Requirements for Certification Bodies Offering Certification Against the Criteria of the Global Aquaculture Alliance

Best Aquaculture Practices Standards

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Approved CB
Relevant Accreditation Bodies
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1 Standards Background and Program Overview

1.1 The Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) (Standards Owners)

The Global Aquaculture Alliance (GAA) is an international, non-profit trade association. The corporation is registered in Delaware, USA with principle offices based in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. It is dedicated to advancing environmentally and socially responsible aquaculture. The Alliance was founded in 1997 with 59 members in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. It now comprises over 1100 members in 70 countries and has become the most prominent industry organization representing the global aquaculture business (www.gaalliance.org).

Through the development of the Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) program, GAA has become the leading standards – setting organization for farmed seafood.

1.2 Best Aquaculture Practices – Program Manager

Best Aquaculture Practices is a division of the GAA, with headquarters office located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, USA. Best Aquaculture Practices manages the GAA BAP Program on behalf of the GAA.

1.3 Objective of the GAA BAP Standards

The objectives of the GAA BAP standards for farms, hatcheries, feed mills and processing plants is to specify food safety, quality, environmental and social responsibility, verification testing and traceability criteria required to be in place within the type of operation each standard applies to. The Seafood Processing Plant Standard’s food safety component is GFSI recognized. The format and content of each Standard are designed to allow an assessment of a company’s premises and operational systems and procedures by a competent third party ISO/IEC 17065 accredited Certification Body against the requirements of that individual Standard.

To ensure the integrity of the GAA BAP Standards and the associated certification it was imperative for Best Aquaculture Practices to establish structures with defined responsibilities, procedures and terms of reference.

As changes are made to the BAP Program, applicants and Certification Bodies will be given sufficient time to make necessary changes and adaptations. The time allocated will be decided by the BAP Management on a case by case basis.
1.4 Standards Development and Ownership

The GAA BAP Standards have been developed by GAA Standards Technical Committees. Since January 2008, the GAA Standards Oversight Committee has overseen the standards development process and committee selection process. The Standards Oversight Committee membership is drawn from representatives of Industry, NGO’s and Academia.

The BAP Technical Committees manage the continued operational issues in relation to Standards.

Each committee has their own Terms of Reference under which they conduct business. The Standards remain the property of the Global Aquaculture Alliance.

1.5 BAP Program Management

Once Standards are approved, the administration of the BAP Program rests with the Best Aquaculture Practices who act as Program Managers for the GAA. Best Aquaculture Practices approves and contracts Certification Bodies (CB) to carry out certification of the Applicants to the Program Standards. CB’s are categorized as either Restricted Approved or fully Approved (See 3.3).

Best Aquaculture Practices is responsible for the official training of auditors and maintains a list of approved auditors from all CB’s for the GAA BAP Standards.

Best Aquaculture Practices conducts regular reviews of the operation of the scheme to protect program integrity and ensure compliance with the requirements of global standards including, as applicable, examples such as ISO/IEC 17065, ISO 17011, GFSI, etc. These reviews are conducted in multiple ways including internal audits, CB and auditor performance monitoring, consult with the GAA and SOC in Standards review and revision, and so forth.

1.6 Certification and Assessment Scope

Certification of applicants wishing to be assessed against the GAA BAP Standards is carried out by approved CB’s.

The GAA BAP Standard does not allow exclusions in conducting assessments of any facilities against any of the standards. All facilities seeking certification against any of the GAA BAP Standards, and CB’s performing assessments, must conduct a full evaluation against all parts of the facility and GAA BAP eligible species and product forms that the facility produces. For example, exclusion of particular lines, cooked versus raw, rooms, ponds or cages is not permitted.
The CB’s who wish to gain approval to evaluate against the GAA BAP Standards must fully understand their responsibility and role to provide assurances that required Standards are monitored and maintained.

These Terms of Reference will include CB performance review and, where necessary, Best Aquaculture Practices will draw to the attention of the CB and their Accreditation Body any matters requiring investigation or action.

Diagram 1 – Summary of the Structures Associated with the Certification Program
2 Standards Background and Program Overview

2.1 Purpose

This document has been prepared by the BAP division of the GAA, the designated BAP Program Managers.

The purpose of the document is to ensure that CB’s and Accreditation Bodies are fully aware of:

- The role of the Best Aquaculture Practices
- The importance of the GAA BAP Standards
- Their responsibility with respect to legal liability
- The procedures supporting the GAA BAP Standards and the obligation to comply with all requirements toward protection of the integrity of the scheme

Significant efforts have been made to promote openness and transparency in the development and implementation process and to work closely with all stakeholders to ensure the integrity and robustness of the system.

It is of the utmost importance that those involved with certification and accreditation are included in the continued development and implementation of the GAA BAP Standards. This document will assist with the understanding of the aims of the GAA BAP Standards and their significance.

2.2 Update to Standards, Protocols and Procedures

Best Aquaculture Practices will periodically issue new or revised requirements to this document, the GAA BAP Standards, and/or the various other documents supporting these Standards. Best Aquaculture Practices shall make the CB’s aware of these changes and the CB shall ensure these are communicated to applicants and the appropriate staff, auditors and subcontract auditors within their organization. The latest Issue of each Standard will be on the GAA BAP website.

Standards will be identified by an Issue Number. When minor changes (house-keeping) are made to a Standard this may result in a subsequent Revision Number e.g. Issue 1 Rev. 1. CB’s are expected to be accredited to the most recent Issue Number.

When a significant change is made to a Standard the Issue Number will change. Applicants and CB’s will be given adequate time to make necessary changes and adaptations.
2.3 Communications

With Certification Bodies: See 3.4.2.

With Applicants and Certified Sites: Best Aquaculture Practices may contact applicants or certified sites in order to request feedback with regard to the audit and certification process as part of the CB performance monitoring.

With Accreditation Bodies: Best Aquaculture Practices will expect to have open channels of communication with Accreditation Bodies and may share some data with Accreditation Bodies responsible for the accreditation of Best Aquaculture Practices approved CB’s. CB’s will be expected to facilitate open communication channels with Accreditation Bodies. This may include such items as complaints submitted to Best Aquaculture Practices that are considered to be justified, or information resulting in suspension or withdrawal of CB approval by Best Aquaculture Practices. Accreditation Bodies are also required to share information with Best Aquaculture Practices related to CB Compliance and / or notifications of suspension or withdrawal of a CB’s accreditation.

3 Certification Body (CB) Requirements

3.1 CB Recognition by Best Aquaculture Practices

Certification Bodies wishing to apply for approval and recognition to assess against one or more of the GAA BAP standards must first, as a pre-requisite, be accredited to ISO/IEC 17065 to a recognized standard BEFORE applying to BAP. CB’s wishing to seek recognition must formally write to Best Aquaculture Practices confirming their intention and submit a registration form. The CB’s shall state which of the Standards they are requesting approval for. If the registration meets the BAP Requirements, the CB will be sent additional materials to initiate the application process.

Certification Bodies will be given “Restricted Approval” status for each Standard until they achieve full accreditation status for each specific Standard Issue. During this time the CB will be given a restricted number of assessments to allow them to gain accreditation extension.

Note: In addition, once a CB has been approved by BAP, that CB must also seek an extension to scope of their ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation to include the GAA BAP Seafood Processing Standard and the relevant GAA BAP farm Standard(s). The CB will remain on a Restricted CB Approval List for each Standard scope until the CB has become accredited for that scope. Once accreditation has been achieved the CB will move to a “Fully Approved” listing. See 3.3 and 3.4 for more details.
Applicants must meet all requirements of this and other relevant GAA BAP documents, including but not limited to the competency and training requirements of Certification Body personnel and individual Auditors related to the specific seafood categories covered under GAA BAP.

