Flexible approaches to aquaculture licensing: Consultation Document

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Objectives / goals

- Evaluate existing regulatory and licensing frameworks across the EU
- Design new, flexible approaches to licensing working to common standards
- Develop timely and cost efficient tools that incentivise sustainable aquaculture
- **Ensure the acceptability and utility of the approaches, by:**
  - Close engagement and collaboration with industry, regulators and certifiers
  - Take account of the range of production environments in consultation
Consultation process
Draft consultation report on new and flexible approaches

• The issues and bottlenecks outline from consultation – what are they?
• Highlighted areas where tools are needed.
• Tools asked for directly by consultees.
• Tools suggested from workshops.
• Collated and formed report.
1. Overview of issues, bottlenecks to regulation of aquaculture in the EU

2. Recommendations to improve these issues and highlighting the potential positive impact of each

3. Appendix - exploring case studies and potential new approaches – regulation and tool requirements

4. Basis for consultation and discussion.

5. **Summary recommendations to tackle issues and bottlenecks**
Recommendations

1. Develop a modern **electronic licensing system** focused on the provision of:
   - Formal **timelines** with real-time tracking.
   - Accessible **guidance** and procedural information for all users.
   - Enhanced **communication**.
   - **Flexibility** to support new and emerging technologies.

2. Provide clear guidance for **quantifying impact and balancing risk**, with accessible and understandable tools to assist in quantification and risk assessment.

3. Develop and improve tools and environmental models, making them accessible to industry and planners, to assist with **site identification, site optimisation and carrying capacity** assessment.

4. Carry out **real time, inexpensive, risk focused monitoring** to assess the environmental impacts and monitor for potential impacts.
Recommendations

5. **Level the playing field for costs** of applying for, and fees applied to, aquaculture licences, particularly in regard to environmental impact statement preparation.

6. **Streamline aquaculture legislation** by condensing the number of licences required to operate (and synchronising validity periods); incorporating operational flexibility into the legal framework and appropriate licence terms to support industry investment and planning, facilitating research using trial licence models.

7. Harmonise the implementation of EU regulations by **reducing the variation in implementation** including harmonising of procedure and requirements for EIS and EIA incorporating reference to the benefits and costs of aquaculture within regulation.

8. Encourage the implementation of the National Plans and the amended EIA Directive across jurisdictions to help **simplify processes and administration**.
Recommendations

9. Designate **strategic national aquaculture zones** as part of spatial plans where risk assessments, capacity and impact studies are carried out on an ‘area’ approach in advance of issuing licences, balancing considerations of economic growth and environmental protection with cumulative impacts of development.

10. Develop local scale, **producer lead, communication platforms** to facilitate dispute resolution between resource users, enhancing cooperation and developing a forum to represent local producers on a broader regional scale to input into local planning.

11. Develop **public communication platforms** to make monitoring information publically available, providing context, and to provide explanatory factual information about aquaculture to the media and general public.
New Approaches

Draft consultation report on new and flexible approaches

• Recommendations on 24 themes
• 18 Appendices
• Recommendations on new tools for regulation, licensing and decision making
• Examples of best practise
Licence Application Process & the Licence

**E-Licensing System**

- Adoption of an E-licensing system for processing applications. Each member state could provide a portal, using best practise from across jurisdictions
  - E-licensing guidance

**One-stop-shop**

- Create inter-institutional agencies that centralise, coordinate and process all the permits, licences and reports from the various agencies and authorities that have responsibilities for aquaculture
  - Example: Norway - Greece
Licence Application Process & the Licence

Aquaculture Legislation

• Recommend that countries complete an internal review of their licensing process.

• Examples
  • Independent Review of Scottish Aquaculture Consenting - Scotland
  • Review of the Aquaculture licensing process- Ireland
Licence Application Process & the Licence

Licence – Term

• Licence should be sufficiently long to allow business planning and stability
  • Perpetual licence
  • Transfer / Lease and have an asset value
• Transparent and uncomplicated procedures for renewal
Licence Application Process & the Licence

Licence – Flexibility

• Regulating in a constantly changing environment, the legislative control on production needs to also be dynamic to allow responses to change.

• Need flexibility within the licence to adapt quickly.
Licence Application Process & the Licence

**Pre- application process**

- Appropriate guidance in the early stage of application and preparation to check completeness and ensure the application progresses through the system as efficiently as possible
- Provide advice and guidance to the applicant in the preparation of the business proposal and the aquaculture licence application
Communication

Communication Platforms

- provision of a forum for communication between producers allows for
  - problem solving
  - enhanced development and utilisation of space resulting in better management between users
  - collectively represent the sector in broad scale planning
  - communication for stakeholders
Communication

Database of environmental monitoring and results

• Centralised publicly available data in relation to environmental monitoring
  • Transparency
  • Environmental protection
  • Better public understanding and industry accountability
  • Improved education and outreach on the industry
  • A tool for regulation
Decision Support & TAPAS tools

Decision Making

• Tools to assess environmental and societal impacts of aquaculture, quantifying ecosystem services

• Monitoring to provide real-time, environmental data to inform regulation and decision making to support risk assessment
Decision Support & TAPAS tools

Aquaculture Zones

• Zones where aquaculture development is prioritised balancing economic productivity, environmental stewardship, and social expectations

• Integrated planning, better regulation, reduce conflict with others

• Feasible in eastern Europe freshwater culture?
Decision Support & TAPAS tools

Spatial planning
- Strategic, integrated approach that supports policy and planning decisions to coordinate and manage activities in the spatial environment with cooperation from all stakeholders.
Decision Support & TAPAS tools

Policy

• Alleviate administrative burdens, which remain a key barrier to development of the sector

• Provide sustainable aquaculture growth to fill the gap between EU consumption and production

• To further improve public support, public acceptance and the idea of social licence for aquaculture

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Aquaculture Sustainability Toolbox

Guidance documents (in box)  Interactive tools (in box + links)

Toolbox subjects

Case studies (in box)  Monitoring tools / Data (in box + links)