

QP1: CERTIFICATION BODY (CB) APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BIM CERTIFIED QUALITY AQUACULTURE (CQA) AUDITS AND CERTIFICATION

Introduction

The BIM Certified Quality Aquaculture (CQA) Farm Programme is a third party, independent and accredited Certification Programme owned and operated by BIM. The Programme is designed for aquaculture production of finfish and mussels.

The programme’s central documents are the CQA Farm and Processing Standards, separated into different modules, each one covering different areas of activity on a farmed fish production/processing sites. These modules are grouped as follows:

Scope: Certified Quality Aquaculture Farm Standard (core module)

Certified Quality Aquaculture; Certification Requirements. This 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 operational 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 the specific product criteria describing superior quality Irish aquaculture products for both finfish (including Atlantic Salmon, Freshwater Salmonids) and Mussels.

This scope is available for Salmon, Freshwater Finfish and Mussels.

Additional CQA Farm Standard 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 Sub-scope covers the additional eco requirements that are to be in place together with the general requirements in the CQA Standard to achieve eco certification.

This scope is available for Salmon, Freshwater Finfish and Mussels.

Certified Quality Aquaculture Processing Standard (Core requirements for all processors)

Certified Quality Aquaculture; General Requirements. This section of the standard covers the

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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, Finfish) and Mussels.

Additional CQA Processing Standard Sub- Scope: Eco Production

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 general requirements in the CQA Processing Standard in order to achieve eco certification.

This document describes the requirements necessary for Certification Bodies (CBs) to apply and become successfully approved to Audit and Certify Applicants to the BIM CQA Standards.

Scope

The scope of CB Approval Requirements covered is for the Auditing and Certification of Aquaculture farms/processors to the BIM CQA Standards (Requirements for Certification) current version.

1.0 Certification Body Registration with BIM

1.1 Registration

1.1.1 Certification Bodies (CBs) wishing to apply to become registered, carry out assessments and certify against the BIM CQA Standards shall first, as a pre-requisite, be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity assessment - Requirements for Bodies Certifying Products, Processes and Services.

CBs wishing to seek recognition shall formally write to the CQA Programme Lead at the BIM Aquaculture Development division, confirming their intention to submit an Application Form.

Upon receipt of an Application Form for Approval to Conduct Assessments, The CQA Programme Lead will provide the CB with a copy of this Approval Requirements Document and other relevant

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documents.

CB Applicants shall meet all requirements of this document including, but not limited to, the competency and training requirements of CB Staff and Individual Auditors related to the specific categories covered under the BIM CQA Standards.

Only CBs that are registered and formally recognized by BIM are authorised to conduct assessments against the BIM CQA Standards.

Recognition of a CB by BIM will only take place if the CB Accreditation Body is recognised by BIM. To this extent the Accreditation Body must be a member of the International Accreditation Forum (refer to www.IAF.NU).

BIM CQA Standards (Requirements for Certification) current versions.

ISO/IEC 17065:2012 BIM Aquaculture Scope Extension:

To achieve an extension to their current ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Scope of Accreditation, a CB shall demonstrate it is able to carry out evaluations against the BIM CQA Standards. Therefore, a CB shall be allowed to carry out a specified number of evaluations, at least 2 but no more than 10, prior to achieving Full Accreditation Extension for the BIM CQA Standards.

CBs in Application for extension to their Accreditation, shall identify their certification activity by the issuing of BIM CQA Standard Certificates by using the terminology ‘*Accreditation in Application*’ to all those applicants they certify.

The applying CB shall be able to provide documentation that confirms that they have a current and active application in progress;

- a) An active application to the Accreditation Board for an Extension to Scope against ISO/IEC 17065:2012 accreditation to include the appropriate BIM CQA Standard.

The timeline to receive full accreditation shall be within that specified by BIM currently;

- b) Accreditation Scope Extension must be expected within 12-18 months of the date of application to their Accreditation Body.