Only Certification Bodies that are registered and formally recognized by Best Aquaculture Practices are authorized to conduct assessments against any of the GAA BAP Standards. Any and all offices that offer and make certification decisions, and/or issue certification to GAA BAP Standards shall be duly registered with Best Aquaculture Practices.

Approval of a Certification Body will only take place if their Accreditation Body is recognized by Best Aquaculture Practices. See 3.3.

The CB will have a named representative responsible for dealing with all aspects of GAA Standards, Certification and Accreditation and these persons shall be named on the registration form. In the event that a named representative leaves the employment of the CB, Best Aquaculture Practices shall be informed accordingly and provided with the name and details of the replacement.

Best Aquaculture Practices recognizes the importance of accreditation and during the development of all the BAP Standards and Certification Process it has consulted with the (IAF) nation accreditation bodies and experienced CB’s to ensure that all the requirements of product/process certification are met.

3.1.1 CB Quality Management System

The CB will provide evidence 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, such that regular system reviews are conducted to ensure the continuous improvement in the quality of the CB services provided.

- The CB’s Quality Management System must be documented in a quality manual and associated quality procedures, made available to all staff, implemented, maintained, and continually improved.
- The CB must have an appropriate Quality Manual that must include a Quality Policy Statement outlining management commitment to quality objectives.
- As part of the Quality Manual, the CB must document a clear organizational structure, which unambiguously defines ownership and documents job functions, responsibilities and reporting relationships of all staff engaged in delivering certification services.
- The CB must clearly identify the staff member accountable for the maintenance of the quality system.
• The CB must have a list of everyone employed with the organization and maintain personnel records for all staff and auditors covering their qualifications, training, experience, affiliations, professional status, and any relevant consultancy to identify possible conflict of interest or risk to impartiality.

• The CB’s senior management must demonstrate its commitment to the implementation of the Quality Management System and to review its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness.

• A description of the management of the certification process including the CB criteria, terms of reference and procedures.

• The CB will provide an updated list of all individuals responsible for the technical review of BAP audit reports that include qualifications and practical experience.

• Details of management review policy and procedures, including frequency and documented results of such reviews. Reviews shall be conducted, at a minimum, annually.

• Document control procedures.

• Recruitment procedures; i.e. selection, initial training, ongoing training and performance assessment for all relevant certification Body personnel.

• A list of all subcontractors and a detailed procedure for their appointment, assessments, and their ongoing management.

• Procedures for actions in response to non-conformities and the effectiveness of agreed objective evidence presented, corrective and preventative actions taken.

• Procedures in relation to the use of the certificate, rules for granting, suspending or withdrawing a certificate, and the actions taken by the Certification Body should a suspension or withdrawal take place

• Policies and procedures relating to appeals, complaints, and disputes.

• Procedures for conducting and documenting internal audits and for correction actions arising from internal audits.

CB’s will be subject to a performance review according to the BAP CB Review procedure. CB’s failing to meet the expectations of the GAA BAP Program will be suspended from approval lists.

3.2 Contractual Agreements

With Best Aquaculture Practices: A contract is required between the CB and Best Aquaculture Practices. The contract will provide the basis by which a CB can undertake evaluations against the BAP Standards for which they are approved.
With Applicant/Facility: The CB must ensure that an agreement with the Applicant is in place for the authorization of the provision of the audit report and any associated information to Best Aquaculture Practices.

The CB’s agreement with the facilities shall include a provision to ensure that the CB is informed of any food safety prosecution, significant regulatory/food safety non-conformity or any product recall relating to food safety. CB’s shall have procedures in place to ensure the integrity of certification after notification. The CB shall inform Best Aquaculture Practices of any such notifications.

With CB Personnel and Auditors: The Certification Body shall have in place agreements with all staff involved in the certification process that obligates them, at a minimum, to the requirements listed under 3.7.4 and 3.7.5. The CB shall further have agreements in place with all auditors, including subcontract auditors that include the items listed under 3.7.4 and 3.7.5.

3.3 CB Accreditation Body Requirements, and Accreditation Scope Extension to BAP

There are two levels of CB approval for each Standard:

1) Restricted CB Approval Listing - for CB’s seeking accreditation extensions of scope for specific Standards. This “Restricted” level allows the CB enough assessments to gain accreditation.

2) Full Approval Listing – for CB’s which have gained accreditations for the specific standards.

The BAP Team will maintain an up-to-date list of CB Approval listings for each category.

3.3.1 CB’s Accreditation Body

The CB’s Accreditation Body shall be a member of the IAF (International Accreditation Forum) and a signatory to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA). CB’s registering/applying for BAP recognition shall disclose at that time whether or not they are aware of any circumstances that would reasonably or may reasonably lead to the withdrawal or suspension of their Accreditation. GAA shall have an open communication channel with the Accreditation Body as part of the arrangement with the CB.
3.3.2 Accreditation Extension to Scope against the GAA BAP Standard(s)

As stated under 3.1, accreditation by a recognized AB to ISO/IEC 17065 is a pre-requisite for any CB to apply for recognition to BAP. Once a CB has been approved for listing by BAP, that CB must also seek an extension to scope of their ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation to include the GAA BAP Seafood Processing Standard and the relevant GAA BAP farm standard(s). The CB will be put on a “Restricted CB Approval List” until each specific extension of accreditation scope has been achieved.

Best Aquaculture Practices recognizes that to achieve an extension to their scope of accreditation, CB’s must be able to carry out evaluations against the Standard(s) they are seeking approval for. Therefore, a CB shall be allowed to carry out BAP audits, on a restricted number basis, prior to achieving accreditation extension, where they can demonstrate the following;

- An active application for an extension to scope against ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation to include the GAA BAP Standard(s).
- Accreditation scope extension must be expected within a target 12-18 months of the date of application to the Accreditation Body. An Accreditation plan shall be submitted to the BAP Team.
- Compliance with scheme and competency requirements.

Should accreditation to the scope of the GAA BAP Seafood Processing Standard and/or farm standards not be granted within the time frame specified above, the CB’s approval shall be reviewed on the basis of a formal risk assessment, GAA will decide on of the following after consultation with the relevant Accreditation Board:

- Allowance of a further set amount of time to gain accreditation
- Termination of contract

A CB which has accreditation extension for a given standard will remain in Full Approval for 12 – 18 months after the publication of a new issue of the standard. After that period the approval rating of the CB will move from Full to Restricted and the CB’s contract will be reviewed.

3.4 Accreditation Status

CB’s seeking Full Approval Listing to assess against any GAA BAP Standard must supply a copy of their ISO/IEC 17065 accreditation certificate to BAP. The CB shall only be placed on the Restricted CB List when it has applied for, a new scope extension to a specific BAP Standard(s).
A CB shall only be placed on the Full Approval List for a new Standard when it has gained, accreditation for that specific standard. A copy of the accreditation certificate shall be provided to Best Aquaculture Practices, with reference to the version number or date of the BAP Standard(s) made.

The CB shall make Best Aquaculture Practices immediately aware of any change of accreditation status or changes to ownership, management structure, of staff involved in the BAP certification process.

3.4.1 Scope of Expertise

CB’s shall only work within the specific fields of expertise relating to the GAA BAP seafood categories for which they are approved. CB’s must demonstrate that their staff has the knowledge and expertise to work within these fields. CB’s must also demonstrate appropriate training for Auditors has been undertaken before requesting an extension to scope of an auditor’s approval categories (see 3.6.7).

