



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,
MARE.A.2/BVT

Subject: AAC Recommendation on Research and Innovation priorities for the aquaculture sector

Dear Mr Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your mail of 7th October 2025 including the “*Recommendation on Research and Innovation priorities for the aquaculture sector*”.

In this Recommendation, the Aquaculture Advisory Council specifically recommends the European Commission:

- *To note the **research and innovation priorities listed** and ensure due consideration is given to these areas in the development of future calls under the appropriate research programme.*

DG MARE would like to thank the AAC for this list of research and innovation priorities for aquaculture and will take them into consideration in the discussions with DG RTD on future research work programmes.

- *That under the **next Multi Annual Financial Framework**, Europe maintains a strong, independent, adequately resourced **Framework Programme (FP10)**, with sufficient resources allocated to support the research and innovation priorities identified above for a resilient, sustainable European Aquaculture sector.*

In July 2025, the Commission presented its proposal for an ambitious and dynamic Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) amounting to almost EUR 2 trillion. A new European Competitiveness Fund will invest in strategic technologies, and it will focus its support on four areas, one of them being health, biotech, agriculture and bioeconomy. Horizon Europe for 2028-2034 with an amount of EUR 175 billion, will be developed in close connection with the European Competitiveness Fund and together they will offer support for the entire investment journey of a project, from conception phase to scale-up. Aquaculture will also be supported under the Member States National and Regional

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Partnership Plans. The decision on the future MFF will be taken by the legislators, the Council and the European Parliament. The Commission will do everything in its power to support a swift agreement. Additionally, and following the European Ocean Pact, the Commission will develop a European Ocean R&I Strategy that will include relevant aquaculture issues.

- *That an **annual meeting** should be convened by DG MARE to discuss research and innovation issues relevant for European aquaculture, including consideration of current priorities, recent research outputs and matters related to knowledge and innovation transfer, and comprising the relevant representatives with responsibility for the aquaculture sector drawn from the DGs (MARE, RTD, SANTE, REGIO, GROW, ENV) alongside representatives from CINEA and REA, the European Partnerships, the SCAR-Fish Committee and such other organisations and individuals as recommended by the AAC.*

DG MARE welcomes the idea to organise an annual meeting to discuss research and innovation issues for EU aquaculture with the relevant DGs and the other suggested organisations.

- *That the European Commission works with and supports existing **Technology Platforms and research & innovation networks** to communicate and disseminate project results more effectively, specifically to producers and value chain actors in a more targeted manner, and to seek input on strategic research and innovation needs.*

DG MARE and RTD are closely collaborating with the European Aquaculture Technology and Innovation Platform (EATIP) on research and innovation needs and on the dissemination of project results and will continue to do so. EATIP is also a member of the EU Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism consortium that is disseminating project results via the Knowledge Base on the EU aquaculture website. Additionally, the Commission is closely collaborating with the Farm Animal Breeding and Reproductive European Technology Platform (FABRE TP) that recently published a report on priorities in aquaculture breeding and genetics ⁽¹⁾. Furthermore, DG RTD communicates and disseminates project results through different publications such as the recent CORDIS Results Pack on food from aquatic ecosystems ⁽²⁾.

- *That further support and financial assistance is given to the implementation of innovation transfer through **Smart Specialisation Strategies** (S3) for the aquaculture sector, including at a regional level.*

The S3 Thematic Platform for a Sustainable Blue Economy fosters the development of interregional partnerships and innovative value chains across various blue economy sectors, including smart and circular aquaculture. This platform facilitates collaboration among a range of public and private stakeholders, including regional authorities, industry, research institutions, academia, and civil society. By working together, stakeholders can leverage their

⁽¹⁾<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/63eb4bf2dadeef5f0083e3e9/t/6800d80f3737d37c73988c32/1744885777470/2025+FABRE+TP-Research+priorities+aqua+breeding+sector.pdf>

⁽²⁾<https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/457663-research-and-innovation-for-sustainable-climate-resilient-aquaculture-and-fisheries>

collective expertise, knowhow, and resources to identify and address common challenges, share knowledge and best practices, and prepare and implement jointly innovative projects.

- *That **continued resources** are directed towards the **Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism (AAM)**, promoting the potential and function of the AAM knowledge base with specific consideration given as to how aquaculture producers and other stakeholders may be assisted in accessing and using research outputs and knowledge provided through the AAM.*

DG MARE envisages to renew its contract with the AAM in June 2026 to ensure the continuation of the Knowledge Base included in the EU aquaculture website.

- *That **Multi-Annual National Strategic Plans for aquaculture development** should contain a specific section outlining a strategy for research and innovation actions alongside innovation and knowledge transfer, to support sustainable aquaculture development at the national level.*

DG MARE can only encourage Member States to include a specific section related to a R&I strategy in their Multi-Annual National Strategic Plans for aquaculture.

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 (Julia.rubeck@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.296.88.89), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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