

ON THE FEAP-FAO GFCM COLLABORATION AROUND THE 2030 STRATEGY AND AQUACULTURE GUIDELINES

GFCM 2030 STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE BLACK SEA

Background

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) released, in 2021, the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (GFCM 2030 Strategy). In line with the GFCM 2030 Strategy, in particular its Target 3, the GFCM has published four aquaculture guidelines outlining how to tackle crucial topics in the aquaculture sector. These documents provide a wealth of inspiration and vision that together have motivated Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) to adopt and promote these guidelines and use them as a blueprint to further strengthen the Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive European Union aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030, published by the European Commission in 2021.

“Going the extra-mile by bringing the best of European Union and GFCM policies, putting farmers first for the benefit of their areas and families.”

Given the aim to enhance the sustainable development of aquaculture in Europe and to overcome potential and existing obstacles,¹ the GFCM 2030 Strategy, as well as the FAO [Blue Transformation vision](#), constitute a reference for FEAP. Together, they are an ambitious and practical approach, and highlight the needs and opportunities to transform policies, perception and the potential of aquaculture. They form a roadmap to a an aquaculture sector that empowers farmers to lead a truly sustainable and beneficial activity supporting their families, society and the ecosystems in which they live.

The GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable aquaculture in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and the GFCM aquaculture guidelines: mutual opportunity for FEAP and European Union aquaculture producers

FEAP and its members have joined the effort in implementing the GFCM aquaculture guidelines, with a clear and ambitious aim: to ensure the sustainable and resilient growth of the sector to its full potential.

¹ See our recent press release on European Court of Auditors' special report on European Union aquaculture practices https://feap.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/231218-feap-pr_eca-report-and-eu-policies-final-002.pdf

The guidelines provide **assistance on key issues such as restocking and stock enhancement, developing social acceptability, streamlining aquaculture licensing, leasing processes, and mitigating potential impacts of non-indigenous farmed species**. Aligned with FAO Guidelines for sustainable aquaculture, these guidelines provide interested parties with a useful toolkit to enhance the social, environmental and economic sustainability of their practices. FEAP is benefiting from the guidelines established by GFCM, as they offer stakeholders guidance, tools and resources. In turn, FEAP is bringing a vision, inspiration and practical assistance in improving the collective actions of aquaculture and fish farming professionals.

“Improving the uptake of sustainable practices, while strengthening the collective actions and capacity of professionals to be visible, heard and understood.”

As a federation of national aquaculture farmers’ organizations, FEAP brings into this cooperation with GFCM its expertise in strengthening **collective actions and the role of associations** in pushing forward productive, innovative and sustainable aquaculture policies. Policies that take into consideration the human, social and economic dimensions of this industry, while ensuring the most up-to-date, science-based and sustainable practices for delivering aquaculture products to a growing population.

FEAP will be an advocate of the GFCM’s efforts for sustainable aquaculture, promoting GFCM aquaculture guidelines to its members and producers, while supporting the GFCM with **knowledge transfer and capacity building in collective action amongst aquaculture professionals in the Mediterranean and Black Sea**.

Example of joint actions of FEAP and the GFCM

AQUACULTURE GUIDELINES

FEAP actively supports the GFCM aquaculture guidelines and wishes to disseminate and promote the application of its guidelines widely. These guidelines address:



1. [Streamlining aquaculture licensing and leasing processes.](#)
2. [Assessing and minimizing possible impacts from the use of non-indigenous species in aquaculture.](#)
3. [Aquaculture restocking and stock enhancement.](#)
4. [Support of social acceptability for sustainable aquaculture development.](#)

EMPOWERING WOMEN TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT

FEAP co-organized from 11 to 18 June 2023, with its Greek member the Hellenic Aquaculture Producers Organization (HAPO), an empowerment programme to drive women’s leadership in sustainable aquaculture.

Links to photos and overview of the workshop:

- <https://feap.info/index.php/2023/06/19/empowering-women-towards-sustainable-aquaculture-development/>
- <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/activities/aquaculture/consumers-and-market/marketing/trainingwomen/en/>

COLLABORATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS: OPENING TO NON-EUROPEAN UNION MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES

On 18 January 2024, FEAP organized a workshop in Rome in partnership with the GFCM and the Italian Association of Aquaculture Producers (API). This workshop provided a unique knowledge and experience exchange opportunity to 30 representatives from European

aquaculture companies, farmers associations, as well as GFCM members and delegates of Mediterranean and Black Sea countries including Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Romania, Spain, Portugal and Tunisia. Among the invited aquaculture experts and professionals, the event highlighted aquaculture initiatives in line with the GFCM 2030 Strategy, with several national fish farmers associations sharing their experience such as:

- the **HAPO** in Greece, represented by Yannis Pelekanakis, Senior Advisor. who shared their experience in improving social acceptability for aquaculture in Greece and promoting sustainable aquaculture activities with emphasis on the establishment of allocated zones for aquaculture.
- the **Portuguese Aquaculture Association (Aquacultores.pt)**, represented by Isidro Blanquet, Secretary General, who presented their collaborative work with the Portuguese Institute of Nature Conservation in mapping of artificialized areas abandoned for use in aquaculture, a work which resulted in the mapping of 1 618 ha that can be reconverted for aquaculture projects integrated into the environment. As well as the work with the Portuguese Collaborative Spaces for Industries and Economic Stakeholders (COLABS) where over 60 concrete actions were proposed in 2023 for the transformation of national aquaculture, in the areas of sustainability and animal welfare; licensing; competitiveness and investment; communication; and science and innovation.
- the **Spanish Producer's Association (APROMAR)** represented by Garazi Rodríguez, Responsible for Production and Marketing Plans, who presented the creation and development of a collective brand for Spanish farmed fish which has helped consumers to identify and support aquaculture finfish and the development of coastal and rural communities.
- the **Croatian Aquaculture Association (Croatian Chamber of Economy)** represented by Zoran Radan, Secretary General, who explained the strategy of multi-year marketing campaign "Fish from Croatia – Eat what is worth eating". In his presentation he showed how the project contributes to efforts to increase the consumption of aquaculture products in Croatia, raises awareness on aquaculture, contributes to better public perception and acceptability of aquaculture and enhances valuation of local aquaculture products.
- the **Italian Association of Aquaculture Producers (API)** represented by its director Andrea Fabris presented their work on Good management practices in fish health and welfare in the Mediterranean.

The workshop, introduced by Mr Marco Rossitto Aquaculture Officer in the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture at the Italian Ministry of Agriculture (MASAF), is organised in partnership with the Association of Italian Fish Farmers (API) the professional organization aiming at the protection, development and consolidation of all fish farming and aquaculture activities both in inland and marine waters. Aquaculture companies members of API represent freshwater and brackish and marine fish farming, in land or open sea systems, extensive systems (valliculture) and cover approximately 90% of the aquaculture companies present in Italy. API is recognized with D.D. n°225 of 4 July 2013 of Ministry of Agriculture, as a National association of aquaculture enterprises with legal personality.

About the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers is an organisation that represents the European fish farming profession and is based in Brussels. FEAP is composed of 24 national fish farming associations from 23 countries, both EU and non-EU. The combined yearly production of FEAP members surpasses 2,5 million tonnes of nutritious, safe, delicious and environmentally sustainable fish.

