

# QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (QMS) and GOVERNANCE MANUAL

## Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Certified Quality Aquaculture (CQA) Scheme

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the QMS Governance and Control Manual for the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture (CQA) programme. It supports the assessment of activity on a farmed fish production and/or processing site against the ‘**Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm and Processing Standards**’ and is further supported by a collection of standard procedure documents, templates, and specific information.

This manual outlines the policies and procedures which prescribe and guide the auditing/evaluation/certification/accreditation process and demonstrates that there are no policies/procedures whereby BIM actively participates in any part of the assessment or decision-making process.

The BIM CQA Programme is owned and managed by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). The structure of the operating, certification and control procedures are described herein.

The BIM CQA Programme and Standards management considers and aims to follow the general best practice criteria and guidance as outlined by:

- The EU Organic Regulations 848/2018 under the national standard ‘Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland (OFFSI); (as applicable to applicants who wish to apply for organic certification).
- 2003 Environmental Code of Practice for Aquaculture Companies and Traders (ECOPACT).
- Council Directive 91/492/EEC (and Code of Practice on Marine Biotoxins).
- 2003 ICES Code of Practice on the Introductions and Transfers of Marine Organisms.
- Resolution by the Parties to the Convention for the Conservation of Salmon in the North Atlantic Ocean to Minimise Impacts from Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers, and Transgenic on Wild Salmon Stocks (2003).
- Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention).
- PARCOM Recommendation 94/6 on Best Environmental Practice (BEP) for the Reduction of Inputs of Potentially Toxic Chemicals from Aquaculture.
- The Fisheries (Amendment) Act (1997).
- Aquaculture (Licence Application and Licence Fees) Regulations (1998).
- Wildlife (Amendment) Act (2000).
- European Communities (Conservation of Wild Birds) Regulations (1985).
- European Communities (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations (1998).

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

## BIM CERTIFIED QUALITY AQUACULTURE PROGRAMME

- European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations (1999).
- CMO Regulation 1379/2013 & FIC Regulation 1169/2011).
- European Communities (Live Bivalve Molluscs) (Health Conditions for Production and placing on the market) (Amendment) Regulations (2000).
- European Communities (Fishery Products) (Health Conditions and Hygiene Rules for Production and Placing on the Market) Regulations (1996) (EU Reg 853).
- Irish Medicines Board Act (1995).
- European Communities (Aquaculture Animals and Fish) (Placing on the Market and Control of Certain Diseases) Regulations (2000).
- Quality of Shellfish Waters (Amendment) Regulations (2001).
- Waste Management (Licensing) Regulations (2004).
- Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations (2001).
- ISO 17065.
- GSSI (Global Seafood Sustainable Initiative).
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 (No 10) and subsequent amendments.
- National Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2014/89/EU (establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning).
- The protection of shellfish growing waters is under the remit of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC).
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011). Amended by; SI No, 290 of 2013; 499 of 2013; 355 of 2015.
- Fish Health Regulations S.I No 261 of 2008 (implementing Directive 2006/88/EC).

The principal objectives of the BIM CQA Programme are:

- To support the production of high-class farmed Irish seafood and to differentiate aquaculture products in the marketplace through quality, sustainability and eco labelling and for those applicants to the organic OFFSI Ed.2.
- Assurance is demonstrated by a Certified Statement of Conformity issued by an approved independent Certification Body stating that products are quality, and/or eco labelled based on the CQA Standards, procedures and practices.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

## BIM CERTIFIED QUALITY AQUACULTURE PROGRAMME

- The CQA standards scope include farms and processing plants involved in farming and processing of finfish (including Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater salmonids) and mussels (including rope and bottom grown mussels) and its main objectives are to ensure food safety, quality, and environmental responsibility, via verification testing and traceability criteria required to be in place within the type of operation each standard covers and for organic applicants, support their certification via the provision of guidance.
- The standards are performance based and can be defined as defining objectives (e.g. food safety, product traceability, biosecurity management, integrated pest management, nutrient impact reduction, sustainability of raw materials, nature and conservation, environmental management, feed specification, etc...) with confirmation that the thresholds and the documented evidence have been in place via the audits.

The Scheme is open to all applicants within the region of Ireland regardless of size and scale, management, and minimum number of operators.

The key standards underlying for the BIM CQA Programme are the:

1. Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard, Issue 2 Revision 0, Jan 2022 superseding the outgoing version Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard, Issue 1 Revision 1, Nov 2018.
2. Certified Quality Aquaculture Processing Standard, Issue 2 Revision 0, Jan 2022 superseding the outgoing version Certified Quality Aquaculture Processing Standard, Issue 1, June 2016.

CQA Farm and Processing Standards version 'Issue 2 Revision' are valid from Jan 2022. For existing 'certified entities', transition to this new standard will become effective 'at the latest' Jan 2023, allowing a maximum of 12 months to become compliant with it. New entities shall be assessed and certified against this new standard starting from Jan 2022.

This new CQA Farm Standard Issue 2 arose following a significant review of sections of the Standard specific to key areas of interest, notably; sustainable aquaculture practice, conservation of biodiversity and environmental performance of aquaculture.

This new CQA Processing Standard Issue 2 arose following a significant review of sections of the Standard specific to key areas of interest, notably; criteria that demonstrates sustainable practice within processing operations. Areas that continue to remain of significant importance to the Certification Programme include; seafood safety, seafood quality, traceability to origin and the sustainability of Irish aquaculture.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

Additionally, these new versions were necessary due to the introduction of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 on organic production and labelling of organic products and repealing Council Regulation EC 834/2007 (referred to as the Organic Regulation(s) which came into force from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022). The previous sub-scope for Organic Aquaculture Certification Part 1A of CQA Farm Standard Issue 1.1 and CQA Processing Standard Issue 1.0 is now superseded by a new separate implementing Standard for the Organic Regulation(s) called the Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland Edition 2. The Organic Sub-scope (Part 1A previously in CQA Farm Standard Issue 1.1 and Processing Standard Issue 1.0) have been removed from the new CQA Standards Issue 2. This document includes a link to a [BIM Organic Aquaculture Advisory Document](#) which provides guidance to applicants on the Organic Food and Farming Standards in Ireland Edition 2 and the Organic Regulation(s). The changes were significant and therefore it was determined by the CQA Committees that this justified an Issue=Number change. The CQA Program underwent a 60-day public comment period as part of the GSSI approval process.

The frequency of the audit to maintain approval is at least annual. Certified Companies could be subject to short notice and unannounced audits if issues are brought to the attention of the BIM or the Certification Body

This manual will be accessible on the BIM website. The content of this manual will be subject to annual review as part of the Programme’s Internal Quality System Review.

BIM makes information and documentation freely and publicly available about the Programme’s governance structure, programme ownership, standards and standard-setting procedures, and the composition, operating procedures and responsibilities of its governance bodies. This is available on the BIM website.

## 2. BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Policy Statement

### 2.1 General BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Policy Statement

The BIM CQA policy is founded on a commitment by BIM and its members to provide and support a responsible standard for the production of high-class farmed Irish seafood and to differentiate aquaculture products in the marketplace through quality, eco and with pairing to OFFSI Ed. 2, organic labelling.

