

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Executive Committee (EXCOM) meeting

12th July 2022 (09:30-13:00)

Online meeting via Zoom – Interpretation available in EN - FR – ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

EXCOM MEMBERS

Javier Ojeda (AAC Chair)

Operators

Catherine Pons (FEAP)

Yannis Pelekanakis (HAPO)

Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA)

Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)

Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)

Laurine Tertre (CNC)

Giuseppe Prioli (AMA)

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia)

Addy Risseeuw (PO Mosselcultuur)

Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC)

Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA)

Other interest groups

Paul Denekamp (Stichting Vissenbescherming)

Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for Animals)

Phil Brooke (CIWF)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Working Group Chairs: Andrea Fabris (WG1 Chair), Stéphane Angeri (WG2 Chair)

Observers: Vincent Godefroy (GMB)

Secretariat: Cécile Fouquet (AAC Secretariat), Charlotte Musquar (AAC Secretariat)



AGENDA

Opening by the Chair

- [Adoption of the agenda and approval of the Minutes of the last meeting \(28/10/2021\)](#)
- [Working Groups: Updates](#)
- [AAC Budget 2021-2022: update on ongoing financial year](#)
- [Performance Review](#)
- [AAC members categorisation](#)
- [AAC dissemination activities in relation to the Strategic Guidelines](#)
- [Inter-AC Brexit Forum](#)
- [Reimbursement of ex-AAC UK members' travel expenses](#)
- [New tasks for the secretariat](#)
- [AAC Work Programme for 2022-2023](#)
- [Calendar for 2022-2023 AAC meetings](#)
- [AAC Budget 2022-2023 – lump sum](#)
- [Results of the internal survey on the last WG meetings](#)
- [Information on the AAC elections](#)
- [Any other business](#)
- [Conclusions and closing of the meeting](#)

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome words by the Chair Javier Ojeda

Javier Ojeda (JO) welcomed the Executive Committee (ExCom) members and confirmed the quorum.

He informed that Brian Thomsen (WG3 Chair) could not attend this meeting and that WG3 Vice-Chair, Paul Denekamp, would update the ExCom members on the WG3 activities in his place.

1. Adoption of the agenda and approval of the Minutes of the last meeting (10/02/2021)

The Secretariat suggested to move the point 12 on the Calendar for 2022-2023 AAC meetings before point 11 on the AAC Budget 2022-2023 – lump sum (new point 12). And in point 13, it was agreed to incorporate 'other secretariat issues'.

The agenda was adopted with these changes.

The minutes from the previous ExCom meeting (10.02.22) were adopted without any change.



2. Working Groups: Updates

WG1 FINFISH

Andrea Fabris (AF) (WG1 Chair) presented an overview of the current WG1 work and of the decisions taken during the last WG1 meeting:

- **Fish Parasites:** WG1 asked the Commission for an update on the work on parasites in fishery products. The Commission has drafted a mandate to request a new study by the EFSA.
- **Fish Health:** a guidance document on Fish Health Management will be drafted (as requested by the Strategic Guidelines).
- **EU regulation 2019/04 on medicated feed:** a letter has been sent to the EC to underline the importance of medicated feed for aquaculture activities and the challenges posed by the regulation.
- **Fish Feed:** A presentation was made by Ole Christensen (FEFAC) on how the Russian invasion of Ukraine regarding does not challenge feed security for European aquaculture but already has great consequences on the prices¹.
- **Droughts and inland aquaculture:** A presentation was made² and a new Focus Group will be gathering material on the consequences of drought in different regions.
- A FG will be created to work on the **circularity of feed** and the **decarbonisation of fish farming**.
- **Updates from the FG on Fish Welfare**
 - Two Recommendations on welfare have been published: one on live fish transport³ and another on the setting up of a fish welfare reference centre⁴.
 - A ToR was approved to look for an expert on “improving fish welfare & production through a better understanding of fish behaviour & ethology”. AF and WG1 Vice-Chair Phil Brooke are currently in the process of selecting candidates.
 - On understanding consumer views on animal welfare, WG1 is waiting for DG MARE’s answer on the possible involvement of the European Assistance Mechanism for Aquaculture.
- **Reproduction and Genetics:** A presentation was made by EFFAB and it has been agreed to discuss the topic of domestication during the next WG1 meeting.

