



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Aquaculture policy in England

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23 November 2023

English Aquaculture Strategy

November 2020



The English Aquaculture Strategy was published in November 2020

It is an industry lead document that, amongst other things, set out a series of actions intended to drive growth in the English aquaculture sector.

The full strategy set out three categories of actions – critical, high priority and medium priority - and listed ‘potential participants’ for each action.

Critical actions

Cross-cutting elements

Knowledge, Innovation & Technology

- 1 Development of a research sub-strategy for English aquaculture.
- 2 Provide funding to support the establishment of an Aquaculture Innovation Hub in KI 3.
- 3 Establish an Aquaculture Innovation Hub and online forum for English aquaculture.

Financial Support

- 1 Public funding of English aquaculture is reassessed and directed in line with the aspirations set out in the Strategy.
- 2 Work to align the replacement scheme for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and its successor public funding programmes with the funding sub-strategy resulting from FS 1.

Governance & Regulation

- 1 A clear policy for English aquaculture development is prepared within the framework of the Fisheries Bill, the Common Fisheries Policy (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, and the wider policy environment.
- 2 Following completion of Defra's review of aquaculture regulations, implement the agreed approach for transparent, streamlined and proportionate regulation.
- 3 Develop a regional approach to aquaculture development, management and regulation, creating regional hubs.

Human Capacity Development

- 1 Develop a training needs analysis for human capacity development for English aquaculture up to 2040.

Sub-sectors

Shellfish

- 1 Finalise a formal policy for the use of Pacific oysters in English waters.
- 2 Develop the risk-based approach to the classification of shellfish production waters.³

Macroalgae

- 1 Develop specific marine licensing for macroalgae culture.

³ This action is already underway via the following initiative: [Developing an Assurance Scheme for Shellfish and Human Health](#)

Fisheries Act

November 2020



Fisheries Act 2020

2020 CHAPTER 22

An Act to make provision in relation to fisheries, fishing, aquaculture and marine conservation; to make provision about the functions of the Marine Management Organisation; and for connected purposes.

[23rd November 2020]

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

- The Fisheries Act (the Act) provides the legal framework for the United Kingdom to operate as an independent coastal state. Amongst other things, it:
 - Sets out nine overarching **Fisheries Objectives** for the management of fisheries & aquaculture and requires Fisheries Administrations to publish a **Joint Fisheries Statement** setting out the policies which would achieve or contribute to the achievement of those objectives
 - Provides power to **amend UK law** (including primary legislation and retained EU law) related to fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic animal health
 - Provides powers for the Fisheries Administrations to **introduce schemes of financial assistance** for the fish and aquaculture industries

Fisheries Objectives

November 2020

- (1) the sustainability objective,
- (2) the precautionary objective,
- (3) the ecosystem objective,
- (4) the scientific evidence objective,
- (5) the bycatch objective,
- (6) the equal access objective,
- (7) the national benefit objective, and
- (8) the climate change objective

Joint Fisheries Statement

November 2022

4.2.15. Aquaculture



- 4.2.15.1 Aquaculture is important at the UK level, and the fisheries policy authorities will work together to support sustainable growth, an ecosystem-based approach, and our climate change objectives.
- 4.2.15.2 As such, the fisheries policy authorities support balanced, industry-led, sustainable growth of each aquaculture sub-sector based on the best available science relating to that sub-sector, and related industries which are diverse, economically viable and contribute to food security whilst also contributing to the ecosystem, climate change and sustainability objectives. We acknowledge that the various sub-sectors of aquaculture, found in the different nations of the UK, operating through various cultivation methods, can interact to varying degrees with their host ecosystems and users of a shared environment. As such, any development and expansion of any part of the aquaculture sector will be undertaken using the best available evidence, in line with the relevant regulations and strategic management frameworks, such as marine planning, and within environmental limits.
- 4.2.15.3 The fisheries policy authorities will collaborate on aquaculture where relevant to achieve common goals, and will work together to maintain the high standards of aquatic animal health and animal welfare already adopted.

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UK Seafood Fund



- The UK Seafood Fund is a £100 million fund set up to support the long term future and sustainability of the UK fisheries and seafood sector.

The fund's objectives are to:

- reform and modernise infrastructure to level up and bring economic growth to coastal communities
- ensure the best science, research and technology is used in fisheries management
- encourage new entrants to the industry and upskill the existing workforce
- enable an environmentally sustainable fishing industry that gives most value for money and reflects the long term needs of the sector
- boost UK seafood exports to new and existing markets

UK Seafood Fund



Strand	Total funding awarded to aquaculture	Notes
Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) Scheme	c£ 1.4m	3 projects – oysters, mussels & lobsters
Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF)	c£ 10.3m (c£3.1m in England)	63 projects in total, 22 in England - variety of species & stages in production process
Skills and Training	c£ 0.5m	3 projects – Scottish education centres
Infrastructure Fund	c£13.6m (c£5m in England)	6 projects – variety of species & projects
Seafood Exports Support	Not quantified	Various sub-sectors benefitted
TOTAL	c£25.8m (c£9.5m in England)	

England Fisheries and Seafood Scheme



The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme delivers investments to safeguard the long-term sustainability, resilience and prosperity of the seafood sector across England.