All activities of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme will be carried out in a systematic manner in accordance with defined and documented Policies and Procedures, will meet applicable legislative requirements, will be visible and auditable, and will ensure that the needs of Applicant, Staff, Certification Bodies (CBs), Accreditation Bodies (ABs) and all other related Stakeholders are met.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By	C. Morrison		
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

## 2.2 Key Performance Indicators for BIM CQA

BIM is committed to providing and facilitating a cost effective and practical assessment and certification process through which salmon and mussel farms and processing sites in Ireland can demonstrate their commitment towards quality and ecosystem friendly production and will implement the Quality Management System (QMS) described in this document in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To work in partnership with CBs and applicants to provide for their needs and enhance their expectations to enable them to meet the requirements of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme;
- To achieve and maintain Global Sustainable Seafood Initiative (GSSI) Benchmarking for the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme;
- To maintain a participatory work ethic, to properly apply the innate excellence of staff, and to provide a culture in which they excel;
- To facilitate and maintain ISO 17065 accreditation for the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme;
- To provide open, effective communication with customers, interested parties and committees;
- To provide systematic validation and control of quality processes.

The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme is not a mandatory scheme and there is no requirement for aquaculture facilities and processing sites to be certified in order to access any markets.

## 2.3 Programme Review

The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme is subject to an annual review process to ensure it remains relevant, accurate and optimised. The review outcomes include a list of findings, cause analysis, and preventive and corrective actions with deadlines and responsibilities, as applicable. The preventative and corrective actions can result in the revision of operating procedures or the standard itself.

The management review is fully documented, is carried out with the involvement of directly affected stakeholders and other interested parties and addresses any issues of concern raised by such. There are opportunities for stakeholders to engage via comments submitted directly to BIM or CBs, or during open public comment periods.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**2.4 Management and Control**

The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme has established and will maintain an independent effective certification assessment system based on ISO 17065 to ensure that CBs operate in a consistent and controlled manner and so that applicants and certified plants manage their businesses and market their products in full conformity with the criteria defined in the Programme standards.

**2.4.1** In support of its policies, the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme has established and will maintain a system of documentation and control procedures coupled with regular reviews to ensure that it facilitates an efficient and cost effective certification service to the industry it serves.

**2.4.2** This Manual also serves as a management QMS Control Manual and a training manual. It is essential that all BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture personnel and other relevant parties are made aware of relevant procedures and controls and to adhere to the systems defined to ensure their effective operation.

BIM, the BIM Seafood Technical Services Director and Key Staff are fully committed to the above policies and performance targets.

Signed *Rory Campbell*  
Rory.Campbell (Oct 27, 2022 08:03 GMT+1)

Date: Oct 27, 2022

**BIM CQA Oversight Committee Chair**

Signed: Vera Flynn

Date: Oct 27, 2022

**BIM CQA Program Lead**

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

### 3. PROGRAMME STATUS, STRUCTURE AND FINANCES

#### 3.1 History

**3.1.1** Globally, aquaculture is projected to be the prime source of seafood by 2030, as demand grows from the global middle class and wild capture approach their maximum take. Aquaculture, in common with all other food production practices, is facing challenges for sustainable development. Most aquafarmers, like their terrestrial counterparts, are continuously pursuing ways and means of improving their production practices and quality to make them more efficient and cost-effective. Awareness of potential environmental problems has also increased significantly.

The management of the seafood sector in Ireland is carried out on behalf of the State by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) as well as three non-commercial semi-state bodies: Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), The Marine Institute (MI), and The Sea-Protection Authority (SFPA).

#### ***BORD IASCAIGH MHARA (BIM)***

BIM was established under the Sea Act 1952 as the state agency with primary responsibility for developing the Irish sea fishing and aquaculture industries. BIM's mission is to grow a thriving Irish seafood industry; expand the raw material base, add value and develop efficient supply chains that together deliver on the Government's Food harvest 2025 targets for seafood and create sustainable jobs.

BIM is focused on expanding the volume, quality and value of output from the Irish seafood industry. It provides a range of advisory, financial, technical and training services to all sectors on the Irish seafood industry. The agency is governed by a non-executive Board, comprised of six directors, including the Chairman, appointed by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

**3.1.2** In 1997, BIM decided to address the value chain's need to produce world-class farmed seafood and differentiate these products in the marketplace through quality assurance programs. These have developed to quality, organic and eco specifications. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), with representatives from all parts of the supply chain from feed to fork was convened to develop the BIM Quality standards including the Certified Quality Aquaculture Standard. As of January 1st 2022, the CQA Organic Sub scope will be superseded by the new Organic Food & Farming Standards for Ireland Edition 2 transposing EU Regulation 848/2018. This new Standard will be the only DAFM recognised Organic Standard in use and will not fall under the direct remit of the CQA TAC. However, the TAC will remain engaged in organic aquaculture in the form of supporting the technical interpretation and guidance to applicants based on the OFFSI Ed. 2 specific to the sections relating to aquaculture.

**3.1.3** The TAC agreed that the standard should be a business-to-customer facing assurance that

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					



would have aquaculture facilities as its unit of certification. It was also agreed that the new standard should be managed according to ISO 17065, which required the appointment of an independent Certification Body which could undertake all auditing and award certificates to compliant farms.

**3.1.4** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standard considered 3 specific area:

- Irish Quality Assured (Available for Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater salmonids and Mussels).
- Irish Eco Assured (Available for Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater salmonids and Mussels).
- Guidance to the OFFSI Ed.2 Standards specific to organic aquaculture.

**3.1.5** The first BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture farms were certified in April 2001.

**3.1.6** The Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard is separated into different modules, each one covering different areas of activity on a farmed fish production site. These modules are grouped as follows:

**Scope: Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard**

Certified Quality Aquaculture; Certification Requirements. This core section of the standard covers the production process from inputs through to outputs and covers the assessment of the applicant’s food safety system and operation practices, traceability system, facility hygiene, product quality, sustainable management and nature conservation and environmental performance. This core section covers the practices that are required to be in place for maintaining good environmental status and also specific product criteria describing our superior quality Irish aquaculture products including Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Salmonids and Mussels. This scope is available for Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Finfish and Mussels.

**Additional CQA Sub-scope: Eco Production**

Certified Quality Aquaculture; Additional Eco Requirements. This section of the standard aims to assist the applicant in the implementation of an environmental management systems approach to demonstrate and prove their commitment to environmentally sustainable development during the production process. The subscope covers the additional eco requirements that are to be in place together with the CQA Certification requirements in order to achieve eco certification. This sub-scope is available for Salmon, Freshwater Finfish and Mussels.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

### Certified Standard Scopes

<p><b>Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard</b></p> <p>The applicant must be able to demonstrate compliance to the Certification/ General requirements of the Standard.</p>
<p><b>Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard: Additional Sub-scope; Eco Production</b></p> <p>The applicant must be able to demonstrate compliance to the Certification Requirements and the Eco Requirements of the Standard.</p>

Similarly, the Certified Quality Aquaculture Processing Standard is separated into different modules, each one covering different areas of activity in the fish processing facility. These modules are grouped as follows:

#### **Scope: Certified Quality Aquaculture Processing Standard (Core requirements for all processors)**

Certified Quality Aquaculture; General Requirements. This core section of the standard covers the manufacturing process from raw material intake through to final product dispatch and covers the assessment of the company, premises, operational systems and procedures. The Processing Standard covers the food safety, operational, quality and environmental criteria that are required to be in place and also the specific product criteria for both finfish and mussels. This core section covers the practices that are required to be in place for maintaining good environmental status and also the specific product criteria describing superior quality Irish aquaculture products (including Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Salmonids) and Mussels.

