



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.A.2/BVT

Subject: AAC Recommendation on framing new EU financial tools to support good husbandry practices in shellfish farming

Dear Mr Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your mail of 30th October 2025 including the “*Recommendation on framing new EU financial tools to support good husbandry practices in shellfish farming*”.

In this Recommendation, the Aquaculture Advisory Council specifically calls upon the European Commission to:

- ***Strengthen the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism (AAM). The AAC recommends reinforcing the AAM as a practical and participatory platform that supports the dissemination and financing of GHPs in shellfish farming, ensuring the effective involvement of producers, research bodies, and administrations.***

The AAM is actively disseminating the document collecting Good Husbandry Practices (GHP) for aquaculture, including the GHPs for mussel farming, via the EU aquaculture website⁽¹⁾ and its newsletter⁽²⁾, and will continue to do so after the renewal of its contract with the Commission as of July 2026.

EMFAF funding is available for Member States for GHP on the condition that it is included in their Multiannual National Strategic Plans for Aquaculture. Furthermore, the Commission Strategic guidelines recommend the Member States and the AAC to support and ensure the broad dissemination of good practices. In this context we welcome the webinar on the GHPs organised by the AAC in September 2025 and would encourage the AAC to repeat this kind of webinars in the future.

⁽¹⁾ [Good husbandry practices | EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism](#)

⁽²⁾ [CINEA -](#)

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- **Integrate targeted support for shellfish GHPs in the post-2027 MFF.** The AAC invites the Commission to include dedicated measures for extensive and non-fed shellfish farming in future EU funding instruments and to encourage Member States to set measurable objectives for GHP implementation in their national strategic plans.

The Commission proposal for its 2028–2034 MFF was published on 16 July 2025 and discussions are ongoing with the European Parliament and the Council. Under the Commission proposal, Member States will prepare National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs) for investments and reforms to address national priorities and identified needs and challenges. The Commission will assess coherence of the Plans with the objectives included in the legal proposal supporting these Plans before approving them. While the targeted support proposed is aligned with the current Strategic guidelines for aquaculture, we cannot pre-empt the final political agreement or the content of the Member States' NRPPs before the co-legislators conclude negotiations.

- **Operationalise the EIB recommendations from “EIB Unlocking the Potential of Europe’s Seaweed and Bivalve Industries Report”.** The AAC recommends rapidly building on the findings of the 2025 EIB report to design concrete and accessible financial instruments tailored to the needs of shellfish and seaweed farmers.

The Commission is in contact with the EIB to explore possible ways to support aquaculture with financial instruments, including the farming of bivalve molluscs.

- **Recognise the ecosystem services provided by shellfish farming.** The AAC encourages the Commission to acknowledge the environmental services delivered by shellfish farming and to consider the latter as a basis for developing results based financial incentives and payment schemes supporting shellfish GHPs.

The Commission has funded a study on the “assessment of the ecosystem services of bivalve mollusc farming and fish farming in ponds and wetlands” that will soon be published. This study includes recommendations on how to promote the growth of this type of aquaculture. The results of this study will be the basis for the preparation of a document on how to promote the environmental benefits of aquaculture (including shellfish farming) in 2026.

- **Facilitate access to EU funding for shellfish producers.** The AAC invites the Commission and Member States to simplify procedures and improve guidance to ensure that shellfish farmers can effectively access available financial instruments supporting GHPs.

The Commission fully agrees that funding must be accessible to all producers. Member States' funding programmes work under shared management, which means the detailed procedures and eligibility rules are set at national level. The Commission will continue working with Member States to reduce administrative complexity where possible, improve guidance based on experience from the past and current period, and ensure that national authorities integrate clear, user-friendly support conditions in the next generation of programmes. The Commission invites the sector to share concrete examples of bottlenecks and good practices to support this work.

- **Develop monitoring indicators for GHP-related investments.** The AAC recommends establishing indicators to monitor and evaluate the use and impact of EU funds dedicated to GHPs in shellfish farming, improving transparency and accountability.

The indicators and the common monitoring and performance framework system for the post-2027 period are included in the legal proposal of the Performance Framework Regulation (Annex I). The Commission will assess how best to reflect these monitoring needs in the future on the basis of the agreed and adopted regulation.

- *Enhance coordination between EU funding programmes. The AAC encourages the Commission to strengthen synergies between funding instruments (EMFAF, LIFE, Horizon Europe, Interreg, EIB) to ensure coherent and complementary support for shellfish GHPs.*

As recommended in the “Strategic guidelines for EU aquaculture” the Commission works to ensure coherence, synergies and complementarity in support of aquaculture under the different EU funds managed by the Commission. The Commission also insists that Member States coordinate the planning, commitments and expenditure on aquaculture under different funds under the Multiannual Financial Framework, ensuring coherence, synergies and complementarity between them.

I am looking forward to our continued fruitful cooperation. Should you have further questions on this reply, please contact Ms Julia RUBECK, coordinator of the Advisory Councils (MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.296.88.89), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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