

TOOLBOX AQUACULTURE

Guidance for developing a One Stop Shop Tool



Licensing Process - One-Stop-Shop



Ineffective communication has been highlighted as an area that contributes both directly and indirectly to many bottlenecks and issues found in the current aquaculture licencing process in member states. Poor communication has been identified with, within and between decision makers, and is exacerbated by fragmentation and the multiple agencies involved. A proposed method for improving the coordination of agencies and administrative authorities is the creation of a 'one-stop-shops' that centralises, coordinates and processes all the permits, licences and reports to do with the licencing process. This One Stop Shop (OSS) would incorporate all agencies and authorities that have responsibilities for aquaculture, allowing the OSS to act as the sole authority. It would provide all services required by the applicant to complete a successful application in a defined time period.

Objectives of this tool

The aim of this tool is to provide an overview of the requirements for a One Stop Shop. By setting out the steps required, decision makers can identify the requirement for a streamlined process for applicants. By adopting a One Stop Shop approach decision makers can formalise their efforts to prevent inefficiencies, duplication or unnecessary complexities of the current systems. Efforts can be focused on streamlining the process for the applicant and themselves. To achieve this objective this guidance document sets out key elements and steps to be taken in implementing the One Stop Shop approach with a view to achieving best practice.



Case Study

In 2005 Norway implemented a singular Act (Aquaculture Act, 2005) for the regulation of aquaculture, establishing a licensing system and framework for sustainable development. It is the County Council's responsibility to co-ordinate the comments from all relevant authorities on the application. Currently the County is the competent body to make administrative decisions to award locations for salmon and trout production. The County Council's authority is partly expressed by law, and partly by delegation from government. The County Council has the authority to coordinate the legal process and make final decisions on allocations of salmon and trout farms pursuant to the Aquaculture Act.

In the process leading up to the decision, several government authorities assess the application, and the project is reviewed with regard to several bodies of law. Several other authorities are also involved in processing applications for permits for aquaculture.

Though the County Councils have an important coordinating role, the ultimate authority to control the aquaculture industry still rests with national fisheries authorities, partly by regulations under the Aquaculture Act and partly by regulations under the Act relating to Food Production and Food Safety. The Directorate of Fisheries is responsible for deciding on appeals against decisions made by the country authorities.

Benefits

This single window approach, as seen in the Norwegian example, enables a co-ordinated process, allowing efficient timing and sequencing to decision making, simplifies the process for applicants - creating efficiency, expedience and a demonstrable reduction in decision making times.

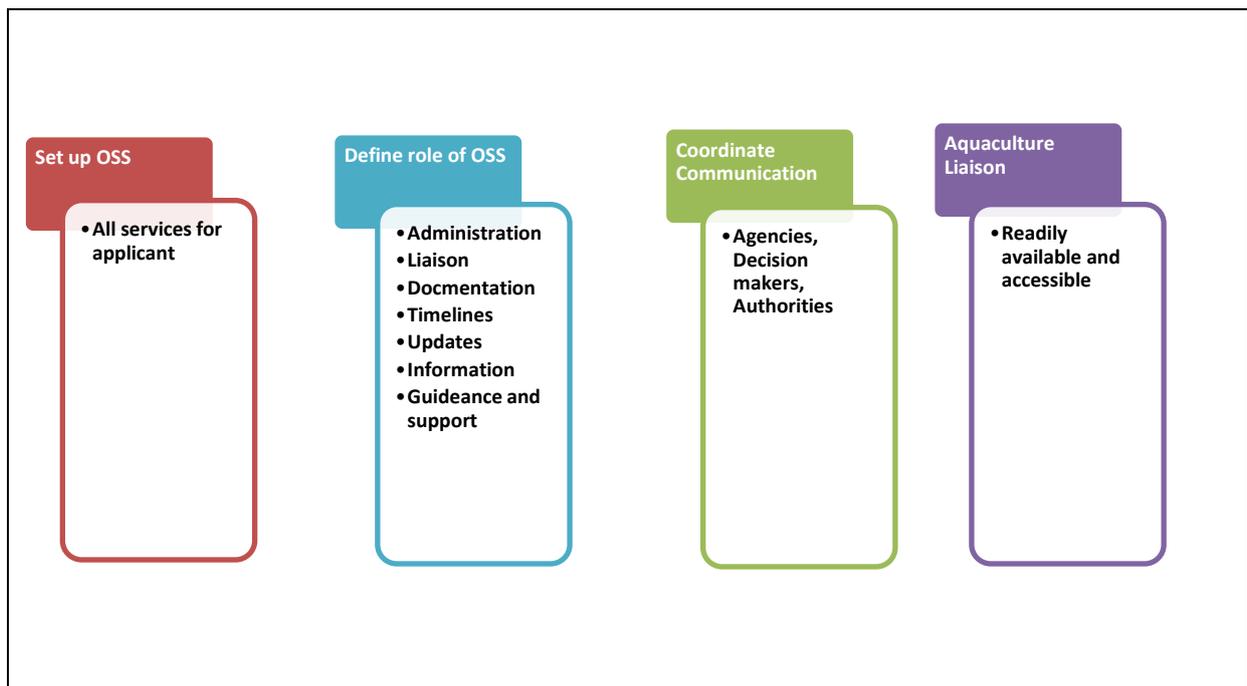
Upon review of the Multiannual National Strategic Plans for Aquaculture Development, the priorities outline a confidence for expansion in the aquaculture sector over the next 10 years. Plans show member states are ready to take the necessary steps to achieve these targets. New initiatives mentioned by numerous member states include plans such as

- Establishing a one-stop- shop for licensing.
- Adopting a single aquaculture law to simplify licensing procedures.
- Setting targets for cutting the licence waiting time.

The one-stop-shop approach would facilitate better communicate with the applicant and regulator by streamlining communication between the agencies involved, channelling all communication through a central agency. The approach will simplify communication between agencies involved in consultation and decision making and will improve the efficiency of this process.



Steps to Achieving a One Stop Shop



1. Set up sole agency to provide all the necessary services to the applicant
2. Define the role of the agency to include:
 - Administration of application
 - Liaison with all decision makers, agencies and authorities
 - Collation of documentation
 - Adherence to timelines
 - Regular communication and updates with the applicant
 - Dissemination of relevant information to applicant
 - Advise on regulatory requirements
3. Sole agency to coordinate all communications between the relevant decision makers, agencies and authorities
 - Provision of guidance and regular feedback on progression of the application
4. Assign an Aquaculture Liaison Officer to each applicant, accessible by telephone and email. The Aquaculture Liaison Officer would take charge of each application and carry out all the necessary functions to aid the applicant and liaise with all the relevant bodies on their behalf.