#### **Additional Sub-Scope: Eco Processing**

Certified Quality Aquaculture; Additional Eco Requirements. This section of the standard is aiming to assist the company to demonstrate and prove their commitment to environmentally sustainable development during the manufacturing process. This Sub-scope covers the additional eco requirements that are to be in place together with the core general requirements in the CQA Processing Standard in order to achieve eco certification.

**3.1.7** In October 2001 the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Scheme achieved, through its independent Certification Body, the International Organisation for Standardisation ISO Guide 65:1996 (EN45011) accreditation. This accreditation standard has been superseded by ISO 17065 in 2015.

### **3.2 Programme Governance Structure**

The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme is managed via the BIM Aquaculture Division, a department that has operating resources and dedicated staff with clearly defined responsibilities and functions. The other bodies involved in the Governance of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

Programme are defined and summarized in an organisational chart. In assigning membership of each body, it is ensured that individuals have adequate capacity, knowledge and experience to fulfil responsibilities.

BIM, The Seafood Development Agency is an Irish government state agency. The remit of BIM is described on the BIM website [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie). The Board of BIM comprises six directors, including a Chairman appointed by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The Board determines BIM's programmes in the context of EU and national policies and oversees their implementation. The current BIM Board members are listed on the BIM website.

### 3.2.1 BIM Seafood Technical Services Director

The BIM Seafood Technical Services Director connects the Chief Executive Officer who connects the Board of Directors (Board) and the CQA Oversight Committee. The CEO reports to the Board on any relevant matters. The CEO offers specific Assurance expertise and strategic guidance and may collaborate with the Seafood Technical Services Director who is the Chair of the CQA Oversight Committee to ensure the BIM vision and remit are carried out at every level of the organisation and reflected in the CQA Scheme.

### 3.2.2 CQA Oversight Committee (OC)

To promote a stakeholder involvement within Ireland and abroad, the CQA Oversight Committee (OC) is composed by members from BIM, industry, management and research agencies.

Further to this, the Oversight Committee allows for the public to call in for input during face-to-face meetings for potential input and comments in the standard development process and allows for comment to be received through other channels such as the stakeholders comment details provided on the CQA website, which can provided year round. The Oversight Committee holds primary guidance and oversight for the standard development process that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) carries out, whose members represent industry, nongovernmental conservation, and academic/regulatory interests. The CQA OC directs the drafting of all standards by the TAC. The CQA OC can recommend adjustments in the standards development process and set overarching goals for CQA certification, such as including more performance metrics or clearer specifications for the Irish industry, for consideration by the TAC.

Individuals are appointed to the Oversight Committee as representatives of BIM, companies, organisations, or other entities based on their experience. They serve until the completion of their appointed terms (2 years) and may only be replaced upon mutual agreement between the BIM Seafood Technical Services Director and the organizations they represent. Companies or organizations can be represented in successive terms but may not have more than one representative on the oversight committee at any given time. Participation can be requested by contacting the BIM Seafood Technical Services Director. Potential participants are then evaluated based on their motivation to join and experience in the industry segment they represent. The opportunity to join is then communicated

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

every two years from the start of the term or when new members are required in the oversight committee.

Members of the Oversight Committee shall carry themselves professionally, act objectively on behalf of the industry they represent and disclose any potential conflict of interest that they may have when taking part in this group, as instructed by the Chair.

**The Oversight Committee (OC)**

**3.2.2.1** The BIM Seafood Technical Services Director appoints the initial members of the OC Committee. He is the OC Chairperson.

**3.2.2.2** The OC shall appoint new members to the OC.

**3.2.2.3** Membership of the OC shall consist of a maximum of 6 people. The OC allows for the public to attend the meeting, remotely via an open conference call line to provide input or to attend the meeting to give specific technical input and expertise. The OC also allows for comment to be received through other channels such as the stakeholders comment details provided on the CQA website, through conference networking and email invitations which can be provided year-round.

**3.2.2.4** BIM acts as the secretariat for the OC but is not a voting member. BIM will maintain the records of the OC and development activity.

**3.2.2.5** It is the principal role of the OC to provide oversight of the process by which revision/updates of the BIM CQA Standards are conducted as necessary based on expertise, external comments, new legislations and guidance and to keep the BIM CQA Standards relevant and in line with internationally recognised best practice in aquaculture and processing management.

**3.2.2.6** The OC is similarly responsible for overseeing the development, revision and interpretation of all scheme requirements for CBs, all rules covering claims and logo use by CBs and certificate holders, all procedures for resolving complaints and appeals, and all procedures to be followed in the management and operation of the scheme.

**3.2.2.7** The OC is also responsible for overseeing the approval of contracts needed for the operation of the scheme, and the negotiation and approval of all agreements for cooperation or mutual recognition with other certification schemes.

**3.2.2.8** It is also vital that the BIM CQA Standards are maintained in an auditable and practical format. Once the Standards have been subject to an Open Comment Period of 60 days and have been approved by the TAC and the OC, the Standards are passed along to relevant Accreditation and Certification Bodies for review and implementation.

**3.2.2.9** The constitution of the OC, its Terms of Reference, Rules of Procedures and a list of members together with their professional affiliations are provided in the S2 document.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**3.2.2.10** The OC has no operational function in certification operations and categorically does not have a decision-making role in the approval, suspension, cancellation or in setting conditions of certificates, which are the responsibility of the CBs.

**3.2.3 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

The CQA Technical Committee is a committee of aquaculture and standard technical experts and is tasked with developing standards for specific species and reflecting the development and need in the Irish aquaculture industry. Each set of CQA standards is reviewed, revised, and voted upon by the Technical Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee allows for the public to telephone into the meeting via an open conference call line to provide input or to attend the meeting to give specific technical input and expertise. The TAC also allows for comment to be received through other channels such as the stakeholders comment details provided on the CQA website, through conference networking and email invitations which can be provided year-round.

The CQA standards drafted by the TAC committee are forwarded to the Oversight Committee for final approval.

The Oversight Committee also approves TAC committee membership, ensuring that the TAC represents a balance of stakeholders (e.g. industry, research, management, oversight, NGO). TAC members are evaluated and suggested by the CQA Program Lead and approved by the Oversight Committee based on their technical expertise, leadership experience, and communication skills. Chairpersons are required to act impartially in maintaining the orderly conduct of committee meetings and processing committee input. TAC members shall disclose any potential conflict of interest that they may have when taking part in this group.

The CQA Programme Lead works with the TAC chairperson in recruiting TAC members to participate in the standards development process. Nominations from the Oversight Committee are also welcome. TAC members serve an initial term of three years or until the work of the TAC is completed, as determined by the CQA Programme Lead in concert with the Oversight Committee. TAC members may be re-appointed for two additional terms. Participation can be requested by contacting the CQA Programme Lead. Potential participants are then evaluated based on their motivation to join and experience in the industry segment they represent. The opportunity to join is then communicated every three years from the start of the term or when new members are required in the TAC.

