

# Water Quality Technical Working Group

## Terms of Reference

June 2021

### Introduction

The TAG Terms of Reference make provision for the formation of Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to support the technical and scientific work of the TAG. Typically, a TWG will be comprised of technical experts; external to ASC's governance bodies, and a member of the TAG acting as a sponsor; to facilitate communication and understanding between the TAG and the TWG and support the ASC technical lead. The ASC's Secretariat will provide logistical support to the group and a Project Lead from ASC will be appointed to provide the group with the technical resources. An external facilitator may be also appointed.

### References

[ASC Standard Setting Procedure](#)

[ASC Metrics Methodology](#)

[ASC Complaints Procedure](#)

[TAG Terms of Reference](#)

## 1. Terms of Reference

### 1.1 Background

During the preparation of the aligned [ASC Farm Standard](#) project, which will bring the current eleven species-specific Standards into a single farm-level Standard, the water quality requirements have been identified as highly diverse (in their approach and/or language) and in where significant variation exists, even if Standards cover similar production systems. Furthermore, since the operationalisation of the different Standards, ASC has received a number of Variance Requests<sup>1</sup> (VRs) against water quality indicators (55 out of 446, as per April 2021). With this in mind, ASC is revising the current water quality requirements aiming to define Criteria/Indicators that collectively address impacts of aquaculture on water quality in all major production systems<sup>2</sup> that discharge into different water types<sup>3</sup>. A Technical Working Group (TWG) will be formed to support ASC in this revision.

### 1.2 Statement of purpose of the Technical Working Group

The purpose of the TWG is to revise the current approach in the ASC Standards and recommend Criteria/Indicators that collectively address impacts of aquaculture on water quality in all major production systems that discharge into different water types, based on the latest scientific knowledge and current best practices within the aquaculture industry.

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<sup>1</sup> A Variance Request (VR) is a request to adapt an ASC indicator/performance level to a unique local circumstance that the ASC Standards, being global, were not able to, for whatever reason, foresee during the Standard Setting Process

<sup>2</sup> Major production systems are: cages, suspended/off-bottom, in or on-bottom and land-based (point-discharge systems, e.g. ponds, race-way, flow-through and RAS).

<sup>3</sup> Water types are: marine, brackish, freshwater.

### 1.3 Terms of Reference

The TWG will have the following responsibilities:

- a) Review the current water quality indicator requirements and associated VRs;
- b) Analyse, discuss and collaborate in the development of recommendations for revised indicators in water quality;
- c) Provide input into the development of the two draft versions of the revised indicators in water quality;
- d) Seek feedback from the ASC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the two draft versions of the revised indicators prior to their public consultation;
- e) Assess and advise on stakeholders' comments after each public consultation;
- f) Decide when the final draft of the revised indicators is ready to be proposed TAG for approval;
- g) Attend the TWG meetings or other in relation to this review as necessary and/or required by the Project Lead.

## 2. Membership

TWG membership shall aim to balance interests from the standard's key interest groups and geographical representation. All members should support the aims of the [ASC, its Vision and Mission](#), and commit to engaging constructively. To fulfil the group's purpose in recommending Criteria/Indicators that collectively address impacts of aquaculture on water quality based on the latest scientific knowledge and current best practices within the aquaculture industry, the TWG will be formed primarily by water quality expert with a scientific background. Participation of others stakeholder segments may be sought by the TWG at ad-hoc bases.

### 2.1 Technical competencies required:

Advanced degree in Environmental, Biology, Aquatic Animal Health, Sustainable Management, Aquaculture or other related science.

Experience in studying and addressing aquaculture water quality-related matters. This experience may come from working in academia or regulatory agencies.

**Table 1: TWG Members**

Name	Role	Organisation	Stakeholder sector	Primary region represented
Anders Kiesling	Professor	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Academia	Scandinavia
Francis Murray	Independent Expert/ASC Consultant	Independent	Academia	Europe/Asia
Ian Payne	Independent Expert/ASC Consultant	Independent	Independent	Europe/Asia
John Beijer	Aquatic Ecologist	Wageningen UR	Academia	Europe
Martyn Futter	Aquatic Ecologist	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences	Academia	Scandinavia
Peter Cook	TAG Sponsor	The University of Western Australia	Academia	Oceania
Peter E. Davies	Adjunct Professor	University of Tasmania	Academia	Oceania

Raymond Bannister	Salmon Environmental Management Section	EPA Tasmania	Regulator	Oceania
Trevor Telfor	Professor	University of Stirling	Academia	Europe
Trine Dale	Research Scientist	Norwegian Institute for Water Research	Academia	Europe

### 3. Reporting requirements

3.1 The TWG will report to the TAG on January and July 2022, prior to the public consultation rounds allocated for that year.

Materials made available for review will include:

- White papers
- Meeting minutes
- Recommendations

### 4. Duration and review times

4.1 It is expected that the TWG will be active until the final recommendations for revised indicators in water quality are approved by the TAG. The TWG may be called upon to consider questions raised in the initial application of the new requirements.

**Table 2: TWG timeline**

	Date	Activity	Outcome/Deliverable
1	JUN-DEC 2021	TWG meetings	1 <sup>st</sup> draft recommendations for revised water quality indicators for TAG endorsement for 1 <sup>st</sup> public consultation
2	JAN 2022	Present 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of TWG's recommendations for revised water quality indicators to TAG for endorsement for 1 <sup>st</sup> public consultation	1 <sup>st</sup> draft recommendations for revised water quality indicators endorsed by the TAG for 1 <sup>st</sup> public consultation
3	MAR-APR 2022	1 <sup>st</sup> PUBLIC CONSULTATION	
4	MAY-JUN 2022	TWG meetings (public consultation follow up)	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft recommendations for revised water quality indicators for TAG endorsement for 2 <sup>nd</sup> public consultation
5	JUL 2022	Present 2 <sup>nd</sup> draft of TWG's recommendations for revised water quality indicators to TAG for endorsement for 2 <sup>nd</sup> public consultation	2 <sup>nd</sup> draft recommendations for revised water quality indicators endorsed by the TAG for 2 <sup>nd</sup> public consultation
6	SEP-OCT 2022	2 <sup>nd</sup> PUBLIC CONSULTATION	
7	NOV-DEC 2022	TWG meetings (public consultation follow up)	Final draft recommendations for revised water quality indicators for TAG approval

## **5. Resources**

Membership of ASC TWGs is voluntary and unpaid. Reasonable expenses will be paid for attendance at in-person meetings to cover travel and associated subsistence costs. Accommodation will be provided.