Note: Categories/fields of expertise under the GAA BAP pertain to the scope of the Standards, i.e. seafood experience, categories: farms, hatcheries, feed mills, and seafood processing plants. Refer to the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Approval Requirements” document where the specific BAP competency categories are defined.

The importance of fields of evaluation and Auditor competence cannot be over emphasized and for Best Aquaculture Practices, their members, and other users, these are critical criteria, which are essential to support a legal due diligence defense.

3.4.2 Communication

Best Aquaculture Practices welcomes CB communications and information exchange. Best Aquaculture Practices will, from time to time, seek CB input into the GAA BAP Standards, related documents, and audit process.

The CB must warrant and communicate to Best Aquaculture Practices that:

- Any and all offices that offer and make certification decisions, and/or issue certification to GAA BAP shall be duly registered with Best Aquaculture Practices
- Each auditor is qualified to perform the audit services he/she performs on behalf of the company in accordance with the criteria set our herein and other related GAA BAP 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 auditors.
• All factual information supplied to Best Aquaculture Practices and/or the Accreditation Body by the company is, or was when given, true, accurate and not misleading.
• The company has the power and all necessary consents, licenses, and registrations to conduct their business and to enter into and perform the contract; and
• The company has read, understood, and shall comply with their obligations and requirements as laid out in this document and other GAA BAP/Best Aquaculture Practices documents.

The Certification Body (CB) must demonstrate that it will carry out audits:

• With all due skill and care
• In accordance with the relevant Standard(s)
• In accordance with any conditions attached to their Accreditation and only in respect of the GAA BAP Categories for which they are approved
• Using only auditors who are trained and registered with Best Aquaculture Practices and meet the competencies of each of the relevant Standard(s) for undertaking such Audits

3.5 Extensions to Scope of BAP Recognition of Certification Bodies

Where a BAP recognized/approved Certification Body wishes to extend their scope to include a new GAA BAP Standard, the request for an extension to the scope or recognition will need to be submitted to Best Aquaculture Practices. The process for extending the scope of CB assessment is the same as for initial registration.

3.6 CB Auditor Competence

Each auditor undertaking certification evaluations must have the appropriate qualification, training, experience and skills to perform an evaluation against the relevant GAA BAP Standard(s).

The CB shall ensure that all auditors undertake such training as may be required in accordance with their accreditation and the GAA BAP Standard(s).

The qualification, training and experience will differ relevant to the product and technology covered by the scope of the individual GAA BAP Standard; however, the auditing skills will not differ and shall be monitored to maintain a high standard.
Certification Bodies and their auditors are required to read, understand, and comply with the detailed requirements regarding competency described in the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Approval Requirements.”

### 3.6.1 Auditor Registration and Training

Best Aquaculture Practices will require the CB to register all auditors with Best Aquaculture Practices and provide details of the fields of evaluation/GAA BAP categories in which they are qualified to evaluate. The initial registration and updating of information is the responsibility of the CB.

The CB will hold a detailed and complete skills matrix or files for all auditors undertaking GAA BAP evaluations. The Certification Body shall maintain records demonstrating how auditors comply with the requirements for qualifications, training and experience required under the GAA BAP Standard(s). These records shall be kept up-to-date and provided to Best Aquaculture Practices upon initial auditor approval and thereafter upon request.

CB’s shall promptly notify BAP when a BAP and CB approved auditor is no longer being used or has had their approval to conduct BAP audits suspended or revoked by the CB for any reason.

### 3.6.2 Auditor Qualifications, Training, Experience, and Competencies

The Certification Body must have systems and procedures in place to ensure that auditors conducting assessment meet the requirements, at a minimum, described below and elsewhere in this document. Additionally, the CB must ensure compliance regarding auditor qualifications as detailed in the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Requirements” document or where a Certification Body, through documented procedures, can demonstrate through practical experience and supervised audits that the auditor has competence for the assigned audits.

BAP reserves the right to make the final decision regarding admittance of candidates to BAP Auditor Training courses.

### 3.6.3 Qualifications/Education

**Language Skills:** Demonstrate good written and verbal English capabilities

**Education:** A degree in a relevant scientific field and/or other relevant education (as described below under “other education”).
• Some examples of relevant degrees include: Food Science, Microbiology, Veterinary Medicine, Aquaculture, Biology, or Chemistry.

Other Education: Other education combined with experience can be substituted in place of a degree requirement provided that education is deemed sufficient and can be verified through certificates. The other education must be directly applicable.

• Examples of other education include training or courses in: HACCP, GMP’s, Sanitation, Hygiene, Quality Assurance, Microbiology and additional audit courses beyond that already required under item 3.6.5.

3.6.4 Total Work Experience

Processing Plants

• Auditors must have at least 5 years of direct experience with seafood processing plants. Experience may take the form of at least 3 years of direct plant experience and at least 2 years of continuous auditing experience.
• Continuous auditing experience for this purpose, is defined as no fewer than 6 seafood plant audits being conducted in a 12 month period.

Farms

• Auditors must have at least 3 years of experience for farms and hatcheries.
• Experience may take the form of 2 years of direct relevant industry experience and 1 year of continuous auditing experience.
• Continuous auditing experience for this purpose, is defined as no fewer than 6 seafood farms, and / or hatchery audits being conducted in a 12 month period.

Feed Mills

• For feed mills, auditors must have at least 3 years of experience in animal and/or aquaculture feed mills (see “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Requirements” document for the specific BAP competency categories).
• Experience can take the form of positions held, previous experience in performing audits of facilities for the relevant BAP categories a candidate is seeking approval for, or both (Examples of positions held: quality assurance, production, food safety, product inspection, plant manager, farm manager, etc.). The auditor shall be able to demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of specific product categories for which they are approved.
3.6.5 Formal Auditor Training

Recognized auditor course: Candidates shall have successfully completed recognized course(s) in audit techniques based on Quality Management Systems (QMS) or (Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS)).

- Examples of recognized courses include: ISO 9001, ISO 22000, BRC, FSSC 22000, SQF, IFS, ASQ, Certified Quality Auditor, ASQ Certified HACCP Auditor, or similar.
  - The BAP Auditor Course is not a suitable replacement for an “audit techniques” course

HACCP training: Seafood processing plant auditor candidates must have previously successfully completed a training course in seafood-specific HACCP requirements based on Codex and the International Seafood HACCP Alliance curriculum. Feed mill auditor candidates must have previously successfully completed a HACCP training course.

BAP auditor training course: Candidates shall have successfully completed a Best Aquaculture Practices official auditor training course in the relevant BAP Standard(s).

The examination content shall as a minimum cover:

- General knowledge of the scheme
- Knowledge and understanding of specific seafood plant, farm, feed or hatchery processes, as applicable for the auditor’s established area of competency
- Understanding of quality management, pre-requisite programs such as hygiene and sanitation requirements, and food safety including (for processing plants) seafood HACCP.

3.6.6 Initial Training

A Certification Body training program for each auditor shall incorporate, at a minimum:

- An assessment of knowledge and skills for each field and sub field and assignment of fields evaluation
- An assessment of knowledge of food safety, HACCP, Pre-Requisite Programs, and traceability assessments, and have access to, and be able to apply relevant laws and regulations. In the case of farms, hatcheries and feed mills, similar relevant knowledge to also include sector-specific knowledge such as aquaculture systems, disease management, medicated feeds, and feed ingredient controls and, etc.
- A period of supervised training to cover the assessment of quality management systems and HACCP, specific audit techniques and specific category knowledge.
- A documented sign off, of the satisfactory completion of the training program by the appointed supervisor.
See 3.7 herein and the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Requirements” document for more details.

