



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE/A2/EL

Subject: AAC recommendation on the STECF Reports on the Economic Performance of the EU's Aquaculture Sector

Dear Mr. Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your letter with recommendations on the STECF Reports on the Economic Performance of the EU's Aquaculture Sector.

Let me first bring some elements of clarification in relation to the issues raised in your letter. You mention that the STECF does not have sufficient experts in aquaculture economics and biology. STECF delegates work on specific topics to a number of experts working groups (EWGs) - as the one which produced the aquaculture economics report (EWG 20-12 mentioned in your letter). Experts are called through an open call for applications, published together with the terms of reference for the respective working group, and are selected following their expression of interest.

The STECF, among other tasks, peer-reviews the work of the different EWGs during its three yearly sessions. The EWG and STECF work is based, in general, on data collected through the Data Collection Framework, submitted by the Member States, and further processed through the Commission Joint Research Centre's (JRC) databases.

More specifically to your recommendations:

- On the composition of STECF experts, please note that the STECF is composed of 30-35 independent experts who are selected following an open call for applications for a period of three years. The composition of the committee depends on the applications received and needs to ensure a balanced representation to cover the topics in the STECF mandate (to assist the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals, delegated acts or policy initiatives and to monitor the evolution of common fisheries policy⁽¹⁾) in a

⁽¹⁾ Article 2 of Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (2016/C 74/05).

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balanced way (geographically, with regards to expertise, but also gender and mandate renewal). The STECF Decision (2016/C 74/05) provides for the appropriate framework to allow for a balanced composition of the STECF committee. Should AAC experts wish to encourage members to apply for STECF membership, we would like to ask you to consult the website where the STECF call for applications is published at the end of mandates: [Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-affairs/stecf/stecef-expert-groups)

- Regarding the options to include producer organisations in data collection, the relevant forum to discuss such options would be the Regional Coordination Group for Economic Issues (RCG ECON) which brings together the EU socioeconomic data collectors and end users. For more information on the RCG ECON and the scope of their work, we would invite you to consult their website: [RCG ECON - Fisheries Regional Coordination Groups \(fisheries-rcg.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-affairs/stecf/rcg-econ).
- As explained previously, the two steps mentioned in your letter are already operating in the STECF. The possibility to apply for observer status in the various EWGs is also provided for, so you are invited to follow the activity of the STECF ([2022 - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-affairs/stecf)) and contact for each EWG, in which you are interested to participate as an observer, the JRC contact point mentioned on each EWG page, expressing your interest. The STECF protocol for observers is available as Annex III of the STECF rules of procedure ⁽²⁾.
- The STECF Economic Report on Aquaculture ⁽³⁾, contains economic indicators such as the number and type of enterprises, number of employees, profitability as well as social data such as gender, age, type of education, origin of employees. The next STECF Economic report, expected to be published soon, will also include data on energy use. The data sources of the STECF Economic Report on Aquaculture are data collected under the data collection framework (DCF) and EU MAP, Eurostat and FAO.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have any further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Pascale COLSON, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (Pascale.COLSON@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.295.62.73), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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⁽²⁾ [THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEES On “Consumer Products \(SCCP\)” “Health and Environmental Risks \(SCHER\)” “Emerging and Newly Identified \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-affairs/stecf/stecef-expert-groups)

⁽³⁾ https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/economic/-/asset_publisher/d71e/document/id/2871698