

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Executive Committee meeting

24 June 2025 (10:00-12:00)

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

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

EXCOM MEMBERS

Brian Thomsen (AAC Chair)
Paul Denekamp (1st Vice-Chair)
Philippe Le Gal (2nd Vice-Chair)

Operators

Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk)
Javier Ojeda (FEAP)
Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA)
Ma Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA)
Ole Christensen (FEFAC)
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)
Teresa Morrissey (IFA) – proxy given to Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)
Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC)
Andrea Fabris (API)

Other interest groups

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

Excused: Addy Risseeuw

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Secretariat: Cynthia Benites, Alicia Mouthuy

Invited: Stéphane Angeri



AGENDA

- Welcome words by the Chair and adoption of the agenda
- 2025-2026 Strategic Plan
- Budget and AAC 10-year anniversary
- Election Chair, Vice-Chairs and Treasurer for 2025-2028
- Revision of Statutes and Rules of Procedure
- Calendar of meetings for 2025-2026
- Date of the General Assembly in September
- Updates by the Secretariat
- Update by the Chair
- 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 General Assembly in September.

Under AOB, the **Secretariat** introduced the feedback on the evaluation of the AAC's Working Group meetings of June 2025, **Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk)** added a video on the situations sturgeon fish farmers face to display at the end of the meeting. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** also wished to mention the participation of DG MARE to AAC WG meetings. **Pier Salvador (COPA)** finally wanted to consider drafting a letter on the MFF based on the letter sent by COPA and FEAP.

The agenda was adopted with these additions.

The minutes of the previous ExCom meeting (16.04.2025) were adopted by written procedure.

2. 2025-2026 Strategic Plan

The Secretariat presented DG MARE's proposed amendments to the Strategic Plan, highlighting the need to define what constitutes a Focus Group. Many members reacted to the presentation and also addressed the need to ensure coherence between the work programmes of the relevant DGs of the European Commission and of the AAC, as well as the need to explore ways to enhance the AAC's functioning and reduce/streamline the volume of email communications.

The Secretariat will incorporate the comments that were raised and send the updated Strategic Plan to the ExCom for written approval.

3. Budget and AAC 10-year anniversary

The Secretariat presented the 2024-2025 progress budget and the proposed budget for 2025-2026, along with various options for organising events such as the webinars, the ExCom abroad and the AAC's 10-year



anniversary celebration. **Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk)** inquired about the possibility of translating AAC recommendations into Swedish. **Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** suggested using AI-based interpretation tools to help reduce interpretation costs.

The ExCom approved the draft budget for 2025-2026. The Secretariat will request a quote for Swedish translations. Additionally, the Secretariat will coordinate with the MAC to plan the joint 10-year anniversary event, with a preliminary agenda to be presented at the next ExCom meeting.

4. Election Chair, Vice-Chairs and Treasurer for 2025-2028

The Secretariat presented the list of candidates for the upcoming AAC elections for Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Treasurer.

The ExCom approved the proposed nominations of Brian Thomsen as Chair of the AAC, Paul Denekamp as First Vice-Chair of the AAC, Philippe Le Gal as Second Vice-Chair of the AAC, and Addy Risseeuw as Treasurer of the AAC.

5. Revision of the Statutes and Rules of Procedure

The Chair presented the amended AAC statutes and rules of procedure.

The Secretariat will update the document based on the comments that were received and send it to the ExCom for written approval.

Javier Ojeda (FEAP) proposed discontinuing the use of Focus Groups within the AAC and recommending that each topic be addressed directly at the Working Group level. It was suggested that ways be explored to optimise email communication, in particular by using clear and consistent subject-line labelling, if Focus Groups stopped existing.

6. Calendar of meetings for 2025-2026

The Secretariat presented the draft meeting calendar for 2025-2026. Several members provided feedback, noting particularly busy periods in June and September. Several of them have also asked to align the AAC calendar to DG MARE's and EATIP General Assembly.

The Secretariat will contact DG MARE and EATIP to coordinate, it will then send the revised draft calendar to the ExCom for written approval.

