



# Aquaculture Certification

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**TECHNICAL GUIDELINES ON  
AQUACULTURE CERTIFICATION**

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**DIRECTIVES TECHNIQUES RELATIVES À  
LA CERTIFICATION EN AQUACULTURE**

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**DIRECTRICES TÉCNICAS PARA LA  
CERTIFICACIÓN EN LA ACUICULTURA**





# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ **Fifth Session of the COFI/AQ (2010):**

- ❖ ..... the Sub-Committee adopted the draft guidelines and requested the Committee on Fisheries (COFI) to approve them at its 29 Session.

## ❖ **Twenty ninth Session of COFI (2011):**

- ❖ The Committee approved the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope

- ❖ These guidelines provide guidance for the development, organization and implementation of credible aquaculture certification schemes.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope

- ❖ The guidelines consider a range of issues which should be considered relevant for the certification in aquaculture, including: a) animal health and welfare, b) food safety, c) environmental integrity and d) socio-economic aspects associated with aquaculture.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope

- ❖ Credible aquaculture certification schemes consist of three main components:
  - ❖ (i) standards;
  - ❖ (ii), accreditation, and
  - ❖ (iii) certification.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope

- ❖ The guidelines therefore cover:
  - ❖ standard setting processes required to develop and review certification standards;
  - ❖ accreditation systems needed to provide formal recognition to a qualified body to carry out certification;
  - ❖ certification bodies required to verify compliance with certification standards.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope – who certifies?

- ❖ Developing and implementing a certification scheme may be undertaken by **any entity qualified to do so** in accordance with the requirements of these guidelines. Such an entity can include, inter alia, a government, an intergovernmental organization, a non-governmental organization, private sector group (e.g. a producer or trade association), a civil society arrangements, or consortium comprising some or all of these different stakeholder groups, as direct users of the guidelines.





# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Scope – who certifies?

- ❖ The guidelines provide information on the institutional and organizational arrangements for aquaculture certification, including governance requirements, particularly to ensure that conflicts of interest are avoided.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ 13 Principles
- ❖ 4 minimum substantive criteria for developing aquaculture certification standards
  - ❖ a) animal health and welfare,
  - ❖ b) food safety,
  - ❖ c) environmental integrity and
  - ❖ d) socio-economic aspects.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ The extent to which a certification scheme seeks to address the issues depends on the objectives of the scheme, which should be explicitly and transparently stated by the scheme. Development of certification schemes should consider the importance of being able to measure performance of aquaculture systems and practices, and the ability to assess conformity with certification standards.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ Institutional and procedural requirements for establishing and implementing credible aquaculture certification schemes are presented here in four parts:
  - ❖ 1) Governance,
  - ❖ 2) Standard setting,
  - ❖ 3) Accreditation and
  - ❖ 4) Certification.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ The sections on Standards setting, Accreditation, and Certification are each subdivided into four sections:
  - ❖ i) Purpose,
  - ❖ ii) Normative references,
  - ❖ iii) Functions and structure and
  - ❖ iv) Requirements. .



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ The requirements are considered the minimum requirements that a body or entity should meet to be recognized as credible and reliable in executing its duties and responsibilities. The principles provided in this document apply equally to procedural and institutional aspects of certification schemes for aquaculture.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ The guidance presented here draws on other internationally accepted guidance, especially those produced by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC).



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

- ❖ Any certification scheme implemented pursuant to these guidelines must conform with a country's WTO commitments, particularly those under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures.





# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Application

- ❖ Entities responsible for new and existing aquaculture certification schemes should undertake to assess, verify and document that these certification schemes have been developed and are being implemented in accordance with the guidelines.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Application

- ❖ If there are deficiencies in the way an existing scheme was developed and/or in how it is being implemented, the entities responsible for the functions (i.e. standard setting, accreditation, or certification) should act accordingly to define and implement a corrective action plan.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Application

- ❖ When this is completed, the entities should verify and document that the scheme is in accordance with the guidelines. There should not be any conflict of interest among the entities involved.



# Aquaculture Certification Guidelines

## ❖ Application

- ❖ If the entities responsible for a private aquaculture certification scheme do not provide credible assurance that the scheme has been developed and is being implemented in accordance with the guidelines, stakeholder groups (especially those being certified under the scheme) may use these guidelines to have the scheme evaluated by a body with appropriate expertise or undertake such evaluation themselves. See chapter on Institutional and Procedural Requirements for details.



# Conformity Assessment Framework

- ❖ **Sixth Session of COFI/AQ (2012):**
  - ❖ FAO build on the experience gained during the development of the conformity assessment framework for the guidelines on ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from capture fisheries, during its efforts in developing the same for aquaculture certification.



# Conformity Assessment Framework

- ❖ **Thirtieth Session of COFI (2012):**
  - ❖ ..... requested FAO to develop a conformity assessment framework for aquaculture certification guidelines and noted that such activities and resulting tools should not create any technical barriers to trade.



