



REGULATORY REFERENCE

ASC Certification

Aquaculture Stewardship Council · Responsible aquaculture

GLOBAL · AQUACULTURE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL · INDEPENDENT
NGO · NETHERLANDS · FOUNDED BY WWF AND IDH IN 2010

May 13, 2026

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JURISDICTION Aquaculture Stewardship Council · independent NGO · Netherlands · founded by WWF and IDH in 2010	TYPE Certification	CATEGORY Aquaculture
DARWIN PRODUCTS Captia · Tracium	LAST OFFICIAL UPDATE August 1, 2025	DOCUMENT VERSION v1.0.0 · 13/05/2026

1. What is it?

The **ASC Certification** (*Aquaculture Stewardship Council*) is an **eco-label** that identifies responsible aquaculture: practices that minimize environmental and social impact. It was founded in 2010 by **WWF** (World Wide Fund for Nature) and **IDH** (The Sustainable Trade Initiative) as an independent non-profit NGO based in the Netherlands. Certification is **voluntary** and commercially driven: large European and North American retailers require ASC from their farmed-seafood suppliers.

The standard is in **transition**: until now ASC operated with **species-specific** standards; the new **ASC Farm Standard v1.0.1**, published in August 2025, consolidates the requirements into a single transversal standard. **Mandatory from May 1, 2027**.

2. Who does it apply to?

Covered actors (farm + post-farm chain):

- **Aquaculture farms** raising covered species.
- **Processors, distributors, importers and retailers** that take ownership of ASC certified product (must hold **Chain of Custody — CoC** certification).

- **Food service and restaurants** that sell product under the ASC label to the consumer.

Covered species (until the full transition to the Farm Standard):

- Salmon (Atlantic, coho, chinook).
- Shrimp (*Penaeus*, *Litopenaeus*).
- Tilapia.
- Pangasius.
- Freshwater trout.
- Sea bass, sea bream and meagre.
- Seriola and cobia.
- Bivalves (clams, oysters, mussels, scallops).
- Abalone.
- Flatfish (sole, turbot).
- Tropical marine finfish.

Markets: globally recognized standard. Dominant adoption in the **European Union** (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Carrefour, Lidl, Edeka, Aldi require ASC for farmed seafood) and growing in **North America**. Key LATAM exporters: **Chile** (salmon), **Ecuador and Honduras** (shrimp), **Brazil and Colombia** (tilapia).

Voluntary nature: ASC is not legally mandatory. The pressure is **commercial** (buyers demand it as proof of responsible practices) and **reputational** (the label is consumer-visible and differentiates price).

3. Key requirements

Certification covers **two complementary levels**.

Level 1— Farm (Farm Standard)

The **ASC Farm Standard v1.0.1** (effective August 1, 2025, mandatory May 1, 2027) replaces the species-specific standards with a single consolidated set. It covers 7 impact areas.

Area	Focus
Management system and traceability	Documentation, record control, lot traceability , environmental and social management system.
Water quality and discharge	Culture-water parameters, discharge to the environment, impact on water bodies.
Biodiversity and ecological interaction	Escape prevention, predator interaction, invasive species.
Responsible sourcing of juveniles and feed	Traceability of smolts/post-larvae/juveniles, responsibly sourced fishmeal and fish oil (marine chain), sustainable plant-based inputs.
Animal health and welfare	Mortality, sanitary management, restricted antibiotic use , welfare plan.
Responsible chemical and antibiotic use	Positive/negative list, use registry, withdrawal periods, mandatory residue detection in CoC.
Human rights and community	Workers (wages, safety, no child/forced labour), local communities, indigenous peoples, transparency.

Level 2 — Chain of Custody (CoC)

From the moment the product leaves the certified farm, **every company that takes ownership** must hold a current **ASC CoC certificate**. ASC uses the **MSC Chain of Custody Standard** plus its own **ASC CoC Module**. The Module adds additional requirements on:

- Food safety.
- **Antibiotic detection** in product.
- Lot-to-lot traceability.
- Segregation of certified vs. non-certified product.

Operational benefit: a company handling both MSC (wild capture) **and** ASC (aquaculture) product can run a **combined ASC + MSC audit**.

Certification cycle

Aspect	Detail
Validity	The certificate lasts 3 years .
Surveillance	Annual audits during the cycle.
Recertification	Full audit at the close of the 3rd year.
Accreditation	ASI Assurance Services International (accreditation body for the certifiers performing ASC audits).
Consumer label	Certified product may carry the ASC logo on consumer packaging.

4. How does Darwin cover it?

Captia captures production events on the farm and along the chain; **Tracium** anchors the records to the immutable ledger. The combination overlaps naturally with the traceability model ASC requires.

- **Lot traceability from the farm (ASC Farm Standard · Management system and traceability):** **Captia** generates Traceability Lot Codes per production event on the farm (initial smolt/post-larvae load, feeding, sanitary treatments, harvest, dispatch); **Tracium** signs each lot on-chain, enabling bidirectional traceability to the auditor.
- **Juvenile and input traceability:** **Captia** maintains a versioned catalog of smolt/post-larva and feed suppliers, with COA, responsible-sourcing certifications and linkage to the culture lot.
- **Antibiotic and chemical use registry:** **Captia** records each treatment (substance, dose, date, affected lot, withdrawal period); **Tracium** signs for immutable evidence. Direct support for the Farm Standard's restrictions and the CoC requirement of **antibiotic detection**.
- **Animal welfare and health:** **Captia** records mortality per cage/raft, sanitary management, veterinary monitoring and welfare plan; supports the "Health and welfare" area of the Farm Standard.
- **Water quality and discharge:** **Captia** structures periodic monitoring of parameters (pH, DO, temperature, nutrients), records results and alerts on deviations.
- **Chain of Custody (CoC) post-farm:** every handoff between certified actors is captured in **Captia** with timestamp, shipment photo, linked ASC lot; **Tracium** signs the handoff and enables reconstruction of the full origin-to-destination chain for CoC audit.

