

Aquaculture Advisory Council

WG2 Shellfish Meeting

4 February 2025 (10:00 - 13:00)

Online (Zoom) – Interpretation available in EN - FR - ES - IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

WG2 MEMBERS

Stéphane Angeri (SENC, Chair)

Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming, Vice-Chair)

Lorenzo Gennari (AMA),

Andrea Fabris (API),

Phil Brooke (CIWF),

Audrey Lainé (CNC),

Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC),

Thibaut Pivetta (EMPA),

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillon de Galicia),

Teresa Morrissey (IFA),

Addy Risseeuw (PO Mosselcultuur),

Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK),

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISK),

Wouter van Zandbrink (CEP),

Ole Christensen (FEFAC),

Hein Sas (NORA).

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Invited: Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE), Clément Jaubertie (DG AGRI).

Observers: Joe Redfern (SAGB).

Member States Experts: Rui Oliveira (Portuguese Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services), Patricia Daly (Irish Seafood Development Agency – BIM), Nicolas Chopin (Irish Seafood Development Agency – BIM), Vera O'Donovan (Irish Seafood Development Agency – BIM), Samuel Kingston (Irish Ministry for Agriculture, Food and the Marine), Deborah Cheslett (Irish Marine Institute), Rebecca Saliba (Maltese Aquatic Resources Agency), Gabriel Popescu (Romanian National Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture), Raquel López González (Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food), Bérenger Colsohl (German Thünen Institute of Fisheries Ecology), Hinke Oostveen (Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature).

Secretariat: Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat), Justine Marrot (AAC Secretariat).



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MEETING MINUTES

Welcome by Chair Stéphane Angeri

Stéphane Angeri (Chair) welcomed the participants as well as the secretariat and interpreters.

1. Adoption of the agenda and minutes of the last meeting

The Secretariat added two AOBs on the AAC elections in 2025 and the approval of the WG2 Rapporteurs' Contracts for 2024-2025.

The agenda was approved with these changes. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by written procedure.

2. Review of maximum levels of inorganic arsenic in certain foodstuff

- Presentation of the EC proposed maximum levels of inorganic arsenic by **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE) presented the European Commission proposed maximum levels of inorganic arsenic. The original proposed maximum levels raised a lot of concerns in the shellfish sector. Many producers would find it difficult to meet the proposed maximum levels particularly at certain times of the year. After a discussion with the Member States in December, there was a revision of what was proposed and the new maximum levels of inorganic arsenic for bivalve molluscs (except scallops) is at 0.5 mg/kg. The next steps are not scheduled yet, but a vote could be planned in the second quarter of 2025, perhaps before Easter. The new maximum levels would apply from later in the year, maybe third quarter of 2025, with a transition period for foods. From the



data submitted and what he understands, the current proposed maximum levels for shellfish should not be a problem for European shellfish production.

The Chair, Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) and **Wouter van Zandbrink (CEP)** thanked **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** for his work on the subject, since it was a concern of importance for the sector. **Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillon de Galicia)** mentioned that she was very concerned about the difference in maximum levels between European mussels and third countries mussels, especially from Chile and New Zealand and she wanted to know if this difference still stands. **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** mentioned that the maximum levels for mussels are all into one category now. **Niall Gerlitz (DG MARE)** will send a presentation of his colleague on the topic to the Secretariat for dissemination to the members.

3. Norovirus

- Exchange of information on the latest news
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Audrey Lainé (EMPA) updated the members on the Oxyvir programme and the implementation of the Oxyvir observatory¹. **The Chair** mentioned that he would like to hear from other Member States' experiences. **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)** mentioned that it would be interesting to see to what extent the Member States would be prepared to find financial systems adapted to the monitoring of these indicators; perhaps cross-border tools, particularly between EU members and in relation to shellfish-producing European members such as the UK. **Audrey Lainé (EMPA)** then presented the reply from the European Commission on the Recommendation on the "Norovirus crises, the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and the Water Resilience Initiative" and her analysis.

The follow-up analysis of the reply from the European Commission will be sent to the Focus Group members for comments.

