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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**

**Interim Evaluation**

*of the*

**Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for the Sustainable Development of EU  
Aquaculture**

{SWD(2020) 6 final}

This Staff Working Document presents the summary of the results of the interim evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for the sustainable development of EU Aquaculture.

The management of aquaculture in the EU is a shared competence, with EU Member States having greater control in many of its aspects. However, the challenges, barriers and threats that face EU aquaculture are common across many countries. EU aquaculture policy is developed and implemented in the framework of the OMC as established under the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation<sup>1</sup>. It is a non-legal, voluntary process that offers the possibility for Member States to cooperate and direct their national policies towards common objectives.

The interim evaluation of the OMC examines the period 2013 to 2017. It covers all the OMC tools and all Member States, except Luxembourg.

The summary conclusions are:

### **Effectiveness**

The OMC tools have contributed to improve strategic planning and created a sense of common goals across the EU. The Strategic Guidelines have encouraged Member States to develop a comprehensive strategy specifically for aquaculture.

The main hindering factors in the achievement of the priorities identified in the Strategic Guidelines are a result of the complexity of the regulatory framework for aquaculture activities.

### **Efficiency**

It has not been possible to quantify Member States' exact costs of engaging with the OMC, but Member States consider that the costs are at an acceptable level.

There are some efficiency gains possible in the application of the different OMC tools. Resources should be increased to strengthen communication and collaboration at the regional level.

Some Member States indicated that the guidelines on EU legislation could be made simpler and more understandable and be better disseminated.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 – Article 34

## **Coherence**

There is no evidence of any major inconsistencies in EU policy texts concerning environment, food safety, animal health and welfare, research and innovation and the OMC. Much of the current policy directives and funding mechanisms are aligned with the Commission's "Europe 2020 Strategy"<sup>2</sup>, and with the synchronisation of public funding through the EU cohesion mechanism.

## **Relevance**

Simplifying administrative procedures is still highly relevant. Coordinated spatial planning of aquaculture is becoming increasingly relevant. Enhanced competitiveness of EU aquaculture is still as relevant as before with the continued growth of low-cost aquaculture outside of the EU.

There are emerging challenges that may need a greater strategic focus.

The Strategic Guidelines need to be revisited. Although still largely relevant, the latest challenges and opportunities for aquaculture should be included and the priorities should be re-evaluated.

The majority of the OMC tools are still useful and relevant. However, there are demands for the OMC to have a greater regional focus.

## **EU Added-Value**

The OMC has ensured that Member States are more aligned with EU policies and objectives.

The OMC has given the European Commission a much more in-depth understanding of the evolution of the aquaculture sector at Member State level.

The underlying needs of the aquaculture sector addressed by the OMC still require EU action.

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<sup>2</sup> COM(2010)2020. Communication from the Commission "EUROPE 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth"