Recommendation n.º 89

Recommendation on the implementation of practices and technologies that promote energy optimisation in aquaculture in the Outermost Regions

Whereas the SWOT Analysis of Aquaculture in the Outermost Regions, of July 2021, identifies higher import costs, difficulties in accessing finance and limitations in technical support and in the supply of juveniles, in a sector with differing levels of development across territories;

Whereas the strategic vision presented by the European Commission on 10 September 2026 links the development of the Outermost Regions (ORs) to the blue economy, renewable energy, innovation and energy autonomy;

Having regard to the specific status of the ORs, recognised in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and to the potential of the energy transition to reduce the costs, emissions and external dependencies of aquaculture;

The Advisory Council for the Outermost Regions (CCRUP) addresses the following recommendations to the European Commission and the Member States concerned:

1. Assessing and enhancing energy and carbon performance

Although low fuel consumption is observed in support trips for marine aquaculture, this figure requires confirmation under conditions comparable to those of fishing and does not, in itself, reflect the total carbon footprint. In turn, the complexity and cost of assessments and certifications make access difficult for small-scale producers.

We recommend funding energy audits and carbon footprint assessments, with technical assistance and collective solutions. Assessments should cover the life cycle, use comparable methodologies and distinguish between species, systems and production stages, including energy, feed and transport. Support should cover independent verification and voluntary certification, enabling proven results to be showcased to consumers without creating barriers to market access.

2. Energy efficiency and renewable energy

Energy needs vary between hatching, juvenile production and grow-out. Facility roofs can lend themselves to solar generation, depending on local conditions. Continuity of supply is essential to the

survival of farmed organisms and to production security.

We therefore recommend supporting the modernisation of equipment and the integration of renewable energy, prioritising reduced consumption and solar self-consumption in hatcheries and nurseries. Projects should be tailored to the consumption profile and to local risks, with storage and emergency power supply where necessary. We also recommend assessing the possibilities of electrification and the use of biofuels within a global approach (notably in support vessels), taking into account range, safety and the economic and environmental benefits.

3. Local production and sustainability of production inputs

Importing feed and other production inputs increases exposure to transport costs and supply disruptions. Regional production can retain value and strengthen resilience, but proximity does not, in itself, guarantee a lower environmental impact or economic viability.

In this context, we recommend supporting projects for the regional production of feed, ingredients, and juveniles, based on demand and on technical, health and economic viability. The use of co-products and alternative ingredients should ensure nutritional quality, feed efficiency and sustainable supply, without placing additional pressure on fishery resources. Where the local scale is insufficient, we recommend cooperation between territories, joint purchasing and shared processing.

4. Cooperation and technical capacity-building

The effectiveness of investments depends on local capacity to operate and maintain equipment. Needs shared by aquaculture and small-scale fishing create opportunities for cooperation in logistics, cold storage and the valorisation of co-products.

We recommend strengthening training and shared technical assistance services, involving producer organisations, research centres and training bodies. Support should cover audits, funding applications and maintenance, promoting skilled employment and reducing dependence on external assistance. Furthermore, it is essential to create sustainable support that takes into account the insularity of the competent technical structures.

5. Financing tailored to the ORs

The additional costs of remoteness, the small size of farms and cash-flow difficulties constrain access to investment. Achieving the European energy transition objectives depends on accessible financial

instruments tailored to the characteristics of our territories.

In this context, we recommend mobilizing the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) as well as all mechanisms that allow concrete and direct action (single access point, enhanced financial support rates, treasury advances, etc.) to support diagnostics and investments. Procedures should be compiled into a single document, and not several, proportional to the size of projects, taking account of small producers' cash flow and favouring collective initiatives. We further recommend that support continue in a single package, within the framework of the next multiannual financial framework, taking into account the structural state of the sector that truly needs this support.

6. Environmental sustainability and economic efficiency

Differences between regions, species and production systems determine the benefits of energy solutions. Operational savings also depend on the costs of investing in, maintaining and replacing equipment. Emission reduction is only one dimension of aquaculture sustainability.

We recommend aligning priorities with local diagnostics and with the cost of investments over their service life, considering modernisation and the creation of production capacity. Selection should incorporate water quality, effluents, biodiversity, biosecurity and animal welfare, ensuring lasting environmental and economic benefits.

7. Implementation and monitoring

Evaluating support requires objectives adjusted to the baseline situation of each territory. Jointly analysing consumption per unit produced and absolute values makes it possible to distinguish efficiency gains from changes in production volume.

We therefore recommend establishing a coordinated programme of funding and technical assistance, with the participation of regional authorities, the CCRUP and producers. The programme should set targets for each OR, test solutions and assess consumption, emissions, costs, use of renewables and security of supply annually, with proportionate data collection and aggregated dissemination of results.