4. Framing new EC financial tools to support Good Husbandry Practices for shellfish farming (waste, restoration projects)

- Presentation on the EC financial tools for Good Practices in Agriculture by **Clément Jaubertie, unit on Environmental sustainability (DG AGRI)**²
- Update on FG activities by FG leader **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

The Chair thanked **Clément Jaubertie** for his very interesting presentation in the context of the work of WG2 on this recommendation, which is included in the AAC's Strategic Plan for 2024-2025. Many WG members reacted to the presentation. **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)** updated the members on the activities of the FG. The main discussion was to understand how these EC financial tools for good practices in agriculture could be adapted to the aquaculture sector. New members decided to join the FG.

¹http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/250203_Presentation-CNC-OXYVIR-observatory_WG2-AAC_V2.pdf

² http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/20250204_CAP-green-architecture.pdf



The FG leader will decide on the next steps.

5. Shellfish health: worrying impact of climate change on EU mussels' production level

- Update on FG activities by FG leader **Audrey Lainé (EMPA)**³
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

A first FG meeting was held on 16 January and **Audrey Lainé (EMPA)** encouraged the FG members to share data/information in the shared library. Concerning genetic selection as a solution, **the Chair** mentioned the project ShellFishBoost⁴. **Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillon de Galicia)** believes that the development of hatcheries for mussels is not feasible. Concerning the situation in Galicia, it has improved since the end of last year but they can't predict what will happen. Research needs to be made to develop models and tools to improve predictiveness. They were still able to maintain acceptable production levels. Concerning the situation in Italy, **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)** mentioned that the problems of mussels' mortality in August 2024 was exceptional. They don't have any in depth data yet but one positive element is that the stocks in the Adriatic were not completely wiped out.

The FG leader will decide on the next steps.

6. Blue crab

- Presentation of a revised draft recommendation by FG leader **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) mentioned that the AAC should request targeted feedback from the Member States when there are specific recommendations to the Member States. **Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming)** asked about the protection of shellfish from blue crabs, which should be a priority. **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)** mentioned the different systems used by the farmers but they have not found a proper solution so he can't tell if they can fully protect the shellfish. **Andrea Fabris (API)** mentioned the health and food security aspect with the risk of contamination of microplastics. He also emphasized that it could be a first example to assess which are the most efficient actions and how we should proceed in the case of a future challenge regarding alien species, which is very likely to happen due to climate change.

The FG leader will decide on the next steps.

7. Industrial contaminant levels in aquaculture products and climate change

- Update of FG activities by the Chair
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

The Chair mentioned that this recommendation is included in the Strategic Plan of the AAC for 2024-2025. It

³http://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/250203_Presentation-CNC-mortalites-moules-et-changement-climatique_WG2-AAC.pdf

⁴ [SHELLFISHBOOST – CIIMAR – Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research](#)



was decided to create a joint FG between WG1 and WG2 to work on this topic. A first FG meeting was held on 10 January. There is no FG leader. The members decided to create a list of the relevant industrial contaminants. The next meeting is on 7 February to decide on the next steps. **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)** suggested to include the notion of animal welfare in the FG and to move it to WG3.

The Chair and Andrea Fabris (WG1 Chair) decided to move this Focus Group to WG3 if the WG3 Chair agrees and invite WG3 members to participate in the next FG meeting on 7 February.

8. Molluscan Welfare

- Update of FG activities by the FG leader **Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming)**
- Exchange of views with the Working Group members and decision on next steps

Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming) mentioned the reply from the European Commission to the AAC Recommendation on Molluscan Welfare. A preparatory meeting was organised between him, **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)**, **David Bassett (EATiP)** and the **Secretariat** to discuss the priorities concerning research following the recommendation.

A Focus Group meeting will be organised during the month of March.

9. AOB & conclusions

The Secretariat presented the timeline of the AAC elections in 2025. An email will be sent to the members with all the information and deadlines.

The following contracts will be submitted for approved for EMPA rapporteurship on:

- A recommendation on blue crab
- A recommendation on shellfish health and the worrying impact of climate change on EU mussels' production level
- A recommendation on framing new EC tools to support Good Husbandry Practices for shellfish farming

The Chair concluded the meeting. **The next WG2 meeting will be held in Brussels the 3 June 2025 (morning).**

