

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Executive Committee meeting

22 June 2026 (14:15-16:15)

Meeting in Dublin – Interpretation available in EN – FR – ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

EXCOM MEMBERS

Brian Thomsen (AAC Chair)
Charlotte Epinay (1st Vice-Chair)
Addy Risseuw (Treasurer)

Operators

Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC) - proxy given to Addy Risseuw (Treasurer)
Angeles Longa (Mexillón de Galicia) - proxy given to Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Béla Halasi-Kovács (COGECA),
Javier Ojeda (FEAP) – proxy given to Maria Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA),
Lorenzo Gennari (AMA) - proxy given to Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Maria Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA),
Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk),
Ole Christensen (FEFAC) - proxy given to Ola Oberg (RECIRKFISK),
Teresa Morrissey (IFA),
Thibault Pivetta (EMPA),
Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA),

Other interest groups

Alexandre Cottier-Pérez (CIWF),
Phil Brooke (CIWF)

Excused: Ole Christensen (FEFAC), Javier Ojeda (FEAP), Lorenzo Gennari (AMA), Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC), Angeles Longa (Mexillón de Galicia), Philippe le Gal (CNC)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Secretariat: Cécile Fouquet, Alicia Mouthuy



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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 agenda was approved with the following AOB:

- Debates about ExCom farm visits, proposed by Pier Salvador (COPA)

The minutes of the previous ExCom meeting (15.04.2026) were adopted by written procedure.

2. Strategic Plan 2026-2027

The Secretariat presented the Strategic Plan for 2026-2027.

The ExCom approved the Strategic Plan, with a comment raised by Thibault Pivetta (EMPA) on the background paper on circular economy opportunities for the aquaculture sector, which also concerns shellfish farming. This point will be reflected in the WG3 section rather than in WG1. The Strategic Plan will be presented at the General Assembly (22.09.2026) for approval.

3. Budget forecast 2025-2026

The Secretariat presented the budget progress for 2025-2026, highlighting a healthy financial situation. A new update will be made at the General assembly taking place on 22 September, and at the last ExCom meeting of the year, on 28 October. **The ExCom took note of the positive financial outlook.**



4. Budget 2026-2027

The Secretariat presented the draft budget for 2026-2027, and highlighted that a number of budgetary decisions would be required to ensure a balanced budget. Members discussed different items, including the potential use of alternative meeting venues, training for new WG Chairs, dissemination activities, increased support from the secretariat on recommendations, technical studies and increased EC grant. **The ExCom agreed that further discussions would be required on these items at the WG ExCom meeting in July. The draft budget will be revised in light of these discussions and subsequently submitted to the ExCom for approval by written procedure. The final budget will be presented to the General Assembly on 22 September for adoption.**

5. Calendar of meetings for 2026-2027

The Secretariat presented the proposed calendar of meetings for 2026-2027. **The ExCom approved the draft calendar, including the organisation of an ExCom meeting in Sweden on 29 June 2027. The draft calendar will be sent to the GA for final approval.**

6. AAC webinars

The Secretariat presented the outcome of the call for webinar topics launched among AAC members. Following an exchange of views, ExCom members agreed that the most strategic and timely topics were:

- the future Multiannual Financial Framework (to be organised in 2027) and
- the development of a Common Aquaculture Policy.

These two themes will be prioritised for the next AAC webinars.

The Secretariat will also liaise with other Advisory Councils, including the MAC, to explore opportunities for organising joint webinars.

7. September GA speakers

The Secretariat presented proposals for external speakers to be invited to the September General Assembly on 22 September.

The ExCom agreed to invite MEP Stéphanie Yon-Courtin to provide insights on her maritime spatial planning legislative report and the emerging debate on a Common Aquaculture Policy, as well as a representative from an EU Member State with a strong aquaculture sector, Italy or Greece.

8. Improving recommendations (two trial recommendations)

The Secretariat presented the initial results of a pilot exercise whereby the Secretariat supported the drafting of two recommendations. Several members highlighted the good quality of the trial recommendations, and the need to assess carefully the respective roles of rapporteurs and the Secretariat before extending the initiative. **The ExCom members agreed that this and the work on the follow up of recommendations were necessary**



areas on which the AAC needed to strengthen its secretariat activities.

