

AQUACULTURE

Codes of Conduct and Best Management Practices

- **FRAMEWORK**

- Strategy for Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture.

The actions proposed in the Strategy include:

- The development of transnational codes of conduct by initiative of Aquaculture Associations
- Development of codes of good practice based on codes of conduct

- ***Objective:***

Reassure consumers that the products purchased from producers and traders who adhere to these codes meet safety standards and environmental protection.

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- The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (www.feap.info), comprising 22 countries, including Portugal, has developed a "Code of Conduct for European Aquaculture, " focused more on farmed fish.

JUSTIFICATION

The creation and implementation of codes of conduct and best practices is a step towards responsible management. When environmental, social and economic principles and standards are included, its application may constitute a good basis for the sustainability of aquaculture.

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- **SITUATION IN PORTUGAL**
- Portugal is represented in the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers by the Portuguese Association of Aquaculture; in accordance with the statutes of the Federation, this association should seek to implement the “**Code of Conduct for European Aquaculture**”.

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State of play in RIA FORMOSA:

2006 – publication of:

"GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN SHELLFISH CULTURE"

Resulting from a partnership among several local entities (public and private), Integrated in the Project focused on "Development and Job Creation in the Ria Formosa" funded through the European Social Fund (EQUAL Community Initiative);

Apparently, the guide was not applied in practice; It would be helpful to find the reasons why in order avoid such a situation in future.

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- **Future Actions**
- - Develop the basis for a review of the "GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE IN SHELLFISH CULTURE" within the FORWARD project;
 - Involvement of competent entities (ARH Algarve, ICNB, DGPA) in order to consider the possibility to associate to the licensing act a commitment from farmers for compliance with those standards;
 - Promote the involvement of farmers, through the associations that represent them, in order to obtain a commitment for the implementation of standards to be adopted;

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- Consider the establishment of a monitoring system in order to assess the level of compliance;
- Consider ways to enhance the product of adherent and compliant farms, possibly through a process of product certification of aquaculture activities;

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Product Certification

- **Why certification?**
- - Consumers have increasing concerns about production of their food, in particular focusing on its quality and safety.
- - The development and implementation of a certification process can promote consumer confidence in aquaculture products and contribute to improved production practices.

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Product Certification

- **Basic principles for the certification**
 - Certification should be transparent, providing access to information and participation of all stakeholders;
 - The certification process should also benefit producers by providing some sort of economic benefit as a reward for their efforts;
 - Certification should be voluntary and open to all producers;
 - Certification shall be multi-sectoral and rely on three fundamental pillars:
 - Environmental acceptability
 - Social equity
 - Economic viability

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Product Certification

- Bearing in mind that about 80% of clams currently produced are exported, and that there seems to be potential for growth (as well as other species, including oysters), it might be interesting to join the certification process at international level;
- Non-governmental associations (NGOs) such as "The Global Aquaculture Alliance" and "Aquaculture Certification Council", may be a potential way forward for this.