1.2 Named CB Representative

The CB will have a Named Representative responsible for dealing with all aspects of the BIM CQA Scheme Accreditation and be knowledgeable of the entire BIM CQA Programme. This person shall be

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named and their position in the CB recorded on the Registration Form. In the event that this Named Representative leaves the employment of the CB or moves to a different role, BIM shall be informed accordingly and provided with the name and details of a replacement, within a period of 5 working days.

2.0 Quality Management System

2.1 General Requirements

As part of the Approval Process the CB shall provide evidence to BIM to show that it has a fully documented and implemented Quality Management System, under the responsibility of a designated individual within a defined Management Structure. The Quality Management System shall be in accordance with accreditation requirements and as such subject to regular System Reviews conducted to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of services provided by the CB.

2.1.1 The CB's Quality Management System shall be documented in a Quality Manual and associated Quality Procedures that are made available to all Staff to implement, maintain and be continually improved.

2.1.2 The CB shall have an appropriate Quality Manual, which shall include a Quality Policy Statement that outlines the management commitment to ensuring its certification quality objectives.

2.1.3 As part of the Quality Manual, the CB shall identify and document ownership, have a clear organisational structure and unambiguously define key procedural documents, job functions, responsibilities and reporting relationships of all Staff engaged in delivering their certification services.

2.1.4 The CB shall clearly identify the Staff Member(s) accountable for the maintenance of their Quality System.

2.1.5 The CB shall have a list of everyone employed within the organisation and maintain personnel records for all Staff and Auditors, which covers their qualifications, training, experience, affiliations, professional status, and any relevant consultancy to identify any possible conflict of interest or risks to impartiality.

2.1.6 A description of how the CB will manage the Certification Process, including the Technical Review and/or Control of Certification Decision Processes such as the Certification Committee Structure, its Membership Criteria and the Terms of Reference and Operating Procedures.

2.1.7 Details of the CB's Management Review Processes, including Policy and Review Procedures, including frequency and documented results. Reviews shall be conducted, at a minimum, every 12 months.

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2.1.8 The CB’s Document Control Procedures shall specify:

- a) Approval documents for adequacy prior to issue.
- b) Review and update as necessary and re-approve documents.
- c) That changes and the current revision status of documents are identified.
- d) That relevant versions of applicable documents are available at points of use.
- e) That documents remain legible and readily identifiable.
- f) Those documents of external origin determined by the organisation to be necessary for the planning and operation of the CBs Quality Management System are identified and their distribution controlled.
- g) The prevention of the unintended use of obsolete documents, and to apply suitable identification to them if they are retained for any purpose.

2.1.9 A documented Recruitment Procedure that covers Selection, Initial Training, Ongoing Training and Performance Assessment for all relevant Staff and Auditors.

2.1.10 A list of all Approved Subcontractors and a detailed Procedure for their Appointment, Assessment and their Ongoing Management shall be documented.

2.1.11 Procedures for actions taken in response to any Non-conformity raised in a Certification Audit are required, to evaluate the effectiveness of agreed objective evidence presented, or corrective or preventative actions taken by the Applicant.

2.1.12 Procedures in relation to the use of the Certificate, Rules for Granting, Suspending or Withdrawing the certificate, and the actions taken by the CB should a suspension or withdrawal need to take place.

2.1.13 Policies and Procedures in response to Appeals, Complaints and Disputes shall be documented.

2.1.14 Documented Procedures for Conducting and Documenting all Internal Assessments and any resulting corrective actions that may arise.

3.0 Contractual Arrangements

3.1 CB Contract Arrangements with BIM

3.1.1 On approval, the CB will be required to enter into a Contractual Arrangement with BIM. The contract will provide the basis by which the CB can undertake Assessments against the BIM CQA Scheme for potential Applicants, but does not constitute a Guarantee of Certification Business. The contract will identify the Terms and Responsibilities of each party with respect to conducting third party Accredited Audits and the Certification of Applicants to the BIM CQA Scheme.

