



# SEAS AT RISK

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

## The path to an environmental responsible European Aquaculture

*Marc-Philip Buckhout, Aquaculture Policy Officer*

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# Introduction

## *No ecological objective in Blue Growth = a missed opportunity*

- The success of the Blue Growth strategy is measured by 2 priority areas, which are only social and economic objectives.
- No environmental objective has been integrated and that is a **missed opportunity**. Not only for the environment but also for the industry.
- People tend to think that **aquaculture and environment are at odds with each other**. That they have contradictory objectives. That is **not true**.
- While a few decades ago, aquaculture practices did often contradict the environmental needs, **today**, aquaculture technology and knowhow has advanced so much, that it actually can play a significant role in achieving environmental objectives.
- Since aquaculture functions **within** the environment, the environment the limits in which economic and social objectives are defined.
- **In other words**, the economic and social objectives should be set within an environmental sustainable vision.

# Introduction

- **The way we look at aquaculture and the way we deal with aquaculture is OUTDATED, because of three reasons:**
- First, the industry and the environment are often viewed separately as if these systems work isolated from each other.
- Second, the interconnectedness of effects of the global and local level are not taken into account enough.
- Third, defining the objectives and making appropriate decisions are often not taken in collaboration by all stakeholders.
- Seas at Risk proposes therefore:
- *One.* A New Model, which is an **environmentally responsible aquaculture model** in which environment and aquaculture go hand in hand.
- *Two.* A New Way of Looking at Aquaculture. Instead of looking at a single level, we take an **eco-system approach**
- *Three.* A New Way of Dealing with Aquaculture: a **multi-stakeholder approach, in which knowledge and resources are pooled, and goals are defined together.**

# A New Model: environmentally responsible Aquaculture

- Environmentally responsible AQ is defined by these 4 key aspects
- Ensure sustainable sourcing of feed
- Minimize negative impacts on biodiversity
- Reduce the impact of chemicals use
- Promote the development of integrated multi-trophic aquaculture and aquaponics
- 'And we can see that these environmental aspects are intertwined with welfare gains for the fish that indicate product quality, animal health and environmental sustainability to consumers'.
- Employing these criteria will create
  - A premium product, that is:
    - Good for animal welfare
    - Good for human welfare
    - Has excellent branding possibility that can revert the negative reputation of aquaculture and create a larger market demand in cooperation with ng's
  - A new niche market that doesn't compete with foreign low-quality markets

# Eco-system level

- Measuring the impact of an operation solely on the outcomes of one level, is short-sighted.
- Instead we should look at the implications of decisions on a larger system level, which we call an eco-system level.
- If we would look at the aquaculture production of certain species, such as oysters or seaweeds, from a single level, we maybe only see
  - jobs created
  - revenue generated
  - and possibly the total increase of its population
- If we look at this same production from an ecosystem level, we could take into account the net benefits for the environment, which could be:
  - increased water quality,
  - coastal structure
  - and habitat.
- In China, mussels and seaweed reportedly remove 340.000 to 880.000 tonnes of carbon per year.
- Therefore, we should always look at aquaculture from an ecosystem based approach,
- Either at a micro scale: what are the impacts of its operations on water quality or habitat.
- Or at a macro scale: what is its possible role in lowering greenhouse emissions, reduce land use and fresh water

# Multi-stakeholder approach

- Collaborations between scientists, industry representatives and NGOs is at the center of more effective development and implementation of sustainable aquaculture objectives.
- It is of utmost importance to match the species, the farm scale and locations through strategic planning, collaboration and monitoring services.
- A first step of the multi-stakeholder approach on the policy level is the Aquaculture Advisory Council.

# Conclusion and what I ask from you

- **Let me repeat that** since aquaculture functions **within** the environment, the environment must become the framework in which economic and social objectives are defined.
- This new model is **not only beneficial** to the environment, it forms a unique economic opportunity for the industry.
- **We therefore ask the EU Commission/Parliament**
  - to incorporate an *environmental vision* and subsequent environmental objectives in the report
  - we also ask to *invest more in research*, so that both the industry and the NGO's can accurately monitor and evaluate innovative sustainable aquaculture models.
  - Ensure that aquaculture products that are imported in the EU are upheld to the same standard as those operating within the EU.
- **We offer the industry**
  - Our knowledge and expertise in setting up these operations, as well as active marketing and promotion efforts of consumer products

# Thank you

Marc-Philip Buckhout,  
Aquaculture Policy Officer

Tel.: +32 2 893 0922

[mpbuckhout@seas-at-risk.org](mailto:mpbuckhout@seas-at-risk.org)



[www.seas-at-risk.org](http://www.seas-at-risk.org)



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