be performed at least once every **12 months** or completed within a **12-month** timeframe where the audit schedule is divided into sections and audited throughout the calendar year.

3.2 Internal audits shall cover the requirements as per this document in a planned, documented and systematic manner.

Control of Records

3.3 The CAB shall retain records associated with a client's UoC for a minimum period of **six years** unless extended due to legal or contractual requirements.

Resource Requirements

3.4 The CAB shall have a process to review capacity requirements to ensure adequate resources based on current needs and future growth predictions to cover its operations relating to ASC certification programmes.

3.5 The CAB shall conform with the qualifications and competencies for the roles according to **Appendix 4.**

3.6 The CAB shall notify Clients of any potential discontinuation of certification services that may impact the Client at least **four months** prior to the expiry of the Client's certificate.

Maintenance of CAB Personnel Competence

3.7 The CAB shall have a documented procedure to ensure that CAB personnel do not participate in ASC certification services until they have:

A) The required experience.

B) Completed the required training.

C) Demonstrated the required competencies for their role according to **Appendix 4.**

D) Received final CAB approval.

3.8 The CAB shall have an effective process to annually review and verify that CAB personnel continue to meet the required competency criteria.

Protection of Auditors

3.9 The CAB shall have policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety, protection and security of their auditors.

4. Suspensions and Withdrawals of Accreditation

4.1 If the CAB accreditation is suspended or withdrawn, the CAB shall inform all affected Clients in writing within **five days** of the date of suspension or withdrawal notification; regardless of any intention of the CAB to appeal the decision.

4.1.1 The CAB shall include ASC on this communication via certification@asc-aqua.org.

4.2 The CAB shall permit the suspended or withdrawn status to be published by ASC's Integrity Services Provider on their website within **five days** of the notification of accreditation suspension or withdrawal.

Part B - Operational Certification Requirements

Scope

Part B outlines the operational certification requirements for CABs to follow when auditing Clients and their Unit of Certification **(UoC)** against ASC Requirements; from the application phase until the certification decision and throughout the certificate lifetime. It also covers additional procedures such as transfer of certificates.

Certification Type

There are **four types** of ASC certification:

A) Single site

B) Multi-site

C) Group - Option 1

D) Group - Option 2.

The requirements for each certification type are detailed in **Table 1** and **Table 2** below.

Table 1: Requirements for Single site and Multi-site Certification Types for ASC Farm and ASC Feed Certification

	Certification Type	
Req.	**Single Site**	**Multi-site**
1	The Client's UoC consists of one site.	The Client's UoC consists of more than one site, without a central Internal Management System **(IMS).** All sites within the UoC shall be selected for every routine CAB audit against the relevant ASC standard.
2	The Client (Certificate Holder[6]) shall be capable of signing a binding contract that is legally enforceable.	
3	The Client shall be the only entity authorised to sell farm product as ASC-Certified or feed as ASC Conforming Feed.	
4	The Client shall either own the area in which the site is located or have a legally enforceable right to use that area, such as through a lease, licence, permit or other contractual agreement. The Client shall retain ownership of the ASC product until it is sold outside the UoC.	For each site within the UoC, the Client or the entity responsible for operating the site, shall either own the area in which the site is located or have a legally enforceable right to use the area, such as through a lease, licence or other contractual agreement. The sites shall be owned or sub-contracted by the Client. The Client shall retain ownership of the ASC product until it is sold outside the UoC.
5	The site(s) shall have clearly defined boundaries as described in the associated legal licences and permits, and may include multiple pens, cages, ponds, tanks, raceway systems or beds.	
6	The site(s) and any associated facilities shall have a defined location and area.	
7	All sites in the UoC shall operate within the same country.	

[6] Client granted ASC certification for a specific UoC.

Table 2: Requirements for Group Certification Types for ASC Farm Certification

	Certification Type	
Req.	**Group Option 1**	**Group Option 2**
1	The Client's UoC consists of more than one farm site, controlled by a central Internal Management System **(IMS)** which is managed by a Group Management Body **(GMB)**.	The Client's UoC consists of more than one farm site, controlled by a central Internal Management System **(IMS)** which is managed by a Group Management Body **(GMB).** The sites are predominantly small- scale producers.
2	The Group's IMS shall be audited at every routine Conformity Assessment Body **(CAB)** audit against the ASC Group Requirements for Farms. A sample of sites within the UoC shall be selected for every routine CAB audit against the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.	
3	The Client shall identify a GMB with a defined location, which is not necessarily the headquarters of the organisation. The group management function shall not be sub-contracted to an external organisation.	The Client is the GMB. The GMB shall be a legal entity or a statutory body within a larger legal entity, or another form of legally recognised organisation i.e. registered with a government office. The GMB shall have a defined location, which is not necessarily the headquarters of the organisation. The group management function shall not be sub-contracted to an external organisation.
4	The Client (Certificate Holder[7]) shall be capable of signing a binding contract that is legally enforceable.	
5	The Client shall be the only entity authorised to sell ASC certified product.	

[7] Client granted ASC certification for a specific UoC.

	Certification Type	
Req.	**Group Option 1**	**Group Option 2**
6	For each site within the UoC, the Client or the entity responsible for operating the site, shall either own the area in which the site is located or have a legally enforceable right to use the area, such as through a lease, licence or other contractual agreement. The sites shall be owned or sub-contracted by the Client. The Client shall retain ownership of the ASC certified product until it is sold outside the UoC.	For each site within the UoC, the contract farmer or other entity responsible for operating the site shall either own the area in which the site is located or have a legally enforceable right to use the area, such as through a lease, licence or other contractual agreement. The sites shall have a Farming Agreement with the Client (GMB). In these cases, the farmer owns the ASC product and shall sell the ASC product to the Client before the Client can sell the ASC certified product outside the UoC. If the farmer sells the site's product directly to another third party, **the product cannot be sold as ASC certified.**
7	The sites shall have clearly defined boundaries as described in the associated legal licences and permits, and may include multiple pens, cages, ponds, tanks, raceway systems or beds.	
8	The sites and any associated facilities shall have a defined location and area.	
9	All sites within the UoC shall operate within the same jurisdiction or within neighbouring jurisdictions that share relevant common regulations.	
10	The GMB shall be responsible for managing the IMS and of assuring conformity against ASC Requirements of all sites within the UoC.	

1. Application Process

Eligibility to Enter the ASC Certification Programme

1.1 The Client's UoC shall not be eligible to apply for ASC certification if the Client:

A) Has been convicted in the last **24 months** for:

i. Fraudulent activities

ii. Use of or involvement in child or forced labour

iii. Environmental or social compliance violations.

B) Has sold product as ASC certified from this UoC, or site within the UoC, when the site was not certified in the last **24 months**.

C) Has had the ASC certificate for this UoC, or a site within the UoC, withdrawn by their CAB in the last **12 months**.

i. The CAB shall confirm this by reviewing ASC's Find a Farm or Find a Feed Mill web page.

D) Has had a failed initial audit in the last **12 months** unless the Client re-applies within that period to the same CAB.

1.2 The CAB shall require the Client to confirm **Requirement 1.1** in writing as part of the application process.

General Client Details

1.3 The CAB shall require that the Client provides the following information as part of the Application Process:

A) Client name, address, and key contact information.

B) Details of any activities that are outsourced to third parties that may impact conformity to the ASC Requirements including sub-contracted production, storage, and transport.

C) Name, physical address[8], and WGS 84[9] geographical coordinates[10] for each site and facility within the UoC.

D) Contact information for each site within the UoC.

E) A map or layout of sites, facilities and all areas to be audited as part of the UoC.

F) **|FARM|** Production system for each site within the UoC.

G) **|FEED|** Production model for each site within the UoC[11].

H) **|GROUP|** Additional site details as required according to the ASC Group Requirements for Farms - Appendix 4 - Group Site Register.

I) **|GROUP|** The GMB name and physical address of where the central IMS processes/activities are planned and controlled.

J) **|GROUP|** The group organisational structure and detail of the interrelationships between sites and the GMB and between different sites within the UoC.

K) **|GROUP|** A description of the degree of centralisation of processes/activities that are applicable to all sites[12].

[8] Where relevant.
[9] World Geodetic System EPSG 4326.
[10] Decimal Degrees e.g. 52.082478, 5.117676.
[11] Mass Balance Production Model/Segregation Production Model, or both.
[12] e.g. purchasing, distribution, harvesting.

Scope of Certification

1.4 As part of the application process, the CAB shall confirm the following:

A) The ASC standard for which the Client is seeking certification.

B) The certification type **(Table 1 and Table 2).**

C) The number of sites and associated facilities within the UoC.

D) The activities performed by the Client's UoC or by sub-contractors, up to the point where product ownership changes, for example:

i. **|FARM|** Stocking, nursing, grow-out, transferring, harvest, slaughter, transportation and storage.

ii. **|FEED|** Production, storage, packing and transport.

E) **|FARM|** The applicable sub-scope and species:

i. For the **ASC Farm Standard**, the sub-scope is the applicable animal group (i.e., **Crustaceans, Finfish, or Molluscs**).

ii. For the relevant **ASC Species Standard**, the sub-scope, where applicable, is the **RAS Module**.

F) **|FARM|** Irrespective of whether product ownership changes from the Client to another entity before or after slaughter:

i. Where fish are harvested and slaughtered concurrently at the Client's production site(s), including on board a vessel at those sites, slaughter activities shall be evaluated against the relevant requirements of the ASC Farm Standard.

ii. Where fish are transported live from the Client's production site(s) to a separate location, or facility for slaughter, slaughter activities shall be evaluated against the relevant requirements of the ASC Chain of Custody Standard, and the entity[13] conducting slaughter shall hold valid ASC CoC certification.

[13] Examples include slaughter on board a vessel, at a shore-based processing facility or at a central slaughter facility.

G) **|FARM|** Processing and packing activities shall not be included in the scope of the UoC's ASC Farm Certification. Where processing or packing facilities handling the UoC's product are either **vertically integrated** with, or **subcontracted** by, the Client, those facilities shall hold, or be covered by, valid ASC Chain of Custody (CoC) Certification.

H) **|GROUP|** The stratification of sites within the Group UoC and the site sample size, using the ASC Audit Planning Tool.

1.5 The CAB shall require the Client to provide a list of stakeholders identified by the Client as having an interest in the ASC stakeholder engagement process.

1.6 The CAB may request other information as necessary to conduct an effective application review and establish the Scope of Certification.

Information for Client

1.7 The CAB shall provide the Client with a copy of, or a website link to the:

A) Applicable ASC Standard.

B) ASC Farm and Feed CAR (Certification and Accreditation Requirements).

C) ASC Variance Request & Interpretation Platform.

D) Use of the ASC Label.

E) ASC Data Submission Procedure.

F) CAB Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

G) **|GROUP|** The ASC Group Requirements for Farms.