WG2 SHELLFISH

Stephane Angeri (SA) (WG2 Chair) presented an overview of the current WG2 work and of the decisions taken during the last WG2 meeting:

¹ https://aac-europe.org/components/com_rseventspro/assets/images/files/AAC_WG1%20meeting%20-%20FEFAC%20-%201%20June%202022_version%20pour%20publication.pdf

² https://aac-europe.org/components/com_rseventspro/assets/images/files/WG1%20-%20drought_NItaly_AAC_June.pdf

³ <https://aac-europe.org/en/recommendations/position-papers/373-aac-recommendation-on-fish-welfare-in-live-fish-transport>

⁴ <https://aac-europe.org/en/recommendations/position-papers/375-aac-recommendation-for-the-setting-up-of-a-fish-welfare-reference-centre>



- **Shellfish farming carbon capturing:** A Recommendation was published⁵, and the EC requested more data and scientific knowledge on the topic in its answer⁶.
- **Biodiversity loss and emerging pathogens for molluscs:** the ongoing written approval process is in the phase for comments by WG2 members.
- **Creation of three new FG on:**
 - The Strategic importance of shellfish and oyster farming in the EU
 - Payment of shellfish farming ecosystem services (FG Leader: Bruno Guillaumie (EMPA)): the first focus will be on nitrogen capturing as it is very well documented.
 - Shellfish Welfare (FG Leader: Paul Denekamp (Vice-Chair))

The Secretariat informed that an e-mail was received by Ian Shepherd (DG MARE) about the study on "Algae, shellfish and nutrients". DG MARE will look into the possibility of organising a meeting between their experts and the AAC to discuss the next draft of the study.

WG3 Horizontal Issues

Paul Denekamp (WG3 Vice-Chair) presented an overview of the current WG3 work and of the decisions taken during the last WG3 meeting:

- **Updates from DG MARE on:**
 - **Strategic Guidelines for an EU sustainable aquaculture and on the EU Communication Campaign on aquaculture** by Lorella De la Cruz (DG MARE)
 - **The EU Algae Initiative** by Maris Stulgis (DG MARE)
 - **The Report on the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive** by Celine Frank (DG MARE)
- **Analysis of EMFAF aquaculture spending:** The draft Recommendation is in the phase for comments in WG3.
- **Small Scale Aquaculture:** Discussions will continue within the FG.
- **Socio-economic impact of aquaculture:** Two distinct Recommendations will be drafted: a general one and another one more specific on the access of young people to the aquaculture sector.
- **Organic Aquaculture:** Still at the FG level.
- **Sustainable aquaculture definition:** A Recommendation has finally been adopted and published after years of hard work.
- **Climate Impact on Aquaculture activities:** Expert Tim Huntington (Poseidon) gave an update on his work.
- **Nutrients management:** A Recommendation will be adopted to answer the EC consultation on the matter.

⁵ <https://aac-europe.org/en/recommendations/position-papers/406-aac-recommendation-on-carbon-sequestration-by-molluscs>

⁶ <https://aac-europe.org/en/recommendations/eu-documents/419-european-commission-reply-to-the-aac-recommendation-on-carbon-sequestration-by-molluscs>



- **Inter-AC Recommendation on energy transition and decarbonisation:** WG3 approved the AAC participation.

The Chair congratulated the Working Groups for their valuable and productive work.

The ExCom approved WG3's request for the Management Committee to be DG MARE's main contact for quick feedbacks in their work on the different guidance documents being drafted this year. The whole AAC will have to be consulted for formal positions.

3. AAC Budget 2021-2022: update on ongoing financial year

The Secretariat updated the ExCom members on the ongoing budget for 2021-2022.

The ExCom agreed to use the remaining budget on the amelioration of the AAC website and an update of the AAC leaflet.

Additionally, the Secretariat will ask for quotes to provide AAC members with headsets for virtual meetings and a formal approval will be requested by writing.

4. Performance Review

The Secretariat presented the obligation under the new Delegated Act on the functioning of the ACs to carry out external performance reviews every 5 years. Some preliminary quotes were requested and presented to the members.

The ExCom agreed that the performance review should be as in-depth as possible and a provision of 10 000 € will therefore be made in the 2022-2023 budget.

5. AAC members categorisation

The Secretariat presented the new criteria to categorize AC members under the new Delegated Act on the functioning of the ACs.

For present AAC members: all are correctly categorized according to the new criteria.

