

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE AQUACULTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Article 1. Functioning of the AAC

1. The Aquaculture Advisory Council (hereafter AAC) functions in accordance with the present Rules of Procedure, which supplement the AAC's Statutes.

The General Assembly

Article 2. The General Assembly

1. The General Assembly will ensure the most adequate possible representation of sector organisations and other interest groups.

Article 3. General Assembly meetings

1. The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year.
2. The General Assembly appoints a Chair and 2 Vice-Chairs, for a mandate of 3 years (see Office-holders) after proposals by member organisations.
3. The General Assembly appoints an Executive Committee, drawn from member representative organisations.
4. The time, date, location and draft agenda for the General Assembly meeting are sent to its members, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Member States at least 30 working days before the scheduled date, excluding emergency procedures defined in the Statutes. The same provisions apply when a General Assembly meeting is convened at the request of the European Commission or if the majority of its members send such a request to the Chair of the AAC.
5. Documents that are submitted to the General Assembly for approval pursuant to the Statutes are to be sent to its members, the European Commission and the Member States at least 10 working days before the scheduled date, excluding emergency procedures defined in Statutes.

Article 4. Deliberations and votes

1. The General Assembly deliberations are voted on by a show of hands. Every member of the General Assembly represents one vote.

2. As a matter of principle, the General Assembly strives to reach a consensus amongst its members.
3. If this is not possible, decisions should be taken by simple majority of the members present or represented by proxy. Members' dissenting opinions shall be duly recorded.
4. Following a proposal by the Chair or at request of a simple majority of members present or represented by proxy, the General Assembly may also vote by secret ballot following emergency procedures.

The Executive Committee

Article 5. Representation

1. The Executive Committee shall initially consist of 20 members among the members of the General Assembly. Representation shall respect the allocation of seats as determined in Article 5 paragraph 16 of the Statutes of the AAC.
2. The composition of the Executive Committee shall ensure adequate representation of all parties involved in EU aquaculture.
3. The initial composition of the Executive Committee stands as follows:

Representation	Number
Operators	
Fish Farmers	4
Feed Manufacturers	1
Shellfish Sector	4
Employees	1
Representatives from processing and distribution sector	2
Sub-Total	12
Other Interest Groups	8
TOTAL	20

4. The distribution of seats may be adjusted to reflect developments in the EU aquaculture sector.

Article 6. Elections

1. Members of the Executive Committee organisation are nominated for a period of 3 years, by the General Assembly.
2. Deadlines for elections shall be:
 - a) 6 weeks in advance for calls for candidates
 - b) 4 weeks in advance for submissions of candidacies

- c) 3 weeks in advance for circulation amongst member organisations

Article 7. The Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year.
2. Any changes to the persons nominated as members by their organisation shall be made in advance of any meeting of the Executive Committee, in writing, to the Secretary of the AAC, with a copy to the Chair of the AAC.
3. At least two thirds of the Executive Committee must be present or represented by proxy to perform its functions.
4. The Executive Committee meeting is convened by the Chair at least 30 working days in advance, excluding emergency procedures. This time scale also applies when the Executive Committee meeting is convened at the request of the European Commission, a Member State or if the majority of its members send such a request to the Chair of the AAC.
5. Documents that are submitted to the Executive Committee for approval are then sent to its members at least 10 working days before the scheduled date, excluding emergency procedures.

Article 8. Decisions and votes

1. As a matter of principle, the Executive Committee strives to reach a consensus amongst its members.
2. The Executive Committee decisions are voted on by a show of hands. Each member of the Executive Committee represents one vote.
3. If this is not possible, decisions will be taken by simple majority, as long as the required quorum of two thirds (2/3) of the members present is achieved. Members' dissenting opinions shall be duly recorded.
4. Following a proposal by the Chair or at the request of one of its members, the Executive Committee may also vote by secret ballot following emergency procedures.

Working Groups

Article 9. Working Groups

1. The Executive Committee may establish Working Groups to assist it in its tasks. Working Groups may be ad hoc, appointed for a specific purpose for a limited duration, or may be permanent.

2. The Executive Committee will define the scope and rules for Working Groups and request proposals for participation from members of the General Assembly, and appoints them.
3. A Chair for each Working Group will be appointed from members of that Working Group and/or Executive Committee,
4. Each Working Group Chair will be responsible for communicating positions, deliberations and advice of that Working Group to the Executive Committee.
5. Deliberations put forward by the Working Groups shall be examined for approval by the Executive Committee.
6. Working Group Meetings and other consultation actions will be made under the same conditions as those that apply to the Executive Committee.

Observers & Experts

Article 10. Observers & Experts

1. Representatives of the aquaculture operators and other interest groups from third countries may be invited to participate in the AAC and Working Groups as active observers when issues that affect them are discussed, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
2. Representatives of the European Commission, other European institutions, Member States and additional representatives of member organisations of the AAC shall be permitted to attend any meeting of the AAC.
3. The AAC shall not be responsible for meeting the costs of attendance of observers. Observers shall not be entitled to vote.
4. The Executive Committee may invite experts from institutes of the Member States concerned or international bodies and other qualified scientists, to provide scientific, technical, economic, legal or other relevant advice. Experts shall not be entitled to vote.

Common Provisions

Article 11. Governance and transparency

1. Members of the AAC shall not claim to represent the views of the AAC itself, or the views of other Members, unless delegated specifically to do so.