The TAC has no operational function in certification operations and categorically does not have a decision-making role in the approval, suspension, cancellation or in setting conditions of certificates, which are the responsibility of the CBs.

**3.2.4 CQA Programme Lead**

The CQA Programme Lead reports to the CQA Oversight Committee and committee chairpersons to carry out the general administration of the CQA scheme. The Lead who is a BIM employee guides the TAC Process, advises on general standards policies, and coordinates scheme activities. The Program

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

Lead also helps prepare draft standards and related documents as needed and is responsible for assuring that all records remain on file for at least one full standards revision period.

The CQA Programme Lead has no operational function in certification operations and categorically does not have a decision-making role in the approval, suspension, cancellation or in setting conditions of certificates, which are the responsibility of the CBs.

**3.2.5 CQA Programme Support Team** – The CQA Programme Lead and Programme Team Support will constitute the QMS Review Committee. This committee will conduct an annual QMS review to ensure the continuing suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of the organization. At this review, a number of Quality Management System components are reassessed to ensure that they remain current and applicable. These include the Quality Policy, annual quality objectives, performance and the need for any changes to the QMS or related documents. The CQA Support Team also supports the organisation and facilitating of TAC meetings.

The CQA Programme support team have no operational function in certification operations and categorically does not have a decision-making role in the approval, suspension, cancellation or in setting conditions of certificates, which are the responsibility of the CBs.

**3.2.8 Approved Certification Bodies** – These are independent CBs that are approved and engaged in assessing and certifying CQA Applicants. A CB is initially approved by BIM on the basis that it is accredited to ISO 17065. The contracts for actual certification are between the Applicant and the CB. Insurance coverage (field and volume) for liability is included in the CB requirements documents.

**3.2.9 Accreditation Bodies** – These are Accredited Bodies that are members of the International Accreditation Forum. They are engaged in assessing and accrediting Certification Bodies. The contracts for accreditation are between the Certification Body and the Accreditation Body.

**3.2.10 BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Applicants** – Organizations, usually aquaculture farms, applying for BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture assessment and certification against the BIM Standard. The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Applicant engages directly with approved Certification Bodies.

### 3.3 Finances

**3.3.1** BIM is a non-commercial semi-state Irish body and it is funded from the Irish Government and EU Subsidies. It is separate from the CBs that conduct the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture assessment and certification process.

**3.3.2** Certification Bodies are separate legal entities from BIM and BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Applicants and derive their funding from the membership/registration fees for assessment of farm and processing activities and other state sources.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**3.3.3** Accreditation Bodies are separate legal entities from all other BIM parties and derive their finances from the assessment and accreditation of Certification Bodies.

**4. BIM GOVERNANCE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - BRIEF**

**BIM / Board** – Standards Owners but have no Operational Responsibility. They agree on the finance and strategic direction of the CQA Program.

**BIM CEO** – Reports on the Programs Performance to the BIM Board when relevant – option to attend all Committees.

**Seafood Technical Services Director** – Reports to the BIM CEO on the Performance of the Program, Chairs the Oversight Committee, option to attend Technical Committees.

**Oversight Committee** - Oversees that the Program is maintaining its performance targets and strategic direction.

**Technical Advisory Committee** – Provides recommendations for the CQA Standard.

**CQA Program Lead** – Reports to the BIM Seafood Technical Services Director on the Performance of the Program, Closely Assists the Technical Committee and reports to the Oversight Committee. He/she is the key contact for the Program.

**Program Support Team** – Reports to the Program Lead. Provides Certification, Accreditation and Benchmarking support for the Quality Management System.

**Public Bodies** – have access to the Program Lead, Oversight Committee, Technical Advisory Committee and Public Comment Process to make recommendations to key decision makers.

**Certification Bodies** – Independently assess aquaculture organisations against the CQA Standard to a process that has been accredited by an Accreditation Body.

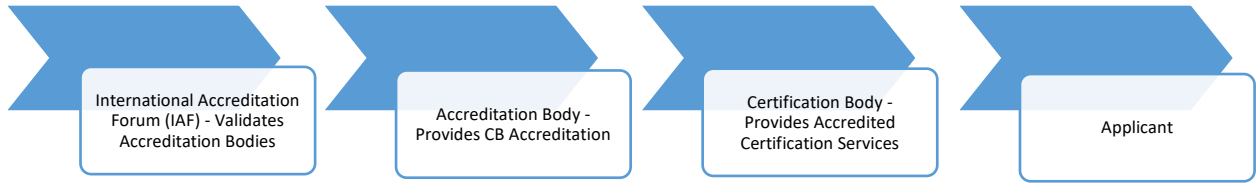
**Accreditation Body** – Independently assess the Certification Body to determine that it is operating to ISO 17065 requirements.

**Applicants** – Aquaculture Organisations that are in application to a Certification Body.

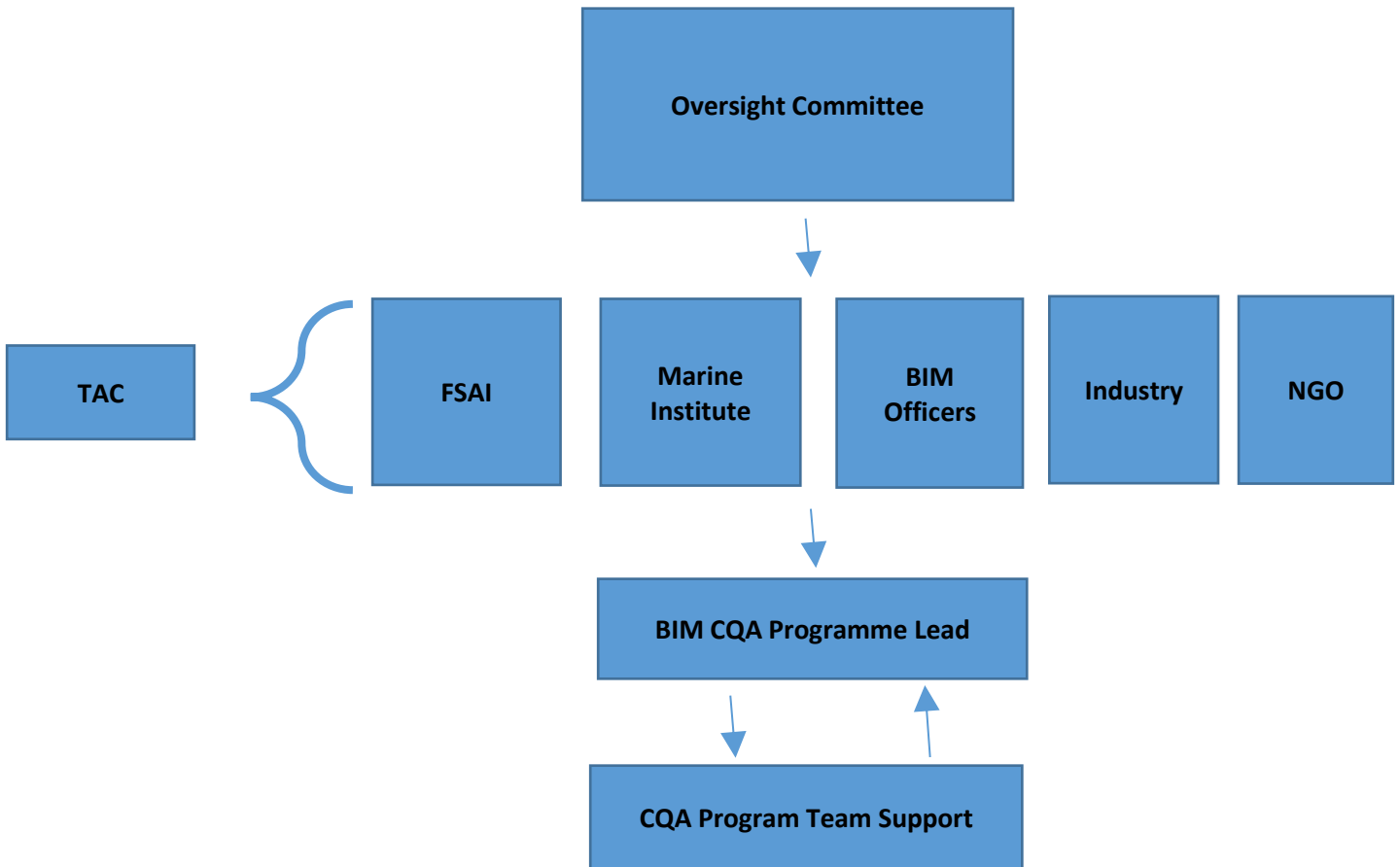
**Certified Companies** – Aquaculture organisations that have been certified by the Certification body as having met the CQA standard and are listed on the BIM website as certified.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By	C. Morrison		
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**ACCREDITATION & CERTIFICATION GOVERNANCE**



**ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE**



<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					



6. ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES

**6.1 The BIM CQA Lead acts on behalf on the OC**

**6.1.1** The BIM CQA Programme Lead is responsible for setting the outline of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme Procedures and Controls, which Certification Bodies must follow.

**6.1.2** BIM is responsible for the initial and continuing approval of Certification Bodies seeking to operate within the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme. Certification Bodies are expected to meet levels of service to their clients.

**6.1.3** The BIM CQA Programme Lead is responsible for liaison with Certification Bodies on any operational queries.

**6.1.4** The BIM CQA Programme Lead is responsible for coordinating the Annual Review of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme and publishing the proposed ‘BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme of Work’.

**6.1.5** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires Certification Bodies to maintain a written fee structure that is available on request and is adequate to support accurate and truthful assessments commensurate with the scale, size and complexity of the application, including the number and nature of Aquaculture Farm and Processor assessments to be conducted, and the number and nature of site audits.

**6.1.6** The BIM CQA Programme Lead ensures that the validity of a certification cycle does not exceed 1 year.

**6.1.7** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that Certification Bodies carry out periodic surveillance and monitoring annually to verify that certified operations continue to comply with the certification requirements.

**6.1.8** The BIM CQA Programme Lead ensures that CBs apply a consistent methodology to assess compliance with the aquaculture standard, including the use of the report templates provided.

**6.1.9** The BIM CQA Programme Lead ensures that accredited CBs have consistent documented procedure(s) that specify the conditions under which certification may be suspended or withdrawn, partially or in total, for all or part of the scope of certification. This procedure must include recognition that a certification is only valid while the aquaculture operation remains approved against the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture standard.

**6.1.10** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires CBs to use consistent formats for audit reports and reporting.

**6.1.11** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that CBs have in place consistent procedures for stakeholders to provide input during the certification process.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**6.1.12** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that the CB permits stakeholder input during the aquaculture assessment process.

**6.1.13** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that CBs use a consistent procedure during the farm audit process for determining non-compliances, verifying corrective actions arising from non-compliances and allowing for appeals of non-compliances.

**6.1.14** The BIM CQA Programme Lead maintains and ensures a list of certified enterprises is made publicly available via the BIM website.

**6.1.15** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires CBs upon request, to make aquaculture reports available.

**6.1.16** The BIM CQA Programme Lead notifies AB's, CB's and certified enterprises of any change in management procedures, which affects Programme rules and procedures for accreditation or certification.

**6.1.17** Where there is approval of a corrective actions to identified non-conformances, the BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that:

- The status of those conditions is examined during all future audit activities and procedures.
- The status of these conditions is factored into decisions over the aquaculture product retaining certification in all future audits.

**6.1.18** Where there is certification of an entity with non-compliances, the BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that:

- A timeline for closing out corrective actions must be defined.
- A system to verify that corrective actions have been closed out is in place.

**6.1.19** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires CBs to ensure that their aquaculture auditors have successfully completed training in the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme and have a continuing professional development programme and provides their auditors with current best practice for aquaculture.

**6.1.20** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that Certification Bodies include the following in their competence assessment of assessors and auditors:

- An assessment of knowledge and skills relating to either aquaculture production practices, aquaculture management and operations and/or aquaculture research, as appropriate.
- An assessment of the personal attributes of the assessor/auditor, to ensure they conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- A period of supervised training to cover the aquaculture audit and/or specific audit techniques and specific category/species knowledge.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

- A documented sign off of the satisfactory completion of the training programme by the appointed competent supervisor.

**6.1.21** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that CBs have a continuing professional development programme in place that provides assessors and auditors with current best practice aquaculture production practices, aquaculture management and operations.

**6.1.22** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires CBs to have documented procedures for auditing methods and frequency of audits that meet the following requirements:

- certificate validity does not exceed 1 year.
- audits are conducted annually.

**6.1.23** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires that CB assessment and audit reports are based on the provided assessment and audit templates, and include (as relevant):

- the date of the inspection/audit or period of the desktop assessment.
- the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for the assessment/audit and report.
- for site audits, the names and addresses of the sites inspected/audited.
- for site audits, the scope of the inspection/audit.
- for site audits, the non-conformities identified.
- for aquaculture assessments, the name of the species farmed, the geographical area of operation, the type of farming method used.

**6.1.24** The BIM CQA Programme Lead requires the CB to file aquaculture reports at their office and to make these reports available upon request.

## 6.2 Certification Bodies (CBs)

**6.2.1** Certification Bodies are approved after formal application to the BIM CQA Programme Lead. The CB must be accredited to ISO 17065 by an Accreditation Body of the International accreditation forum. The Programme is open to new CBs. The roles of the CB are as follows:

- Conduct a desktop assessment and onsite assessment of the aquaculture operation from which the seafood product is sourced against the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Scheme.
- Conduct a site audit/audit of the applicant farming/processing facilities against the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Scheme.
- Identify any significant failure on the part of the applicant to meet the requirements of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Scheme, and to decide on the issue or denial of Certificate of Approval based on compliance with the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm or Processing Standard.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By	C. Morrison		
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

- Conduct an annual audit of the aquaculture farming/processing facilities, and to decide on the maintenance, suspension or withdrawal of Certificates of Approval based on the outcomes of these.

**6.2.2** Certification Bodies shall be accepted by the BIM CQA Programme Lead on the basis of experience: in the categories of Practical (Working) Knowledge: Standards Knowledge; Auditing Knowledge; ISO 17065 accreditation.