1.8 The CAB shall retain evidence of this communication.

Application Review

1.9 The CAB shall review the application to ensure that:

A) The Client's UoC is not already certified and review ASC's Find a Farm or Find a Feed Mill web page for any previous suspension or withdrawals.

i. If the Client's UoC is certified, the CAB shall inform the Client to notify their current CAB of their intention to transfer certification as per **Section 11 – Certificate Transfer Process.**

B) The information obtained is sufficient to progress with the certification process.

C) The scope of certification is defined, understood, and agreed between the Client and the CAB.

1.10 If the CAB declines the application for ASC certification following the application review, the reasons shall be documented and clearly communicated to the Client.

2. Certification Agreement

2.1 The CAB shall require the Client to sign a legally enforceable certification agreement that meets the requirements detailed in **Appendix 5** before providing certification services for the Client's UoC.

2.2 Where ASC releases new or revised ASC Requirements that impact the CAB's Certification Agreement with the Client, the CAB shall ensure that these changes are implemented within the timelines prescribed by ASC.

3. Audit Preparation and Planning

3.1 The CAB shall plan routine CAB audits to ensure the **three-year** certification cycle includes an initial or re-certification audit and two surveillance audits.

3.2 To assist with audit planning the CAB shall utilise the ASC Audit Planning Tool prior to each routine CAB audit to determine:

A) The number of employees to interview during the audit.

B) Whether a remote audit is permitted.

C) Audit team composition.

D) **|GROUP|** Stratification of sites within the Group UoC.

E) **|GROUP|** Site sample size.

3.3 **For initial audits** The CAB may also review information submitted by the Client as part of the application process to assist with audit preparation.

3.3.1 The CAB may request to review other additional information as deemed necessary for the initial and subsequent audits.

3.4 **|GROUP|** The CAB Management System Auditor shall fulfil the lead auditor role and meet the competency requirements for both roles. For the initial and subsequent routine CAB audits, the CAB Management System Auditor shall review the following documentation prior to audit announcement:

A) **|GROUP|** The Group's organisational structure.

B) **|GROUP|** List of personnel responsible for the management and maintenance of the IMS and their functions.

C) **|GROUP|** The most recent Site Register.

D) **|GROUP|** Most recent internal audit report of the IMS against the ASC Group Requirements for Farms, including non-conformity findings and actions taken to address the findings.

E) **|GROUP|** The most recent summary analysis of the internal non-conformities findings and actions taken to address the findings for each site within the UoC together with a sample of internal site audit reports.

F) **|GROUP|** **For initial audits,** all raised internal audit non-conformities against the Group Requirements for Farms and the relevant ASC Standard for Farms shall be closed.

G) **|GROUP|** The geographical coordinates for sites within the UoC.

H) **|GROUP|** Templates of farming agreements and other legal and contractual agreements between the Client and the UoC, if applicable.

I) **|GROUP|** Traceability processes and procedures, including the Group's description of production flow from inputs though to dispatch/sales.

J) **|GROUP|** Documented conclusions from the most recent management review meeting.

K) **|GROUP|** Received complaints, appeals, and details of their respective resolutions; for the **six months** preceding the initial audit, and between subsequent CAB audits.

3.5 If during the review the CAB recognises that the Client is significantly unprepared for their initial audit, the CAB may decide not to conduct the audit.

3.5.1 If so, the CAB shall inform the Client of the decision not to conduct the audit and that further preparation is required before the audit can be conducted.

3.6 The CAB shall review findings and stakeholder submissions raised during or after the previous CAB audit.

Planning for Group Audit – Sample Size

3.7 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall determine the provisional number of sites to audit as a sample using the ASC Audit Planning Tool.

3.8 **|GROUP|** For all routine CAB audits, the CAB shall conduct an on-site audit of the Group's IMS against the ASC Group Requirements for Farms and on-site audits of the proposed sample number of sites against the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.

3.9 **|GROUP|** During the initial audit process, the CAB shall not reduce the minimum number of sites to be sampled.

3.10 **|GROUP|** The CAB may increase the number of sites to be sampled if there is increased risk identified during the application or audit of the Group.

3.11 **|GROUP|** For routine CAB audits conducted after initial certification, the site sample size may increase from audit to audit based on the information evaluated in the previous CAB audit and new information gathered between audits.

3.12 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall record the rationale for the increase.

Social Interviews

3.13 The CAB shall allocate sufficient time to conduct employee interviews as per the number of interviews determined by the ASC Audit Planning Tool.

3.14 Employee interviews shall be stratified based on their tasks and background[14].

3.15 The following UoC personnel shall be interviewed:

A) Senior management of the UoC or their designate.

B) Employee representatives, if available.

C) Employees.

D) Other relevant personnel[15].

[14] e.g. gender, type of work – permanent/temporary, type of labour – migrant, temporary, seasonal.
[15] e.g. health and safety, human resources, finance, etc.

Group Audit IMS Interviews

3.16 **|GROUP|** The CAB's Management System Auditor shall interview a sample of the key personnel responsible for:

A) **|GROUP|** The management and maintenance of the Group's Central IMS.

B) **|GROUP|** IMS related audit activities.

C) **|GROUP|** Conformity and sanction decisions.

Site Sample Selection for Group Audits

3.17 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall select **50%** of the site sample at random.

3.18 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall select the remaining **50%** of the site sample based on risk factors as deemed relevant by the CAB at their professional discretion.

3.19 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall conduct **20%** of the total site sample selection as unannounced audits.

3.19.1 **|GROUP|** There shall be no more than **two working days'** notice given to the Client prior to the starting date of the unannounced audits.

3.20 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall not audit the same sites in consecutive routine CAB audits, unless there are justified and documented reasons for doing so.

Audit Duration

3.21 The CAB shall have a documented process or method[16] that allows for consistent determination and allocation of sufficient time to complete the audit.

3.22 The CAB shall consider the following factors for determining audit duration[17] at a minimum:

A) Audit and certification type.

B) Number of sites within the UoC.

C) Number of employees at the UoC.

D) Use of independent interpreters and technical experts.

E) **|FARM|** Production area size or number of production units.

F) **|FARM|** The relevant ASC Standard for Farms and applicable, sub-scope.

G) **|FEED|** Number of production lines.

H) **|FEED|** Production Model.

3.23 In addition to **Requirement 3.22**, the CAB may consider other factors[18] at their professional discretion for determining audit duration.

3.24 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall set a minimum audit duration of **1.5 auditor days** for the CAB audit of the UoCs Internal Management System (IMS) to the ASC Group Requirements for Farms.

[16] ASC intends to develop a time-based parameter system once sufficient audit duration data is available.
[17] The minimum audit duration includes time spent on-site auditing and real-time remote auditing with human interaction. The minimum audit duration does not include the time spent offline remote auditing.
[18] Examples include number of social interviews to be conducted at the UoC, the UoC's audit performance history and whether the audit is conducted remotely.

Provisional Audit Plan

3.25 The CAB shall provide the Client with a provisional audit plan that includes:

A) Date, time, and details of sites, facilities, and physical areas[19] and activities to be audited such as slaughter.

B) Scope of the audit.

C) Audit duration.

D) Names and roles of proposed audit team members.

E) Timings of any scheduled visits with relevant local Stakeholders where Client assistance is needed.

F) Audit method e.g. on-site, remote-real time, assisted remote, remote- offline.

G) Expected length of time for each audit activity.

H) **|GROUP|** For Group, this shall also include:

i. **|GROUP|** The provisional number of sites selected for sampling.

ii. **|GROUP|** The details of the sites selected for sampling shall be provided to the Client **no more than 14 days** before the start date of the Group audit, except for those sites to be audited as unannounced.

3.26 The CAB shall have a documented procedure for addressing a Client's concern about a member of the proposed audit team that reviews and addresses any concerns.

3.26.1 The CAB shall maintain records of the justification for its actions.

[19] e.g. storage facilities and employees' living quarters and any other areas as appropriate.

Audit Timing

3.27 The exact timing of the routine CAB audits shall be the responsibility of the CAB, in consultation with the Client[20].

3.28 The CAB shall schedule audits only:

3.28.1 **|FEED|** when the site(s) are in production and where possible, producing ASC product. During the audit, the CAB shall assess production intended for sale[21].

3.28.2 **|FARM|** when slaughter activities are occurring in accordance with **Requirement 1.4 F (i)** of this document.

3.29 **For initial audits**, the site(s) within the UoC shall have been in operation for a minimum period of **six months prior to the scheduled audit date**, with records consistent with ASC Requirements.

3.30 **For surveillance audits**, the CAB shall conduct the audits at least annually within a window of **three months** before or after the anniversary of the initial certification decision date. **No fewer than two** surveillance audits shall be conducted during the **three-year** certification cycle.

3.31 **For re-certification audits**, the CAB should conduct the audit at least **six months** before the expiry date of the existing certificate to minimise the risk of a lapse of certification.

3.32 **|FARM|** The CAB shall schedule audits when the sites are in production with the following exception:

3.32.1 **|FARM|** The CAB may conduct surveillance or re-certification site audits without product on-site if **all** the following conditions are met:

A) **|FARM|** The site audit is not an unannounced audit.

B) **|FARM|** The site grows a long cycle species.

C) **|FARM|** The site is fallowing.

D) **|FARM|** The previous audit was conducted with product on-site.

[20] Excluding unannounced audits.
[21] No trial or mock production.

3.32.2 **|GROUP|** For an **initial** Group audit, sites that are fallowing may be included within the Group UoC provided that an internal audit was conducted at each fallow site within the 12 months prior to the initial audit while the site was in production.

3.32.3 **|GROUP|** At every surveillance and re-certification audit of a Group's UoC, the CAB shall ensure that all sites selected within the audit sample are in production at the time of the site audit.

3.33 **|FARM|** Subsequent audit planning shall ensure that the same site is not in fallow continuously for two consecutive audits.

3.33.1 **|FARM|** If this is not possible due to the length of the fallow period and the required audit timings, the CAB shall instruct the Client to submit a voluntary withdrawal request and the CAB shall **cancel** the certificate or site under the certificate.

3.34 **|FEED|** **For initial audits**, the site(s) shall have a functioning Ingredient Accounting System **(IAS).**

3.35 **|FEED|** **For initial audits**, at least one documented successful IAS balancing exercise shall have been completed. This also applies where a shared IAS is in operation.

Harvest[22]

3.36 **|FARM|** The CAB shall witness harvest for initial and re-certification audits of sites with short production cycles or continuous harvest.

3.37 **|FARM|** The CAB shall witness harvest at least once in the **three-year** certification cycle for sites with a long production cycle

3.38 **|FARM|** Where harvest and slaughter occur concurrently at the Client's production site(s) the CAB shall witness both activities during the initial audit and each subsequent routine audit.

3.39 **|FARM|** If harvest is witnessed, the CAB shall document the evaluation of the harvest process for product intended for sale[23].

[22] Movement or transfer of fish from one grow-out site to final grow-out is not considered harvest and does not require auditor witnessing.
[23] No trial or mock harvests.

3.40 **|FARM|** If more than one species is included in the scope of the certificate[24] but not harvested together, the CAB shall verify conformity to ASC Requirements for all species to be included in the certificate scope by auditing additional evidence of the other species harvest procedure.

3.41 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall witness harvest as a minimum, at one of the selected sites during each routine CAB audit.

Audit Announcement

3.42 At least **42 days** prior to the audit start date, the CAB shall register the audit announcement on the ASC database for scheduled routine CAB audits of the Client's UoC, transfer audits and scope extension audits (to add additional sites to an existing UoC).

3.43 If the audit is an unannounced or a follow-up audit, the announcement may be registered on the ASC database less than **42 days** before the audit start date. ASC shall not publish this type of announcement.

3.44 The CAB shall update audit announcements on the ASC database within seven days of the change and no less than **14 days** before the audit start date.

3.44.1 The CAB shall clearly identify all updates in the announcement with the reason for the update.

3.45 Before registering an audit announcement, the CAB shall ensure the required documentation for the previous audit cycle has been submitted within the required timeframes to the ASC database.

[24] e.g. Whiteleg Shrimp, *Litopenaeus vannamei* and Giant Tiger Prawn, *Penaeus monodon*.

4. Audit Methodology

Opening Meeting

4.1 The opening meeting shall be chaired by the auditor assigned the Lead Auditor role.

4.1.1 The Lead Auditor shall be responsible for the specified audit as well as managing auditors, technical experts and interpreters.

4.2 The opening meeting shall be held with:

A) Members of senior management of the UoC.

B) Relevant personnel responsible for the functions or processes to be audited.

C) Employee or trade union representatives, if applicable.

4.3 The Lead Auditor shall confirm:

A) The scope of certification and if there are any changes that may impact the scope.

B) The audit plan, audit objectives and any changes that may impact the audit plan.

C) The status of findings from the previous audit, if applicable.

D) The language to be used during the audit.

E) If there are sub-contracted employees at the site and if so, the number of employees and the work being performed on the day of the audit.

4.4 The Lead Auditor shall inform the Client that audit evidence:

A) May be in the form of documents, records, pictures and other multimedia.

B) Shall be collected during the audit to relate solely to the applicable ASC Requirements.

C) Shall only be photographed with permission from the Client.

4.5 For auditing social indicators, the Lead Auditor shall inform the Client that:

A) Interviews are conducted confidentially.

B) Employees shall not be discriminated against for taking part in interviews; irrespective of the nature of their job.

Communication During the Audit

4.6 During the audit, the Lead Auditor shall convene brief meetings with the audit team to monitor audit progress and exchange information.

4.6.1 Any changes that impact the audit plan shall be communicated to the Client.

4.7 The Lead Auditor shall review any need for changes to the scope of certification that became apparent as auditing activities progress with the Client.

4.7.1 If there is a significant impact on the audit process, the Lead Auditor shall notify the CAB to determine whether activities can be assessed during the current audit, or if an additional audit is required.

4.8 When appropriate[25], audit findings should be reviewed with the Client at time of detection and not only at the closing meeting to ensure that the:

A) Evidence to support any findings is accurate.

B) Findings are understood[26] by the Client.

4.8.1 If clarification or further discussions are required, a pre-closing meeting with senior management may be held.

Audit Evidence

4.9 The auditor shall collect all audit evidence relevant to the audit objectives, scope and criteria.

[25] It is not appropriate to discuss a non-conformity at the time of detection or during the closing meeting, if doing so could put an employee's welfare at risk.
[26] 'Understood' does not imply that the non-conformities have been accepted by the Client.

4.10 Methods to obtain audit evidence may include:

A) Observation of processes and activities.

B) Review of data, documentation and records.

C) Interviews.

4.11 The auditor shall verify audit evidence by appropriate sampling considering all applicable risks, including:

A) Size and complexity of the UoC.

B) Number of batches/products produced by the UoC annually.

C) Number of employees.

D) Number of inputs and suppliers used by the UoC.

4.12 The auditor shall conduct a traceability test of a representative sample of batches following the instructions in the audit report.

4.12.1 **|FARM|** An input/output exercise shall also be conducted.

4.12.2 **|FEED|** A Traceability test is only required for mills producing ASC product under the Segregation Production Model.

4.13 As part of the traceability test, the auditor shall record in the audit report:

A) Details of the outcome of the traceability test.

B) **|FARM|** Details of the outcome of the input/output exercise.

C) Potential or identified risks to the traceability system.

D) A determination of whether the traceability system is sufficient to maintain the traceability and segregation of ASC product back to the site's production unit and forward to the point of sale.

E) Rationale for determination.

F) The intended point of first sale.

4.14 **|FARM|** The auditor shall verify the accuracy of the Client's polygons in accordance with ASC's GIS Submission Procedure.

Tour of the UoC

4.15 Every on-site audit shall include a complete site tour to review and observe the implementation of ASC Requirements.

4.16 For auditing social indicators, the site tour shall include:

A) All work areas, irrespective of the presence of employees in the area on the day of the audit.

B) Storage facilities and any other facilities related to the site operations[27] on and off-site.

C) Accommodation facilities for employees.

D) On-site hospital/clinic.

E) Any kitchen and dining areas.

F) The perimeters of production and any other areas as appropriate.

Document and Records Review for Auditing Social Indicators

4.17 When selecting samples for records review, the auditor shall consider different types of:

A) Employees[28].

B) Payment methods[29], as appropriate.

4.18 Auditing of personnel records[30] shall be based on risk and the auditor's professional discretion.

[27] e.g. mechanical/electrical workshops, generator/boiler room etc.
[28] Full time, contractual, seasonal, migrants.
[29] Hourly rate, piece rate, monthly rate.
[30] e.g. time sheet and pay records.

4.19 For each employee interviewed, personnel records shall be reviewed.

4.19.1 For **on-site audits**, personnel records shall be made available for in-situ review at the UoC premises.

4.19.2 Where **remote audits** are permitted by ASC Requirements, personnel records shall be made available for review by the auditor through screen sharing by the UoC.

4.19.3 Personnel records shall not be copied, transferred, downloaded or retained by the auditor.

Conducting Social Interviews

4.20 The auditor shall ensure confidentiality while speaking with employees.

4.21 The auditor shall maintain records of all interviews conducted during an audit as audit evidence.

4.22 Employee interviews shall be conducted as follows.

4.22.1 For **on-site** audits, employee interviews shall be conducted at the UoC premises, unless the auditor determines that an off-site, face-to-face interview is necessary to ensure the effectiveness and confidentiality of the interview; **or**

4.22.2 Where **remote** audits are permitted by ASC Requirements, employee interviews shall be conducted remotely using a secure communication method that enables the auditor and employee to communicate directly and confidentially.

4.23 All employee interviews shall be conducted in a quiet, private area away from management offices and without the presence of management representatives or personnel in supervisory roles.

4.23.1 If requested by the employee, interviews shall be conducted in the presence of a trade union member.

4.23.2 To provide additional confidence and a method of communication, employees interviewed shall be provided with ASC's contact information as contact@asc-aqua.org.

4.24 During the audit, the Lead Auditor may decide to increase the number of interviews.

4.24.1 Justification for increases and stratification of interviews shall be documented in the audit report.

Audit Findings

4.25 Audit findings summarising conformity and detailing non-conformity shall be identified and recorded to support an informed certification decision.

4.26 All non-conformity findings shall be recorded against a specific ASC Requirement with a clear statement of the non-conformity that identifies, in detail, the objective evidence on which the non-conformity is based.

4.27 Non-conformities shall be graded as minor, major, or critical according to the definitions given in **Appendix 2** and the grading shall be clearly justified in the audit report.

4.28 The non-conformity detection date shall be set as the date of the closing meeting; where all non-conformities are presented to the Client.

4.29 Where the audit being conducted is during the validity period of a certificate, the auditor shall verify the effectiveness of implemented corrections and corrective actions for open, closed, and extended non-conformities raised during or after the previous CAB audit.

4.30 The auditor shall refrain from suggesting a root cause of non-conformities, potential corrections or corrective actions.

4.31 **|GROUP|** If a site non-conformity is identified by the CAB during sample site auditing, the CAB shall grade the non-conformity according to the definitions in **Appendix 2, Table 2.1** and record it against the applicable requirement of the relevant ASC Standard for Farms for the affected site(s).

4.31.1 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall determine if the non-conformity is:

A) **|GROUP|** An isolated site non-conformity that does not indicate failure of the Group's IMS, **OR**

B) **|GROUP|** A systemic non-conformity raised against more than one site, which indicates likely failure of the Group's IMS.

4.32 **|GROUP|** If non-conformities are identified against the ASC Group Requirements, the CAB shall categorise the non-conformity as a **Group non-conformity.**

4.33 **|GROUP|** **If Requirement 4.31.1 B** applies, the CAB shall raise a Group non-conformity[31]; which shall be in addition to the non-conformities raised against the sites.

4.34 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall establish and record the non-conformity grade as Group minor, Group major or Group critical according to the definitions given in **Appendix 2, Table 2.2.** and record it against the specific ASC Group Requirement.

Closing Meeting

4.35 A formal closing meeting shall be chaired by the Lead Auditor and held with:

A) Members of senior management of the UoC.

B) Relevant personnel responsible for the functions or processes that were audited.

C) Employee or trade union representatives, if applicable.

4.36 Attendance of the closing meeting, including attendee name and job title, shall be recorded.

4.37 The Lead Auditor shall advise the Client that the audit evidence obtained was based on a sample of the information; thereby introducing an element of uncertainty inherent in the audit process.

4.38 The auditor shall present the audit findings and re-confirm the non-conformities and their grade in a manner that is understood by the Client.

4.38.1 The auditor shall inform the Client that the findings and their grading will be reviewed as part of the CAB's independent certification process.

4.39 A documented copy of non-conformities presented during the closing meeting shall be provided to the Client by the auditor on the day of the closing meeting or within **one working day** of the closing meeting.

[31] The CAB may need to increase the site sample size to determine whether the same non-conformity is identified at other sites to establish the most appropriate Group non-conformity grade.

4.40 The auditor shall inform the Client that, for each identified non-conformity, they shall provide the CAB with:

4.40.1 A corrective action plan, within **28 days** from the audit closing meeting, identifying:

A) The root cause of the non-conformity.

B) The corrections to address the non-conformity.

C) Corrective action to eliminate the root cause of the non-conformity and prevent recurrence.

4.40.2 Supporting objective evidence demonstrating effective implementation of a corrective action plan within the timeframes detailed in **Appendix 2, Table 2.3.**

Non-Conformity Follow-up

4.41 If a non-conformity grading is changed as part of the CAB's independent certification process, the detection date shall not be changed.

4.42 Non-conformities shall not be downgraded after the independent certification process has confirmed the non-conformity grade.

4.43 The CAB may extend the non-conformity closure timeframe according to **Appendix 2, Table 2.3** if the following conditions are met:

A) The CAB has received the Client's corrective action plan and the Client's corrective action plan provides sufficient evidence demonstrating additional time is needed to execute the associated corrective actions **AND**

B) Conformity was not possible due to circumstances beyond the control of the Client **OR**

C) **|FARM|** The additional time needed is due to circumstances related to the species production cycle.

4.44 The CAB shall close the non-conformity if the CAB determines that the evidence provided demonstrates effective implementation, except for critical non-conformities.

4.45 To close a critical non-conformity, the CAB shall conduct an on-site revisit to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented corrections and corrective actions.

4.45.1 **|GROUP|** To close a **group critical non-conformity**, the CAB shall conduct a **full on-site audit** to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented corrections and corrective actions.

On-Site Revisit

4.46 In addition to the mandatory revisit for a critical non-conformity, the CAB may perform an on-site revisit to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented corrections and corrective actions for any grade of non-conformities.

4.47 On-site revisits shall be scheduled to occur within the timeframe permitted for the closure of non-conformities.

4.48 Revisits should be conducted by the original auditor and audit team, if possible.

4.48.1 If this is not possible, the visit must be undertaken by a qualified ASC auditor whose competencies cover the scope of the revisit.

Non-Conformities Raised After the Closing Meeting or Between CAB Audits

4.49 The non-conformity shall be recorded against a specific requirement.

4.50 The non-conformity detection date shall be set as the date the non-conformity was reported to, or discovered by, the CAB.

4.51 Within **seven days** of the detection date, the CAB shall review associated objective evidence and grade the non-conformity according to the definitions and timeframes given in **Appendix 2 - Non-Conformities.**

4.52 Within **seven days** of the detection date, the CAB shall inform the Client in writing of the non-conformity detailing the grade, detection date, and the necessity to provide a corrective action plan and associated evidence as per **Requirement 4.40.**

4.53 If a non-conformity finding is raised against the Client by ASC's Integrity Services Provider during a compliance assessment the CAB shall:

4.53.1 Grade the non-conformity according to the definitions and timeframes given in **Appendix 2 - Non-Conformities.**

4.53.2 Set the detection date as the compliance assessment closing meeting date.

4.53.3 Within **two working days** from the detection date, inform the Client in writing of the non-conformity detailing the grade, detection date, and the necessity to provide a corrective action plan and associated evidence as per **Requirement 4.40.**

4.54 The CAB shall evaluate the Client's corrective action plan resulting from CAB or ASC's Integrity Services Provider findings.

4.55 If the CAB decides to maintain the Client's certification, the CAB shall document the non-conformity in the subsequent routine CAB audit report.

4.56 Where a Critical non-conformity has been raised, the CAB shall conduct a follow-up audit to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented corrections and corrective actions and verify closure of the Critical non-conformity

4.57 If the CAB decides to suspend or withdraw the Client's certification, the CAB shall register this in the ASC database and submit details of the non-conformity and the reason for the decision within **48 hours**.

Sampling and Testing

4.58 ASC may request that CABs or ASC's designated agents collect samples of seafood, feed, feed ingredients or other substances to verify a UoC's conformance to the applicable ASC standard.

4.59 The CAB may collect samples at its discretion based on observations and evidence collected during the audit.

4.60 The CAB shall follow the ASC Sampling and Testing Procedure.

4.61 The CAB shall record in the audit report the following information where samples are taken during an audit:

A) Justification for sampling.

B) Whether sampling was announced or unannounced.

5. Audit Reports and Technical Review

Audit Reports

5.1 The CAB shall ensure the audit report is prepared in English using the most recent version of the ASC audit report template and uploaded to the ASC database.

5.1.1 The CAB may also upload an audit report in additional languages.

5.2 The CAB shall upload all audit reports, including unannounced audit reports and audits classified as failed audits or audits that resulted in the suspension, cancellation, or withdrawal of a certificate, to the ASC database.

5.3 The CAB shall use the confidential area of the ASC audit report template to record any sensitive or confidential information.

5.3.1 The published version of the audit reports shall clearly reference that there is information retained confidentially.

5.3.2 Confidential information will not be published by ASC.

5.4 The Lead Auditor shall be responsible for the audit report content.

5.5 If the audit was terminated and a formal closing meeting was not conducted, the CAB shall upload the summary of non-conformities to the ASC database.

5.6 The Lead Auditor shall ensure that:

A) There is a record of the audit evidence evaluated for each applicable indicator and applicable requirements in the audit report.

B) It is made sufficiently clear within the final audit report when a revisit takes place to close outstanding non-conformities.

C) The audit report is completed following the format and requirements of the ASC audit report template.

D) The audit report provides an accurate, concise and clear record of the audit to enable an informed certification decision.

E) The audit report contains sufficient detail to ensure audit evidence is reproducible[32].

5.7 The Lead Auditor shall address all issues raised by the technical reviewer.

[32] The audit report should include sufficient information to allow a secondary individual to locate identical documentation, information and data that was reviewed during the original audit and arrive at the same conclusion.

Technical Review

5.8 For initial and re-certification audits, a technical review shall be completed for all draft audit reports.

5.8.1 For final audit reports, technical review shall be completed for any revised content or additional details added since the draft audit report.

5.9 For surveillance audits, technical review shall be completed for all final audit reports.

5.10 Technical review shall be conducted by a person (or group of persons) who:

A) Was not directly involved in the audit process.

B) Meets the competency criteria according to **Appendix 4, Table 4.3**.

5.11 Before submission of an audit report to ASC for publishing, a technical review shall be conducted to ensure that:

A) The information provided by the audit team is sufficient with respect to ASC Requirements and the scope of certification.

B) Each section of the audit report is complete and accurate.

C) Each non-conformity has been appropriately graded based on the evidence presented.

D) Non-conformity grading may be revised during the technical review but shall not be changed thereafter. Information or evidence submitted by the Client after the technical review may be considered for the evaluation of corrective action but shall not be used to revise the grading of a non-conformity.

E) **|GROUP|** The selected site sample size is justified based on the grading outcomes of Site and Group non-conformities.

5.12 If requested, the CAB shall provide a copy of the draft audit report to the Client prior to publishing.

5.12.1 This request shall not impact the CAB's reporting timeframes.

5.13 Final audit report technical review shall include evaluation of the Client's:

A) Corrective action plans with identified root causes.

B) Corrections and corrective actions.

C) Supporting objective evidence of implementation.

6. Certification Decisions

Certifiers

6.1 The certification decision shall be conducted by a designated person or group of persons[33] that have not been involved in the audit process.

6.1.1 The certification decision shall consider all information related to the audit including:

A) The outcome of the technical review.

B) Audit evidence.

C) Feedback submitted by stakeholders.

Decisions and Timeframes

6.2 The CAB shall make a certification decision within a **maximum of six months** from the date of the audit closing meeting (non-conformity detection date).

6.3 The CAB shall conduct a full re-audit if the timeframe in **Requirement 6.2** is exceeded.

6.4 The CAB shall not make a positive certification decision if there is:

A) An open major or critical non-conformity.

B) An open minor non-conformity that has not been extended.

C) An associated open variance request.

6.5 The CAB shall record dates and details of each certification decision including any additional information or clarification sought from the audit team or other sources.

6.6 The CAB shall register all positive certification decisions on the ASC database **within seven days** of the decision.

[33] The technical review and the certification decision may be completed concurrently by the same person.

6.7 The CAB shall retain the right to delay or postpone the certification decision to consider new or additional information recieved after the closing meeting that may affect the certification decision.

6.7.1 The reason for such delays shall be recorded in the final audit report together with the details of the new or additional information.

6.7.2 New or additional information may include input provided by stakeholders.

6.8 Where the planned certification decision date is delayed by **more than 14 days,** the CAB shall register this delay on the ASC database.

6.9 The CAB shall issue certificates with a maximum validity period of **three years** from the certificate issue date.

6.10 Certificates that are not published on the ASC website are not valid.

7. Certificate Content, Certificate Scope Exclusions and Extension of Validity

Certificate Content

7.1 The CAB shall issue a certificate in English using the ASC certificate template[34].

Certificate Scope Exclusions

7.2 **|FARM|** The CAB shall only permit the exclusion of specific batches or production units from the scope of certification if the following conditions are met:

A) **|FARM|** The exclusion is due to either:

i. the administration of antimicrobials listed as Highest Priority Critically Important Antimicrobials (HPCIA)[35] or Critically Important Antimicrobials (CIA) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) at any stage in the lifecycle of the product for any ASC eligible species**, OR**

ii. the administration of **any** antibiotics in a crustacean farm which are not banned or Authorised for use in Humans Only by the World Health Organisation (WHO)[36] **AND**

B) **|FARM|** The excluded product is identified as non-ASC certified, and the Client has informed the CAB within **14 days** of identifying the affected product as per Appendix 5 **AND**

C) **|FARM|** The entire site otherwise conforms to all other applicable requirements in the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.

7.2.1 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall not apply this exclusion for the certification type Group - Option 2.

7.3 **|FARM|** Product from the excluded batches or production units shall not be identified or sold as ASC certified product.

7.4 **|FARM|** Batches or production units that fulfil the conditions in **Requirement 7.2** shall be identified as a Certificate Scope Exclusion.

7.4.1 **|FARM|** Details of these site-specific, identifiable batches or production units shall be recorded in the audit report and the ASC certificate scope shall be kept up-to-date.

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[34] The certificate format may be altered to suit the CAB needs; however, the content shall remain unchanged.
[35] An exemption applies to the use of oxolinic acid in freshwater salmonid production.
[36] https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/gcp/who-mia-list-2024-lv.pdf?sfvrsn=3320dd3d_2

Extension of Certificate Validity

7.5 The CAB may extend the validity of a certificate once by up to **three months** if all the following conditions are met:

A) The CAB issued the current certificate **AND**

B) The Client has submitted their application to the CAB for re-certification **AND**

C) The application has been accepted by the CAB before the current certificate expiry date.

7.6 The CAB shall upload the extended certificate and complete the certificate extension request before the expiry date of the current certificate to the ASC database.

8. Stakeholder Engagement Process

8.1 The CAB shall maintain a stakeholder database, per country, species, and applicable ASC standard, of all relevant stakeholders and their contact details.

8.2 The stakeholder database shall include stakeholders identified by the Client and stakeholders who have expressed an active interest in engaging on a particular audit.

8.3 The stakeholder database may be updated at any point in the certification process if new stakeholders have been identified.

8.4 At the same time as the audit announcement stage for initial and re-certification audits, relevant stakeholders shall be formally invited to participate in stakeholder consultation.

8.5 The CAB may conduct stakeholder consultation during surveillance audits.

8.6 Prior to an unannounced audit, the CAB may choose whether to notify relevant stakeholders.

8.7 If a stakeholder provides feedback[37], the CAB shall acknowledge receipt and determine whether the stakeholder would like to engage further in the consultation process.

[37] Written or verbal

8.8 Stakeholder consultation shall be scheduled at the convenience of the CAB and stakeholder; prior to the closing meeting.

8.9 The Client shall not be present during stakeholder consultation.

8.10 Stakeholder consultation may be conducted remotely or in-person as part of the audit process.

8.11 The CAB shall respond in writing before the final audit report is published to all stakeholder feedback, detailing how their comments were addressed.

8.12 The CAB shall request permission to publish within the audit report, a summary of the stakeholder feedback and the actions taken in response.

8.12.1 If the stakeholder does not grant permission, the CAB shall retain this information within the audit report confidential area which **shall not be published.**

8.13 The CAB shall maintain a publicly accessible mechanism for stakeholders to provide feedback between CAB audits and outside of the period of the stakeholder engagement process.

8.13.1 The CAB shall respond to the stakeholder, confirming how their feedback will be considered.

9. Remote Auditing

9.1 **|FARM|** The CAB shall refer to the most recent version of 'ISO 9001 *Auditing Practices Group Guidance on: Remote Audits'* when remote auditing using Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

9.2 **|FARM|** To prepare for the use of ICT, all certification, legal and Client requirements related to confidentiality, security and data protection should be identified, and actions should be taken to ensure their effective implementation.

9.3 **|FARM|** Both the CAB and Client shall agree to the use of ICT for audit purposes and determine if additional agreements are required.

9.3.1 **|FARM|** If an agreement is not reached, the CAB shall revert to an on-site audit approach.

9.4 **|FARM|** The CAB shall test the ICT selected during the audit planning stage in advance of the remote audit to confirm both parties have the necessary infrastructure to support the use of the ICT proposed.

9.5 **|FARM|** Contingency plans should be considered including provision for additional audit time, if necessary.

9.6 **|FARM|** If employee interviews are conducted remotely, the CAB shall ensure the ICT, and the method of interview, is appropriate to protect the confidentiality of the interviewees.

9.6.1 **|FARM|** The CAB shall obtain consent from the interviewees to be interviewed using ICT.

9.7 **|FARM|** Remote audit evidence presented in the form of video, photograph or live streaming shall be verified as being accurate to the specific UoC under remote evaluation[38].

[38] e.g. by geotagging.

9.8 **|FARM|** The CAB shall not conduct a remote audit if any of the following conditions are met:

A) It is the initial audit of the site.

B) It is a re-certification audit of the site[39].

C) The Client's certificate or the site within the UoC was **suspended** within the last **12 months.**

D) The previous routine CAB audit of the site was conducted remotely.

E) **A critical or five or more** major non-conformities were raised at the previous audit of the site.

F) The audit is an unannounced audit.

9.9 **|FARM|** The CAB shall not conduct the audit remotely if all of the following conditions are met:

A) An interpreter is required to translate during interviews **AND**

B) The country risk is 'High' according to the ASC Audit Planning Tool.

9.10 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall not conduct remote audits of the Group's IMS, or Group sample sites selected for audit.

9.11 **|FEED|** The CAB shall not conduct remote audits of sites certified to the ASC Feed Standard.

[39] An exemption applies if the re-certification audit is of a fallowed site, growing a long-cycle species.

10. Unannounced Audits

10.1 The CAB shall conduct annual unannounced audits on:

10.1.1 **|FARM|** At least **10%** of their ASC certified sites (rounded down to the nearest whole number) certified under Single Site and Multi-Site certification.

10.1.2 **|FEED|** At least **5%** of their ASC certified sites (rounded down to the nearest whole number) certified under Single Site and Multi-Site certification.

10.2 CAB's with **10 or fewer**[40] sites certified under Single Site and Multi-Site certification under each ASC certification programme are not required to conduct unannounced audits.

10.3 **|FARM|** The CAB shall use all available information[41] to determine the most suitable time to schedule an unannounced audit with product on-site[42].

10.4 The CAB shall plan unannounced audits to ensure they are distributed throughout the year to align with the CAB's audit schedule.

10.5 The CAB shall have a documented risk-based approach to the selection of sites that will receive an unannounced audit.

10.5.1 If the CAB determines that a greater number of unannounced audits is appropriate using the risk-based approach, the number of unannounced audits may be increased.

10.6 The risk-based approach shall include consideration of the following risk factors:

A) Non-conformity findings raised at most recent CAB site audit.

B) The length of time the site has been certified within the UoC.

C) Site's annual production volume.

D) Site's relationship with the Client[43].

[40] 10 or fewer sites per ASC certification programme, i.e. ASC Farm Certification Programme and ASC Feed Certification programme.
[41] e.g. historical production data, seasonal production trends, regulatory body reporting platforms, previous audit reports.
[42] i.e. the site is not fallow.
[43] e.g. owned by the Client, sub-contracted, under contract farming agreement.

10.7 When assigning unannounced site audits, the CAB shall prioritise sites that have been identified as high-risk. If none of the sites are identified as high-risk the CAB may select sites randomly.

10.8 There shall be no more than **two working days'** notice given to the Client prior to the starting date of an unannounced audit.

10.8.1 Exceptions of **five working days'** notification may be made for sites that require complex logistics to access the site[44].

10.9 The CAB may perform an expedited, unannounced audit of a Client's site in response to unforeseen events, such as incident reports from ASC's Integrity Services Provider or feedback from stakeholders.

10.9.1 The CAB shall register the audit announcement on the ASC database within **24 hours** of deciding to conduct the audit.

10.9.2 There shall be no public announcement, and the Client shall be given no more than **two working days'** notice, unless **Requirement 10.8.1** applies.

10.10 The CAB shall plan a second unannounced audit if the Client refuses the unannounced audit but has an acceptable justification[45].

10.10.1 The CAB shall **suspend the certificate** if the justification is not acceptable, and the CAB shall schedule an on-site routine CAB audit.

10.10.2 The CAB shall lift the suspension only after an on-site routine CAB audit is completed, and any major and critical non-conformities are closed.

[44] e.g. rental or arrangement of boats, helicopters, planes.
[45] e.g. responsible personnel not available, poor weather conditions, etc.

11. Certificate Transfer Process

Transfer of Certification

11.1 Transfer of certification is the recognition of an existing and valid certification granted by one CAB, (hereinafter referred to as the 'previous CAB'), by another CAB, (hereinafter referred to as the 'new CAB') for the purpose of issuing its own certification.

11.2 Both the previous CAB and new CAB shall follow the certificate transfer process and shall co-operate with the Client throughout the process.

11.3 The previous CAB shall not suspend or withdraw the certificate if the Client continues to satisfy the requirements of certification.

11.4 A certificate shall be transferred only once within the validity period of a certificate, unless the previous CAB has had its accreditation for ASC activities suspended or withdrawn.

11.5 A certificate **shall not** be transferred if any of the following conditions are met:

A) The Client's certificate or sites under the certificate are suspended.

B) There are open critical or major non-conformities raised against the UoC.

C) There is a known open integrity investigation associated with the Client's UoC.

Pre-Transfer Process for Previous CAB and New CAB

11.6 When a Client contacts a new CAB requesting a transfer of certification, the selected new CAB shall confirm that the Client's:

A) Certification falls within the new CAB's accreditation scope.

B) Previous audit cycle has been completed.

11.7 Once **Requirement 11.6** is confirmed by the new CAB, the new CAB shall request that the Client formally notifies the previous CAB in writing of their request to transfer its certificate and include the new CAB in this notification.

11.7.1 The Client shall provide written permission for the previous CAB to share required UoC information that is not publicly available on the ASC website with the new CAB.

11.7.2 The new CAB shall register the transfer of certification notification date on the ASC database within **seven days** of the formal notification between the Client and the previous CAB.

11.8 Within **14 days** of the Client's formal transfer of certification notification, the previous CAB, shall share required UoC information with the new CAB, that is not publicly available on the ASC website.

11.8.1 This shall include:

A) Non-conformity status with:

i. Any associated findings identified by ASC's Integrity Services Provider

ii. Corrective action plans

iii. Corresponding evidence of implementation.

B) Audit report confidential information.

C) List of relevant stakeholders and their contact details.

11.9 The new CAB shall review all documentation including that received from the previous CAB.

11.9.1 This document review shall include:

A) The most recent audit report.

i. If the most recent audit report is a surveillance audit report, the new CAB shall also review most recent initial certification or most recent re-certification audit report.

B) The status of all open non-conformities.

11.10 Based on the outcome of the documented review, the new CAB may decide to decline or accept the transfer of certification.

11.10.1 If the transfer of certification is declined, the new CAB shall maintain a record of the rationale for the decision and notify the Client and previous CAB of their decision.

11.10.2 If the transfer of certification is accepted, the new CAB, previous CAB, and Client shall agree a transfer date in writing.

11.11 The transfer of certification date shall occur within **three months** of the Client's formal transfer of certification notification date.

11.11.1 The new CAB shall register this transfer of certification date on the ASC database within **seven days** of agreement of the transfer date.

11.11.2 The new CAB shall require the Client to sign a legally enforceable certification agreement **(Appendix 5)** before the transfer of certification date.

Transfer of Certification Process for New CAB

11.12 Within the period between the transfer acceptance date and the agreed transfer of certification date, the new CAB shall conduct one of the following:

A) An administrative transfer, **OR**

B) The subsequent routine CAB audit as the transfer audit, if it is due within this **three-month** window, **OR**

C) A transfer audit covering the full requirements of the applicable ASC standard.

11.13 The new CAB shall record the rationale for the decision to conduct either a full transfer audit, routine transfer audit or an administrative transfer.

11.14 If the new CAB conducts a routine transfer audit or an administrative transfer, the new CAB shall maintain the previous CAB's routine audit schedule, non-conformity closure and certification cycle dates.

11.15 If the new CAB conducts a transfer audit to the full requirements of the relevant ASC standard[46], they may re-set the routine audit schedule and certification cycle dates.

11.16 If the previous CAB has had its accreditation withdrawn or suspended, the transfer of certification shall be completed within **six months** or by the expiry date of the Client's certificate, whichever is sooner.

11.17 All rights and obligations for maintaining the certificate shall be transferred from the previous CAB to the new CAB on the transfer of certification date.

[46] i.e. following the re-certification process.

12. Audit Termination

12.1 The CAB's Lead Auditor shall terminate an audit and inform the CAB if it is confirmed that:

A) Attempts are made to bribe any member of the audit team, **OR**

B) Members of the audit team are threatened.

12.2 If **Requirement 12.1** occurs during an **initial audit**, the CAB shall classify the audit as a failed audit, and the CAB shall not award certification.

12.2.1 The CAB shall notify the Client in writing they are not permitted to re-apply for certification to the ASC certification programme for at **least 24 months** from the date of audit termination.

13. Cancellation, Suspension, and Withdrawal of Certification

13.1 If the CAB discovers breaches of ASC Requirements[47] the CAB shall determine the appropriate action to:

A) **Suspend** the certificate, or site under a certificate, **OR**

B) **Withdraw** the certificate, or site under a certificate.

13.2 The CAB may also **suspend** or **withdraw** a certificate for its own contractual or administrative reasons.

13.3 If the CAB receives a voluntary withdrawal request from a Client, the CAB shall decide whether to approve the cancellation of the certificate, or site under a certificate if the Client meets the **Requirement 13.7**.