2. The AAC shall respect all of the opinions expressed; dissenting opinions shall be recorded. The AAC shall respect equal opportunities and shall not discriminate against membership within its operating structures on the grounds of race, gender or disability.
3. Deliberations from the General Assembly and decisions of the Executive Committee are recorded chronologically and are indexed to the calendar year in which they were adopted.
4. Deliberations from the General Assembly and decisions of the Executive Committee are sent to the authority that called upon the AAC within 30 working days of their adoption. Within the same time period, they are also published on the AAC website.
5. Minutes from meetings of the AAC are sent to the participants as well as to members of the General Assembly.
6. The Chair of the AAC may also consult the members of the Executive Committee in writing via post or e-mail. Such a written consultation is initiated for urgent matters or when an in person meeting is not called.
7. Members of the General Assembly or Executive Committee may participate in collegiate deliberations and decisions, following provisions set out in Article 5 of the Delegated Regulation (EU) N xxx/2014, with the Chair's consent. Participation in this manner counts towards the quorum.

Chair and Vice Chairs

Article 12. Chair and Vice Chairs

1. The Office Holders of the Advisory Council shall be:
 - a) The Chair of the AAC

To be appointed by consensus for a term of three years by the General Assembly. The Chair will preside over both the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. The Chair shall play an impartial and independent role. In the event that the Chair is drawn from the members of the Executive Committee, a substitute member shall be nominated, in writing by the organisation which the Chair formerly represented. The Chair of the AAC shall not have a vote within the Executive Committee.
 - b) The Two Vice Chairs of the AAC

The First Vice-Chair is to be appointed every 3 years by the General Assembly from the members of the Executive Committee amongst representatives of the other interest groups affected by aquaculture in the Common Fisheries Policy.
The Second Vice-Chair is to be appointed every 3 years by the General Assembly from the members of the Executive Committee amongst representatives of the operator sector.

2. The deadlines for elections for the Chair and the Two Vice Chairs shall be:
 - a) 6 weeks in advance for calls for candidates
 - b) 4 weeks in advance for submissions of candidacies
 - c) 3 weeks in advance for circulation amongst members organisations

Article 13. Delegation

1. The Chair of the AAC may delegate his authority to the Vice Chairs.

Article 14. Interim measures

1. Should the Chair of the AAC be unable to attend meetings, he will be temporarily replaced by one of the Vice-Chairs.

Various provisions

Article 15. Secretariat

1. The AAC shall engage the services of a Secretariat, which shall serve the AAC for an agreed term with the possibility of renewal.
2. The AAC may appoint a person who shall act as executive secretary of the AAC. The Executive Secretary shall be directly responsible for the administration and management of the AAC exercising the powers that the Executive Committee decides to delegate. The Executive Secretary will act impartially and participate in the meetings.
3. Without being exhaustive and without prejudice to other functions that it may perform on instructions from the Executive Committee, the Secretariat, subject to the supervision of the latter, shall exercise the following functions:
 - a) Distribution of the information produced by the AAC's bodies to the members of the General Assembly and of the Executive Committee, to Member States concerned, to the European Commission and to other European Union institutions.
 - b) Maintain the Register of the members of the AAC. Organise and, on behalf of the Chair, call meetings, and monitor attendance.
 - c) Attend the meetings of the AAC and prepare minutes of these.
 - d) Seek funds to finance the AAC, and arrange their processing and collection
 - e) Implement and execute the contracts passed between the Executive Committee and the Secretariat and the payment, where applicable, of indemnities, fees and allowances to the members of the AAC bodies and experts.
 - f) Manage and collect fees from its members.
 - g) Purchase or rent the premises, equipment, appliances and supplies needed for the operation of the AAC.

- h) Maintain financial accounting and all the documentation of the AAC, create and maintain its website and manage correspondence and relations with outside bodies and with the members.
 - i) Assist the members of the AAC bodies and experts in their requests linked to meeting attendance.
4. The Secretariat shall act at all times under the responsibility of the Executive Committee and the supervision of its Chair and Vice Chairs. For certain specific matters such as those indicated under (g) and (i), it shall only act under specific *ad hoc* mandate.

Article 16. Amendments

1. These Rules of Procedure shall be agreed by the General Assembly. The European Commission shall be informed.
2. The General Assembly can only deliberate on these Rules of Procedures, based on a proposal made by the Executive Committee, if a minimum of two thirds (2/3) of its members are present or represented by proxy. Amendments to Rules of Procedure shall be approved by two thirds (2/3) of the quorum.

Article 17. Reimbursement of expenses

1. The Secretariat will facilitate the process of reimbursing members and invited experts with their travel costs, following the rules laid down in this document.
2. Expenses to be reimbursed are decided annually by the General Assembly, but will in no case exceed the rates as determined in the Commission's regulations. When planning their travels, members should take into account that they can only claim economy fare airplane tickets and train tickets, and car mileage. A standard reimbursement sheet is available and must be sent to the Secretariat with original travel receipts attached, at the latest one month after the meeting date. Furthermore, with this sheet, members can also claim a per diem, which is a set amount, independent of the travel expenses and for which no receipts need to be provided. This per diem covers subsistence costs of the participants at the place where the meeting is held including meals, lodging and public transport.
3. As a basic principle, one representative per member of the AAC is entitled to be reimbursed following attendance to meetings, unless the Executive Committee decides otherwise.