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3.2 CB Contracts Arrangements with Applicants for Certification

3.2.1 The CB shall ensure that a Contractual Agreement with the Applicant is in place for the authorisation and provision of any Assessment activity and Certification reporting.

3.2.2 The Contractual Arrangement shall include the notification to the Applicant of the requirements of the CB to provide the Applicant’s Information associated with the Assessment and Certification Status to BIM.

3.2.3 The CB shall have procedures in place to ensure that the resources to undertake any BIM CQA Assessment and Certification activity will be in place on entering into a contract to provide these services with a Potential Applicant or Existing Certificate Holder of the BIM CQA Programme.

3.3 CB Contractual Arrangements with Own Staff and Subcontracted Auditors

3.3.1 The CB shall have in place agreements with all Staff involved in the Certification Process which obligates them, at a minimum, to the requirements listed below. The CB shall further have agreements in place with all its Auditors, including its Subcontracted Auditors.

The CB shall carry out Assessments:

- With all due skill and care.
- In accordance with the relevant standard.
- In accordance with any conditions attached to their Accreditation and only in respect of the BIM CQA Standard categories for which they are registered.
- Using only Auditors who are trained and meet the competencies of the BIM CQA Standard for undertaking such Assessments.
- In accordance with International Best Practice in Third Party Assessment and Auditing, which includes Auditor Code of Conduct for Impartial and Ethical Behaviour.

3.4 Provision of Certification Information to BIM Aquaculture Board

The CB shall inform the BIM CQA Programme Lead of all Certification Decisions and to which Applicant, within a period of 5 working days.

4.0 CB Registration with Accreditation Body

Any CB wishing to carry out Assessments against BIM CQA Standards shall be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065:2012 Conformity Assessment – Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services by a recognised Accreditation Body that is a member of IAF (International Accreditation

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Forum) and a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA.).

Should Accreditation to the Scope of the BIM CQA Standard not be granted within the timeline specified in section 1, the CB's Approval with BIM may be invalidated and Re-registration will not be an option until further evidence of the commitment to achieve Accreditation Status is provided to BIM by the CB.

4.1 Accreditation Status

The CB shall make the CQA Programme Lead immediately aware, within 24 hours of any Change of Accreditation their Status or Changes to Ownership, Management Structure or staff involved in the BIM CQA Scheme Certification Process.

4.2 Extensions to Scope for Registered CBs

Where a Registered CB wishes to extend their scope to include another BIM CQA Standard, the request for Scope Extension will need to be submitted to the CQA Programme Lead. The process for extending the scope of the CB Assessment is the same as for the Initial Registration.

4.3 Scope of Expertise

CBs shall demonstrate to their Accreditation Body that their Staff and Contractors have the knowledge and expertise to work within the specified fields of knowledge relevant to the industry sector being assessed. Each Auditor undertaking Certification Assessments must have the appropriate qualifications, training, experience and skills to perform an Evaluation against the BIM CQA Standard. CBs shall demonstrate appropriate training for each Auditor and Subcontracted Auditor has been undertaken to understand the BIM CQA Standard. **The importance of demonstrable competency under the Scope of Evaluation cannot be over emphasised for all Staff and Auditors.**

4.4 Auditor Registration and Training

4.4.1 The CB will hold a detailed and complete Skills Matrix or Files for each Auditor undertaking BIM CQA Standard Assessments.

4.4.2 The CB shall maintain up-to-date records demonstrating how each Auditor complies with the requirements for qualifications, training requirements and experience required under the BIM CQA Standard.

4.5.3 These records shall be made available to BIM CQA Programme Lead and supplied on request.

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4.6 Specific Auditor Qualification Requirements

4.6.1 All Auditors shall be able to report in the 'Working Language'. Auditors shall also be able to communicate effectively with the language spoken at the site of the Applicant for Assessment. (The use of independent interpreters accompanying the Auditor will be acceptable to overcome any language barriers).