13.4 The date of the suspension or withdrawal shall be the date the decision was made by the CAB.

13.5 The CAB shall register cancellation, suspension or withdrawal of certificates or sites under the certificate within **48 hours** of the decision in the ASC database.

13.5.1 ASC will update the registered status on the ASC website within **two working days.**

[47] e.g. certification process, standard or contractual requirements.

13.6 If a certificate or site under a certificate is suspended, withdrawn or cancelled, the CAB shall, within **48 hours** of the decision, instruct the Client in writing:

A) Not to identify, dispatch or sell any product from the date of suspension, withdrawal or cancellation as ASC certified or as ASC-conforming feed or with the ASC label or trademark or claim.

B) To advise existing customers in writing of the suspension, withdrawal or cancellation within **four days** of CAB notification.

C) To provide ASC within **four days** of the CAB notification details of existing customers via assurance@asc-aqua.org.

D) In the case of a suspension, the CAB shall advise the Client that failure to follow instructions in **Requirement 13.6 A** will result in withdrawal of the certificate or site under the certificate for a period of **24 months** from the detection date of the failure.

E) In the case of cancellation or withdrawal, the CAB shall advise the Client that failure to follow instructions in **Requirement 13.6 A** will result in an exclusion of the site(s) from the ASC certification programme for a period of **24 months** from the detection date of the failure.

Cancellation

13.7 A Client may not submit a voluntary withdrawal request for the CAB to **cancel** a certificate or site under a certificate from the ASC Certification Programme if any of the following conditions apply:

A) The site is currently suspended.

B) The site has any open major or critical non-conformities.

C) The site has any outstanding data requests from ASC or ASC's Integrity Services Provider.

13.8 If the Client's UoC or site within the UoC does not meet the conditions in **Requirement 13.7**, the CAB shall **withdraw** the associated certificate, or site under the certificate, as per the withdrawal requirements prescribed below.

Suspension

13.9 The CAB shall **suspend** the certificate or site under the certificate if one of the following conditions are met:

A) Major non-conformities are not closed or extended within the initial closure timeframes according to **Appendix 2, Table 2.3**, **OR**

B) A critical non-conformity is raised according to **Appendix 2, Table 2.3.**

13.10 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall suspend the certificate and all sites under the certificate if the CAB or GMB raises a Group Critical non-conformity against the ASC Group IMS Requirements.

13.11 If a certificate or site under the certificate is suspended, the CAB shall set a maximum deadline of **six months** from the date of suspension decision for the Client to satisfactorily address the causes that led to the suspension.

13.11.1 If the certificate expires within this **six-month** period, the suspension deadline shall be set as the certificate expiry date.

13.12 The suspension deadline shall not be extended.

13.13 Before lifting a suspension, the CAB shall verify and register on the ASC database that the Client followed **Requirement 13.6.**

13.14 The decision to lift a suspension shall be registered on the ASC database within **seven days** from the decision date.

13.14.1 The CAB shall also upload the associated audit report to the ASC database when lifting the suspension is due to the closure of a critical non-conformity.

13.15 The CAB shall **withdraw the certificate** or site under the certificate if actions are not satisfactorily completed by the set suspension deadline.

Withdrawal

13.16 The CAB shall **withdraw** the certificate if any of the following conditions are met:

A) The Client presents forged documents or records as evidence to the CAB, ASC or ASC's Integrity Services Provider.

B) The Client is successfully convicted for:

i. Carrying out fraudulent activities confirmed by the statutory authority

ii. Use of, or involvement in, child or forced labour.

C) Where **Requirement 12.1** has occurred.

D) If the Client is discovered as not following **Requirement 13.6.**

13.17 If **Requirement 13.16** applies, CAB shall notify the Client in writing they are not permitted to re-apply for certification to the ASC certification programme for at least **24 months** from the date of withdrawal.

13.18 The CAB shall **withdraw** the certificate if the:

A) Client's critical non-conformity is not closed within the initial closure timeframes according to **Appendix 2, Table 2.3.**

B) Actions required to lift a suspension have not been executed within the suspension timeframes as prescribed by the CAB.

13.18.1 The CAB shall notify the Client in writing they are not permitted to re-apply for certification to the ASC certification programme for at least **12 months** from the date of withdrawal.

13.19 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall **withdraw** the certificate and all sites under the certificate if the Group Critical non-conformity is not closed within the initial closure timeframes according to **Appendix 2, Table 2.3.**

13.19.1 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall notify the Client in writing all sites under the certificate are not permitted to re-apply for certification to the ASC certification programme for at least **12 months** from the date of withdrawal.

14. Changes to Scope of Certification

14.1 Changes to scope of certification may:

A) Be requested by a Client.

B) Be prompted by information submitted to the CAB by Clients as part of their contractual obligations. Consequently, the CAB may require the Client to provide additional information to determine whether the proposed change requires an additional CAB audit.

C) Become apparent during CAB audit activities. The Lead Auditor shall decide whether it is necessary to contact the CAB to establish if the change can be evaluated during this ongoing audit or if it requires an additional CAB audit.

Scope Extension Audits

14.2 If a scope extension audit is required as determined in **Requirement 14.1,** this may be conducted as:

A) An additional CAB scope extension audit, **OR**

B) A routine CAB audit; if this aligns with the Client's audit cycle.

14.3 If an additional audit is required to add a site to a certificate, **Requirement 14.11** shall apply.

14.4 If the CAB determines that an additional audit is not required, the CAB shall maintain a record of the rationale for this determination.

14.5 The CAB shall decide on the approval of a certificate scope extension or certificate scope reduction based on all information provided.

Adding Certified Sites to an ASC Certificate

14.6 Sites with a valid ASC certificate may be added to the scope of an existing valid single or Multi-site certificate for the same Client without a CAB audit if all the following conditions are met:

A) There are no open major or critical non-conformities **AND**

B) There is less than **12 months** between the last CAB audit and the next scheduled CAB audit under the scope of the existing certificate.

14.7 The CAB shall ensure that subsequent audits under this existing certificate adhere to applicable CAR Requirements to ensure:

A) The certification cycle is maintained.

B) There is no lapse in site audit timing.

14.8 **|GROUP|** Sites with valid ASC certification may be added to the scope of an existing valid Group certificate for the same Client without evidence of a satisfactory internal audit if:

A) **|GROUP|** There are no open major or critical non-conformities.

B) **|GROUP|** There are less than **12 months** between the last CAB audit and the date of the site's inclusion under the existing certificate.

14.9 **|GROUP|** The CAB shall ensure that subsequent audits under this existing Group certificate adhere to applicable ASC Requirements to ensure:

A) **|GROUP|** Additional sites are included in the total number of sites for sampling.

B) **|GROUP|** There is no lapse in the Group's internal audit timing of these additional sites.

14.10 The site(s) shall hold certification with the same CAB, if not the CAB shall follow the requirements detailed in **Section 11 - Certificate Transfer Process**.

Adding New Applicant Sites to an ASC Certificate

14.11 New applicant sites[48] shall be added to an existing valid single or multi-site certificate after:

A) An initial CAB audit has been conducted of the site **AND**

B) All open major or critical non-conformities identified during the CAB audit are considered closed by the CAB.

14.12 New applicant sites shall undergo an initial CAB audit and shall follow the initial audit requirements specified in this document.

14.13 **|GROUP|** New applicant sites shall be added to an existing valid group certificate once the Client:

A) **|GROUP|** Has conducted a satisfactory internal audit of the site **AND**

B) **|GROUP|** All open non-conformities identified are considered closed by the CAB.

14.14 **|GROUP|** The Client may request to increase the number of sites starting from the initial certification date.

[48] A site that has not previously held ASC certification or a site that has previously held certification and meets the relevant eligibility requirements to re-enter the ASC certification programme as outlined in Part B, 1.1 B), C) and D).

14.15 **|GROUP|** If the Client requests to add sites to the Group between routine CAB audits, the CAB shall determine whether the addition of these new sites increases the Group's total annual production volume by more than **10%** of the current annual production volume.

14.15.1 **|GROUP|** Where the addition of new sites increases the Group's total annual production volume by more than **10%**, the CAB shall conduct an on-site audit of a representative sample of the sites proposed for addition prior to adding the sites to the Group.

A) **|GROUP|** The sample size shall be determined using the Group Risk Rating in the Audit Planning Tool (APT) from the most recent routine CAB audit.

B) **|GROUP|** The CAB shall enter the total number of additional sites proposed for inclusion into the Audit Planning Tool to determine the required sample size.

C) **|GROUP|** Under this circumstance, an audit of the UoC's Internal Management System (IMS) against the ASC Group Requirements for Farms shall not be required.

14.15.2 **|GROUP|** If adding the new sites increases the Group's total annual production volume by less than **10%**, a CAB audit shall not be required if the strictest condition[49] below is also met:

A) **|GROUP|** The requested increase to the number of sites does not exceed a total of **five sites**, **OR**

B) **|GROUP|** The requested increase to the number of sites does not exceed more than **10%** of the total number of existing sites in the Group.

14.15.3 **|GROUP|** If the adding of the new sites does not satisfy the strictest condition outlined in **Requirement 14.15.2**, the CAB shall conduct an audit.

14.16 **|GROUP|** If a CAB audit is required, the new sites shall be added to the certificate only after the CAB conducts the audit on the required sample of the new sites and all open major or critical non-conformities are closed.

[49] i.e. the condition that results in the lower number of sites.

Removing Sites from an ASC Certificate

14.17 The CAB shall follow the requirements detailed in **Section 13 – Cancellation, Suspension, and Withdrawal of Certification** when removing sites from a valid ASC Certificate.

15. Changes Affecting Certification

15.1 When ASC releases new or revised ASC Requirements that affect the Client, the CAB shall ensure these changes are communicated to all Clients within **14 days** from the issue date.

15.1.1 The CAB shall retain evidence of this communication.

16. ASC Label Use

16.1 The CAB shall inform the Client who has been granted ASC certification that:

A) ASC certified entities shall only use the ASC label, claim and trademarks if authorised through a signed ASC Licensing Agreement.

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

C) They have a right to claim, subject to their scope of certification, that their UoC is certified in accordance with the applicable ASC standard.

D) They are eligible to apply for an ASC Licensing Agreement by contacting licensing@asc-aqua.org.

Appendix 1 - Acronyms

Acronym	Term
AB	Accreditation Body
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CAR	Certification and Accreditation Requirements
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMB	Group Management Body
IAS	Ingredient Accounting System
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IMS	Internal Management System
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
NC	Non-Conformity
UoC	Unit of Certification
WHO	World Health Organization
WGS	World Geodetic System

Appendix 2 - Non-Conformities

Table 2.1: Definitions of Non-Conformities

Grade	Definition
Critical	o Employees' lives are evidently at risk. o Evidence of child or forced labour. **ASC Standard for Farms Specific Requirements** o Detection of the following in ASC-identified product samples collected at a Client's UoC by ASC, ASC's designated agent, ASC's Integrity Services Provider or the CAB: • Banned substances. • Antibiotics in crustaceans. • For **any** ASC eligible species, detection of antimicrobials listed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as: o Authorized for use in Humans Only o Highest Priority Critically Important Antimicrobials (HPCIA) o Critically Important Antimicrobials (CIA) for Human Medicine o Sales or dispatch of non-ASC certified product as ASC certified. **ASC Feed Standard Specific Requirements** o Sales of either: • Non-ASC product as ASC-conforming Product, **OR** • Non-eligible ingredients within a Segregation Production Model Product, **OR** • The Ingredient Accounting System is demonstrated to be overdrawn at **two** consecutive audits.