3.6.7 Auditor Extension of Competency

In order for a currently approved BAP auditor to extend the scope of the standards they are approved to audit against, all of the requirements must be met as described above and in the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Requirements” document. That is, the CB must first verify that the above competency requirements have been met for the new category. This includes the experience and training requirements, attending, and passing a BAP course, and undergoing of the required training/shadow and witness audits described below in 3.7.1.

3.7 CB Auditor Experience

3.7.1 Initial Audit Experience – Shadow and Witness Audit Requirements

Note: See 3.10 for the competency requirements of the assessor conducting the shadow and witness audits.

Once an auditor has met the competency requirements and passed the BAP auditor course, they are not fully approved to audit on their own until they have successfully completed a series of supervised shadow and witness audits against the relevant BAP Standard/competency category to the CB’s satisfaction. The number of shadow and witness audits per BAP category are as noted below.

CB’s shall conduct more than the minimum number where the auditor performance during shadow / witness assessment indicates the auditor is not ready for approval and needs additional training and supervision. This is particularly relevant for auditor candidates that qualified mostly on entirely on practical experience with no auditing experience.

“Shadow” audits are audits where training, discussion and direction can be provided to the auditor in training. For “witness” audits, this is the final sign-off. Therefore, the new auditor must conduct the entire audit by themselves with no direction or commentary from the assessor. The assessor observes and documents the assessment outcome only. After which the CB must decide, based on all of the information, if the auditor is to be given final approval to audit on his her own, or more shadow audits and another witness are necessary.

For Seafood Processing Plants: After passing the BAP course, newly approved auditors must successfully complete a series of supervised training (shadow audits) and a final
“sign off” (witness audit) conducted on site at a number of different plants against the GAA BAP Seafood Processing Standard. The total number and duration of these audits shall be a minimum of 10 audit days and 5 audits. Every shadow/witness audit shall be conducted by an assessor that meets the competencies defined in 3.10. BAP will accept up to three GFSI “E1” (Processing of Animal Perishable Products, which presently includes us, FSSC 22000, GRMS, SQF, IFS, and BRC) benchmarked scheme shadow/witness audits as equivalent to BAP shadow witness audits. Shadow audits conducted to the standards of other GFSI recognized schemes for category E1 Processing of Animal Perishable Products and conducted at a processing plant for animal perishable products can also count toward the shadow audit requirements but not the final “sign off” (witness audit). If BAP accepts three GFSI E1 audits, the auditor will be required to complete one BAP shadow audit and one BAP final sign off witness audit.

For Auditors Meeting the Combined Competency Requirements for Farms and Hatcheries: As described above, for a total of 2 (1 shadow, 1 witness), conducted on site at a number of different facilities (e.g. 2 farms, or 2 hatcheries, or 1 farm and 1 hatchery) against a relevant GAA BAP farm or hatchery standard. (The similarity in farm and related hatchery competencies are recognized and therefore allowed to overlap / replace one another for the purposes of Shadow / Witness). The relevant BAP standard shall be in compliance with the auditor competency categories as described in “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Approval Requirements” document. The auditor shall then be signed off, where competency has been demonstrated. Every shadow / witness audits shall be conducted by an assessor that meets the competencies defined in 3.10.

3.7.2 Submittal to BAP of Documented Proof of Final Auditor Sign off by the CB

The CB shall document the dates, duration, and location of the supervised shadow and witness audits described above along with their outcome. The CB shall submit to BAP this document or spreadsheet showing the status and progress of shadow and witness audit activities at BAP Request.

In any case, the CB shall submit to BAP, in writing, the notice of final approval of the auditor and the complete shadow and witness history upon final CB approval. This is required with or without BAP request. This information is necessary for BAP to maintain verification records of the auditor competency and in order to update the BAP auditor status records from “pending shadow and witness” to “approved.”
3.7.3 Maintain Audit Experience

The CB shall have in place an annual program to maintain experience in the relevant GAA BAP standard(s).

**Seafood Processing Plants:** To include at least 5 on site audits annually at a number of different organizations, against a GFSI approved standard of which at least 2 must be against the GAA BAP Standard to maintain category and scheme knowledge.

**Farm/Hatcheries:** At least 2 BAP farm audits annually for each of the BAP farm/hatchery competency categories the auditor is approved for. As described in the “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Requirements” document.

**Feed Mills:** At least 1 per year to BAP Feed Mill Standard and/or any credible International Feed Standard/Scheme.

3.7.4 Continuing Training, Refresher Training, and Competency Monitoring

BAP approved auditors shall attend a BAP auditor course for refresher training in the categories they are approved for at a minimum, every 3 years. This shall be more often where the CB determines, during performance monitoring and calibration, that the auditor needs refresher training sooner.

CB’s shall promptly notify BAP where an auditor is unable to attend the required refresher training by the 3-year date. In such cases the auditor may be suspended until such time as the refresher training is successfully completed, depending on circumstances.

The auditor must be kept up to date with category best practice, and have access to and be able to, apply relevant laws and regulations.

Auditors shall undergo additional training by the CB whenever a new version of the GAA BAP Standard(s), checklist, policies, guidance documents, etc. are issued. The CB shall maintain written records of all relevant training undertaken. It is the responsibility of the CB to ensure any auditor they are using undergoes proper and effective training in between attending full BAP auditor refresher courses.

Training and monitoring shall also include calibration across auditors and to the Standard(s), report reviews and comparisons, and so on.

Auditors shall be subjected to periodic testing by Best Aquaculture Practices against the relevant BAP Standard in addition to course attendance, at BAP discretion.
3.7.5 Attributes and Competencies

The Certification Body must have a system in place to ensure auditors conduct themselves in a professional manner. The following provide examples of required behavior.

- 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, i.e. aware of need for confidentiality and observing professional code of conduct

3.7.6 Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality, and Code of Conduct

The Certification Body and the Auditors they employ, must avoid any conflict of interest, or breach of confidentiality or ethics. CB’s are bound by a contractual agreement with Best Aquaculture Practices to abide by these requirements. Certification Bodies shall also have signed agreements in place with all auditors approved to assess against the BAP Standard(s). 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 audit, or that may arise during an audit
- A policy for the CB to investigate notifications of, or incidences or potential, conflict of interest and to exclude the auditor for a specific period (at least 2 years) where appropriate
- Prohibitions against consulting for, or soliciting consultancy or other types of work with a BAP applicant prior to or during an audit, and during the certification process
- Prohibitions against conduct or remarks that may, in the view of BAP Management, disparage the scheme, scheme management or owner and related staff, certified facilities, or associated organizations such as the Certification Bodies, Accreditation Bodies, GFSI, SOC, or similar.
• Prohibitions against using or sharing confidential information of facilities, Best Aquaculture Practices, the GAA, or other associated organizations

The Certification Body shall include in the auditor agreement at a minimum the above points, including specific codes of ethics / conduct obligations as outlined herein and under point 3.7.5. Copies of these agreements shall be provided to Best Aquaculture Practices upon request.

Any potential breaches of these requirements that come to the attention of the Best Aquaculture Practices by the Certification Body or its auditors will be brought to the attention of the CB. Conversely, the CB is required to also notify Best Aquaculture Practices of such matters that may come to their attention. At the discretion of Best Aquaculture Practices, such instances may result in sanctions, suspension, or withdrawal of approval of the CB, auditor or both.

