

Aquaculture Advisory Council

Executive Committee meeting

31 January 2025 (10:00-12:00)

Online meeting - ZOOM – Interpretation available in EN – FR– ES – IT

Minutes

PARTICIPATION LIST

EXCOM MEMBERS

Brian Thomsen (AAC Chair)

Paul Denekamp (1st Vice-Chair)

Philippe Le Gal (2nd Vice-Chair)

Operators

Ola Öberg (Recirkfisk)

Javier Ojeda (FEAP)

Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA)

Bernhard Feneis (COGECA)

Ma Luisa Alvarez (FEDEPESCA)

Ole Christensen (FEFAC) – Proxy to Javier Ojeda

Thibault Pivetta (EMPA)

Lorenzo Gennari (AMA)

Angeles Longa Portabales (Consello Regulador do Mexillón de Galicia)

Teresa Morrissey (IFA)

Anne-Laure Prego-Cauchet (CNC)

Other interest groups

Phil Brooke (CIWF)

Douglas Waley (Eurogroup for Animals)

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Secretariat: Cynthia Benites, Charlotte Musquar, Justine Marrot



AGENDA

- [Welcome words by the Chair and adoption of the agenda](#)
- [Presentation of final AAC accounts for 2023-2024](#)
- [Execution of ExCom strategic tasks](#)
- [Update on AAC Webinars on dissemination of information to EU farmers](#)
- [Annual evaluation of the Secretariat and the AAC's work](#)
- [AAC elections in 2025](#)
- [Follow-up on the previous decisions](#)
- [Updates by the secretariat](#)
- [Any other business](#)
- [Conclusions and closing of the meeting](#)

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.

Under AOB, Javier Ojeda (FEAP) raised an item regarding the policy on participation in external events (*this point ended up being discussed under Point 8*) and the categorization of the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), a topic recently discussed in the Market Advisory Council (MAC) ExCom meeting (*this point ended up being discussed under Point 7*).

The agenda was adopted with these additions.

The minutes of the previous ExCom meeting (29.10.2024) were adopted by written procedure.

2. Presentation of final AAC accounts for 2023-2024

The Secretariat presented the final accounting report, with a comment from the Treasurer (Addy Risseuw) noting a positive balance.

The report was approved, will be translated into English and will be submitted to the General Assembly.

3. Execution of ExCom strategic tasks

The Chair provided an update on the ExCom strategic tasks, stating that focus should now shift to action planning. The follow-up table will be converted into a working document updated quarterly for ExCom meetings.



ExCom Strategic tasks (AH: Ad hoc, IP: Internal policy)	
Evaluation CFP	Recommendation (AH)
Strategic Guidelines	Establish stronger link between the Strategic Guidelines and the Strategic Plan (IP) Consultation procedure for the Guidance Documents (AH) Recommendation mid-term assessment/consider previous recommendations (AH) Recommendation annual survey to Member States (IP)
Recommendations	Distinguish between own initiative and Strategic Guideline recommendations (IP)
	Select and follow up on prioritized recommendations (IP)
Independent perf. review	Document on internal policies/best practises (IP) Attune EC work programme with the Strategic Plan (IP)
Annual Strategic Plan	Revise lay-out and content (IP); develop protocol for preparation and adoption (IP)
Annual wheel	Include update on strategic tasks (IP)

An exchange with ExCom members followed:

- The Farm to Fork strategy should better support EU producers rather than creating additional administrative burden; it was therefore suggested to include a Recommendation on the Farm to Fork in the strategic tasks. Doug Waley (WG3 Chair) suggested to discuss this at WG3 level;
- Norwegian competition and level-playing field need to be addressed; two Recommendations have already been written on this matter, but it was suggested to draft a third one;
- Concerns were raised about small producers, the level playing field and the minimization of Green Deal goals. A comment was also made on the role of the communication of the work of the AAC.

4. Update on AAC Webinars on dissemination of information to EU farmers

The Chair updated the ExCom on the webinars for disseminating information to EU farmers, and the Secretariat provided cost information.

The ExCom agreed on the organisation on a first webinar in September 2025. The Secretariat will determine a September date.

5. Annual evaluation of the Secretariat and the AAC's work

The Chair noted the lowest ratings related to Member States (MS) responses to AAC Recommendation, and to the communication of Recommendations to local authorities. He emphasized the importance of addressing these issues, adding that some step has already been taken with the clear distinction between advice addressed to the European Commission (EC) and MS in AAC Recommendations.

He also noted the issue of late responses from the EC, which affects all Advisory Councils and is already being addressed. He added that he will convene a virtual ExCom meeting to discuss AAC 'visibility/communication'



once we have received the summary report on MS responses to the EC survey.

6. AAC elections in 2025

The Secretariat presented information on the 2025 elections.

Javier Ojeda suggested amending the Rules of Procedure to include the treasurer's procedure.

The procedure and timeline for the elections were approved.

7. Follow-up on the previous decisions by the Chair

The Chair provided a written update on previous decisions:

- **Membership categorisation (ASC):** The ASC did not agree with any of the proposed solutions. **The Secretariat will contact the MAC, who has faced the same issue, to assess the possibility of co-signing a joint letter to be addressed to the EC on this issue.**
- **Renaming WG2:** The possibility of adding algae and renaming WG2 is now under the umbrella of the work of WG3.
- **Rules of Procedure (RoP):** An updated RoP, including policies and the treasurer's role, will be presented in September during the General Assembly.
- **External performance evaluation:** This item is considered complete and will be removed from the ExCom agenda.

8. Updates by the secretariat

- **European Parliament Event:**
 - The event on January 27, "The Role of Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy," highlighted the importance of ACs. Next steps include MEP Sander Smit's aim to assign corresponding MEPs to each AC.
 - External Event Participation Policy: it was suggested that all AAC representatives attending external events, not just the designated speakers, should adhere to this policy.
- **Inter-AC Meeting:** The meeting will be held on April 8-9, with the Commissioner in attendance. However, the next ExCom meeting is also scheduled for the 8th so DG MARE has promised to try to schedule the Inter-AC meeting in the afternoon; if not, a Doodle poll will be used to determine an alternative date for the ExCom.
- **Achievements Dissemination to NGOs:** The Secretariat will continue disseminating achievements and invited ExCom members to inform them of any contacts they may have with NGOs. The list of contacted NGOs will be shared with the ExCom.
- **EMD Workshop:** A new workshop focusing on the Ocean's Pact will be organized during the European Maritime Days (EMD). The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) will lead, but all ACs will participate. The proposal "20 years of AC stakeholders expertise for the Ocean Pact" is pending EC validation. More information will be provided at the next ExCom meeting.



- **Communication Campaign (March 25):** The Secretariat invited the ExCom members to confirm their participation and assistance with products to be served during the event.

9. Any other business

Pier Antonio Salvador (COPA) proposed to host the ExCom meeting in Venice and organise a visit to a nearby sturgeon farm with caviar production plant. Additional details regarding the date and logistics will be provided by the Secretariat in due course.

10. Conclusions and closing of the meeting

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

The next ExCom meeting should take place online on the **8 April 2025**.

