



DRAFT Internal Terms of Reference (By-Laws)
for the
European Aquaculture Technology &
Innovation Platform

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Background

I. The EATIP Mission

In order to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the European aquaculture industry and to reinforce the position of Europe as a leading global player in the development and production of aquatic products, the European Aquaculture Technology Platform will pursue the following key objectives:

- Establishment of an effective European-wide expert network involving industry, research organisations, public authorities, financial institutions and other stakeholders for the coordination of their efforts in the field of research, development and innovation so as to benefit the stakeholders of European aquaculture.
- Identification of the innovation challenges of the collective interests of the stakeholders in European aquaculture.
- Identification and implementation of actions to improve the competitiveness of professional aquaculture and related industries, specifically through knowledge-based activities.
- Definition of a common long-term Vision of European aquaculture and the development of a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) which is to be implemented through targeted and coordinated research, technology development and innovation efforts.
- Development of structures and measures to improve the overall research, development and innovation framework conditions for European aquaculture – focussing on effective technology transfer mechanisms, skill development and the dissemination of the results of the RTDI engaged.
- Supporting the implementation of financing mechanisms for the achievement of innovative RTDI and its successful completion.

II. The EATIP Objectives

The core priorities for EATIP are:

- Establishing a strong relationship between aquaculture and the consumer (health, quality, traceability and others)
- Assuring a sustainable industry (social, environmental and economic)
- Consolidating the role of aquaculture in society (food security, knowledge management, skill development, communications, networking etc)

Each of these priorities will be supported by actions on specific thematic areas.

Furthermore, a number of horizontal ‘pillars’ will be established for

- a) improving of technology transfer mechanisms,
- b) raising skills through effective education and training and
- c) communicating in the best possible manner with stakeholders, authorities and society.

III. Actions foreseen

In the short term, the platform has to assure

- i. The identification of the innovation challenges of the collective interests of the stakeholders in European aquaculture and
- ii. The preparation of the final VISION document, based on the draft made by the Interim Working Group [appointed at the 1st Stakeholders' Meeting].

This has to be accompanied by starting work on the development of the Strategic Research Agenda [SRA] – a key requirement for official recognition, by the European Commission - of the EATIP.

The range of information, inputs and debate that are required to achieve the SRA requires delegation of these tasks to area/issue-specific Working Groups who will report their progress and suggestions to the proposed management structures of the EATIP.

Agreement on the priorities and content of the areas/issues will be assured by an Operating Council [composed of Working Group Chairpersons & Facilitators] for decision by the Board of Directors, prior to presentation to the Stakeholder Forum.

IV. Co-ordination and management of the EATIP

The EATIP sets out to identify and support industry-led innovation RTDI actions for the benefit of the European aquaculture sector, which is characterised by its diversity and geographic dispersion. The production sector is composed of large, even multinational companies, SMEs and micro-enterprises, including family companies. A wide range of upstream and downstream economic activities are also evident, while – being primarily a food production activity using natural resources – additional stakeholders include consumer and environmental interest groups.

The wide range of stakeholder interests of European aquaculture means that the structure and management of the EATIP has to be efficient and effective in all manners.

To achieve this, the EATIP will be coordinated and managed by senior representatives of identified stakeholder interests, and function within a clear and transparent organisational structure. This structure has to provide the support and facilitate the achievement of the mission and goals of the EATIP, as described in the Draft Vision Document.

It is proposed that the operating bodies of the EATIP would be the following:

A. ASSEMBLY [STAKEHOLDER FORUM]

The highest authority of the EATIP will be the Assembly [*Stakeholder Forum*] of the Platform that will be composed of Platform Members.

- i. It will be responsible for nominating the Directors and approval of the operational, administrative and financial actions of the EATIP.
- ii. The Stakeholder Forum is also responsible for the approval of the Vision Document, the Strategic Research Agenda and the Implementation Plan that will be proposed by the Board of Directors.

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors will take the ultimate managerial responsibility of the platform, being responsible for administrative and financial management of the EATIP.

