



# Recommendations for STECF Reports on the Economic Performance of the EU's Aquaculture Sector

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Aquaculture Sector*

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## **Background**

This latest Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) report<sup>1</sup> on the economic performance of the EU's Aquaculture sector for 2021 is the seventh report of its kind. It provides a comprehensive overview of the latest information available on the production, economic value, structure and competitive performance of the aquaculture sector at the national and EU levels.

The EU Commission has recently published an impact study on aquaculture.<sup>2</sup> The report notes that the identified aquaculture impacts are predominantly environmental in nature, and that the scientific literature rarely addresses the economic impacts of EU aquaculture. The main source referred to is, in fact, the afore-mentioned STECF reports. The authors behind the impact report searched for additional literature on the economic impacts, but only a limited number of relevant publications was retrieved.

The AAC is concerned about the lack of scientific publications on the economic aspects of EU aquaculture because economics is one of the core pillars of sustainability. The AAC organised a webinar on this topic, which was held on 11 March 2022. During it, Dr Rasmus Nielsen, Chairman of the Economic Working Group for Aquaculture under the STECF, presented the latest report. The webinar participants identified several important shortcomings:

- The STECF does not have experts in aquaculture economics and biology, so it lacks the needed insight into aquaculture economics and biology. This is especially concerning, considering that both the strategic guidelines for 2021–2030, and the new EMFAF in particular, support the development of sustainable and competitive aquaculture.
- The STECF could make use of the aquaculture producer data that producers' organisations collect from their members. This could strengthen the imputation methodology and nowcast modelling.
- A two-step procedure would help to improve the quality of the STECF's reports. The first step should focus on data collection and analysis; the second step should focus on deeper economic analysis. The second step might necessitate the creation of a smaller sub-group of experts analysing specific economic and socio-economic issues related to the EU's aquaculture sector.

The STECF's reports should include indicators on economic sustainability of aquaculture.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic/-/asset\\_publisher/d7le/document/id/2871698](https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic/-/asset_publisher/d7le/document/id/2871698)

<sup>2</sup> [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/publications/study-state-art-scientific-information-impacts-aquaculture-activities-europe\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/publications/study-state-art-scientific-information-impacts-aquaculture-activities-europe_en)



## **Recommendations**

In this context, the AAC recommends that the European Commission should:

1. Amend Commission Decision of 26 August 2005<sup>3</sup> to ensure increased representation of aquaculture experts in the STECF and to allow the AAC to appoint one member by its membership.
2. Explore options for involving EU producer organisations in data collection.
3. Encourage the STECF to introduce a two-step procedure and invite the AAC as an observer in the second step.
4. Encourage the STECF to develop and include indicators on economic sustainability in its reports.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=03ed6e86-e139-4de3-be07-codc61459687&groupId=43805](https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=03ed6e86-e139-4de3-be07-codc61459687&groupId=43805)



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