



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE.A.2/LE

**Subject: AAC Recommendation on European fisheries and aquaculture statistics (EFAS)**

Dear Mr Brian Thomsen,

I would like to thank you for your mail including the “*Recommendation on European fisheries and aquaculture statistics (EFAS)*”.

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

***On the definition on recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS):***

- 1. Ask the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism to establish a methodology for segmenting RAS into extensive and intensive systems based on water intake and the amount of feed used.***

The Commission takes note of the recommendation which will be considered and discussed with the Aquaculture Assistance Mechanism (AAM).

- 2. Introduce the definitions on RAS in the relevant EU legal acts.***

- 3. Include the collection of data on extensive and intensive RAS in the EFAS regulation and the data collection framework***

The Commission takes note of the recommendations on the recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS), including the distinction between extensive RAS and intensive RAS, and the request to reflect this distinction in European aquaculture statistics.

The Commission recalls that the European Fisheries and Aquaculture Statistics Regulation (EFAS) will be a statistical legal act, whose primary objective is to ensure harmonised, comparable and high-quality statistics across Member States. EFAS is not

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intended to establish or amend substantive technical or regulatory definitions governing aquaculture practices.

At this stage, the Commission considers that the introduction or revision of legally binding definitions of RAS in sectoral legislation (for example in the areas of organic production, aquaculture policy or environmental legislation) would require a broader policy and legal assessment, going beyond the scope of EFAS. Such work would also need to take into account existing EU and international definitions and interpretations.

The EFAS proposal foresees the use of Table 11 of Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 for the structural classification of aquaculture establishments. Any refinement of the RAS categories, including a potential split between extensive and intensive systems, would therefore require a modification of that Delegated Decision, which falls under the Data Collection Framework.

Since the EFAS proposal is still under interinstitutional discussion and the relevant secondary legislation is under preparation, the Commission is not in a position at this stage to propose additional data collections or pilot refinements.

Nevertheless, once the legislative framework is stabilised, the Commission stands ready to reflect, together with Member States, on the feasibility, methodological robustness and proportionality, including any additional administrative burden, of a split of RAS categories for statistical purposes.

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](mailto:MARE-AC@ec.europa.eu); +32.2.296.88.89), who will forward them to relevant colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

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