### 6.3 Assessors

The BIM CQA Programme Lead has defined the qualifications and competence criteria required by auditors and audit teams employed by CBs. The BIM CQA Programme Lead makes this information available on request. Only BIM approved Aquaculture Assessors, appointed and controlled by approved Certification Bodies may carry out farm assessment and auditing activities.

**6.3.1** All auditors are required to follow the aquaculture assessment process and requirements described in the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards, BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Audit templates, as consistent with other relevant BIM documentation, including this QMS Control Manual.

**6.3.3** The service provided by each CB employed is subject to an agreement, which sets out the arrangements for the provision of the service and it includes requirements for the information and data arising from the provision of the service to be retained in confidence. The BIM CQA Programme Lead maintains a copy of the agreement with each CB in an up-dated form and these are available for examination, on request, by authorised persons.

### 6.4 The Certification System

**6.4.1** To qualify for approval to conduct BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture assessments, each Certification Body must be accredited to ISO 17065 or be in application for accreditation to ISO 17065 and agree to conform to BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Rules and Regulations.

**6.4.2** The CB must be capable of complying with BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme Regulations, which clearly set out:

- the procedure for progressing applications to certification decision;
- the assessment procedure and frequency of assessments;
- the certification procedures;
- the Rules Governing Certification.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**6.4.3** Both the Procedures and Programme Standards will be subject to Documentation and Amendment Control and will be issued, as appropriate, to Applicants, Clients, and relevant Certification Bodies and to members of Committees.

**6.5 Certification Programme**

**6.5.1** The technical specifications, which applicants to the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme must meet to achieve certification, and must maintain to retain certification, are presented in the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture standards. The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards are controlled documents and are available publicly on the BIM website.

**6.5.2** Application to the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme is open to all aquaculture operations in Ireland. Those Applicants which are determined not to meet the requirements for BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture certification at any stage of the process will not be eligible to carry the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture logo.

**6.6 Operating Procedures**

**6.6.1 CB Pre-assessment Check on Applicant**

The purpose of a pre-assessment check is to determine by telephone discussion, correspondence or meeting whether the Applicant has the capability and resources to operate in conformity with the criteria defined in BIM Standard.

**6.6.2 CB Assessments (Overview)**

- (a) The BIM assessment and audit process provides for:
  - A desktop assessment of the Aquaculture Farm / Processor from which product materials are sourced against the relevant sections of the BIM Standard.
  - A site audit of the Farm and or processing facilities which represent the Unit of Certification.
  - Interested parties should refer to the full procedure detailed in the Appendices for Aquaculture Farm assessments and processing plant audits.
- (b) The CB will identify any observed non-compliance with the criteria defined in the relevant section of the BIM Standard and record them on the appropriate Aquaculture Farm or Processor audit report template.
- (c) On completion of the assessment/audit, the CB will present their findings, discuss any non-compliance and indicate, when relevant, the conditions under which the audit unit has been approved, or the nature of non-conformities and timescales for submission of a corrective evidence to close them off. The time scale to close of non-compliance to the BIM standard is set at 28 days from the date of issue.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

(d) The CB will complete a report for every Aquaculture Farm /Processor assessment and audit conducted, using the appropriate report template:

(e) The CB Programme Administrator will submit any final report for consideration by the appropriate CB Certification Committee.

If the application is approved by the CB Certification Committee:

- the Applicant will be informed in writing.
- the Applicant’s details and certified products will be entered in the relevant CB Register of Clients and a CB Certificate of Approval will be issued.
- Aquaculture Farm / Processor certified unit details will be made publicly available on the BIM website.

(f) If CB approval is withheld

- The Applicant will be informed in writing of the reason(s) for the withholding of approval.
- the reasons will be communicated to the Applicant in writing, which will identify areas of non-compliance and requesting a corrective action(s) Programme. Corrective action(s) will be verified before the application can be given further consideration.
- the CB assessment report and all the relevant correspondences will be filed for future reference.

(h) Should the Applicant wish to appeal against the withholding of a Certificate of Approval the appeal will be heard in the manner described in Appeals section of this Manual.

### 6.6.3 Certificate of Approval

(a) A CB Certificate of Approval granted to a Client is valid from the date of issue subject to satisfactory performance. Satisfactory performance shall be determined during annual audits.

(b) The CB Certificate will state as a minimum:

- the name of the accreditation body
- the name and address of the Scheme Owner;
- the name and address of the certification body;
- the name and address of the certification holder;
- the effective date of issue of the certificate;
- the substance (scope of certification) of the certificate;
- the term for which the certification is valid;
- the signature of the issuing officer.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

- (e) The Assessment report will be reviewed, following which:
- the Applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of the review with the reference being made to any matters requiring corrective action;
  - the CB assessment report together with all relevant correspondence will be filed for future reference.

(f) certification bodies are required to store audit reports and related documents (e.g. certificates, certification committee meetings minutes) and evidence at their office. These shall be made available to relevant parties (e.g. CQA scheme reps, stakeholders) if requested.

#### 6.6.4 Marks of Conformity (BIM CQA LOGO)

Clients and associated organizations listed on a valid BIM Certificate are entitled through an approval process to use a Logo or Mark of Conformity approved by BIM. Refer to QP 6 BIM CQA Logo Management Procedure & Logo Licence Agreement Document (Terms and Conditions for the use of the BIM CQA Logo).

The Logo is a Certified Mark of Conformity and its use is regulated through the Logo Management Procedures. Below is a copy of the BIM CQA Logo.

The BIM CQA Logo may be used only in the form approved by BIM and only in relation to products (but not on consumer facing packaging), which are subject to the Certificate issued to the Client and organizations concerned. The Marks must be used only:

- in association with the business names shown on the Certificate or the brand mark of the business;
- or in association with a purchaser’s name or brand mark always provided that the name of the Client/ associated organizations can be identified from the indications on the product packaging and/or from the purchaser’s records.

Incorrect use of the approved BIM CQA Logo or misleading references to certificates held/found in advertisement, catalogues, etc., shall require immediate withdrawal of the offending material.

Where no such corrective action is implemented BIM may initiate appropriate legal action.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					



**6.7 Rules Governing Certification**

**6.7.1** These Rules apply to all CB’s.

**6.7.2** For the purpose of these Rules, the definitions of the terms used are set out in the Manual.

**6.7.3** The CB is the sole authority by which a Certificate may be granted or withdrawn. The CB operates under the general administration and development of the Certification System, the approved Certification Programme included within the System and under these Rules.

**6.7.4** Applicants who satisfy the CB that they are capable of compliance with the requirements of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards and who give such undertakings as may be required shall: i) subject to complying with these rules as amended from time to time and such undertakings; ii) be entitled to a Certificate, which shall nevertheless remain the property of the CB.

**6.7.5** Certificates are valid for one year from the date of issue, subject to the terms of these Rules as amended from time to time.

