



Multi-annual National Strategic Plans for the development of sustainable Aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030

Summary ESTONIA

“Multiannual National Agenda for Aquaculture 2030”

1. State of the aquaculture sector

The majority of Estonian aquaculture is in freshwater fish farming. The main species are Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), Crayfish (*Astacus astacus*), European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), carp (*Cyprinus carpio*), sturgeon (*Acipenseriformes*), African eel (*Clarias gariepinus*).

2. Objectives for 2021 to 2027

The strategic guidelines and objectives of the Estonian multi-annual national action plan for aquaculture are derived from the ‘Agriculture and Fisheries Development Plan 2030’. Strategic guidelines for the sustainability and competitiveness of aquaculture for the period 2021-2030 were adopted in the European Union in 2021. The development plan for agriculture and fisheries must therefore describe the objectives set in accordance with these guidelines, namely:

- Increasing resilience and competitiveness;
- Participation in the green transition;
- Ensuring social acceptance and consumer information;
- Increasing knowledge and innovation.

Growth targets

The strategic objective of developing sustainable marine aquaculture is to increase the volume of marine aquaculture to 10 000 tonnes per year over the next five years.

3. Objectives for Measures for 2021 to 2027 responding to the 13 key areas listed in the “*Strategic Guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030*”¹

1. Access to space and water

In order to agree on the principles for the use of maritime space in society in the long term and to contribute to the achievement and maintenance of the good status of the marine environment and to promote the maritime economy, the Ministry of Finance has been led by the Ministry of Finance to carry out maritime planning in Estonia. The country’s strategic goals, reforms and nodes set by the Estonia 2035+ strategy will also guide the use of the sea in the long term. The maritime area plan defines in which areas and under which conditions activities can be carried out in a maritime area and has also developed an interactive map application for this purpose. In addition, the interaction between existing and planned activities in the maritime area was also assessed, as well as the associated impact on the marine environment and the economy, as well as the social and cultural impact of the activities. The maritime area plan must be taken into account when drawing up plans, decisions affecting the use of maritime space, permits issued for maritime use and strategic development documents of the State and local authorities. Achieving and maintaining a good status of the marine environment is a cross-cutting principle. In the Estonian legal area, the Planning Act (PlanS) provides guidance for the preparation of a maritime area plan. It also emphasises the efficient and sustainable use of the sea area and Estonia’s openness to the sea under the national plan ‘Estonia 2030+’.

2. Animal health and public health

Through the implementation of the national eradication programme for aquatic animal diseases, the number of disease-free herds increases, allowing access to export markets as production increases and improving competitiveness on the local market. In order to monitor and eradicate these diseases in Estonia, the Agricultural and Food Board (PTA) has drawn up a programme for the control of epizootic diseases for the period 2020-2023 and, according to it, inspections are carried out at least twice a year on holdings keeping species susceptible to those diseases. The country has an overview of movements of aquaculture animal housing and products subject to mandatory registration and authorisation, thereby preventing the spread of unsafe aquatic animal

¹ COM(2021)236 final

diseases and ensuring the necessary guarantees for trade in animals and products of animal origin in the future.

3. Producer and market organisations

In Estonia, the producer organizations have not yet achieved a significant development benefit. In the future, joint action will play an important role in the development of the sector and acting as a producer organisation will contribute to the competitiveness of the sector. Cooperation in the aquaculture sector can be improved through a producer organisation, which would help diffuse and small-scale production units to increase market power and increase profits for members. Production and marketing plans shall be drawn up to enable producer organisations, through collective action, to direct their members towards more sustainable production, containing the measures necessary to achieve these objectives. This will allow for increased market power and better planning of the production process if sufficient production capacity is available.

4. Environmental performance

The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea commits to reducing marine pollution and the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen entering the sea in order to improve the state of the sea. Where a farm is subject to a compensatory measure that reduces the environmental impact of aquaculture, the methodology for calculating the reduction in the amount of pollutants resulting from the implementation of such a measure shall be laid down in the water permit. For example, if an operator wants to rear more aquaculture animals in a region than the environmental tolerance of contaminants in that area, it must apply compensatory measures in case of exceedance of the permitted amounts of contaminants. When a compensatory measure is applied, the amount of pollutants added to the aquatic environment shall be reduced by the amount of pollutants calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the water permit. In order to ensure the achievement of the strategic objective set for the development of marine aquaculture and good status of marine areas, a detailed environmental impact assessment shall be carried out for each development project.

5. Animal welfare

In Estonia, the welfare of aquaculture animals is regulated by a number of legal acts which form the basis for the development of the sector.

6. Communicating on EU aquaculture

The Ministry of Rural Affairs launched a campaign to promote the consumption of fish and fish products, entitled 'Fish well', which started in February 2021 and runs until spring 2023. The main objective of the campaign is to increase the consumption of fish and fishery products in Estonia, including aquaculture products. At the heart of the campaign, the website www.kalatoidud.ee was created. In addition, during the Estonian Food Month, a fish week has taken place at the beginning of the autumn, led by the Fisheries Information Centre.

7. Data and monitoring

In Estonia, data relating to aquaculture products are collected by Statistics Estonia, to which all consumers have equal access. The methodology applied in Estonia is described in the quality report transmitted to Eurostat. The statistical office analyses society's situation and changes more broadly and provides society with information relevant to population, social, economic and environmental development.

8. Knowledge and innovation

Within the Fisheries Biology and Fisheries Department of the Estonian Maritime Institute of Tartu University, the Fisheries Information Centre has been set up as a long-term project to coordinate cooperation between the aquaculture sector and scientists, commission and coordinate studies and pilot projects of interest to the parties. The Fisheries Information Centre collects, analyses and shares information on aquaculture and the processing and marketing of aquaculture products, publishes fisheries and aquaculture information in cooperation with scientists and operators, and helps coordinate cooperation between scientific institutions and authorities. In the light of past experience, cooperation between the sector and R & D institutions has been recognised as important in Estonia. It is therefore important to continue well-established cooperation and encourage solutions to meet the broader objectives set both at national and in the European Union.

4. Funding

Grants are financed to the extent of 70% European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund during the period 2021-2027 and 30% of the budget of the Republic of Estonia.