- i. The Board of Directors, although not limited by statutes at this time, is proposed to be composed of a maximum of 11 persons, representing different stakeholder interests of the aquaculture sector in a balanced manner.
- ii. The Board of Directors will be endowed with the executive authority required for the management of the EATIP.
- iii. The Board of Directors shall approve the Chairpersons and Facilitators of the Working Groups that represent the Thematic Areas of the EATIP, decided by the Stakeholders Forum, presenting these nominations for approval by the Stakeholders Forum.
- iv. The Board of Directors shall be able to replace Chairpersons should this be deemed necessary.

The statutes proposed to the Board/Assembly would only cover the legal and statutory function of the EATIP as a non-profit organisation and, from a legal basis, these would thus concern Membership conditions, the functions of the Assembly and the Board of Directors and their respective responsibilities.

The function and responsibilities of the Thematic Areas and Working Groups, including their members and Chairpersons, would be covered by internal by-laws (i.e. non- statutory).

C. THEMATIC AREAS (WORKING GROUPS)

The initial work of the EATIP is to finalise the Vision Document and to start the development of the Strategic Research Agenda.

To achieve this, it is proposed to create Working Groups, based on agreed Thematic Areas, which will be supervised by a Chairperson, preferably selected from aquaculture industrial interests, assisted by a Facilitator from the research sector. *[While this internal rule may not be statutory, it will indicate the philosophy of 'industry-led'; some flexibility may be required]*

They will be responsible jointly for the organisation and coordination of the Thematic Area representation and working groups within the Thematic Area concerned.

The following Thematic Areas have been proposed for the platform:

- i. Product quality & human safety and health
- ii. Technology and systems (engineering)
- iii. Managing the biological lifecycle
- iv. Sustainable feed production
- v. Interactions with the environment
- vi. Knowledge management
- vii. Aquatic Animal Health & Welfare

It may be necessary to create additional specific working groups to work on specific components within a Thematic Area, their creation being determined on need and requiring to be agreed by the Board of Directors.

D. OPERATING COUNCIL

The initial role of the Operating Council will be to prepare the Strategic Research Agenda and the Implementation Plan of the EATIP.

For effective coordination of the interests of the EATIP, the Chairpersons and Facilitators of each Thematic Area, plus 2 Directors, nominated by the Board of Directors, will form the Operating Council of the EATIP.

It is anticipated that the European Commission would be invited to nominate observers to any of the Working Groups and, if felt appropriate, the Board of Directors and the Operating Council.

E. MIRROR GROUP (MEMBER STATES)

The Mirror Group will be a network of national bodies that fund aquaculture research; such a group is external to the administrative operations of the EATIP and needs to be developed further.

F. SECRETARIAT

These operational entities will need to be supported, in the first instance, by a Secretariat whose role will be to provide administrative and organisational support, including meeting organisation and communication activities (preparation of Minutes, communication with the European Commission, platform promotion).

The Secretariat will be appointed and supervised by the Board of Directors on the basis of agreed activities, budgets and financing.

V. Details of the activities and proposed structure of the EATIP

A. FORMAL MEETINGS

Formal meetings of the EATIP and its structures are anticipated on the following basis:

- It is expected that the **Stakeholders Forum** [Assembly] would initially need to meet twice annually during the creative phase of the EATIP, diminishing thereafter to one formal Annual Meeting (*statutory*).
- **Thematic Areas/Working Groups:** A minimum of twice each year, prior to Operating Council Meetings where possible, accompanied by Conference call meetings when required (*non-statutory*).
- **Operating Council:** Initially twice each year, where possible following Working Group Meetings, providing conclusions and recommendations to the Board of Directors (*non-statutory*).
- **Board of Directors:** In the initial phase of operations, twice each year so as to follow the developments anticipated (*statutory*).

B. ASSEMBLY [STAKEHOLDERS FORUM]

The Assembly [*Stakeholder Forum*] is the highest authority in the EATIP.