3.8 Subcontracted Auditors

Where Best Aquaculture Practices and CB 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 auditors, etc., shall apply.

The CB shall not, at any time, use any subcontract auditor that has not been approved by Best Aquaculture Practices.

3.9 Certification Body Personnel and Competency

Note: This section discusses CB administrative/management personnel involved in BAP program management, the assignment of auditors, technical reviews, etc. Auditors are discussed separately above).

Certification Body personnel involved in any aspect of the GAA BAP certification process shall be impartial and competent for the functions they perform, including making required technical judgments, framing policies and implementing them. Clearly documented instructions shall be available to the personnel describing their duties and responsibilities. These instructions shall be maintained and kept up to date.

In order to ensure the evaluation and certification are carried out effectively and uniformly, the minimum relevant criteria for the competence of personnel in relation to GAA BAP certification shall be defined by the Certification Body and combined should be equal to that of the auditor.
CB’s must ensure that a sufficient level of understanding of the GAA BAP Standard exists within their organization at all times. All staff with a key role in the GAA BAP certification process, regardless of their specific function or name of the group (technical committee, review committee, certification committee, etc.) shall have demonstrated experience and knowledge regarding seafood audit processes, corrective action evidence review, and the applicable GAA BAP Standard(s). This includes, for example, functions such as the review of audit reports, nonconformities and corrective action evidence and making decisions regarding certification and other related activities.

At least 1 member of the Certification Body involved in the GAA BAP program management or administration shall attend a Best Aquaculture Practices auditor training course.

Information on the relevant qualifications, training, and experience of each member of the personnel involved in the GAA BAP certification process shall be maintained by the CB. Records of training and experience shall be kept up-to-date. These records shall include at a minimum:

- Name and address
- Organization affiliation and position held
- Educational qualifications
- Experience and training related to seafood, audit processes, assessment of audit reports and corrective action evidence, and the relevant BAP Standard(s)
- Records including dates, related to training and education

Personnel utilized 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 Best Aquaculture Practices upon request.

CB’s shall provide to BAP, an organizational chart that defines the personnel involved in the BAP scheme and their functions related to BAP. This chart shall be kept up-to-date and BAP shall be notified promptly, in writing, of any changes to such personnel.

3.10 Competency Requirements for Assessors Used by CB’s to Conduct BAP! Training/Shadow and Witness Audits

For BAP related training/shadow and witness auditing: the training/shadow and witness audits performed against the BAP scheme by the CB are crucial in protecting the integrity of the scheme by ensuring the competency and proper interpretation of the Standard(s) by the auditor under assessment. For that reason, CB’s are required to ensure that personnel they use to conduct such training/shadow and witness audits
under BAP have a high level of experience and proper training in order to ensure the robustness of these assessments.

3.10.1 Training/Shadow and Witness Assessor Training and Reporting

The CB shall ensure the personnel conducting assessment audits of other BAP auditors have been properly trained in conducting such assessments. The CB shall further ensure that a report format, checklist or template is provided for documenting the assessment outcomes for all relevant categories. The report shall include, but is not necessarily limited to:

- The facility where the assessment is taking place and the type of facility (farm, plant, etc.)
- Whether or not the audit is a training/shadow/observation audit, or a witness audit.
- Whether or not the assessment audit is the first, second, third or sign off/approval audit or surveillance audit etc.
- The name of the shadow and/or witness assessor, and of the auditor under assessment
- Anyone else that is part of the audit team (technical expert, CB management observer etc.)
- Any areas of improvement needed
- Audit preparation
- The opening meeting
- Accuracy of interpretation of the BAP Standard clauses and intent
- Accuracy and clarity of statements of conformity and non-conformity
- Whether or not proper objective evidence was obtained and cited for both conformity and non-conformity
- Proper assignment of non-conformance levels
- Proper control over: the audit process and time management (e.g. allowed facility delay and disorganization to compromise the audit and audit duration. Waited for each item during delays instead of moving on to another clause. Failed to remember to go back to “pending” items. Spent too long on some sections and too short on others. Excessive delays created by auditor disorganization).
- Time allocation: proper amount of time spent on site versus document review
- Audit duration: proper amount of time spent to conduct a proper audit (not too long, not too short)
- Professionalism
- Appropriate questioning techniques (open-minded, not leading, not threatening, not confusing)
- The closing meeting
• Provision of a non-conformance summary to the facility before leaving
• Clarity of the overall report writing
• Where the minimum required shadow/witness audits have occurred as defined by competency category previously, whether or not the auditor is recommended to proceed to witness auditing, or if more shadow/training audits are required
• Where the final witness audit has occurred, whether or not the auditor is recommended for full approval, or needs more supervised audits first
• Other items as deemed appropriate by the CB

3.10.2 Training/Shadow and Witness Assessor Experience Requirements

The qualifications for the person conducting the BAP training/shadow and witness audit/assessments are one of the following options:

A. A Senior BAP auditor
   1. This is a currently approved BAP auditor for the category being assessed. (At the time of this writing there are 6 separate competencies. See “BAP Auditor and Competency and Course Approval Requirements” document for details).
   2. May be either an employee of the CB or an independent subcontractor
   3. Has properly conducted in their own, a minimum number of BAP audits in the relevant category, as follows (NOTE – shadow and witness audits DO NOT COUNT toward the below):
      i. Seafood Processing Plants = 20 Audits
      ii. Farm/Hatchery Combined Qualification = 15 audits where the auditor is approved for farm/hatcheries, a combination of farms/hatcheries in related categories that add up to 15 (i.e. some salmon farms and some salmon hatcheries = 15 total).

B. A Senior Auditor in a Different but Relevant Scheme
   1. Is not an approved BAP auditor but has significant, senior auditing experience of at least 3 years in another scheme and has conducted at least the number of audits relevant to BAP as described under point 3 below.
   2. Has studied, in advance of approval to do BAP assessments, the relevant BAP standard in depth to ensure understanding of the differences in the BAP standard versus the standard(s) the auditor is experienced in. This length of study shall be a minimum of at least 24 hours. The CB shall document the hours of BAP related study and submit the records of the said study to Best Aquaculture Practices.
   3. Relevant “Other Scheme” Experience
      i. Seafood Processing Plants = 25 seafood plant audits to another processing plant standard currently recognized by GFSI (the auditor shall have been approved to audit to the other
standards for seafood categories. Non-seafood category audits shall not count. For example, BRC or SQF audits conducted in poultry plants are not accepted. Similarly, auditors approved to or audits conducted against GFSI recognized Global Red Meat Standard shall not count).

ii. Farms/Hatcherries = 20 audits conducted against the ASC or Global GAP Aquaculture farm/hatchery standards for the relevant BAP category. Or, a combination of ASC and Global GAP audits to the proper BAP category (see “BAP Auditor Competency and Course Approval Requirements”)

C. Senior Auditor with Combined BAP and Other Relevant Scheme Experience

1. Has a combination of BAP and other relevant scheme experience in the proper BAP category being assessed
2. Combination experience requirements:
   i. Seafood Processing Plants = 20 seafood plant audits to both the BAP seafood processing standard and one or more GFSI recognized processing plants schemes where that auditors is approved under that scheme for seafood processing plant categories. Only seafood processing plant audits will count (See “B 3 i above). Of these 20 audits, a minimum of 10 shall have been properly conducted against the BAP Seafood Processing Standard.
   ii. Farms and hatcheries = 15 audits. A combination of BAP, ASC, and/or Global GAP in the relevant BAP category as described under “B 3 i” above. Of these 15 audits, at least 8 shall have been properly conducted against the relevant BAP farm and/or hatchery standard.