**6.7.6** Clients (i.e. Applicants and Certified Organisations) shall:

- At all times comply with these rules, as periodically amended.
- Comply with the requirements of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme. Failure to comply with any of the specified requirements of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Scheme will be the cause of withdrawal of the Certificate of Approval.
- Give representatives of CB’s access during normal working hours to production establishments in which production or storage of products, subject to the Certificate of Approval, is being carried out for the purpose of examination of products, and/or the

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					



application of rules of production, the production environment, the production processes, product handling and storage, transportation of the product, staff training, the control of product, records and details of internal audits, or establishing that the procedures following the withdrawal of the Certificate of Approval as described herein have been carried out as necessary.

- Give representatives of CB’s access during normal working hours to establishments whose management systems, which are subject to the Certificate of Approval, for the purpose of examination of the said management system procedures to establish they are in conformity with the Standards Scope (Quality) and additional Eco Subscope.
- Nominate a management representative and one or more deputies authorised to act in the main nominee’s absence (and replacement nominees as may be necessary) that shall be responsible for all matters in connection with the requirements of the Certificate of Approval.
- Correct any deficiencies identified during continuing assessments.
- Use a Logo/Mark of Conformity or issue a Statement of Conformity only in relation to products which are subject to the Certificate, produced by the participating company on the Certificate, and strictly in accordance with the conditions for its use.
- Discontinue any use of a Logo/ Mark of Conformity which is outside the scope of the conditions for its use, or which is unacceptable to BIM and any form of statement with reference to the authority of the Producer to claim compliance with a Certification Programme, and which in the opinion of the Programme might be misleading.
- Upon withdrawal of the Certificate (however determined) forthwith discontinue use of any Logo/Mark of Conformity for which a licence has been issued and all advertising matter that contains any reference thereto. In addition, any other documents in the possession of the Producer which bear reference to the Certificate shall if BIM requires, be so treated.
- Not conduct operations in a manner that may affect the confidence of buyers and consumers in the reliability of BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme or bring themselves or the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme into disrepute.

**6.7.7** Having regard for BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture administrative costs, Clients and Applicants shall pay as part of formal contract agreements:

- the relevant annual fee for assessment and Certification;
- the cost of any additional assessment deemed to be necessary by the CB;
- the cost of any additional sampling or testing deemed to be necessary by the CB; and
- any additional costs incurred by the CB due to non-compliance with these Rules.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**6.7.8** The Approved CBs shall:

- Undertake periodic site audits at the establishments of Clients for the purpose of verifying that the obligations defined by the Certificate are being observed.
- Undertake annual audits for the purpose of verifying that the approval awarded as a result of the aquaculture audit remains appropriate.
- Notify Clients of any changes to the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards and give them a maximum of 12 months, to allow adjustment of their processes and relevant procedures to meet the revised standard requirements.
- Not disclose any information concerning a Client obtained during the course of its assessment and certification activities other than that which is in the public domain. Unless otherwise required to do so by the law, or requested/permitted to do so by the Client.
- Notify Clients of any complaints it received relating to products or management systems that apply to the Certificate.

**6.7.9** If a Client is temporarily unable to comply with the requirements of these Rules, as amended from time to time, the CB Certification Committee may require the Client to discontinue any claim of compliance with the relevant Certification Programme and use of any associated Logo/Mark of Conformity, with immediate effect until it is satisfied that compliance is again achieved. The CB must immediately inform the BIM CQA Programme Lead.

**6.7.10** If a Client fails to comply with these Rules, as amended from time to time, the CB on behalf of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme may:

- withdraw the Certificate or reduce its scope;
- refuse to grant a Certificate or extend its scope.

Such decisions, and the grounds for them, shall be communicated to the Client in writing.

**6.7.11** The CB may consider withdrawing or refusing to grant a Certificate if a Client’s business is likely to be disbanded.

**6.7.12** If a Client, or Applicant or external party, wishes to complain against any decision of a CB under these Rules, they shall, within 14 days of being officially informed of the decision, give notice to the relevant Certification Body and the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Lead (in writing) of their wish to appeal against the decision and give the grounds for doing so.

**6.7.13** The Certification Body will instigate its own Complaints Review Process and inform the Complainant. If the Complainant is still not satisfied with the outcome they have the right to raise the issue with the Programme Appeals Committee.

**6.7.14** In these cases, the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Lead will refer the matter to the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Oversight Committee Chair who on behalf of the BIM CQA Programme

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

Lead shall appoint an Appeals Panel to hear the appeal. The Panel shall comprise of three members, none of who shall have any commercial interest in the subject of appeal. A meeting (teleconference) of the Panel shall be held within 30 days of the receipt of the notice of appeal. The BIM CQA Programme Lead will assist with the facilitation of information.

**6.7.15** The Appellant, the Certification Body and their associated Accreditation Board will be informed in writing of the Appeals Panel decision. The Certification Body will be required to review its certification decision if the Appeals Panel finds in favour of the Appellant and submit its findings to its accreditation board and to the BIM CQA Programme Lead.

**6.7.16** These rules may, from time to time, be altered by the BIM CQA Programme Lead on behalf of BIM. No alterations shall affect the right of Clients to claim compliance with the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme, use an associated Logo/Mark of Conformity, or issue a Statement of Conformity unless the BIM Aquaculture OC Chair has given them notice in writing of such alterations. A date by which the altered rules come into force shall be issued by the BIM CQA Programme Lead following approval by the BIM OC Chair and shall not be less than six months from the date of notification of the alteration.

**6.7.17** Each CB shall keep a register of Certified Clients that shall be provided routinely to BIM for updating purposes. The BIM CQA Programme Lead will maintain a published master list.

## **6.8 Certification Administrative Procedures (Overview)**

### **6.9 Issue and Maintenance of a Certificate of Approval**

**6.9.1** A designated CB Technical staff member must scrutinize all reports arising from the aquaculture site audits.

**6.9.2** The reports, or a summary produced by the CB Assessors, are considered by the relevant CB Certification Committees.

**6.9.3** Each Applicant/Client will be notified in writing of the results of the CB Committee’s findings including any non-compliance, which will require to be addressed prior to issue or to ensure maintenance of a Certificate.

**6.9.4** Appeals against a decision to withhold the issue or to withdraw a Certificate of Approval will be heard in the manner described.

**6.9.5** The CB will issue summary audit reports, on request with all commercial information redacted and BIM will make this publicly available on the BIM website.

### **6.10 Withdrawal of a Certificate of Approval**

**6.10.1** In cases where the Client concerned has, within the period of time defined:

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By	C. Morrison		
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

(a) Provided satisfactory evidence that the required corrective action has been implemented no further action will be taken.

or

(b) Failed to implement the required corrective action the Certificate will be withdrawn. The Client will be notified in writing and required to return or destroy the Certificate.

**6.10.2** Appeals against a decision to withdraw a Certificate will be heard in the manner described.

## **6.11 Complaints about Certified Products or Programme Operation**

**6.11.1** Complaints about the general Integrity of Certified BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Sites/Facilities/Operations.

The responsibility for complying with the requirements of a Certification Programme as defined in the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards, and for complying with statutory requirements, rests absolutely with Clients. Therefore, any complaint about a product, or possible infringements of the law, shall be dealt with by the Client. Complaints of this nature coming directly to the CB or BIM CQA Programme Lead will be referred to the CB concerned for appropriate action to be taken. Clients are required to maintain a record of all such complaints and the subsequent action taken, and to make these records available for examination when continuing assessment visits are carried out.