The Assembly shall be convened by the Board of Directors annually, presided by the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. (*statutory*)

If deemed necessary, additional extraordinary meetings may be called by decision of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors and the Board of Directors itself. (*statutory*)

- Draft agendas shall be circulated to the members at least 20 working days prior to the date of the Stakeholders Forum by e-mail and by posting to the EATIP homepage. *(statutory)*
- The governing principle of the Forum shall be that decisions shall be made on the basis of consensus.
 - Objections to decisions shall be noted and minuted. *(statutory)*
- The Minutes of the meetings shall be sent to all stakeholders present within 14 days following the meeting. *(statutory)*

The responsibilities of the Stakeholders Forum are to:

- Appoint the Board of Directors and, should the case arise, replace individual Directors.
- Respect the guiding principle for the appointment of Directors where the Board should be balanced, representing the interests of all stakeholders to European aquaculture. *(difficult to be precise in statutes on this – unless decision on composition is taken)*
- Have the right of approval of the Board’s report on the activities and expenditure for the previous year and plans and budgets for the coming year. *(statutory)*
- Modify the Terms of Reference of the EATIP. *(statutory)*

C. WORKING GROUPS FOR THEMATIC AREAS OF THE EATIP (NON-STATUTORY)

The Board of Directors will establish a number of Working Groups on Thematic Areas agreed by the Stakeholders Forum.

- i. The Board shall appoint a Chairperson, where possible from industry, and a Facilitator from the RTDI sector concerned by the Thematic Area identified.
- ii. The Board may, at its discretion, create additional Working Groups as and when required.

1. Membership of the Working Groups for Thematic Areas:

- i. Senior expertise in the fields of work covered by the Thematic Areas will be required.
- ii. Membership may be by invitation or by application; in each case, the Board of Directors will be required to approve appointment.
- iii. The Chairperson and Facilitator of each Working Group for Thematic Areas will be members of the Executive Operating Council for discussion and debate on the topics of the Strategic Research Agenda, establishing priorities and balance within the issues agreed.
- iv. At the discretion of the Chairpersons and Facilitators, additional experts or observers may be invited to participate in the work, where appropriate or necessary.

2. Mission of Working Groups for Thematic Areas

- i. Develop outlines proposals concerning the Thematic Area for integration into the EATIP's Vision Document, Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) and Implementation Plan.
- ii. Provide the interface on national and European policies and legislation for the issues specific to the interests and activities of the thematic area.
- iii. Seek added-value and enhanced impact through interactions with other Working Groups of the EATIP and other European Technology Platforms
- iv. Publicise and promote their activities within the structure of the EATIP.
- v. Initiate and, where appropriate, manage projects that reflect the interests and activities of the Thematic Area.

3. Operation of Working Groups for Thematic Areas

- i. The Chairpersons and Facilitators will convene meetings, in agreement with a timetable set by the Board, in order to achieve the work foreseen.
- ii. Such meetings may be in person or using telephonic or electronic facilities.
- iii. Minutes of meetings shall be prepared and provided to all members of the EATIP through electronic means.

With the number of Thematic Areas anticipated at present, the Executive Operative Council will thus have a minimum of seven representatives from industry and a maximum of seven members from non-industry sectors.

VI. The Operating Council

The Operating Council of the EATIP provides the link between the Working Groups and the Board of Directors.

Its initial role is to prioritise and balance the conclusions and suggestions of the Thematic Areas for inclusion within the Vision Document and the Strategic Research Agenda.

- i. It is proposed to be composed of the Chairperson and Facilitator of each Thematic Area.
- ii. 2 Directors of the EATIP Board will be delegated to follow its work and to report to the Board of Directors on progress and recommendations.
- iii. The Operating Council will select a Chairperson and a Vice-Chair from its Members.
- iv. For effectiveness, it is proposed that the Operating Council will meet following meetings of the Thematic Areas, in order to make the appropriate reports and recommendations in a timely fashion.
- v. The European Commission will be invited to appoint observers to follow the work in the Council.

VII. The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be composed of persons with standing and experience, representing in a balanced manner the different stakeholder interests of European aquaculture.

A. THE MISSION OF THE BOARD

- oversee the development of the long-term Vision for European Aquaculture
 - propose the Vision for approval by the Assembly,
- ratify or reject the draft content and final Strategic Research Agenda,
 - propose the Strategic Research Agenda for approval by the Assembly,
- provide directional guidelines to the Working Groups,
- propose to the Assembly [Stakeholder Forum] any changes on the structure and goals of the EATIP as required,
- approve actions concerning public relations of the EATIP (press releases, public documents, publications...),
- manage financial aspects of the EATIP,
- control, audit and evaluate procedures of the EATIP.