Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for the sustainable development of EU Aquaculture

Interim evaluation

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Aquaculture in the EU employs around 75,000 people - an important primary industry in many less well developed coastal & rural locations.

Aquaculture is largely a Member State competence.

Challenges, barriers and threats that face EU aquaculture are common across many countries.

The CFP set up the Open Method of Coordination for aquaculture.

The Commission developed in 2013 Strategic Guidelines for the sustainable development of EU Aquaculture.
The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

- A **voluntary process** for cooperation between the Commission and the Member States to promote the sustainable development of EU aquaculture.

- Under this OMC cooperation is **based on:**
  - [Strategic Guidelines](#) developed by the Commission in 2013
  - [Multi-annual Aquaculture National Strategic Plans](#) (MANPs) in 2015
  - [Guidance Documents on EU legislation](#)
  - [Exchange of good practices](#)
The Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

- Lower administrative burdens
- Better access to space

- Improved competitiveness
- Level playing field

Sustainability, food security, growth and employment
Interim evaluation of the OMC

External study

- Titel: “Study on an interim evaluation of the open method of coordination for the sustainable development of EU Aquaculture”
- Launched in October 2017
- Final meeting with contractor - next week
- Contractor: Coffey – Poseidon
Interim evaluation of the OMC

Objectives

1. To **assess** national and EU efforts to promote the development of the sector.

2. To **inform** Member States, stakeholders and the public on the achievements of the OMC in this sector;

3. To **provide input** for future policy making for sustainable EU aquaculture.
Interim evaluation of the OMC

Scope

• All OMC tools:
  • 2013 Strategic Guidelines,
  • MANPS,
  • Guidance on EU legislation,
  • Exchange of good practices

• Period 2013 – 2017

• All Member States except Luxembourg
Conclusions

- The OMC has given the European Commission a more in-depth understanding of the evolution of the aquaculture sector in the MS.

- The OMC tools contributed to improved strategic planning:
  - MS structured their MANPs on the 4 priorities of the EU Strategic Guidelines.
  - Increased focus on aquaculture in other EU programmes & funds (eg research).
  - Number of MS contributing/participating in the technical seminars confirms common interest and create common goals.

- Consulted stakeholders recognize the added-value of the OMC, notably:
  - increased cooperation/mutual learning
  - alignment with EU policies and objectives.
Conclusions (2)

- There has been **progress on the priorities of the Strategic Guidelines:**
  - most MS have an **MANP** and set **quantified objectives for growth**, 
  - **administrative procedures** were analyzed and bottlenecks identified, 
  - improvements in the integration of aquaculture in **spatial planning** 
  - EMFF implementation was delayed, but the budget for EU aquaculture is significant (**€1.8 billion**) 

- Most progress is made with **administrative simplification** and **spatial planning** - in some MS improvements in:
  - Number of processed aquaculture applications, success rates and new licenses; 
  - Reductions in duration of licensing procedures. 

- But the **underlying needs of** the aquaculture sector addressed by the OMC still require action at EU level.
Conclusions (3)

- The main *hindering factors* were due to:
  - complexity of the regulatory framework;
  - level of de-centralization;
  - number of entities involved;
  - “promoting the level-playing field” was not well-understood

- There is little information on the impact of the OMC on the *wider objectives of the CFP* (e.g. on sector growth and competitiveness). Only a few Member States could measure the direct effects in terms of sector growth.
Conclusions (4)

- It is difficult to do a **cost-benefit analysis of participation** in the OMC from a MS perspective. But MS consider that costs incurred are at an acceptable level.

- It is not possible to quantify possible **savings** in particular related to administrative simplification as there are no mechanisms at MS level to make these types of calculation. Also, any savings cannot be directly attributed to the OMC.

- But **direct costs** for MS and EC involvement in the OMC are at **appropriate** levels. And MS report that the **benefits** provided by the OMC **justify** their **time and resource commitment**, particularly as the OMC has increased cooperation and mutual learning.

- There is **scope for efficiency gains** in the use of OMC tools, e.g.:
  - strengthen collaboration at **regional level**
  - **technical guidelines** could be simplified and better disseminated
Conclusions (5)

- **Communication** is a key to exploit the high environmental, animal health and consumer protection standards, but
  
  - there has been *little formal advice, standardization or coordination* between MS, except ‘Farmed in the EU’.
  
  - **Simple guidance**, based on practical experience of communicating to stakeholders in similar primary industries, would be useful.

- **EU environmental** objectives (in Natura 2000, WFD and MSFD) are **coherent** with **EU aquaculture** objectives. But there have been differences in interpretation and implementation, especially regarding consents to develop aquaculture in Natura 2000 areas.
Recommendations

1. **Review and update** the *Commission's 2009 ‘for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture’* and the *2013 Strategic Guidelines*.

2. Clarify “enhancing competitiveness” and “creating a level playing field”.

3. Introduce some level of **outcome benchmarking**.

4. Continue the use of **MANPs** for sustainable aquaculture development. **Ex-ante conditionality for EMFF funding** has been useful.
Recommendations (2)

5. Provide more **practical guidance** to Member States for including aquaculture in **spatial planning**.

6. Allocate more resources to support coordination and communication at the **regional level**.

7. Develop a more formal **compilation and dissemination of good practices within the EU**, possibly via an online ‘EU Aquaculture Platform’.
Next steps

1. Commission Staff Working Documents on the interim evaluation of the OMC for EU aquaculture: adoption foreseen in September 2019

2. Review Strategic Guidelines: start work soon

3. Intention to discuss with MS update of MANPS
Thank you !