# Conformity Assessment Framework

## ❖ Conformity Assessment:

- ❖ Any activity concerned with determining directly or indirectly that relevant requirements are fulfilled. (ISO Guide 2. 12.2)
- ❖ The evaluation framework would use these guidelines to assess whether a certification scheme is developed and implemented in accordance with the guidelines regarding, *inter alia*:



# Conformity Assessment Framework

## ❖ Conformity Assessment:

- ❖ whether the principles have been adhered to;
- ❖ whether the special considerations have been addressed;
- ❖ whether the objectives of the scheme and issue areas have been addressed in accordance with the appropriate minimum substantive requirements; and
- ❖ whether the standard setting, accreditation and/or certification have been developed and implemented in accordance with the institutional and procedural requirements.





# Conformity Assessment Framework

- ❖ In order to add value to the supply chain and stimulate improvements an aquaculture certification scheme there is a need to comply with three key components:
  - ❖ the scheme should have a clear and transparent scope and objective;
  - ❖ the scheme should use a standard that is in line with its scope and objectives and stimulates improvement; and
  - ❖ the scheme should be credible and robust in its development and implementation.



# Conformity Assessment Framework

- ❖ COFI/AQ/VII (2013) approved the CAF developed by FAO with some comments.
- ❖ COFI-31 (2014) confirmed the decision of COFI/AQ/VII
- ❖ CAF will be revised/amended reflecting the comments made by the COFI/AQ/VII and tabled at the COFI/AQ/VIII to be held in Brasilia, Brazil in October 2015



# Purpose of the CAF

- ❖ The primary purpose of this CAF is to assess the conformity of a certification scheme with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.



# Expected users of the CAF

- ❖ The expected users of this CAF are certification scheme owners, governments, consumers, producers and stakeholders that may have an interest in the field of conformity assessment.



# The evaluation process

- ❖ The evaluation to assess the conformity of a certification scheme with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification must consider the following in their entirety:
  - ❖ The FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification;
  - ❖ All components of the certification scheme;
  - ❖ The FAO CAF.



# The evaluation process

1. The certification scheme must make a clear, unambiguous statement of its goal and scope relative to the Principles, Institutional and Procedural components, and Minimum Substantive Criteria components of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification.
2. This statement must describe which Minimum Substantive Criteria issue areas the scheme intends to cover, and which issue areas it does not intend to cover.



## The evaluation process

3. The evaluation team needs to be defined and records of their meetings and decisions should be retained on file to provide transparency of process. The qualifications of each team member should be noted, along with a declaration that there is no conflict of interest arising.



# The evaluation process

3. Next, the certification scheme must be subject to evaluation against the Principles and Institutional and Procedural components of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification, including all of the requirements of these components as described in this evaluation framework.





# The evaluation process

5. Should the scheme meet all the Principles and Institutional and Procedural components requirements as expressed in the framework, the evaluation can then proceed to the components on Minimum Substantive Criteria, according to the issue areas identified in the scheme goal, and according to all of the requirements for the issue areas as described in this evaluation framework.



## The evaluation process

6. Only if the evaluation against the Minimum Substantive Criteria fulfills all the requirements of at least one of the issue areas (Animal Health and Welfare, Food Safety, Environmental Integrity, Socio-economic aspects) can the evaluation begin to make a statement of conformance.



# The evaluation process

7. The Evaluation Framework is presented in two parts. Part 1 deals with principles and minimum substantive criteria. In this section, the evaluation of conformity is assessed by answering a series of questions directly relevant to a specific paragraph of the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. The expected answers are either YES or NO. The evaluator is expected to provide evidence if the assessment is positive and explain why if the assessment is negative.



# The evaluation process

8. Part 2 of the Evaluation Framework deals with institutional and procedural requirements.
  - (a) Governance,
  - (b) Standard Setting
  - (c) Accreditation
  - (d) Certification
  - (e) Chain of Custody
  - (f) Use of Certification Claim, Symbol, Label or Logo, and
  - (g) Resolution for Complaints and Appeals.



# The evaluation process

9. Each category refers to a certain number of paragraphs in the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification and a set of criteria is provided for the evaluator to confirm if the certification scheme complies with the specific guidelines outlined in those paragraphs/sections.



# The evaluation process

10. The evaluator is required to carefully review and ensure that all documentation adequately reflects the conformity of the scheme, under the above seven categories, with the FAO Technical Guidelines on Aquaculture Certification. The criteria provided in the Evaluation Framework are considered adequate to establish conformity or non-conformity.



# The evaluation process

11. If the assessment does not determine conformance with any of the issue areas, no statement of conformity of any sort with the Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Certification can be made.



# Statement of conformity

11. There is a procedure outlined in the Framework Document.





# Current Status





# Many Certifiers and Certificates!



## GLOBALG.A.P.



Wild, Natural & Sustainable





# Current status

- Third party vs. State certification
- Conformity assessment and tool development
- Awareness creation and capacity building
- Regional work and national implementation
- ASEAN initiative



# Thank You!