- **Segregation of certified vs. non-certified product:** **Captia** distinguishes ASC vs. non-ASC lots in storage, dispatch and records, preventing documentary cross-contamination.
- **Human rights and community:** **Captia** archives social documentation (labour contracts, training evidence, agreements with local communities) in audit-ready format.
- **Combined ASC + MSC audit:** when the client handles both, **Captia** structures traceability so the certifier can review both chains (ASC aquaculture and MSC wild capture) in a single evidence dashboard.

Areas not yet covered in V1 (transparent):

- **Laboratory analysis** (water quality, antibiotic residues, DNA for species verification): Darwin records results and lab certificates but does not perform the analysis.
- **Culture system design** (stocking density, effluent treatment, physical infrastructure): client's operational responsibility.
- **Consumer label** (ASC logo on packaging): the right to use the label is granted by ASC via the certificate, not by Darwin.

5. Sanctions and consequences of non-compliance

ASC is voluntary and **does not impose fines**. Consequences are **commercial, reputational and market-access related**.

Certificate loss:

- Major non-conformities not closed within the defined deadline cause **suspension** of the certificate; revocation if the failure is serious or recurring.
- Without certificate, the farm **loses access to demanding buyers** (European chains, premium retailers).
- Without current **CoC**, a post-farm company cannot sell the product as ASC nor use the label.

Commercial risk:

- **Tesco, Sainsbury's, Carrefour, Lidl, Edeka, Aldi** and other European retailers require ASC for farmed seafood. Without certificate, the plant does not enter the shelf.
- A drop in compliance level (more frequent observations) can trigger **commercial review** by the buyer.
- Price differential: ASC product typically commands a **premium** over non-certified product.

Reputational risk:

- ASC maintains a **public certificate registry**. Suspension or revocation is visible to buyers, NGOs and consumers.
- Serious incidents (mass mortality, escapes, prohibited antibiotic use) can be amplified by WWF and media, damaging the brand long-term.

6. Timeline

- **2010: ASC founded** by WWF and IDH as an independent NGO.
- **2012:** first ASC-certified product (tilapia).
- **2012–2018:** progressive release of species-specific standards (salmon 2012, shrimp 2014, etc.).
- **2017:** ASC Salmon Standard v1.1.
- **March 2014:** ASC Shrimp Standard v1.0.
- **April 2024:** ASC CoC Module v1.3 published.
- **August 1, 2025: ASC Farm Standard v1.0.1 effective** (consolidated, replaces species-specific standards).
- **May 1, 2027: ASC Farm Standard mandatory** for all farms. Species-specific standards are retired on this date.
- **From 2027 onwards:** revision and update cycle of the Farm Standard.

7. Official source and updates

- **Primary source:** [ASC International](#)
- **ASC standards:** [Our standards](#)
- **Full ASC Farm Standard v1.0.1 text (PDF):** [ASC-STD-001 Farm Standard V1.0.1 · Aug 2025](#)
- **ASC Chain of Custody Module (PDF):** [ASC CoC Module v1.3 · Apr 2024](#)
- **Public certificate registry:** dashboard at asc-aqua.org.
- **Last official update verified:** August 1, 2025 (Farm Standard v1.0.1 effective).
- **Darwin doc version:** 1.0.0.
- **Darwin doc date:** May 13, 2026.

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All-in-One Digital Product Platform

Traceability, compliance and operational efficiency for food and agro-industrial supply chains.

From origin to market. From traceability to trust.

Traceability is now market-access infrastructure

Food supply chains must demonstrate origin, process, compliance and evidence. Pressure converges from regulators, global buyers, consumers, brands and higher-value markets.

Regulators

FSMA 204 / EUDR

Buyers

visibility and response

Consumers

trust with evidence

Markets

origin, quality and access

Darwin covers the full traceability cycle



AI LAYER Intelligence applied over traceable data: inconsistencies, gaps, risks, alerts, queries and audits.

What it solves

- Fragmented data across field, plant, logistics and customers.
- Slow audits and traceability rebuilt after the fact.
- Gap between market requirements and operational reality.
- Low digitalization at producers and rural areas.

What it enables

- **Comply better:** structured, auditable and verifiable data.
- **Operate better:** fewer errors, rework and manual load.
- **Sell better:** demonstrable origin, quality and sustainability.
- **Include better:** producers connected to higher-value chains.

Multi-standard compliance

Capture once, structure correctly and reuse the data for regulatory, commercial and operational purposes.

FSMA 204

CTEs / KDEs

EUDR

DDS and deforestation

Certifications

GlobalGAP, BRC, organic

Private standards

retailers and buyers

One platform, different value cases

● Producers

evidence and market access

● Exporters

control and compliance

● Retailers and brands

risk, recalls and claims

● Certifiers

audit-ready evidence

● Industry bodies

sectoral standardization

● Governments

inclusion and markets

Rollout: Discovery, Pilot and Go-live

Differentiators: traceability at the core · capture at origin · interoperability · verifiable evidence · all-in-one modular · AI on top of real traceability.

01 Discovery



02 Pilot



03 Go-live