Grade	Definition
Major	o Where there is a substantial failure that is likely to have a significant impact on conformity to ASC Requirements. o The failure results in the absence or total breakdown of a system or process and is highly likely to materially reduce the ability to assure the integrity of the ASC product. o The failure is persistent and recurs over time (may be due to non-closure or ineffective closure of previous non-conformities). o The failure is systemic and widespread (generally due to a failure or weakness in a system). o A minor non-conformity was raised at the previous audit for the same indicator under the same circumstances.
Minor	o Where there is a failure that does not have a significant impact on conformity to the ASC Requirements. o The failure does not result in the total breakdown of a system or process. o The failure is isolated or due to a single observed lapse of conformity to a requirement. o The impacts of the failure are limited in temporal and spatial scale.

Table 2.2: Definitions of Group Non-Conformities

Grade	Definition
Group Critical	o The failure results in a breakdown of the Group's Central IMS controls that severely impacts conformity to the ASC Group Requirements for Farms. o The impact is **severe, confirmed, systemic and widespread**, affecting a large proportion of sites within the Group and resulting in widespread failure to conform to the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.
Group Major	o The failure results in ineffective implementation or breakdown of a central system or process within the IMS that compromises the effectiveness of the Group's Central IMS and its ability to ensure conformity to the ASC Group Requirements for Farms. o The impact is **significant or potentially systemic**, affecting or having a high likelihood of affecting, the conformity of multiple sites within the Group to the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.
Group Minor	o The failure does not significantly impact the effectiveness of the Group's Central IMS or the Group's conformity to the ASC Group Requirements for Farms, and control systems remain generally effective. o The impact is **limited in scope, contained, or low severity**, with no significant systemic or widespread effect on the conformity of sites within the Group to the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.

Table 2.3: Non-Conformity Closure Timeframes, CAB Lead Auditor and CAB Actions

Part A: Non-Conformity Closure Timeframes

*All timeframes are measured from the **NC Detection Date***

Detected During	NC Grade	Closure Timeframe	Permitted Extension Period	Total Maximum Timeframe to Close NC
Certification Types: Single Site and Multi-Site				
Any CAB Audit	*Critical*	**3 months**	**Not permitted**	**3 months**
	Major		**3 months**	**6 months**
	Minor		**9 months**	**12 months**
Certification Type: Group				
Any CAB Audit	*Critical*	**3 months**	**Not permitted**	**3 months**
	Major		**3 months**	**6 months**
	Minor		**3 months**	**6 months**

Part B: Non-Conformity CAB Lead Auditor and CAB Urgent Actions for all Certification Types

Detected During	NC Grade	Urgent CAB Lead Auditor Actions	Urgent CAB Actions	CAB Actions if NC is not Closed or Extended (Table 2.3 Part A)
All Certification Types				
Initial CAB Audit	*Critical*	Notify CAB within **24 hours** of detection.	Verify critical NC grading within **two working days** of notification.	Classify the audit as a **failed audit.** Certification is not awarded, and a **full re-audit is required.**
	Major	N/A	N/A	
	Minor	N/A	N/A	
The Validity Period of the Certificate	*Critical*	Notify CAB within **24 hours** of detection.	Verify critical NC grading within **two working days** of notification and **Suspend** the site or certificate.	**Withdraw** the site or certificate.
	Major	N/A	N/A	**Suspend** the site or certificate.
	Minor	N/A	N/A	Upgrade to major NC with **NO extension permitted.**

Appendix 3 - Certification Process

Table 3.1: Final Audit Report Submission with Certification Decision Timeframes

Timeframe	Extended Timeframe
MAXIMUM 98 days from the date of the audit closing meeting (audit end date).	***MAXIMUM 6 months*** *from the date of the* ***audit closing meeting*** *(audit end date). This timeframe shall not be exceeded.* ***This extended timeframe may be applied if:*** • Major non-conformities have been granted an extension in accordance with the CAR Requirements, or • The CAB receives, after the audit closing meeting, new or additional information that may affect the certification decision.

Table 3.2: Summary of Reporting Timeframes for Initial, Surveillance, and Re-Certification Audits

Task	Whom	Audit Type	Days	Description
Audit announcement submission	CAB	All	42	Minimum 42 days before audit start date
Publish audit announcement	ASC	All	5	Published by ASC
Corrective Action Plan submission to CAB	Client	All	28	Within 28 days from audit end date
NC summary submission	CAB	Surveillance	28	Within 28 days from audit end date
Draft audit report submission	CAB	Initial and Re-Certification	42	Within 42 days from audit end date.
Publish draft audit report	ASC	Initial and Re-Certification	7	Published by ASC
End of public comment period	CAB	Initial and Re-Certification	21	21 days after the publication of the draft audit report
Final audit report submission with certification decision	CAB	Initial and Re-Certification	98	Within 98 days from audit end date **but not before** the end of the public comment period
Final audit report submission with certification decision	CAB	Surveillance	98	Within 98 days from audit end date
Publish final audit report and certificate	ASC	All	7	Published by ASC

Note: The above timeframes do not apply to Follow-up audits.

Appendix 4 - Competency Requirements

Table 4.1: Competency Requirements for Farm Environmental, Feed Technical, Social and Farm Management System Auditors

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
1	Formal Qualifications/ Industry Experience	**1A)** At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of **two years**) obtained in a discipline related to aquaculture or environmental sciences **AND** **1B)** At least **two years** of practical industry experience in aquaculture operations **OR** **2A)** At least **three years** of industry experience working in aquaculture or environmental sciences. **AND** **2B) One year** experience auditing against third-party aquaculture certification schemes.	✓			
2		**1A)** At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of **two years**) obtained in a discipline related to feed manufacturing /milling /animal nutrition **AND** **1B)** At least **two years** of practical industry experience in a feed / animal nutrition related discipline in a production/manufacturing environment. **OR** **2A)** At least **three years** of practical industry experience either in a feed mill or in a technical production management role in a production / manufacturing environment **AND** **2B) One year** experience auditing against third party feed certification schemes. **AND** **3) In addition to Option 1 and Option 2 above,** the Feed Technical Auditor shall have experience in conducting or auditing risk assessments (e.g. food, feed safety or environmental risk assessments). Experience can take the form of positions held (e.g. positions in quality assurance, production, feed safety, product inspection, plant manager, etc.). It may also be previous experience in auditing.		✓		

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
3	Specific Auditing Experience	**A)** Minimum of **ten days** of on-site audit experience within the last **five years** in conducting second, or third-party audits of aquaculture organisations against either environmental or aquaculture standards **OR** **B)** Actively participated as a trainee Environmental Auditor in at least **three** ASC standard audits.	✓			
4		**A)** Minimum of **ten days** on-site audit experience within the last **five years** in conducting second, or third-party audits of manufacturing facilities against animal feed, food safety or environmental third-party audits **OR** **B)** Actively participated as a trainee Feed Technical Auditor in at least **two** ASC Feed Standard audits.		✓		
5		Participated as an active audit team member in at least **five** third-party audits within the last **five years** for one or more of the following schemes, at least **two** of which are audits of primary production (for an ASC Farm Social Auditor) and **two** of which are audits of manufacturing facilities (for an ASC Feed Standard Social Auditor, this can be *any* manufacturing facility, not necessarily a feed manufacturing facility): • Amfori (Business Social Compliance Initiative - BSCI) • Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code (including SEDEX SMETA) • Fair Trade USA • Fairtrade International (FI) • Goodweave (Rugmark) • International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) – Code of Business Practice • Social Accountability International (SAI) SA 8000 • Worldwide Responsible Apparel Producers (WRAP) – Code of Conduct • ASC audits that include full assessment of social criteria.			✓	

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
6	**Specific Auditing Experience**	**A)** Minimum of **ten days** within the last **five years** audit experience in conducting third-party management system audits **OR** **B)** Conducted a minimum of **three** management system audits within the last **five years**.				✓
7	**Auditor Qualifications/ Training**	o Successful completion of a Lead Auditor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that has a minimum duration of **37 hours**. o The certificate shall specify the course content and duration. o Successful completion shall be indicated on the certificate. o The Lead Auditor training course shall cover: • Applicable standards on quality auditing • Auditing techniques • Focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) • Reporting • A practical case study. o Recognised certificates include: • ISO 9001 • ISO 14001 • ISO 22000 • BRC Global Standard Lead Auditor.	✓	✓		✓
8	**Attributes**	Possess the attributes described in clauses 4, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3.2.a in ISO 19011.	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
9	**Programme Specific Training**	Successful completion of: • ASC online training for the CAR. • Applicable ASC auditor training courses. • Completion of ASC update training for new requirements within the deadlines specified by ASC.	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	**Witnessed Audit Requirements (Onboarding)**	Completion of at least **one** satisfactory audit against the either the ASC Farm Standard or an applicable ASC Species Standard, witnessed and approved by the CAB's competent ASC Farm Environmental Auditor.	✓			
11		Completion of at least **one** satisfactory audit against the ASC Feed Standard witnessed and approved by the CAB's competent ASC Feed Technical Auditor		✓		
12		Completion of at least **one** satisfactory audit against ASC social criteria witnessed and approved by the CAB's competent ASC Social Auditor.			✓	
13		Completion of at least **one** satisfactory audit against the ASC Group Requirements for Farms witnessed and approved by the CAB's competent Management System Auditor				✓
14	**Language Skills**	Working language skills in the primary local language of the UoC being audited. This shall include knowledge of the technical terminology used in this language. • If this is not the case, the audit team shall be accompanied by an independent interpreter.	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
15	**Witnessed audit requirements to maintain competency**	The CABs shall have an effective process that ensures auditors are successfully witnessed by the CAB's ASC auditor with the required competency at least once every **four years** to verify competence and maintain auditor approval.	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	**Minimum number of audits to maintain competency**	At least **two** audits against the ASC Standards for Farms covering environmental criteria within a period of **two years.**	✓			
17		At least **one** ASC Feed Standard audit against technical criteria within a period of **two years**.		✓		
18		At least **two** audits against ASC social criteria or other industry recognised social standard within a period of **two years**.			✓	
19	**Auditor Rotation**	The CAB shall not assign the same auditor to audit a UoC for more than **six** consecutive calendar years.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4.2: Competency Requirements for Lead Auditors

For each audit the, the CAB shall assign the Lead Auditor role to an auditor with the required competencies. The Lead Auditor shall be responsible for the specified audit as well as managing auditors, technical experts, and interpreters.

