

# Aquaculture Advisory Council

## Executive Committee meeting

16 April 2025 (10:00-12:00)

Online meeting - ZOOM – Interpretation available in EN – FR– ES – IT

## Minutes

### PARTICIPATION LIST

#### EXCOM MEMBERS

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Brian Thomsen (AAC Chair)  
Paul Denekamp (1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair)  
Philippe Le Gal (2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair)  
Addy Risseuw (Treasurer)

#### Operators

Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk)  
Javier Ojeda (FEAP)  
Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA)  
Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)  
Ma Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA)  
Ole Christensen (FEFAC)  
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)  
*Teresa Morrissey (IFA) – proxy given to Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)*  
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)  
Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia)  
Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC)

#### Other interest groups

Phil Brooke (CIWF)  
Charlotte Epinay (Eurogroup for Animals)

#### OTHER PARTICIPANTS

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**Secretariat:** Cynthia Benites, Alicia Mouthuy

**Invited:** Stéphane Angeri, Matteo Leonardi



## AGENDA

- [Welcome words by the Chair and adoption of the agenda](#)
- [ExCom meeting : Venice](#)
- [Recommendations: Outsource follow ups to Aliénor](#)
- [AAC adoption processes: Amendments](#)
- [Strategic tasks and tactical tasks](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2025 - 2026: Status](#)
- [Strategic Plan 2024 – 2025: Status planned recommendations](#)
- [Budget 2024 – 2025](#)
- [New item on the date of the next General Assembly](#)
- [Various](#)
- [Any other business](#)

## MEETING MINUTES

### 1. Welcome words by the Chair and adoption of the agenda

**Chair Brian Thomsen** welcomed the Executive Committee (ExCom) members and confirmed the quorum.

The Chair introduced an additional item regarding the date of the next General Assembly on 16 September.

Under AOB, Javier Ojeda (FEAP) mentioned an Inter-AC letter on the Ocean Pact and the MFF consultation and Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA) mentioned the process to appoint a new WG Chair when a WG Chair resigns from the position.

**The agenda was adopted with these additions.**

**The minutes of the previous ExCom meeting (31.01.2025) were adopted by written procedure.**

### 2. ExCom meeting: Venice

Pier Salvador (COPA) presented the programme for the next ExCom meeting in Venice on 24 June, and the Secretariat presented the estimated budget, highlighting that some expenses are not yet confirmed.

**The ExCom adopted the programme and the budget. The Secretariat will send an email with the details of the programme and open the registration process.**

### 3. Recommendations: Outsource follow ups to Aliénor

The Chair introduced the proposal to allocate additional secretariat resources to manage and track follow-up actions on AAC recommendations, ensuring timely execution and updates. All newly approved follow-up actions will be introduced in the dashboard. The document will be updated monthly, and a summary email will be sent to the Chair after each update.

**The ExCom adopted the proposal and decided to benchmark the Secretariat.**



#### 4. AAC adoption processes: Amendments

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The Chair proposed a new protocol for written adoption of recommendations, follow-ups and minutes.

It is proposed that WGs follow the same adoption procedure as the ExCom, where documents are circulated for simultaneous comments and approval, instead of the current process of 2 weeks for comments followed by 2 weeks for approval.

If there are comments a new 2-week consultation is launched once the comments have been answered.

FG	WG	ExCom
Comments/approval: 2W	Comments/approval: 2W	Comments/approval: 2W

The Secretariat and Javier Ojeda (FEAP) underlined that the members need to propose an alternative phrasing along with a justification.

**The ExCom adopted the new adoption process.**

#### 5. Strategic tasks and tactical tasks

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The Chair introduced a revised layout for monitoring the strategic and tactical tasks.

**The ExCom approved the new layout and the Chair will update the document quarterly.**

#### 6. Strategic Plan 2025-2026: Status

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The Secretariat updated on the planned recommendations to be adopted before the end of the financial year (October 2025) as well as the inputs received from DG MARE for next year.

Many WG members reacted to this presentation, highlighting that:

- The AAC should gather information on the work of other DGs, such as DG ENVI and DG SANTE
- The AAC needs a clear timetable from the European Commission to attune AAC's recommendations to the European Commission's activities.
- The AAC should draft a recommendation or a letter on improving the relationship between the AAC and the EC. Charlotte Epinau (Chair WG 3) and Pier Salvador (API) will draft the document.

