



Aquaculture Advisory Council

New Strategic Guidelines' implementation meeting

1. Context

On 17 May 2021, the European Commission adopted new Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030 in the framework of the Green Deal¹. These new guidelines include an Annex in which a series of missions are entrusted to the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC).

On 21 June 2021, the AAC organised an online seminar to discuss these missions and, following a request by DG MARE, reflect upon the ranking of the actions to be undertaken by order of priority. This document summarises the results of this meeting.

2. Main results of the AAC meeting on the Strategic Guidelines implementation

General exchange of views

The AAC seminar started by a general exchange of views among the AAC members about the Strategic guidelines' annex.

The AAC members have remarked that the AAC may help in the construction of the technical assistance website planned by the European Commission (EC).

Assignments for the AAC

2.1.3. Animal health and public health

- A. Develop codes of good practice on the management of aquatic diseases that are not listed in Council Directive 2006/88/EC or in Regulation (EU) 2016/429
- B. Support and disseminate the good husbandry practices identified by the Commission among aquaculture producers
- C. Ensure that EU aquaculture producers are informed about relevant research and innovation on animal-health and public-health matters

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2021:236:FIN>

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Support and disseminate the good husbandry practices
- 2) Develop codes of good practice on the management of aquatic diseases
- 3) Inform EU producers about relevant research and innovation on animal-health and public-health matters

The AAC members note that when talking about molluscs, disease control is impossible in an open environment such as the sea.

2.1.4. Climate change adaptation and mitigation

- A. Disseminate in the aquaculture sector guidance on climate adaptation and resilience
- B. Promote the adoption by EU aquaculture producers of climate-adaptation and climate-mitigation measures

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Promote the adoption by EU aquaculture producers of climate-adaptation and climate-mitigation measures
- 2) Disseminate guidance on climate adaptation and resilience in the aquaculture sector

The AAC members note that point B shall be tackled via the production of an AAC Recommendation.

The AAC has doubts about whether point A should not be considered rather as a competence of the European Commission.

2.1.5. Producer and market organisation

- A. Promote among aquaculture producers the benefits of setting up POs, inter-branch organisations and transnational activities between POs. Provide support for this if necessary.

2.1.6. Control

- A. Encourage the use by the aquaculture sector of digital tools for increased traceability and transparency

The AAC believes that the task that is described in this paragraph should be a Member States' task at the initiative of the European Commission for a better coordination. Attributing it to the AAC would only create costs for the producers and result in non-coordinated actions.

2.2.1. Environmental performance

- A. Promote in the aquaculture sector the implementation of the guidance on environmental performance.
- B. Promote the prevention of marine litter by aquaculture activities.
- C. Promote the monitoring and reporting by the aquaculture industry of environmental indicators.
- D. Ensure that EU aquaculture producers are informed about relevant research and innovation to improve the environmental performance of aquaculture operations.

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Promote the monitoring and reporting by the aquaculture industry of environmental indicators.
- 2) Ensure that EU aquaculture producers are informed about relevant research and innovation to improve the environmental performance of aquaculture operations.
- 3) Promote in the aquaculture sector the implementation of the guidance on environmental performance.
- 4) Promote the prevention of marine litter by aquaculture activities.

The AAC members request a clarification of the term « environmental performance » as it is not clear whether it is about objectives to reach or about the ecological footprint of the sector.

An AAC recommendation could address the need to narrow down the environmental indicators mentioned in point C and suggests whether they should be compulsory or voluntary.

The AAC has doubts about whether point D should not be considered as a competence of the European Commission instead.

2.2.3. Animal welfare

- A. Support and disseminate the code of good practice on fish welfare among aquaculture producers.
- B. Ensure that EU aquaculture producers are informed about relevant research and innovation on animal welfare.

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Support and disseminate the code of good practice on fish welfare among aquaculture producers.
- 2) Ensure that EU aquaculture producers are informed about relevant research and innovation on animal welfare.

The AAC welcomes the task described in point A.

On POINT B, the members agree on the need to inform producers, but also to help them following up on the research and innovation activities.

2.3.1. Communicating on aquaculture

- A. Support and ensure the broad dissemination by members of the coordinated EU-wide campaign on EU aquaculture.
- B. Promote self-regulatory initiatives by the aquaculture sector (e.g. good practices and codes of conduct) and traceability (including the use of digital tools) and their communication of these initiatives to the consumer. Promote the use of brands and quality labels with appropriate control mechanisms.
- C. Promote the use of digitalisation tools and artificial intelligence for the traceability and transparency of aquaculture products.

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Support and ensure the broad dissemination by members of the coordinated EU-wide campaign on EU aquaculture.
- 2) Promote self-regulatory initiatives by the aquaculture sector (e.g. good practices and codes of conduct) and traceability (including the use of digital tools) and their communication of these initiatives to the consumer. Promote the use of brands and quality labels with appropriate control mechanisms.
- 3) Promote the use of digitalisation tools and artificial intelligence for the traceability and transparency of aquaculture products.

The AAC may need additional financial support to carry out the task described on point B.

2.3.2. Integration in local communities

- A. Disseminate among members the good practices on integration of the aquaculture sector in local communities.
- B. Promote among members the involvement by the aquaculture industry of local stakeholders in their activities, as well as the need to show the concrete benefits of those activities to local communities, including through greater transparency.

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Promote among members the involvement by the aquaculture industry of local stakeholders in their activities, as well as the need to show the concrete benefits of those activities to local communities, including through greater transparency.
- 2) Disseminate among members the good practices on integration of the aquaculture sector in local communities.

The AAC members note that, without public support at local and national level, it will be difficult for the AAC to reach the local stakeholders.

2.3.3. Data and monitoring

- A. Encourage industry and industry associations to make voluntary commitments to report to national authorities and make public environmental data, including on escapees and the use of veterinary medicines.

An AAC recommendation could be drafted to this effect, including a list of indications on how to provide and disseminate data too.

2.4. Increasing knowledge and innovation

- A. Encourage aquaculture producers and other stakeholders to work together with research and innovation institutes and public authorities to find solutions to the challenges of the sustainable development of EU aquaculture.
- B. Disseminate information on research and innovation projects and their results among members.
- C. Promote the uptake by the EU aquaculture industry of existing innovation.
- D. Promote in the aquaculture sector the regular training of aquaculture professionals, in particular on how to incorporate innovative practices.

The AAC Members ranked the actions in this order:

- 1) Encourage aquaculture producers and other stakeholders to work together with research and innovation institutes and public authorities to find solutions to the challenges of the sustainable development of EU aquaculture.
- 2) Promote in the aquaculture sector the regular training of aquaculture professionals, in particular on how to incorporate innovative practices.
- 3) Promote the uptake by the EU aquaculture industry of existing innovation.
- 4) Disseminate information on research and innovation projects and their results among members.

FUNDING

- A. Promote among EU aquaculture producers and other stakeholders the use of existing funds and tools to attract investment to implement the objectives laid down in this Communication.



The AAC recalls that the EC's objective is setting up a single financing tool. The AAC should reflect upon the most appropriate tool to support aquaculture activities.



Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC)

Rue Montoyer 31, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0) 2 720 00 73

E-mail: secretariat@aac-europe.org

Twitter: @aac_europe

www.aac-europe.org