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement:
1	**Auditor Qualifications/Training**	o Successful completion of a Lead Auditor training course based on ISO 19011 principles that has a minimum duration of **37 hours.** o The certificate shall specify the course content and duration. o Successful completion shall be indicated on the certificate. o The Lead Auditor training course shall cover: • Auditing techniques • Focus of the audits (psychological aspects and communication) • Reporting • A practical case study. o Recognised certificates include, but are not limited to: • ISO 9001 • ISO 14001 • ISO 22000 • BRC Global Standard Lead Auditor.
2	**Specific Auditing Experience**	Audit experience to demonstrate the following competencies: o Plan the audit and assign audit tasks according to the specific competence of individual audit team members. o Develop and maintain a collaborative working relationship among the audit team members. o Manage the audit process, including: • Making effective use of resources during the audit • Achieving audit objectives • Directing the audit team members, technical experts and interpreters • Coordination and collation of audit findings • Preventing and resolving conflicts and problems that can occur during the audit as necessary • Represent the audit team in communications with the Client • Prepare the audit report in conjunction with the audit team.

Table 4.3: Competency Requirements for Technical Reviewers

NOTE: competency can be gained across a team and not solely one person if all requirements are collectively met.

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement:	Environmental	Technical	Social	Mgmt Systems
1	Formal Qualifications / Industry Experience	**1A)** At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of **two years**) obtained in a discipline related to aquaculture or environmental sciences **AND** **1B)** At least **two years** of practical industry experience in aquaculture operations. **OR** **2A)** At least **three years** of industry experience working in aquaculture or environmental sciences **AND** **2B)** **One year** experience auditing against third-party aquaculture certification schemes.	✓			
2		**A)** At least a post-high school diploma or equivalent (minimum course duration of two years) obtained in a discipline related to feed manufacturing/milling/animal nutrition **AND** **1B)** At least two years of practical industry experience in a feed/animal nutrition related discipline in a production/ manufacturing environment. **OR** **2A)** At least three years of practical industry experience either in a feed mill or in a technical production management role in a production/manufacturing environment **AND** **2B)** One year experience auditing against third-party feed production certification schemes.		✓		

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement:				
3	Specific Experience	**A)** Minimum of **ten days** of on-site audit experience within the last **five years** in conducting second, or third-party audits of aquaculture organisations against either environmental or aquaculture standards **OR** **B)** Actively participated as a trainee Farm Environmental Auditor in at least **three** ASC standard audits. **OR** **C)** Has conducted at least **20** ASC Farm Standard (or previous ASC Species Standards) technical reviews.	✓			
4		**A)** Minimum of **ten days** on-site audit experience within the last **five years** in conducting second, or third-party audits of manufacturing facilities against animal feed, food safety or environmental third-party certification audits. **OR** **B)** Actively participated as a trainee Feed Technical Auditor in at least **two** ASC Feed Standard audits. **OR** **C)** Has conducted at least **five** technical reviews of the ASC Feed Standard or other animal feed programme that includes environmental criteria.		✓		

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement:				
5	**Specific Experience**	**A)** Participated as an active audit team member in at least **five** third-party audits within the last **five years** for **one** or more of the following schemes, at least **two** of which are audits of primary production (for an ASC Farm Social Auditor) and **two** of which are audits of manufacturing facilities (for an ASC Feed Standard Social Auditor, this can be *any* manufacturing facility, not necessarily a feed manufacturing facility): • Amfori (Business Social Compliance Initiative - BSCI) • Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code (including SEDEX SMETA) • Fair Trade USA • Fairtrade International (FI) • Goodweave (Rugmark) • International Council of Toy Industries (ICTI) – Code of Business Practice • Social Accountability International (SAI) SA 8000 • Worldwide Responsible Apparel Producers (WRAP) – Code of Conduct • ASC audits that include full assessment of social criteria. **OR** **B)** Has conducted at least **20** technical reviews of either ASC standard social criteria or other schemes that include social criteria.			✓	
6	**Programme Specific Training**	Successful completion of: • ASC online training for the CAR. • Applicable ASC auditor training courses. • Completion of ASC update training for new requirements within the deadlines specified by ASC.	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 4.4: Competency Requirements for CAB Programme Manager

	Qualification/ Competency	Requirement:
1	**Programme Specific Training**	Successful completion of: • ASC online training for the CAR. • Applicable ASC training courses. • Completion of ASC update training for new requirements within the deadlines specified by ASC.

Appendix 5 - Certification Agreement

The certification agreement (hereinafter referred to as 'agreement') shall include the terms outlined in this Appendix. If the Client has multiple sites this agreement shall cover all the sites within the UoC.

General Provisions

The Client shall agree to:

1) Conform to the applicable ASC Requirements.

2) Implement necessary changes to ensure conformity to ASC Requirements where ASC introduces new or revised requirements.

3) Follow instruction from the CAB regarding certificate handling practices including certificate transfer, audit termination and cancellation, suspension and withdrawal of certification, as outlined in the ASC CAR.

4) The possibility of the CAB conducting unannounced audits and accept the appropriate consequences if an unannounced audit is not accepted in accordance with the ASC CAR.

CAB Notifications and Timeframes

The Client shall agree to:

5) Accept the ASC certification timeframes overview according to **Appendix 3** of the ASC Farm and Feed CAR, including reporting timeframes that the CAB and Client are required to meet.

6) Adhere to ASC reporting timelines as prescribed in the relevant Standard[50].

7) Implement an effective process to inform the CAB, within **14 days** of any changes made to the UoC that may impact the scope of certification and require oversight from the CAB. This includes:

A) |FARM| Changes to, or addition of, species farmed.

B) |FARM| Expansions or reduction of the defined boundaries of the site.

C) |FARM| Relocation of production area and non-production areas.

D) |FARM| Changes in the number of sites within a UoC.

[50] e.g., Escapes and sea lice levels as per the relevant ASC Standard for Farms.

E) **|FARM|** Changes that may impact the start of the chain of custody.

F) **|FARM|** The administration of **any** antibiotics in crustaceans and for any ASC-eligible species, the administration of antimicrobials listed by the World Health Organization (WHO) as:

- Authorised for use in Humans Only
- Highest Priority Critically Important Antimicrobials (HPCIA)
- Critically Important Antimicrobials (CIA) for Human Medicine.

G) **|FEED|** Any addition or change to the production model in operation.

H) **|FEED|** Inclusion of new products that introduce a significant new risk to the facility[51].

I) **|FEED|** Changes in the number of sites within a UoC (if a Multi-site Client).

8) Implement an effective process to inform the CAB within **14 days** of:

A) Fatal workplace accidents.

B) Legal, environmental or social compliance violations confirmed by the statutory authority.

C) **|FEED|** Recall of non-conforming ASC products due to incorrect ingredient formulation[52].

Audit Announcement

The agreement shall include that the Client:

9) Agrees to co-operate with the CAB to confirm an audit date that enables the CAB to publicly announce the audit on the ASC website at least **42 days** before the scheduled audit date.

10) Has the right to raise concerns regarding proposed audit team members with the CAB.

[51] e.g. addition of non-aquaculture feed.
[52] e.g. use of 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.

CAB Audits

The Client shall agree to:

11) Make all necessary arrangements for the conduct of ASC audits including:

A) Provision of requested information, including but not limited to the below, provided they may do so without violating any pre-existing confidentiality and non-disclosure obligations owed to third parties:

- Documents, records, and data.
- Any latest third-party social audit reports including non-conformity reports and corrective actions.
- Contact information of relevant stakeholders.

12) Ensure that relevant senior management of the UoC attend both the opening and closing meetings of the ASC audit.

13) Provide auditors with unrestricted access to relevant equipment, location(s), facilities, area(s), personnel, and Client sub-contractors; where relevant.

14) **|FARM|** Provide the CAB with GIS polygon data in the format specified in the ASC GIS Submission Procedure for validation of the production area.

15) Permit the CAB to collect and evaluate evidence remotely as part of any audit and inform the CAB of any applicable legislative requirements relating to confidentiality, security and data protection to permit the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

ASC Licensing Agreement

16) **|FARM|** The Client shall enter and adhere to the ASC Licensing Agreement[53] if they wish to use the ASC label, claims and other trademarks.

17) **|FEED|** Upon certification, the Client shall enter and adhere to the ASC Licensing Agreement.

[53] For more information see: Our label or get in touch on licensing@asc-aqua.org. Unauthorised label display or use of trademarks is prohibited and will be treated as a trademark infringement.

Audit Termination

The Client shall agree:

18) That during any ASC CAB audit, the CAB shall terminate the audit process if:

A) Attempts are made to bribe any member of the audit team.

B) Members of the audit team are threatened.

ASC and ASC's Integrity Services Provider

The Client agreement shall include that:

19) ASC and ASC's Integrity Services Provider shall have the right to observe any ASC audit.

20) ASC and ASC's Integrity Services Provider 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 to the Client to verify conformity to ASC Requirements.

21) ASC's Integrity Services Provider shall have the right to conduct audits of the Client's UoC, including unannounced audits, for the purpose of monitoring CAB and Client conformity to the ASC Requirements.

22) ASC and ASC's Integrity Services Provider shall have full access to all audit products including audit evidence, audit findings and audit reports, including commercially-sensitive information that has been submitted confidentially to ASC.

23) ASC and ASC's Integrity Services Provider shall have unrestricted access to relevant equipment, location(s), facilities, area(s), personnel, traceability records and, where relevant, Client sub-contractors.

24) ASC retains the right to release updated ASC Requirements and certification is conditional on conforming to new or revised ASC Requirements within the timeframes established by ASC.

Data Submission

The Client shall agree to:

25) Provide to ASC, requested data in accordance with the ASC Data Submission Procedure.

26) Permit ASC to process and publish data and information collected from the certification process for the purpose of transparency, **excluding** confidential and commercially sensitive information submitted confidentially to ASC.

Sampling and Testing

The Client agreement shall include that:

27) ASC or their designated agent, ASC's Integrity Services Provider and the CAB, shall have the right to collect samples of seafood, feed, feed ingredients, or other substances to verify a UoC's conformance to the applicable ASC standard.

28) This sampling shall be conducted in accordance with the ASC Sampling and Testing Procedure and may be conducted at any time without prior notification.

29) The Client shall assist with equipment available at the site and staff to collect the samples.

30) Testing shall be done at an ASC-recognised laboratory, noting that:

A) Any costs incurred for testing of samples collected by the CAB shall be charged to the Client.

B) If results for tests of samples requested by ASC confirm the Client's conformance, the costs may be charged to ASC.

31) If a test result indicates non-conformance:

A) The Client may request a re-test of material from the same sample at the same laboratory, only for the disputed parameters in the first test.

B) If the second test result contradicts the first, the remaining material for the same sample shall be tested again for the same parameters at a different ASC-recognised laboratory.

C) All parties shall accept the result of the third (final) test.

32) Specific test results and other information gathered during sampling will remain confidential and will only be shared with the CAB, ASC or ASC's Integrity Services Provider, if needed.

33) Aggregated results of sample tests may be uploaded to ASC's Supplier Monitoring Tool database.