

# Aquaculture Advisory Council

## WG2 Shellfish Meeting

3 February 2026 (10:00 - 13:00)

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

## Minutes

### PARTICIPATION LIST

#### WG2 MEMBERS

Lorenzo Gennari (AMA, Chair)

Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming, Vice-Chair)

Wouter van Zandbrink (CEP),

Phil Brooke (CIWF),

Audrey Lainé (CNC),

Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC),

Philippe le Gal (CNC),

Florian Guillou (CNPNEM),

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

Laurent Chambeau (CRC Charente Maritime),

David Bassett (EATIP),

Thibaut Pivetta (EMPA),

Teresa Morrissey (IFA),

Hein Sas (NORA),

Addy Risseeuw (PO Mosselcultuur),

Ola Öberg (RECIRKFISK),

Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFISK),

Stéphane Angeri (SENC)

#### OTHER PARTICIPANTS

**Observers:** Joe Redfern (SAGB).

**Member States Experts:** Arianna Martini (CREA - Italian Council for agricultural research and economics, research centre of animal production and aquaculture), George Broulidakis (Directorate of Aquaculture of the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food).

**Secretariat:** Cynthia Benites (AAC Secretariat), Alicia Mouthuy (AAC Secretariat).



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## MEETING MINUTES

### Welcome by Chair Lorenzo Gennari

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Lorenzo Gennari (Chair) welcomed the participants as well as the secretariat and interpreters.

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

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The agenda was approved without any changes. The minutes of the last meeting (15.10.2025) were approved by written procedure.

### 2. Norovirus

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

**Audrey Lainé (CNC)** presented a preliminary assessment of the 2025-2026 situation in France<sup>1</sup>, where the French shellfish farming industry strategy has established monitoring and management measures using the OXYVIR indicator.

**The final results for the 2025-2026 situation in France will be presented once the season has concluded.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/260203\\_Review-OXYVIR-observatory\\_WG2-AAC\\_Version-diffusable.pdf](https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/260203_Review-OXYVIR-observatory_WG2-AAC_Version-diffusable.pdf)



### 3. Potentials and constraints in the implementation of restorative aquaculture

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- Presentation on the draft recommendation by **Hein SAS (NORA)**
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

**Hein Sas (NORA)** presented the context and outlined the key elements of the forthcoming recommendation on restorative aquaculture<sup>2</sup> that he will be drafting as rapporteur. **The Chair** encouraged the inclusion of a clear definition, supported by concrete examples illustrating how aquaculture practices can be restorative. **Ángeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia)** stressed the importance of not limiting the scope to blue mussels and flat oysters, and of also including European mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*). **Christian Vorbeck (RECIRKFIK PO)** added that EU-level indicators and a monitoring system need to be developed rapidly, in light of the imminent requirements Member States will face under the Nature Restoration Regulation.

**Based on the comments received, Hein Sas (NORA) will prepare a draft recommendation to be circulated within the Focus Group for comments and approval. A FG meeting will also be organised.**

### 4. Indicators on environmental performances (including animal welfare) of shellfish aquaculture

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- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)**
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

**The Chair** presented the context and outlined the key elements of the forthcoming recommendation on indicators on environmental performance of shellfish aquaculture that he will be drafting as rapporteur. This work will be based on the EC Guidance Document on Environmental Performance, expected to be released in the first quarter of 2026. He further clarified that no external study will be commissioned for this purpose. Some members questioned whether animal welfare should be addressed in this recommendation or rather in the separate recommendation on economic and social performance and agreed to assess it on a case-by-case basis. **A FG meeting will be organised once the European Commission has published its Guidance Document, which will serve as the basis for the recommendation.**

### 5. Indicators on economic and social performances (including animal welfare) of shellfish aquaculture

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- Presentation of the draft recommendation by **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)**
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

**As Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) was not available, Lorenzo Gennari (AMA) presented the context and outlined the key elements of the forthcoming recommendation on indicators on economic and social performances of shellfish aquaculture that Thibault will be drafting as rapporteur. This work will be based on the annual reports on the state of aquaculture produced by STECF and EUMOFA, which include a wide range of economic indicators to be taken into consideration, as well as on the EC reply to the joint AAC and MAC recommendation.**

**The FG leader will circulate his proposal on indicators ahead of the mid-March Focus Group meeting, during which it will be discussed, with the aim of presenting a first draft of the recommendation at the next WG2 meeting on 10 June 2026.**

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<sup>2</sup> <https://aac-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Restorative-aquaculture-AAC-January-2026.pdf>



## 6. Molluscan Welfare

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

**Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming)** referred to the European Commission's reply to the AAC letter on molluscan welfare. Many members reacted to this presentation, and discussed possible next steps, including the need to address issues related to water quality and acidification. In relation to the previously discussed recommendations (indicators on environmental, economic, and social performance), **Ángeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia)** stressed that the first step should be to gain further knowledge on sentience before addressing any indicators.

**A Focus Group meeting will be organised to discuss the next steps on this file.**

## 7. Follow up of previous recommendations

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- Update by the Secretariat
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

**The Secretariat** presented the follow-up tools and process for EC replies to AAC recommendations, including a dedicated dashboard, aimed at streamlining monitoring and prioritising actions for open recommendations.

**WG2 members agreed on the following next steps:**

- Recommendation on shellfish farming as nitrogen sink: draft a follow-up recommendation
- Recommendation on the good husbandry practices in shellfish farming: draft a follow-up recommendation
- Recommendation on norovirus crises: execute the follow-up analysis
- Recommendation on biosecurity: execute the follow-up analysis
- Recommendation on molluscan welfare: analyse the answer from the European Commission, and include the letter sent to DG MARE as a follow up
- Recommendation on framing new EU financial tools: analyse the answer from the European Commission
- Recommendation on the concerning impact of climate change on EU mussel production: analyse the answer
- Recommendation on blue crab emergency: waiting for the European Commission answer to decide the next steps

## 8. Bivalve challenges – Exchange in view of an AAC contribution

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- Update by the Chair
- Exchange of views with the members and decision on next steps

**The Chair** presented the context of the document on bivalve challenges prepared by the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism, for which DG MARE is seeking input from the AAC by 20 February.

**Following the exchange with members, the members agreed to prepare a position paper based on individual contributions from WG2 members.**



## 9. AOB & conclusions

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The Chair concluded the meeting. **The next WG2 meeting will be held in Brussels the 10 June 2025 (morning).**