For future AAC members: the Secretariat proposed to include a new line in the form to request the EU Transparency Register number if applicable.

The ExCom decided not to ask for the EU Transparency Register number if it is not useful or compulsory. The Secretariat will follow-up on this and propose a new form.

6. AAC dissemination activities in relation to the Strategic Guidelines

- [Information flow via the members](#)

The secretariat proposed ways to improve the dissemination of information for it to reach the AAC members' membership:

- Production by the Secretariat of a template for Recommendations
- Production of a Good Practices document/Chart that each AAC member agrees to respect.



- AAC's own dissemination activities

The Secretariat presented a series of proposals for additional dissemination tools and activities:

- Videos for social media
- Representation of the AAC at AquaFarm, SeaFood Expo, Aquaculture Europe (etc.) with presence of the Secretariat
- Participation of the Secretariat to the members' online General Assemblies
- Edition of an annual report of AAC Activities to be disseminated

The ExCom approved the production of videos for social media (1) and the edition of an annual report of AAC Activities + of a factsheet (2). Additional activities will be considered on a case by case on the basis of quotes.

7. Inter-AC Brexit Forum

The Secretariat explained what the Inter-AC Brexit forum is and what its objective is.

The ExCom decided that the AAC should only act as an observer to this forum. The Secretariat will ask the other ACs if this can be an option.

8. Reimbursement of ex-AAC UK members' travel expenses

Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA) expressed that, in her view and given that Brexit was the UK's own choice, these reimbursements can only occur if the AAC has this budget to spare.

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia) asked if organisations from other third countries wanting to take part to AAC meetings would see their expenses covered. The Chair answered that this would be decided on a case-by-case basis.

The ExCom approved the renewal of the decision to reimburse ex-AAC UK members' travel expenses.

9. New tasks for the secretariat

The Secretariat presented several proposals for additional tasks that they could be carrying out but are not contemplated in the current contract between the AAC and Aliénor:

- Monitoring of EU institutions' activities in relation to aquaculture (to be included in the weekly secretariat's update)
- Additional dissemination activities such as participation to members' GA meetings, representation at EU aquaculture events
- Assistance to the drafting of AAC recommendations. The Chair explained that help would indeed be needed in the English edition of the recommendations since the early stage of the work in the focus groups.

The ExCom asked the Secretariat to prepare a survey to be sent to all AAC members together with the questionnaire to be sent after the General Assembly meeting (14 September 2022) requesting their views



on the performance of the Secretariat and paths for improvement. This survey's results will be presented at the next ExCom meeting (6 October 2022).

10. AAC Work Programme for 2022-2023

The Secretariat presented the Work Programme for 2022-2023.

Stéphane Angeri (WG2 Chair) asked for "shellfish carbon capturing" to be changed to better reflect the new focus on nitrogen sink.

With this change, the Work Programme was adopted.

11. Calendar for 2022-2023 AAC meetings

The following calendar and meeting formats were approved by the ExCom for 2022-2023:

- 31 January and 1 February 2023: Online WG meetings
- 2 February 2023: Online ExCom meeting
- 30-31 May 2023: On-site WG meetings
- 4 July 2023: Online ExCom meeting
- 26 September 2023: Online General Assembly meeting
- 24-25 October 2023: On-site WG meetings
- 26 October 2023: Online ExCom meeting

12. AAC Budget 2022-2023 – lump sum

The Secretariat presented the draft budget for 2022-2023.

The draft budget will be detailed by the Chair, Treasurer and Secretariat to reflect the decisions taken by the ExCom and will be sent again to the ExCom for approval in view of the GA.

13. Results of the internal survey on the last WG meetings

Due to a lack of remaining time, the Secretariat will send the results to the ExCom by e-mail.

14. Information on the AAC elections

The Secretariat presented the timeline towards the elections and called for NGOs to apply to the ExCom as no application was received from them yet.

A discussion about the possibility of reviewing the distribution of the sector's ExCom seats was launched to accommodate new interests such as research.



15. Any other business

Bernhard Feneis (COGECA) proposed to have monthly unofficial meetings for AAC members to discuss variety of topics. **The Secretariat will follow up on that.**

16. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked the ExCom members for a productive ExCom meeting, and the Secretariat for their work.

The next ExCom meeting will take place in Brussels on the 6th of October 2022.

