



EATiP - On The Horizon 2nd webinar

Brief overview of the EU environmental rules applying to aquaculture

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Presentation to EATiP (12.05.2022)

International context

- UN's Sustainable development goals (SDGs): zero hunger, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water
- FAO's Code of conduct for responsible fisheries

EU context

- EU Green Deal: Biodiversity strategy for 2030, Farm to fork, Nature restoration law, Strategic guidelines for aquaculture
- Fisheries: Common fisheries policy (CFP)
- Environment: Strategic environmental assessment directive (SEA), Environmental impact assessment directive (EIA), Birds and habitats directives (BHD), regulations on alien species, Water framework directive (WFD), Marine strategy framework directive (MSFD)
- Research: Horizon Europe including Mission Ocean, EMFAF

‘Green’ and ‘blue’ must go hand in hand with research as a bridge.

Challenges

- Geopolitical crises (Brexit, Covid, war in Ukraine)
- Biodiversity and climate crises
- Intense/over-exploitation of fish stocks used for feed
- Food security issues
- EU imports 2/3 of its seafood
- Invasive alien species
- Pollution (chemicals, nutrients, plastics)

Opportunities

- More research and knowledge to help deliver the Green deal objectives
- Aquaculture as a source of nature based-solutions and environmental services to help address the planetary crises
- Aquaculture included in a food systems approach

We need to scale up EU aquaculture while implementing the Green deal and keeping our high environmental standards.

Common fisheries policy and aquaculture

- *The CFP shall ensure that **fishing and aquaculture activities are environmentally sustainable in the long-term** and are managed in a way that is consistent with the objectives of achieving economic, social and employment benefits, and of contributing to the availability of food supplies'*
- *'The CFP shall implement the **ecosystem-based approach** to fisheries management so as to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised, and shall endeavour to ensure that **aquaculture and fisheries activities avoid the degradation of the marine environment**'*

Common fisheries policy and aquaculture

- *‘The CFP shall promote the development of **sustainable Union aquaculture** activities to contribute to food supplies and security and employment’*
- *‘The CFP shall be **coherent with the Union environmental legislation**, in particular with the objective of achieving a good environmental status by 2020 as set out in Article 1(1) of Directive 2008/56/EC [MSFD], as well as with other Union policies’*

Article 2 of the Common fisheries policy (CFP) covers (sustainable) aquaculture, the ecosystem approach to management and contributes to delivering the objectives under the EU’s environmental legislation.

EU environmental law and aquaculture (1)

- Strategic environmental assessment directive (**SEA**): applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes or when required under the Habitats directive
- Environmental impact assessment directive (**EIA**): applies to a wide range of defined public and private projects (includes aquaculture)
- Regulation concerning use of alien and locally absent species in aquaculture: rules for authorising the use of certain alien species and alleviate their risk of becoming invasive if escaping from aquaculture
- Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (**IAS**): applies to all IAS but not 'to species listed in Annex IV to Regulation (EC) No 708/2007 [above] when used in aquaculture'

EU environmental law and aquaculture (2)

Water framework directive (WFD)

- Scope: covers all impacts on water; protection and management of all waters, including rivers, lakes, transitional-, coastal- and groundwater
- Objectives: protect and enhance water bodies; achieve good status/potential; no deterioration (link to EIA directive)
- Tools: River basin management plans and Programmes of measures; other legislation on: urban waste water treatment, nitrates from agriculture, etc.
- Guidance on the application of the WFD to aquaculture activities:
https://ec.europa.eu/environment/marine/pdf/SWD_2016_178.pdf

EU environmental law and aquaculture (3)

Marine strategy framework directive (MSFD)

- Aims to achieve a 'Good environmental status' (GES) of the EU's marine waters through 11 descriptors and to protect the resources marine economic and social activities depend upon: it aims **to reconcile environmental protection and sustainable use**
- It does not regulate sectors directly ('framework directive') but implements an **ecosystem-based approach** to the management of human activities having an impact on the marine environment

EU environmental law and aquaculture (4)

MSFD descriptors relevant to aquaculture

- (2) Non-indigenous species (NIS) introduced by human activities do not adversely alter the ecosystems
- (4) Elements of the marine food webs at normal abundance and diversity and levels ensuring the long-term abundance full reproductive capacity of the species
- (5) Human-induced eutrophication is minimised, especially adverse effects such as losses in biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, harmful algae blooms and oxygen deficiency in bottom waters
- (8) Concentrations of contaminants do not give rise to pollution effects
- (10) Properties and quantities of marine litter do not cause harm to the coastal and marine environment

EU environmental law and aquaculture (5)

MSFD annex 2b: uses and human activities in or affecting the marine environment

Cultivation of living resources	Aquaculture — marine, including infrastructure*
	Aquaculture — freshwater
	Agriculture
	Forestry

... among a long list of about 30 human activities

EU environmental law and aquaculture (6)

Pressures listed in the MSFD and relevant to aquaculture (annex 2a)

- Biological pressures: input or spread of non-indigenous species, input of microbial pathogens, input of genetically modified species and translocation of native species, loss of, or change to, natural biological communities due to cultivation of animal or plant species
- Substances, litter and energy: input of organic matter — diffuse sources and point sources, input of other substances (e.g. synthetic substances), input of litter (solid waste matter, including micro-sized litter),



DESCRIPTORS

% OF MS THAT WERE ABLE TO CONCLUDE ON CURRENT STATUS

50%

D1 Biodiversity

53%

D2 Non-indigenous species

65%

D3 Commercial fish/shellfish

32%

D4 Food webs

90%

D5 Eutrophication

30%

D6 Sea-floor integrity

29%

D7 Hydrographical conditions

45%

D8 Contaminants

75%

D9 Contaminants in seafood

55%

D10 Litter

12%

D11 Energy, including underwater noise

* birds 47%, mammals 68%, reptiles 25%, fish 35%, cephalopods 22%, pelagic habitats 53%

Thank you



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