

Framework for Community action in the field of water policy. Water Framework Directive

1997/0067(COD) - 18/05/2016

The Commission presents a staff working document on the application of the [Water Framework Directive](#) (WFD) and the [Marine Strategy Framework Directive](#) (MSFD) in relation to aquaculture. It recalls that it issued a communication in 2013 on strategic guidelines for the sustainable development of EU aquaculture, with the aim of helping Member States and stakeholders overcome the challenges facing the sector. In that communication, the Commission announced that it would prepare a guidance document addressing the requirements of the WFD and the MSFD in relation to aquaculture. This document is intended to **assist Member States and industry in the implementation of these EU laws** and facilitate the development of sustainable aquaculture.

It should be noted that the WFD and the MSFD do not contain explicit obligations for aquaculture. The aquaculture industry has to comply with the requirements of the national legislation that implements those Directives in each Member State.

The WSD and aquaculture: to recall, the WFD aims to improve and protect the chemical and ecological status of surface waters and the chemical and quantitative status of groundwater bodies throughout a river basin catchment. The river basin management plans (RBMPs) are the key tools for the implementation of the WFD. During the first cycle of RBMPs (2009-2015) aquaculture was identified as exerting the following pressures on water bodies: use of water resources; point source of pollution; localised reductions in benthic biodiversity; significant dredging of water bodies and physical modification of land; changes in flow regimes; introduction of alien species.

On the other hand, sustainable aquaculture relies on sufficient quantities of clean water. In order to protect waters used for aquaculture, additional objectives beyond good ecological and chemical status should be established for aquaculture protected areas that require specific microbiological standards. Consequently, specific measures should also be defined in the Programmes of Measures accompanying the RBMPs to achieve those additional objectives.

The Commission also assesses the principle of cost recovery in water-pricing policies under the WMD.

The document offers **practical guidance to facilitate the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive** in the context of the development of sustainable aquaculture. More specifically, it provides:

- suggestions and guidelines on good regulatory practice to national authorities about the requirements of the Directives in relation to aquaculture;
- good practice guidelines and suggestions to industry and aquaculture producers on what is expected of them and what they can expect from the implementation of the Directives;
- information about the sustainability of EU aquaculture production and its compliance with relevant EU environmental legislation.