3.11 Use of the BAP Certification Mark

The BAP logo is the property of GAA BAP and its authorization and rules for use are controlled via an agreement between Best Aquaculture Practices and certified facilities approved by the CBs.

3.12 Bribery and Fraud

This policy has been developed to establish controls defining ethical and acceptable auditor behavior before, during and after the auditing process of a facility. The ethics of BAP auditors and approved Certification Bodies is at the heart of program integrity.
This policy applies to all BAP approved auditors and Certification Bodies that conduct third party assessments for the Global Aquaculture Alliance BAP Certification Program.

All BAP approved auditors and Certification Bodies are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost ethical behavior. Auditors shall immediately report to their CB any attempts by a facility to offer gifts, money, or personal favors to garner favorable results in the certification process. Certification Bodies are to immediately inform the BAP Program Integrity Department of any reported fraudulent, or unethical behavior reported by their auditor.

Auditors shall not accept offers including, but not limited to:

- Money
- Personal favors
- Tickets or access to events
- Items of material value
- Off-site meals
  - It is reasonable for a facility to provide an auditor lunch on site during the assessment, but inappropriate for an auditor to go out with representatives from the facility being audited off premises

Any claims by a facility in regards to misconduct by an auditor, such as demanding a bribe for a favorable audit, shall be investigated by the Certification Body in conjunction with the BAP Program Integrity Department.

It shall be the responsibility of the Certification Body to investigate and ultimately decide on disciplinary actions for their employees, or contracted auditors who are accused and or determined to be guilty of fraud, bribery, or unethical behavior. The results of the Certification Bodies investigation shall be reported to the BAP Program Integrity Manager.

Facilities who are accused of bribery or providing false documentation to an auditor shall be investigated by the BAP Program Integrity Department with the full cooperation of the Certification Body. Ultimately, it shall be the responsibility of the BAP Program Integrity Manager to determine actions against facilities accused of and/or determined to be guilty of unethical behavior, up to and including termination from the BAP Certification Program.

Investigation results shall not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those with a legitimate need to know. This is to protect the reputation of those who may be accused, but ultimately found innocent of wrong-doing.
4 The Evaluation Process

4.1 Information to Applicants

The CB shall ensure the Applicant has or is provided with all relevant and up-to-date information related to the GAA BAP standard(s) including the standard(s) themselves, any interpretation guidelines, and relevant audit policies.

The Certification Body shall also require that each applicant:

- Always complies with the relevant provisions of the certification program
- Makes all necessary arrangements for the conduct of the evaluation, including examination of documents, access to areas, records, personnel, etc.
- Make claims regarding certification only in respect of the scope for which certification has been granted (see 1.6 “Certification and Assessment Scope”).
- Does not use its certification in such a manner as to bring the CB, BAP Management or any other associated organizations into disrepute and does not make any statements regarding its certification that the CB may consider to be misleading or unauthorized
- Upon suspension or withdrawal of certification, discontinues use of all advertising material that contains any reference thereto and returns any certification documents as required by the CB and Best Aquaculture Practices

4.2 Evaluation Frequency

It is the responsibility of the Applicant to maintain valid certification. Evaluation frequency consists of initial evaluation and, typically, annual audits thereafter for recertification (Except in cases where seasonality prevents this).

4.3 Duration of Evaluations

Best Aquaculture Practices will insist upon the accurate assessment and duration of evaluations by CB’s.
Although audit duration will vary according to risk assessment, audit duration shall be at a MINIMUM, as follows

- Seafood Processing Plants (primary processors or secondary re-processors/re-packers) = 2 days
- Feed Mills = 2 days
- Stand Alone Medium to Large Farms/Hatcheries = 1 day
- IOM Farms/Small Farms = ½ day each

Note: The minimum audit duration can be all on site, or a combination of remote document review and on site, as circumstances warrants. Where the facility does not send documents in advance, the ENTIRE duration shall be all on site.

Note: The minimum audit duration described above is for facility AUDITING and does NOT include report writing time.

The duration of an audit may vary due to a number of factors such as audit history, severity, type and number of non-conformities found, modifications to the facility or process, significant capacity increase, added species or product forms, structural change or change in company management or ownership (for seafood processing plants, it is common for them to take 2.5 days and sometimes to a maximum of 3 days, for example).

4.4 Evaluation Format

The CB shall be mindful that the evaluation format is one of systems/documentary/records review and physical inspection of the site and manufacturing process. Time allocation during the evaluation shall be such to provide sufficient and proportionate time for each activity to be carried out in full, and where appropriate, additional time given when the Auditor is required to carry out further investigation.

An evaluation will consist of seven elements:

- Review of the facility application to ensure all products and processes are properly defined and to include resolution of any questions, unclear or missing information prior to assessment
- Audit preparation, planning and scheduling, including assignment of a qualified auditor that is available within a reasonable time frame
- Where possible, preliminary document assessment in advance
- Opening meeting
- Site assessment
- Collection of necessary Sample for Testing
• Review of Management systems, records, documents and procedures
• Closing meeting
• Provision of a non-conformance summary to the facility and CB.
• The auditor will complete a formal evaluation report

All sections of the standard shall be covered by reviewing the Applicant’s documents, records, and related procedures, together with an inspection of production facilities.

Seafood Processing Plant: Applicants must be processing a BAP eligible species during the assessment. Documents, records, and procedures for all BAP eligible species and product forms that the facility produces must be assessed whether or not they were produced at the time of the audit.

Farms, Hatcheries and Feed Mills: Applicants must be in operation at the time of the audit. Farms and hatcheries must be stocked.

4.5 Non-Conformance Categories, Reporting, and Closure Time Frames

Any Non-Conformances raised during the evaluation will be recorded by the auditor as either:

**Critical:** Where there is a Critical failure to comply with a food safety or legal issue or a risk to the integrity of the Scheme.

The auditor will immediately inform a CB Management Person who will inform Best Aquaculture Practices. Immediate temporary suspension may ensue pending clarifications.

**Major:** Where there is a substantial failure to meet the requirements of a statement of intent and any mandatory clause of a Standard but there is no imminent Food Safety risk or immediate risk to the Integrity of the Scheme (Generally Policy).

The auditor will record this in the Report Form and communicate the details to the CB management person. Objective evidence which properly verifies correction action has been taken, including addressing of root cause, shall be submitted to the CB by the facility within calendar 35 days of the evaluation taking place.

**Minor:** Where absolute compliance to the statement of intent and a mandatory clause has not been demonstrated (general housekeeping).

The auditor will record this in the Report Form and communicate the details to the CB management person. Objective evidence which properly verifies correction action has been taken, including addressing of root cause, shall be submitted to the CB by the facility within calendar 35 days of the evaluation taking place.

At the closing meeting, the auditor shall present his/her findings, and discuss all non-conformities that have been identified during the evaluation, but shall not make
comment on the likely outcome of the Evaluation. A written summary of the non-conformities discussed at the closing meeting shall be left with the facility upon completion of the audit.

A written non-conformance summary shall be provided to the CB by the auditor within 48 hours of the audit completion. This time frame may be extended by 1 or 2 days under extenuating circumstances.

The CB technical person or committee shall review the non-conformance summary promptly.

This review shall ensure the non-conformance statements are clear, the level of non-conformity assigned is appropriate to the non-conformance statement and intent of the clause, and the auditor has not sited multiple non-conformities for the same issue.