**The ExCom members are invited to add any key matter to the list of suggestions of recommendations for the next SP (2025-2026) currently under consultation.**

**The Secretariat will circulate a document for prioritizing the proposed recommendations.**

#### 7. Strategic Plan 2024-2025: Status planned recommendations

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The Secretariat provided an update on the planned recommendations to be included in the Strategic Plan for 2024-2025 to be adopted by the end of October 2025. The work on all the recommendations has been initiated and is ongoing.



## 8. Budget 2024-2025

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The Secretariat presented a follow up on the AAC annual budget.

The AAC has used approximately 20% of the budget so far, and the Venice costs are still estimates, which may change. **WG1 and WG3 need to inform the Secretariat if they plan to use the allocated scientific experts' budget or if they plan to request a financial compensation to 'rapporteurs' for their work on a draft recommendation.** Additionally, the AAC has a surplus that requires a decision on how to allocate it.

**The WG1 Chair and WG3 Chair will inform the Secretariat if they want to request for the use the budget allocated by the 9<sup>th</sup> of May.**

## 9. New item on the date of the next General Assembly

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The Secretariat highlighted that there is a scheduling conflict between the AAC and MAC & CCRUP General Assemblies on 16 September in the morning.

**The Secretariat will reach out to the MAC & CCRUP to ensure that 'common' members can attend both meetings on the same day.**

## 10. Various

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The Secretariat gave more details about different points:

- **New membership applications received:** Ethical Seafood Research Spain is an NGO who aims to contribute to the development of aquaculture policies that incorporate higher welfare standards for aquatic species: the AAC is still waiting for the green light from the MS (Spain) and will inform the ExCom when received.
- **Launch of the campaign "Eu Aquaculture: We Work For You With Passion" (25 March):** DG MARE launched the campaign at an event hosted by Commissioner Costas Kadis, emphasizing the goal to give EU aquaculture producers a voice and visibility, and to encourage citizens to explore the benefits of aquaculture in their communities. The event featured testimonials from aquaculture ambassadors, a retailer, a discussion on the importance of aquaculture, and a tasting of EU aquaculture products.
- **Stakeholders' event "Strategic guidelines for EU aquaculture: Where do we stand?" (25 March):** the event presented DG MARE's draft report on the implementation of the 2021 strategic guidelines followed by an exchange of views with participants. The mid-term assessment report will be published in the autumn.
- **EMD workshop (21-23 May):** the European Maritime Day 2025 will take place in Ireland. The 11 Advisory Councils have agreed to organise a Workshop "20 Year of Advisory Councils Stakeholder Expertise for Oceans Pact". The workshop aims to highlight the importance of stakeholder engagement through Advisory Councils for effective fisheries and aquaculture management, celebrate their 20-year successes, and propose recommendations for enhancing engagement in delivering the Oceans Pact.
- **Inter-AC meeting (8-9 April):** A round table on the Vision for EU fisheries was organised, followed by discussions on key fisheries and aquaculture topics related to the CFP. Regarding the Vision, the EC has not yet provided a timeline for adoption, but consultations may begin in October during WG meetings with DG MARE representatives. This Vision will consider key EC-wide initiatives, such as the Nature Restoration Law, Communication on Simplification, and Vision for Agriculture & Food, as well as DG MARE initiatives like the CFP evaluation, energy transition roadmap, Fishers for the Future foresight project, and the Ocean's Pact, to determine what is needed for a thriving sector.



- **AAC-DG MARE bilateral meeting:** the next bilateral meeting is expected to take place in May. The Secretariat will get back to the Chair and Vice-Chairs with the date and to get inputs on the agenda.

## 11. Any other business

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Two points were added:

- **The procedure when a Chair resigns:** in the AAC status, when a Chair or Vice-Chair resigns, the AAC should appoint a new one within two months. This procedure needs clarification in the foreseen revision of the status and the RoP.
- **The Inter-AC letter on the MFF consultation:** the AAC Chair explained that he was consulted during the adoption process and signed the letter on behalf of the AAC.

## 12. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

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The Chair thanked the ExCom members for a productive ExCom meeting.

The next ExCom meeting will take place in Venice on **24 June 2025**.