Specific auditor requirements are detailed in the following Quality Procedure:

- QP3 APPOINTMENT OF BIM CQA AUDITORS

4.6.2 Auditors shall also have successfully completed a Recognised Training Course for the BIM CQA Standard/s Assessment Techniques which includes:

- General knowledge of the entire BIM CQA Programme.
- Knowledge of relevant legislative requirements or regulations.
- Knowledge and understanding of specific processes in aquaculture and related supply chain being assessed.

4.6.3 A CB Training Programme for each New Auditor to the Programme shall incorporate, at a minimum:

- An assessment of knowledge and skills for each field of evaluation.
- A document signed off to prove the satisfactory completion of the Training Programme by a BIM CQA appointed supervisor.

4.7 CB Auditor Practical Evaluations

Each Newly Trained Auditor will need to successfully complete one BIM CQA Assessment which is witnessed by an experienced and Registered Auditor.

4.8 Maintain Assessment Experiences

The CB shall have in place an annual review programme to maintain an auditor competence to the BIM CQA Standard/s.

4.9 Continued Training and Competency Monitoring

The Auditor shall be kept up-to-date with Aquaculture and fish feed Sector Best Practice, and have access to and be able to apply relevant Laws and Regulations.

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An Auditor shall undergo additional Training by the CB whenever new versions of the BIM CQA Standard/s, Check Lists, Policies, Guidance Documents, etc., are issued. The CB shall maintain written records of all relevant training undertaken.

Training and Monitoring shall also include calibration across Auditors to the BIM CQA Standard which will include Assessment Report Reviews and Comparisons etc.

Training and Examinations are to be provided to each Auditor wishing to maintain their Active Status approximately every 2 years.

4.10 Auditor Attributes and Competencies

The CB shall have a system in place to ensure that an Auditor conducts themselves in a professional manner. The following provide examples of required behaviour:

- Ethical, i.e. fair, truthful, sincere, honest and discreet.
- Open minded, i.e. willing to consider alternative ideas or points of view.
- Diplomatic, i.e. tactful in dealing with people.
- Observant, i.e. actually aware of physical surroundings and activities.
- Perceptive, i.e. instinctive, aware of and able to understand situations.
- Versatile, i.e. adjust readily to different situations.
- Tenacious, i.e. persistent, focused on achieving objectives.
- Decisive, i.e. timely conclusions based on logical reasoning.
- Self-reliant, i.e. acts independently whilst interacting effectively with others.
- Integrity – aware of need for confidentiality and observing professional code of conduct.

4.11 Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Code of Conduct

The CB and the Auditors they employ must avoid any conflict of interest, or breach of confidentiality or ethics. The CB is bound by a Contractual Agreement with BIM to abide by these requirements. CBs shall also have Signed Agreements in place with all Auditors registered to assess against the BIM CQA Scheme. This Agreement shall include, at a minimum, the following types of topics:

- Prohibitions against conflict of interest.
- The requirement to divulge to the CB any potential conflict of interest (such as prior consulting, prior employment, and the like) before undertaking an Assessment, or that may arise during the Assessment.

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- A policy for the CB to investigate notifications of, or incidences of, potential conflict of interest and to exclude the Auditor for a specific period where appropriate.
- Prohibitions against consulting for or soliciting - consultancy or other types of work with a BIM CQA Applicant prior to, or during an Assessment, and during the Certification Process.
- Prohibitions against conduct or remarks that may, in the view of BIM, disparage the Programme, Programme Management or Owner and related Staff, Certified Facilities, or associated Organisations e.g. CBs or Accreditation Bodies.
- Prohibitions against using or sharing confidential information from the Applicants assessed.
- The CB shall include in the Auditor Agreements, as a minimum the above points, including specific Codes of Ethics/Conduct Obligations as outlined herein. Copies of these Agreements shall be provided to BIM upon request.
- Any potential breaches of these requirements that come to the attention of BIM by the CB or its Auditors will be brought to the CB to formally discuss. Conversely, the CB is required to also notify the BIM of such matters that may come to their attention.