Once the non-conformance summary has passed the CB review, it shall be immediately forwarded to Best Aquaculture Practices along with page 1 of the audit report. BAP shall receive this information no more than 10 calendar days from the date the audit was completed.

4.6 Audit Reporting

The auditor shall provide a full report of the evaluation. The auditor shall submit the report to the Technical Manager or committee of the CB.

The report shall follow the format specified by Best Aquaculture Practices and shall provide full details of the evaluation. The report shall be issued whether certification is granted or not, and in accordance with Best Aquaculture Practices guidelines. The applicant who commissioned the evaluation owns the Evaluation Report, however, an agreement shall be in place between the applicant and the CB for the authorization of the provision of a report to Best Aquaculture Practices.

The details/comments section of the Evaluation Report shall be in open text format and in English. Reports shall also include comments both where criteria have been met, and not met. Objective evidence to support both conformance and any non-conformances that have been identified shall be referenced within the report. Within the Evaluation Report there shall be a record of the duration of the evaluations and any reason for the lengthening or shortening of the duration from that of typical or expected evaluation duration.

The Evaluation Report must accurately reflect the findings of the auditor during the evaluation.
4.7 Corrective Action of Non-Conformities

All non-conformities for all facilities, standards and audit formats shall have facility correction action responses and objective evidence submitted of effective correction and implementation. Such evidence is essential for the audit and Certification Body to verify that the applicant has properly closed out the non-conformance and that the Applicant meets the requirements of the Standard.

Verification may take the form of further on-site assessment or of objective evidence such as submitted paperwork including updated procedures, records, and photographs etc. The evidence must be assessed by a technically competent member or group within the Certification Body. Note, that statements of intent alone by the facility to correct a non-conformance do not qualify as objective evidence. For evidence to be acceptable, it must address the root cause of the non-conformity.

All evidence of corrective action must be returned, completed, and verified by the Certification Body within a timescale defined by BAP before certification can be awarded.

4.8 Technical Review of the Audit Results, and the Certification Decision Making Entity

The audit report, test result and corrective action evidence must be considered by a Certification Manager or Committee of the CB. Audit results must undergo a technical review prior to granting, suspending, withdrawing or renewing certification. Certification decisions shall be made by a person, persons or committee that were not involved in the facility audit. The Certification Body and the decision making process shall be impartial and free from any conflict of interest to include any commercial or financial pressures or gains.

The certification review/decision making group/team/committee shall be adequately staffed to ensure timely reviews and decision making. The committee make up shall be:

- Minimum 2 persons;
- At least 1 at all times having experience and competence in the GAA BAP scheme.

The review shall ensure:

- That reviewers are impartial and technically competent to understand the content of reports, corrective action evidence and test result. And that these data are accurately assessed to demonstrate satisfactory evidence of compliance with the scheme.
• That all requirements of the standard have been fully covered, using any supporting notes made during the assessment by a suitably qualified auditor
• That the scope of the report covers the scope applied for by the client and that the report provides satisfactory evidence that all areas of the scope have been fully investigated
• That all areas of non-conformity have been identified, and effective corrective action has been taken to resolve these non-conformities including the addressing of root cause

The result of the certification decision will be either:

• Applicant meets the Standards
• Applicant fails to meet the Standards

4.9 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

Complaints, appeals and disputes brought before the Certification Body by facilities, Best Aquaculture Practices or other parties shall be addressed in accordance with the Certification Body procedure and in compliance with this section. The applicant has the right to appeal the certification decision of the Certification Body. The Certification Body shall have a documented appeals process in place that is publicly available, and ensure the facility has a copy of that policy upon request and/or in the event of a complaint. Appeals shall be made in writing within the time frame set by the CB. Actions taken and their effectiveness must be documented.

A full investigation shall be conducted and a written response provided by Certification Body personnel and that are independent of the auditor and Certification decision maker(s). Appeals and complaints must be resolved within the time frame set by the CB. Actions taken and their effectiveness must be documented.

4.10 Certificate Content

The CB will issue certificates that conform to the following content requirements:

• Name and address of the facility
• Type of facility
• Species
• The Standard, scope, and version number to which the certificate applies 1
• Audit dates
• Expiration date
• Name of the Certification Body
• CB Certificate/certification number
• CB Logo
• BAP Logo
• AB Logo and number (where applicable)

The Certificate is the property of the CB and the control and Management of the status of a certificate shall be in place. Copies of certificates shall be provided to Best Aquaculture Practices for verification and consistency of content.

Certification shall not be awarded where any non-conformances requiring corrective action, remain outstanding.

Ongoing certification is maintained where there is substantive and demonstrable evidence that the Applicant remains in compliance with the criteria of the Standard in question.

When timescales, verification and/or corrective actions are not completed as required, suspension and/or withdrawal of facility certification may be implemented.

4.11 Certification Validity

The validity and duration of the issued certificate will be specified within each GAA BAP Standard or within documents issued to support these Standards and may vary between the individual GAA BAP Standards (for example, for farms growing species with a long grow out period prior to harvest, such as 18-24 months, certificate validity may be extended to cover the entire cycle).

4.12 Document Control and Document Registry

All records and documentation related to GAA BAP Standard’s evaluations shall be retained by the CB for a minimum of five years. Internal documentation will also be included such as personnel and training records.

CB’s shall ensure that their agreements with Applicants dictate that all documents in relation to the Evaluation shall be made available to Best Aquaculture Practices upon request. The Certification Body shall have in place a document control procedure that ensure all documents and records related to the CB’s GAA BAP certification process and to the GAA BAP Standards and procedures are up to date and that only current versions are in use and/or distributed to facilities, personnel, auditors, and Best Aquaculture Practices.

The CB shall maintain a document control registry that lists version numbers and/or issue dates. Making it clear which is the current, implemented version of all BAP scheme documents.
4.13 Changes in Certification Requirements

The CB shall give due notice of any changes it intends to make in its requirements for certification and that any time frames, where applicable, for adjustments to such changes are defined and reasonable.

5 Certification Body (CB) Performance Monitoring

5.1 CB Internal Monitoring

Certification Bodies shall have an internal audit program which includes internal audits of its Quality Management System (see 3.1.1) as well other systems, records, processes, staff and auditor competency programs, and all other aspects of the certification system to ensure compliance and consistency in the application of the GAA BAP Standard(s). This internal monitoring program shall also include on site assessments, shadow and/or witness assessments of auditors in accordance with the scope of every type or category of assessment for which the CB is approved/accredited under the GAA BAP Standard(s).

The internal audit frequency of the CB’s systems shall be defined and shall occur, at minimum, annually. The CB shall also conduct internal monitoring of the effectiveness of auditor training and competency requirements and assessments as described under “auditor competency” and other parts of this document. Auditor assessments shall be conducted on an ongoing basis to include monitoring of the type and number of non-conformities, competence in evaluating objective evidence, the audit process, the proper application of the GAA BAP Standard(s), auditor calibration, training, and knowledge, and so on. These reviews shall include documentary evaluations, interviews, meetings, etc.

5.2 Best Aquaculture Practices Performance Monitoring

The credibility of the GAA BAP Standard(s) is directly related to the competence, integrity and performance of the approved Certification Bodies and their auditors. Therefore, Best Aquaculture Practices will monitor the performance of Certification Bodies (as per the CB Review Procedure) and their auditors to ensure that the Standards are being applied consistently, auditor and CB personnel competence are properly
ensured, and that reports and certification decisions are completed accurately and timely.

