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ECA survey on special report 25/2023: Aquaculture

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Thank you for having launched the survey questionnaire on the **usefulness** and **likely impact** of the ECA's special report **25/2023: "EU aquaculture policy - Stagnating production and unclear results despite increased EU funding"**. **Links**

(<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/publications/SR-2023-25>) to the special report and to the press release are provided should you wish to consult them while completing the questionnaire.

Please click **here** (<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/files/541b1fcc-bfdd-49d8-ac61-2f7c065d8e0d/7b5101f7-a08d-4f19-b92e-ea806c9d6213>) if you wish to read our **privacy statement** about how we use your information when you answer this survey.

We greatly appreciate your feedback.

Your background

*In which organisation do you work?

- ☐ European Parliament
- ☐ European Commission
- ☐ European Council or Council of the EU
- ☐ Other EU institution or body
- ☐ National or regional authority
- ☐ NGO or any other interest group
- ☒ International organisation
- ☐ Other

Usefulness and likely impact of special report 25/2023 on **the EU aquaculture policy** (consult the special report (https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SR-2023-25/SR-2023-25_EN.pdf) or the press release (<https://www.eca.europa.eu/en/news/NEWS-SR-2023-25>))

*Which of the following have you read:

- ☐ Social media post
- ☐ Press release
- ☐ Executive summary
- ☐ Conclusions and recommendations
- ☐ Part(s) of the report
- ☒ Full report

How do you rate the **usefulness** of special report 25/2023 to your work?

- ☐ Very high
- ☒ High
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very low

How do you rate the **likely impact** of special report 25/2023?

- ☐ Very high
- ☐ High
- ☒ Medium
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very low

Other comments

Please let us know:

a) what did you like most about the report

2,000 character(s) maximum

ECA has delivered in general terms a thorough report describing the situation, challenges, and administrative shortcomings of aquaculture development in the EU and the use of the EMFF.

b) what would you have expected to read in the report, but was not covered

2,000 character(s) maximum

Spatial planning and complicated licensing procedures are not the reasons for the stagnation of EU aquaculture. These are mere symptoms of a problem and not the actual causes. Furthermore, the EC's 2021 Strategic Guidelines will not be enough to drive the same growth of the sector as is being seen in countries like Norway, UK or Turkey. If the EU truly wishes to put aquaculture back on track for growth fundamental issues must be addressed:

(1) Food production in the EU must become an objective with similar level of importance as environmental protection. Aquaculture takes place in public waters, directly in the natural environment, for this reason the implementation of environmental laws has a decisive impact on aquaculture development. However, most Member States are overwhelmed by the implementation of EU environmental policies, leaving very little space for aquaculture development in those ecosystems. The result is that food production in the natural environment is unimportant for those authorities that at the same time hold the key to approving the planning and licensing of aquaculture. The potential of aquaculture in the EU will only be unlocked when food production in the EU becomes an objective with a similar level of importance as environmental protection, including the setting of quantitative production targets.

(2) As for Agriculture, Aquaculture needs a Common Policy. The Treaties of the European Union do not consider aquaculture as a shared competence on an equal footing with other primary food production sectors such as agriculture and fisheries. For this reason, the Union does not define nor implement a specific and effective Common Policy for aquaculture. The main EU instruments today to facilitate aquaculture development are the non-binding documents. A Common Aquaculture Policy could exercise the required pressure to align public administrations and solve the technical bottlenecks of spatial planning and licensing procedures, amongst others.

c) any other comment in relation to the report

2,000 character(s) maximum

One of the shortcomings of this report is that it focuses on potential negatives of aquaculture but fails to balance those possibilities with its positives: efficiency in the use of natural resources, low carbon footprint, little use of space and fresh water, and the provision of highly nutritious food. But such negative impacts are currently unlikely to occur on a sufficient scale to significantly affect the good environmental status of relatively large sea areas.

It is not understandable why ECA is surprised that almost all eligible projects are selected for EMFF funding. It would be surprising that projects that pursue the targets of the Common Fisheries Policy were left out.

Finally, regarding indicators, when considering socioeconomic indicators on the development of the aquaculture sector, ECA should consider that due to the usual delays in the approval of aquaculture farms and the fact that for biological reasons fish production cycles are years long, there is always a substantial delay of years between having a project approved and when its products are sold on the market. Leading indicators on aquaculture growth should be defined and used to foresee in the short term the effectiveness of aquaculture policies and funding.

Please feel free to share any other opinions you may have regarding the work of the ECA.

2,000 character(s) maximum

Thank you!

Thank you for your feedback.

Your assessment and comments will be carefully evaluated and used to improve the usefulness and impact of the ECA's output.

Background Documents

[ECA_KPI2_surveys_Privacy_Statement.pdf](#)

Contact

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