### **6.11.2 Complaints about misuse of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Logo**

Written complaints concerning the misuse of the BIM Certified Quality/Eco Aquaculture Seal will be managed by the BIM CQA Programme Lead on behalf of the BIM. Details of the complaint and products will be recorded including the product, the species, the associated organization, the region. The BIM CQA Programme Lead will complete a trace back to the relevant organisation and certification body and direct the certification body to conduct an investigation and report on the extent of the issue. A breach in the terms of the Use of the BIM Certified Quality/Eco Aquaculture Logo may lead to a product recall.

### **6.11.3 Complaints about Certification Programme Operation**

Written complaints concerning the operation of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme will be dealt primarily and coordinated by the BIM CQA Lead, who will be responsible for acknowledgement and investigation of the complaint with support from the OC Chair.

Any Complaint will be flagged to the BIM CQA Programme Lead who will also be kept informed of any corrective actions until the complaint has been resolved.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**6.12 Maintenance of Records**

**6.12.1** Records shall be maintained by the CBs as defined within their documented Quality Systems to demonstrate compliance with the system and appropriate regulatory requirements. The records include reports arising from assessments.

**6.12.2** The CB records shall be readily accessible and safely stored for a period of five years unless otherwise specified.

**6.12.3** The information contained in the CB records, other than that which is in the public domain, will be held in confidence unless otherwise required by the law, or requested/permitted to do so by the Client.

**6.13 Control of Documentation**

**6.13.1 Issue and Control of Documents**

The following documents are maintained and issued on a controlled basis:

- (a) The QMS Governance and Control Manual and all associated documents and templates for the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme.
- (b) The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standard.

**6.13.2 Amendment Control**

Amendments to previously issued controlled documents will be reviewed and approved by the authorized signatory for that document before issue. In the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards this will be the BIM CQA Oversight Committee Chair.

**6.13.3 Master Lists of Clients and Certified Products**

CBs will maintain a list of their own clients and ensure that the BIM CQA Programme Lead is informed of changes to the client list, including certification, suspension and revocation decisions.

**6.14 Internal Review**

**6.14.1** The operation of the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Programme’s activities and performance will be subject to annual and planned formal review to ensure continued compliance with the procedures defined within this Manual.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**6.14.2** An internal review programme will be maintained ensuring all aspects of the documented systems are reviewed at least annually. The review will assess the implementation and adequacy of the systems defined in the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture QMS Control Manual and the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture Standards.

**6.14.3** A suitably qualified person or group, this will be an external consultant/s, will conduct the review and record any non-compliances with documented procedures, recommend corrective actions, and where appropriate make recommendations for systems improvements. Follow-up reviews will be conducted where necessary to verify corrective actions.

**6.14.4** On-going review of CB assessment performance will be conducted by the BIM CQA Programme Lead and support and is achieved by a combination of monitoring of assessment reports, continuous contact with assessment staff, and witness of assessments conducted by individual assessors and assessments of head office to ensure compliance with assessment procedures and consistency of interpretation of Programme requirements.

**6.15 Management Review**

**6.15.1** The CQA Programme Lead and contracted consultant will make a report on the findings of the Management Review at least annually to the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture OC. The OC will review the Annual Review, key findings and proposed actions for the upcoming year, and sign off on the elements to be actioned to improve overall scheme performance.

**6.16 Communication of Significant Scheme Changes**

**6.16.1** The CQA Scheme ensure that accreditation bodies, certification bodies and certified entities are notified in a timely manner of any substantive change in management procedures. The CQA Programme Lead will target to notify ABs, CBs and certified applicants within 30 days from any substantive change to programme and standards that may affect these parties.

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

## 7. ACCREDITATION MANAGEMENT

### 7.1 Accreditation Bodies

**7.1.2** Accreditation Bodies (ABs) are chosen by the Certification Bodies (CBs) and must be members of the International Accreditation Forum.

**7.1.3** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme does not restrict choice of ABs and ensures that accreditation services are available to CBs irrespective of their country of residence, size and of the existing number of already ABs, within the scope of the Programme.

**7.1.4** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme specifies the requirements for CBs that the AB is required to verify.

**7.1.5** Subsequent to any changes in the accreditation requirements, the BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme owner ensures CBs are given a defined time period to conform to the changes.

**7.1.6** BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme requires (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that the AB employs personnel that have the necessary education, training, technical knowledge, and experience for performing accreditation functions in aquaculture and aquaculture operations. This includes knowledge of the standard and its intent.

**7.1.7** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme requires (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that external audits be carried out on the AB to assess performance via their peer review and evaluation process.

**7.1.8** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme requires (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that the AB makes information available on request about its organizational structure and the financial and other kinds of support it receives from public or private entities.

**7.1.9** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme (through the engagement of IAF AB's) ensures that the accreditation process includes an office audit of the certification body.

**7.1.10** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme ensures (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that the accreditation process includes a review of the performance of CBs and auditors in the field.

**7.1.11** The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture programme requires (through the engagement of IAF AB's) that CBs operating in the Programme be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 for the scope of the respective standard of the Programme.

Doc: QMS & Governance Manual					
Issued By	V. Flynn	Approved By		C. Morrison	
Issue Date	October 2022	Issue	2	Revision	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					

**AMENDMENT LOG**

DATE	ISSUE	AMENDMENT	AMENDED BY
April 2018	1.1	Clarification made on species name certified under the CQA Programme	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Clarification made on performance confirmation via audits	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Added more clarity The Scheme Owner requires that stakeholders have the opportunity to participate in or provide direct input to the top governance body.	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Added facility for stakeholder involvement during TAC meetings	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Added more clarity on auditor training requirements and continuing professional development	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Added more clarity on BIM CQA Logo usage and management	Vera Flynn
April 2018	1.1	Added more clarity on availability of summary audit reports, on request.	Vera Flynn
Nov 2018	1.2	Reflect the new version CQA Standard Issue 1 Revision 1 November 2018	Vera Flynn
Oct 2021	1.3	Reflect the change in name of role of the Aquaculture Development Director to Seafood Services Technical Director and to reflect Rory Campbell in this role.	Vera Flynn
Oct 2022	2.0	Amend the Governance & QMS Manual to reflect the change in scope of the Programme. The Organic Sub-scope will be superseded by the Organic Food & Farming Standards for Ireland Edition 2 from January 1 2022 which will be the only recognised Organic Standard in Ireland. The CQA Programme will no longer directly oversee the implementation of an organic standard and organic certification but will provide guidance to applicants to the CQA Programme who wish to become certified to the new OFFSI Ed. 2 The Governance and QMS Manual also includes reference to a number of other regulatory updates.	Vera Flynn

Signature: *Vera Flynn*  
Vera Flynn (Oct 27, 2022 11:20 GMT+1)

Email: vera.flynn@bim.ie

<b>Doc: QMS &amp; Governance Manual</b>					
<b>Issued By</b>	V. Flynn	<b>Approved By</b>		C. Morrison	
<b>Issue Date</b>	October 2022	<b>Issue</b>	2	<b>Revision</b>	0
Controlled Copy- No unauthorised copying or alteration permitted © BIM, for authorised use only					