Performance monitoring shall include such key performance indicators for CB and auditor competency assessments and related steps as follows:

- The review of audit reports, test results and certificates for quality and consistency
- Review, upon request, of corrective action evidence accepted by the auditor and CB to close non-conformities
- The review of auditor competency records, training and onsite shadow and witness audit records
- Review of CB personnel competency and qualifications
- Review of CB certification procedures and policies
- Accreditation Body findings
- Reports of suspensions of CB’s under other accredited schemes
- Appearance of any certified facilities on a government detention list
- Observance of the number or nature of non-conformities issued
- Audit of the CB office and witness auditing of their auditors
- Other auditor competency assessments beyond document reviews and witness auditing described above, such as requirements for additional examinations (tests).
- Monitoring compliance with audit duration requirements
- Unannounced or short notice audits of facilities by Best Aquaculture Practices or their designees
- Traceability tests of BAP certified products in the market place
- Complaints investigation
- Supplier feedback

The amount or frequency of the above actions, including CB office audits, auditor witness assessments, other listed CB and auditor competency assessments, and facility audits are applied by the BAP scheme based upon risk assessments. Risk assessments shall include criteria such as:

- The number of Certifications a CB issues
- The number of audits an auditor is conducting as well as the size and complexity of the assessments
- The results of findings from monitoring activities
- Unusual patterns in the number or nature of non-conformities issued
- Changes in personnel, Management or Ownership
- Changes in GAA BAP Standards, Regulatory or global standard requirements.

Where, at the discretion of Best Aquaculture Practices, a Certification Body or their auditor performance does not comply with GAA BAP requirements, the Certification Body or its auditor(s) may be sanctioned, suspended or removed from the scheme.
5.2.1 Complaints Investigation

In the event that Best Aquaculture Practices is made aware of any failure or potential failure by the CB to apply the principles and criteria of any of the BAP Standards during the conduct of an audit or otherwise, Best Aquaculture Practices will request a documented report of the reasons for the complaint. This report will be referred to the CB conducting the Certification.

Best Aquaculture Practices will require a full investigation of the report by the CB and, where applicable, the certified site and a response shall be submitted to Best Aquaculture Practices for consideration within 28 days. If the issues raised in the complaints are not addressed to the satisfaction of Best Aquaculture Practices, the CB will be sanctioned.

Best Aquaculture Practices may, at their discretion, suspend or revoke CB approval if in Best Aquaculture Practices’ opinion, the CB fails to properly address matters raised or if the CB’s actions may bring the Certification Scheme into disrepute.

For the avoidance of doubt the CB may not undertake any audits while the contract is suspended or following any termination.

Where a complaint is considered, at the discretion of Best Aquaculture Practices, to have been justified, the information relating to the complaint may be made available to the Certification Bodies Accreditation Body.

Best Aquaculture Practices will notify the person referring the issue of the outcome of the investigation.

5.2.2 Review of Audit Reports

Audit report formats are determined by Best Aquaculture Practices and only authorized versions are to be used. A sampling of reports will be monitored by Best Aquaculture Practices for completeness as part of the Best Aquaculture Practices’ performance monitoring procedures. Best Aquaculture Practices takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the content and information or omissions contained in each audit report, which are the responsibility of the Certification Body.

Where audit reports do not conform to the agreed standard, this will be discussed with the Certification Body responsible. Where BAP requests further information related to the content of a report, such as notes, records or evidence observed, this information shall be provided within 15 working days. If extra time is needed the CB is to notify Best Aquaculture Practices immediately as to the reason and time frame for completion. Approval of delay is at Best Aquaculture Practices discretion.
5.2.3 Sanctioning, Suspension, and Withdrawal

Certification Body performance monitoring by Best Aquaculture Practices is intended to help Certification Bodies ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standard(s) in order to protect the integrity of the scheme.

Wherever a Certification Body’s performance at the discretion of Best Aquaculture Practices, falls short of a requirement this will be brought to their attention and may lead to suspension. Monitoring of CB’s for compliance may result in shortfalls in, for example, areas such as adherence to time frames, auditor competency, confidentiality, or code of ethics breaches, CB personnel competency, improperly closed non-conformities, improperly trained auditors, and so forth.

The Certification Body shall submit a response to the deficiencies along with a corrective action plan to Best Aquaculture Practices describing steps taken or to be taken, and the time frames. The response and plan shall be provided within 15 working days of receipt of notification of Best Aquaculture Practices of the deficiency. Objective evidence of proper correction may be requested by Best Aquaculture Practices and must be provided promptly.

Repeated failures, a failure to co-operate in the investigation of an issue, failure to address an issue satisfactorily, potential breaches of ethics, confidentiality, or the terms of agreement between Best Aquaculture Practice and the CB, or the occurrence of a significant failure which could bring the scheme into disrepute or other serious incidences as determined by Best Aquaculture Practices will result in the sanction, suspension, or withdrawal of a Certification Body.

For the avoidance of doubt the CB may not undertake any audits while the contract is suspended. The Certification Body’s Accreditation Body will be notified of the suspension or withdrawal and the reasons.

6 Information Management and Security

6.1 Information Management

The CB must undertake to immediately notify Best Aquaculture Practices in writing:

- Of any breach of the Contract by the company; or
- Of any claim or threatened claim against the Company by any Applicant to which the Company has provided or is in the course of providing audit services;
• To maintain true and accurate records of each audit completed during the term of the Contract for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of such audit
• To supply Best Aquaculture Practices with a copy of:
  o Their Accreditation certificate or written evidence of their Accreditation; o any report
  o Their records of all relevant training completed by the Auditors and their respective qualifications to undertake Audits; and
  o The insurance policy taken and maintained in accordance with Clause 7.2 below;

The CB must agree to immediately notify Best Aquaculture Practices and, where applicable, to supply a copy of the relevant report when:
• A certificate of an applicant is revoked;
• A certificate of an applicant is suspended;
• An applicant who has previously gained Certification to a Standard, fails to regain certified status after an audit and certification review;
• There are any changes that could affect the safety of products;
• There are significant changes in the management or ownership of the certified facility;
• There is a change in the management or ownership of the CB

6.2 Confidentiality of Information

During the period of CB approval and for a period of 3 years after termination of approval for any reason, each party shall:
• Keep all confidential information confidential;
• Not disclose the confidential information to any other person without the prior written consent of the other; and
• Not use the confidential information for any purpose except the performance of their obligations under the contract

7 Legal and Liability Management

7.1 Legal Challenge

In the event that the applicant becomes aware of the notification of an impending prosecution with respect to product safety or legality, they shall immediately make the CB aware of the situation.
The CB in turn shall take steps to assess the implications of the situation and take appropriate actions. If there is likelihood that the legal proceedings will lead to adverse publicity or government intervention, the CB will immediately inform Best Aquaculture Practices of the incident.

7.2 Liability Insurance

The CB shall ensure that appropriate liability insurance is in place. This insurance shall incorporate employer’s liability, public and product liability and professional indemnity, errors and omissions. A copy of the relevant insurance certification must be submitted to Best Aquaculture Practices upon request.

It is the responsibility of the approved CB to ensure that the referenced insurance covers all activities, regardless of where performed, or whether carried out directly or subcontracted. Where CB’s require subcontract auditors to carry their own insurance, it is the responsibility of the CB to inform them.

The CB must agree to indemnify and keep indemnified the GAA and Best Aquaculture Practices from and against any costs, claims, demands, liabilities, expenses, damages, or losses (including without limitation consequential losses and loss of profit, and all interest, penalties and reasonable legal and other professional costs and expenses) arising out of or in connection with GAA BAP certification activities, including CB and/or auditor negligence, default or breach of the contract.