

Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) Certification

Frequently Asked Questions

The LRQA logo is a white square with a thin white border, containing the letters 'LRQA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. It is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, overlaid on the background of the aquaculture farm.

LRQA

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Frequently asked questions

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What is ASC certification?

A

The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certification is a globally recognised standard for responsibly farmed seafood. It ensures that aquaculture operations adhere to stringent environmental and social criteria, providing assurance to consumers, retailers and businesses that seafood products are sourced sustainably.

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What are the benefits of ASC certification?

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ASC certification offers several advantages, including:

- **Market access** – Certified products are preferred by major retailers and foodservice providers that prioritise sustainability.
- **Consumer trust** – The ASC label is recognised globally, indicating a commitment to responsible aquaculture practices.
- **Improved operational practices** – Certification encourages aquaculture farms to adopt environmentally friendly and socially responsible methods.

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What is the process for obtaining ASC certification?

A

The ASC certification process involves several key steps:

1. **Preparation** – The aquaculture operation aligns its practices with ASC standards, addressing areas such as environmental impact, social responsibility and fish welfare.
2. **Application** – The business applies for certification through an accredited certification body.
3. **Audit and evaluation** – A thorough assessment of the operation's compliance with ASC standards is conducted, including site visits and stakeholder consultations.
4. **Certification and ongoing compliance** – Once approved, certification is granted, with regular audits to verify continued compliance.

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How much does ASC certification cost?

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The cost of ASC certification varies depending on factors such as the size and complexity of the operation. While specific costs cannot be provided upfront, LRQA can offer a tailored quote based on your organisation's needs.

Contact us today →



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How long does it take to become ASC certified?

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The timeframe for obtaining ASC certification varies based on factors such as the preparation of the aquaculture farm, the availability of certification bodies and the complexity of the audit. These factors can influence the duration of the certification process.

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Which major brands and retailers partner with ASC?

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ASC-certified seafood is used by globally recognised brands and retailers, including:

- **Walmart** – A leading global retailer that prioritises sustainability in its seafood sourcing.
- **Whole Foods Market** – A supermarket chain known for its commitment to high-quality, sustainably sourced products.

These brands rely on ASC certification to ensure they meet consumer demand for responsibly sourced seafood.

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What is the ASC combined standard anticipated for release in May 2025?

A

The ASC is planning to introduce a combined standard, tentatively scheduled for release in May 2025. This new standard aims to integrate various species-specific standards into a single, harmonised framework. The objective is to streamline certification processes, reduce complexity and ensure consistency across different aquaculture operations. By consolidating the standards, the ASC seeks to make it more straightforward for producers to understand and implement the requirements, thereby promoting broader adoption of responsible aquaculture practices.

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What does the new ASC combined standard mean for currently certified organisations?

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Organisations already holding ASC certification will need to transition to the new combined standard once it is officially released. The ASC is expected to outline a transition timeline, providing a grace period for certified entities to align their practices with the updated requirements. This transition will involve retiring the existing species-specific standards and certified organisations will be required to adapt to the unified criteria. Specific dates and guidelines will be communicated by the ASC to ensure a smooth and efficient transition process.



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How does LRQA support businesses in achieving ASC certification?

A

As an accredited ASC certification body, LRQA offers independent audits, expert guidance and tailored certification services to help businesses navigate the certification process efficiently, ensuring compliance with ASC requirements.

[Find out how LRQA can help your business →](#)

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How do I start the ASC certification process?

A

To begin the certification process, contact LRQA for an initial consultation. Our team can provide detailed insights, a tailored quote and guidance on the next steps to achieving ASC certification.

[Get in touch with LRQA today to discuss your ASC certification needs. →](#)

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How does ASC certification fit into a wider seafood sustainability strategy, including human rights due diligence?

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- **Human rights due diligence** – Conducting risk assessments to identify and mitigate forced labour, modern slavery and worker exploitation in seafood supply chains.
- **Social accountability and ethical audits** – Verifying working conditions through standards such as SA8000 or other social compliance audits.
- **Traceability and supply chain transparency** – Ensuring robust chain of custody controls and ethical procurement practices.
- **Compliance with regulatory requirements** – Aligning with EU regulations, the UK Modern Slavery Act and other relevant legislation.
- **Engagement with NGOs and industry initiatives** – Participating in global initiatives to promote sustainability and ethical practices in aquaculture.

LRQA provides sustainability assurance, human rights due diligence assessments and ethical supply chain audits to help organisations build a responsible and resilient seafood supply chain.

[Would you like to discuss how LRQA can support your responsible sourcing strategy? Contact us today. →](#)



About LRQA:

LRQA is a leading global assurance partner, bringing together decades of unrivalled expertise in assessment, advisory, inspection and cybersecurity services – underpinned by data-driven insights – to help its clients navigate a new era of risk.

Operating in more than 150 countries with a team of more than 5,000 people, LRQA's award-winning compliance, supply chain, cybersecurity and ESG specialists help more than 60,000 clients across almost every sector to anticipate, mitigate and manage risk wherever they operate.

Get in touch

Visit www.lrqa.com for more information or email enquiries@lrqa.com



LRQA
1 Trinity Park
Bickenhill Lane
Birmingham
B37 7ES
United Kingdom