The scheme will provide funding for a range of projects that deliver the following high-level outcomes:

- Creating a more sustainable and resilient sector;
- Boosting the demand for English seafood and accessing new markets;
- Improving participation through co-design and co-management;
- Achieving good environmental status through the conservation and restoration of the marine environment;
- Supporting net zero through reducing emissions within the industry

England Fisheries and Seafood Scheme



- Since FaSS opened in April 2021 Defra has provided c£5.3m FaSS grant funding to 149 aquaculture* projects
- £4.4m grant funding was awarded to a total of 77 aquaculture projects in England under the EMFF and MFF schemes (since 2016)
- The Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) is now closed for new applications. A modified version of the scheme is expected to commence in 2024.

** Includes all projects classed as “processing of fisheries and aquaculture projects*

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Pacific oyster policy

Shared August 2022

The Pacific oyster is an invasive non-native species in Great Britain, but also an important species for the aquaculture industry with potential for growth. It is currently considered to be established in England south of latitude 52°N and therefore, with current technology, cannot be prevented from establishing in, or be successfully or economically eradicated from, this area.

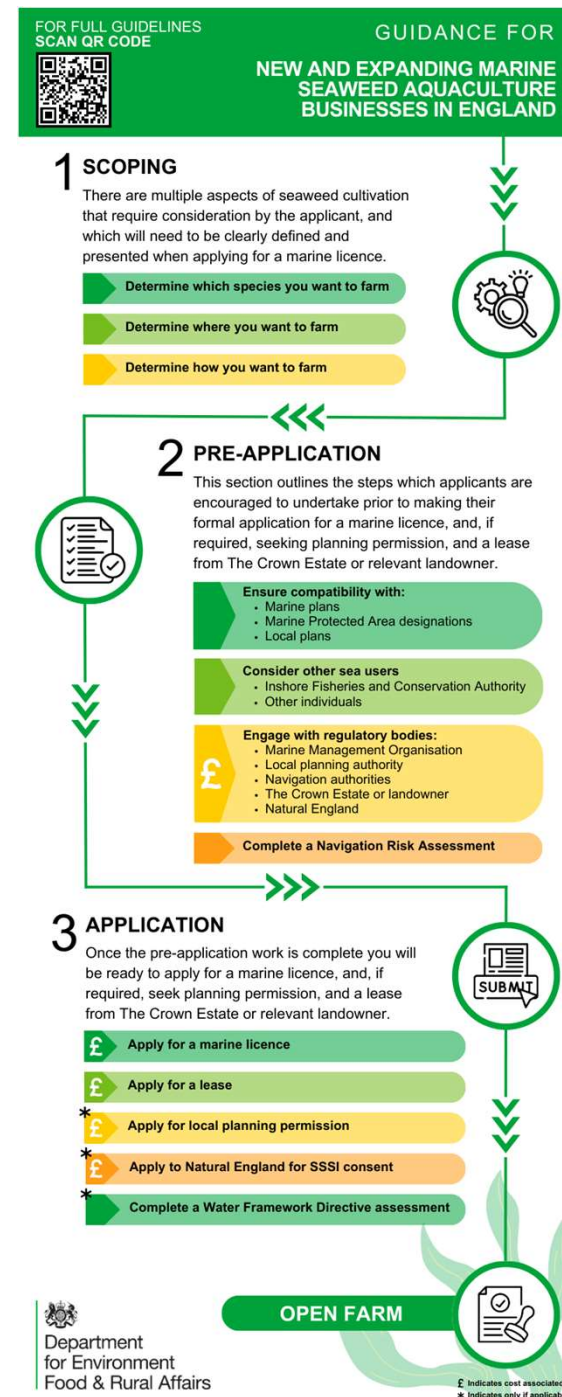
However, where Pacific oysters are not yet well established, which is currently considered to be north of 52°N, it may be possible to reduce the rate at which Pacific oysters spread by limiting human assistance. For this reason, Defra does not support the expansion of the Pacific oyster farming industry north of 52°N.

Defra recognises that some Pacific oyster farms have operated north of 52°N for many years. Defra supports regulators to introduce mitigating authorisation conditions, such as triploidy or monitoring and research that leads to effective control measures to reduce the risk these farms pose to nearby Marine Protected Areas. Funding to support adaptation to these conditions is available under the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme.

South of 52°N, authorisations for farms within 5km of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will continue to be granted only after the regulator has considered the outcome of site based environmental impact assessments. These assessments will take into account the impact of Pacific oysters on the current condition of local MPAs and, if Pacific oysters are likely to have adverse impact on these sites, then Defra support regulators to introduce mitigating authorisation conditions, such as triploidy or monitoring.

Macroalgae

- Guidance has been developed in collaboration with regulators and scientists
- Guidance has been reviewed by industry
- Guidance is now going through clearances, ahead of publication



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What next?

Email us at: aquacultureteam@defra.gov.uk