9. Updates by the Secretariat

The Secretariat provided an update on ongoing administrative and organisational activities. Members were informed that, in recognition of the significance of the AAC's 10-year anniversary, Aliénor had provided a substantial portion of the support for the celebrations on a pro bono basis, beyond its contractual obligations.

10. Updates by the Chair

The Chair reported on the recent Technical Seminar with the European Commission and Member State representatives on 16-17 June, highlighting several possible follow-up actions to strengthen engagement with national authorities, which will be discussed in detail at the ExCom WG meeting.

Members were also informed that the Implementation Dialogue with Commissioner Kadis would take place on 30 June and that the Chair's speaking points would be circulated for comments. **Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)** stressed the importance of coordinating with the MAC to ensure a common approach. Indeed, the MAC will be present at this Dialogue and has included production-related considerations in its draft intervention.

11. AOB

In response to a proposal by **Paul Denekamp (Vissenbescherming)**, raised during the previous Working Group meetings, to include a discussion on Executive Committee farm visits on the agenda of future WG meetings, **Pier Salvador (COPA)** stressed the importance of the field visits organised alongside ExCom meetings.

He emphasised that these visits provide members with a valuable opportunity to gain first-hand insight into local aquaculture practices, realities and challenges, helping to ensure that policy discussions remain firmly grounded in practical farming experience. He further noted that these visits are made possible by producers who voluntarily open their farms to AAC members and should therefore be regarded as opportunities for learning and exchange rather than be subject to subsequent assessment or judgement.

Vice-Chair Charlotte Epinay, acting as Chair by the end of the meeting, agreed with Pier. There will be no such point on the agenda of Working Group meetings.

12. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

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

The next ExCom meeting will take place online on **28 October 2026**.



Annex

Executive Committee Working Group meeting

7 July 2026 (14:30-16:30)

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MEETING MINUTES

1. Wordly AI

The ExCom members discussed the technical issues encountered with WordlyAI.

The Chair and the Secretariat will work together to resolve the outstanding technical issues.

2. Actions following the 17 June seminar with Member States experts

The ExCom members reviewed the follow-up actions arising from the seminar held with Member State experts on 17 June 2026.

The following actions have been approved:

- Future recommendations and related correspondences will clearly specify if the AAC expects the Member States to provide answers or feedback.
- A public subscription service to AAC recommendations and Commission answers will be added to the AAC website. Subscribers may opt for full text recommendations and/or one-page summaries.
- The AAC will consider submitting selected recommendations directly to national portfolio ministers.



- The AAC will ask DG MARE to share its list of national recipients of recommendations with the technical experts and ask them to propose additional recipients.

3. Measures to improve recommendations and follow-up as of 2026/2027

Following an exchange of views with the members on how to improve recommendations and follow-up, the following decisions have been approved:

- The revised follow-up template was approved. It will be updated and circulated on a quarterly basis.
- WG chairs are asked to include "follow up on recommendations" in future WG agendas.
- The secretariat will assist in drafting and/or follow up on 12 recommendations to be decided by the chair/secretariat following requests from WG chairs.

4. Additional dissemination activities as of 2026/2027

The ExCom members discussed possible additional communication activities aimed at increasing the visibility of the AAC's work. They approved the following dissemination activities:

- 4 annual newsletters on EU related EU activities.
- 4 Videos/podcast explainers of AAC recommendations.

5. Collaboration proposal by EURCAW-Aqua

The ExCom members considered the proposal for collaboration submitted by EURCAW-Aqua.

WG1 will be invited to establish a dedicated EURCAW-Aqua team to lead the initiative and coordinate the AAC's contribution.

6. Commission omnibus initiatives

The AAC will ask DG MARE if they will provide the AAC with an overview on the possible impact that the omnibus packages may have on aquaculture.

7. 2026-2027 budget

The ExCom approved the updated budget for 2026-2027, comprising additional costs, such as the secretariat assists in drafting 12 recommendations, 4 annual newsletters and 4 videos.

The AAC will also ask DG MARE for an increased grant as of 2027-2028 to maintain the additional dissemination activities.

8. September webinar

Following a vote, the ExCom decided that the topic of the next webinar in September will be AAC hot topics.

