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Opinion

Title Impact Assessment on: Communication on 'A strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture'

(draft version of 29.10.2008)

Lead DG DG MARE

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

The initiative intends to renew the strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture of 2002 that provided a ten-year vision. The first strategy was part of a series of proposals issued by the Commission to reform the Common Fisheries Policy.

(B) Positive aspects

Based on the impact assessment work, DG MARE concluded to change the general objective of the strategy. The report is well structured and uses non-technical language and is thus accessible to non-specialist readers.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.

The report should better present and integrate the changes to the strategy which have resulted from the impact assessment work. In this context it should assess more fully the outcome of the first strategy of 2002 and present the lessons learned. The reasons for providing support to this specific economic sector should be further justified. The sustainability criteria should be clarified. The definition and presentation of the options should be improved and the possible actions should be linked clearly to the problems and objectives. The assessment should include a reasonable quantification of the impacts.

During the meeting with the Board, DG MARE agreed to revise the impact assessment on this basis. Given the nature of the recommendations, the Board would like to examine a

revised draft IA report on which it will issue a new opinion.

(1) The report needs to be adapted to take into account the changes to the strategic approach which has resulted from the impact assessment work. The objectives need to be reformulated and the new strategic focus - especially the shift away from the particular production growth target - better explained. The specific objective on '*allocating and prioritising support to aquaculture under the current European Fisheries Funds and future financial frameworks after 2013*' should be clarified. The criteria for defining the sustainability of aquaculture development should be made explicit. The other sections of the report should be adjusted and assessed in the light of these changes. The report should also further justify why this specific sector needs to be supported through EU action.

(2) The outcome of the first strategy of 2002 should be presented in more detail. The report should present an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the first strategy, including for FIFG contributions, an overview of what was planned and what was achieved, and the lessons learnt in terms of adjusting the strategy.

(3) The definition and presentation of the options should be improved. The actions planned under option 2 should be presented in the main text of the report and the level of ambition and responsible actors of each action (e.g. legislative/non-legislative, implementation speed, alternative or cumulative) identified. The report should explain how and why these actions have been chosen and they should be clearly linked to the problems and objectives. The expected remedial effects of the option should be substantiated by weighing each action against a clear set of criteria (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness and proportionality).

(4) The assessment should be complemented by a reasonable quantification of the economic, environmental and social impacts. The report should ensure that the expected growth illustrated under option 2 is in line with the growth developments outlined in the JRC scenarios (Annex 4), and link the impacts of different scenarios more closely with the envisaged measures of the different options.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The report complies with the procedural elements required in the IA guidelines. The readability of the report should be improved by integrating the relevant parts of the annexes into the main body of the text.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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