4.12 Subcontracted Auditor

Where the CB's Approved Auditors are Independent Subcontractors to the CB, all of the requirements detailed throughout this document relating to Auditors and CB responsibilities concerning oversight, training, and competency of auditor, etc., shall apply.

The CB shall not, at any time, use any Subcontract Auditors that have not been approved through the CB Auditor Approval Process.

4.13 CB Staff Specific Qualification Requirements

At least one member of the CB's Staff involved in the BIM CQA Certification Process shall attend an Approved Auditor Training Course.

Information on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each Member of Staff involved in the BIM CQA Certification Process shall be maintained by the CB. Records of training and experience shall be kept up-to-date. These records shall include, as a minimum:

1. Name and address.

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2. Organisation affiliation and position held.
3. Educational qualifications.
4. Experience and training related to aquaculture production and the supply chain, farm fish processing, internal auditing, quality, corrective action resolution, and the relevant BIM CQA Standard/s.
5. Records, including dates, related to training and education.

Staff utilised by the CB to conduct Auditor Training, Calibration and Competency Reviews shall also demonstrate proper experience, training and competencies as described above.

Records of CB Personnel training, experience and competency shall be provided to BIM upon request.

5.0 Communication

The BIM CQA Programme Lead welcomes communications with CBs and information exchange. The BIM CQA Programme Lead will, from time-to-time, seek CB input into the BIM CQA standard, related documents, and on the Assessment Process.

The BIM Oversight Committee recognises the importance of Accreditation during the development of the entire BIM CQA Programme and Certification Process. The BIM Oversight Committee will continue to liaise with all approved CBs and Accreditation Bodies where appropriate in the further development of the Programme.

The CB must agree and communicate to BIM the following:

- Any and all offices that offer to make Certification Decisions, and/or issue Certification to the BIM CQA Standard/s shall be duly registered with BIM and with their Accreditation Board.
- Each auditor is qualified to perform the assessment services he/she performs on behalf of the CB in accordance with the criteria set out herein and other related BIM CQA standard/s documents and has complied with all training and competency requirements.
- It maintains an accurate record of the qualifications of each Auditor and the training undertaken by such Auditor.
- All factual information supplied to BIM and/or the Accreditation Body by the CB is, or was when given, true, accurate and not misleading.

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- The CB has the power and all necessary consents, licenses and registrations to conduct their business and to enter into and perform the contract.
- The CB has read, understood and shall comply with their obligations and requirements as laid out in this document and other BIM CQA documents.

6.0 Use of the BIM CQA Certification Logo

The BIM CQA logos are the property of BIM and its authorisation and rules for use are controlled via an agreement between BIM and certified applicants and registered CBs. Refer to QP6 BIM CQA Logo Management.

7.0 CQA Certificate requirements

The CB Shall ensure that at a minimum, the certificate issued to audited and complying farms and processors shall include the following:

- The Accreditation body mark;
- 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 scope of certification of the certificate;
- the term for which the certification is valid;
- issuing officer’s signature.

7.1 Availability of Audit Reports

BIM requires certification bodies to make publicly available, upon request, summary audit reports (excluding sensitive commercial information) after successful certification. The BIM CQA Programme Lead will contact the CB directly for such requests.

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AMENDMENT LOG

DATE	ISSUE	AMENDMENT	AMENDED BY
Oct 2021	1.2	Improved specificity by updating term 'BIM Aquaculture Head of Operations' to 'CQA Programme Lead' and including reference to QP6 in Section 6.0 Use of Logo	Vera Flynn
Oct 2022	2.0	Amend the QP 1 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 st 2022 which will be the only recognised Organic Standard in Ireland.	

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