7. Date of the General Assembly in September

The Secretariat provided an update on the General Assembly scheduled for 16 September. However, due to overlapping meetings organised by the MAC and CCRUP on the same day, a proposal was made to move the date to early September.

The ExCom decided to maintain 16 September in the morning as the date for the General Assembly.



8. Updates by the Secretariat

- **Follow-up of recommendations – update on the work done:** as agreed during the previous ExCom meeting, additional secretariat resources were allocated to manage and monitor follow-up actions on the replies made by the European Commission to the recommendations. The Secretariat created a dashboard to list the remaining pending follow up actions since March 2021 and contacted the relevant AAC members to inform them about the pending tasks and plan the next steps. In addition, all approved follow-up actions since March 2021 were introduced in the dashboard and all the relevant members were contacted.
- **Letter sent to DG MARE/SANTE on EFSA fish welfare studies:** once DG MARE will reply to the letter, the Secretariat will inform the ExCom to coordinate on the follow up actions.
- **EMD Advisory Councils (ACs) event:** the European Maritime Day 2025 took place in Ireland on 22 May. The ACs organised a Workshop on the "20 Year of Advisory Councils Stakeholder Expertise for Oceans Pact". The agenda included an overview of success stories from all the ACs, a discussion on the role of ACs in supporting the implementation of the Oceans Pact, and an interactive session with the audience aimed at formulating inter-AC advice on the potential contributions of ACs to reaching the Oceans Pact's goals. Due to time constraints, the final session did not occur, so no advice will be delivered to the European Commission based on the proceedings.
- **Technical seminar:** the objective of the background paper on **bivalve mollusc farming** is to explore the nature and influence of the challenge faced by this sector and identify the options for action. The 1st draft is foreseen by October 2025 and the final draft by November 2025. The **study on environmental benefits of aquaculture** will identify scientific evidence, assess growth potential, outline challenges, make recommendations, and promote aquaculture. The focus will be on marine bivalve farming and fish farming in ponds and wetlands. The study will be completed by September 25. **The study on feed** will focus on policy and regulation; aquafeed markets; traceability and transparency; on alternative ingredients and on sustainability factors. It will be finalised by early 2026. **The 2nd EU Algae Awareness Summit 2025** will take place in Berlin on 16/17 October. It aims to inform EU Member State administrations about the benefits of algae cultivation, products, and services.
- **CINEA event:** a Stakeholder workshop was organised on "Scaling up EU cultivation of Shellfish and Algae". This study was commissioned by the European Commission to support the European Green deal and was based on 2 studies carried out for the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) on "Algae and climate" and "Algae, shellfish and nutrients". The current study will focus on the North and the Baltic Seas (current and future offshore wind farm projects) and introduce contaminants in the growth model to quantify the impact on the viability for commercial use of the production.
- **DG MARE bilateral meeting:** it will take place on 30 June at 9:30.

9. Updates by the Chair

No updates were provided by the Chair.

10. Any other business

Several points were added:



- **A video on sturgeons displayed by Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk):** a one-minute video on sturgeons was displayed. Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk) will send the video to the Secretariat for circulation.
- **The participation of DG MARE during the WG meetings: Javier Ojeda (FEAP)** expressed the wish to have a DG MARE representative present for the full duration of the sessions, as is the case for the MAC. The Chair will address this issue, as well the issue of coherence between work programmes, with DG MARE during the bilateral meeting.
- **Draft a letter on the MFF:** the AAC will consider drafting a letter to the EC on the MFF, on the basis of the letter already sent by the COPA.
- **Feedback on the survey on the WG meetings of June:** 12 answers were received and all questions received a rating above 4,36, except for the time allocated to exchange ideas during the meeting. There was a high satisfaction with the possibility to express views during the meeting, the communication of the meeting schedule, location and accessibility instructions, the match between the agenda and the meeting's allotted time, the sending of meetings documents in advance, as well as the interpretation services.

11. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the ExCom members for a productive ExCom meeting, as well as the technician and the interpreters.

The next ExCom meeting will take place online on **28 October 2025 in the morning**.

