

TOOLBOX

AQUACULTURE

Guidance for developing Public Information Platforms Tool



Public Information Platforms

Member states should actively support the development of public information platforms to provide a portal of information to assist with a broader understanding of aquaculture. These platforms should provide information which is factual, current, informative and provided by a reliable and impartial source. An independent communication platform should serve as a reference point for the public, the media and the political system, where they can find information that is reliable and trustworthy when they have queries or need clarifications regarding the aquaculture sector.

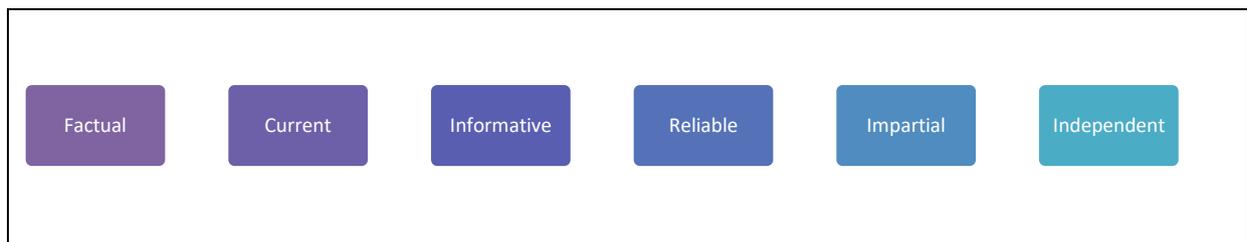


As a minimum provision, an effective public information platform should:

- Provide clear, correct and reliable information and reference materials in relation to aquaculture.
- Better the understanding of the processes of aquaculture and its contributes to food security and ecosystem services.



- Inform regarding the methods involved in aquaculture.
- Inform regarding the environmental footprint of the industry.
- Provide information on food safety, nutritional benefits, responsible sourcing and environmental effects relating to aquaculture.
- Address current questions or concerns regarding issues relating to the sector, providing the latest scientific thinking regarding these issues, in an informative context.
- Act as a focal point or stakeholders.
- Exchange information on fish health.
- Inform regarding organic production and origins of the food produced in the sector.
- Encourage and facilitate public aquaculture engagement.



Providing clear, correct and reliable information and reference materials in relation to aquaculture is vital to inform and build trust with the public, politicians and the media. This should come from impartial source and can serve as a reference point for the public to seek information they can trust when information is needed.

Having industry information on monitoring and environmental data available to be freely accessed by interested parties increases transparency and builds confidence. Context must be provided on the information to explain its relevance and what the data means, in a way that is easily understood by the general public.

An effective communication platform delivers unbiased, factual information at an appropriated dissemination level for the reader. Key objectives suggested by stakeholders include: Improving the understanding of what aquaculture is and what it contributes; acknowledge shortcoming as and mistakes, educate people to new methods, environmental footprint, organic production, food origins, 'farm to fork'.

In addition to the above it would be useful and a confidence building exercise, which should be encouraged and facilitated, to:

- Make freely available, industry information on monitoring and related environmental data, providing a context on the information to facilitate interpretation of the data.

FAO recommendations for improving the public understanding of aquaculture.

1. Address important social and environmental issues to improve the industry and its reputation.



2. Guarantee full transparency of the social and environmental indicator and regulations that control the production of farmed seafood.
3. Collaborate with other stakeholders to communicate more effectively and improve public understanding of aquaculture.
4. Communicate the health benefits of farmed seafood.
5. Promote aquaculture contribution to food security and nutrition.
6. Put the environmental costs of aquaculture into perspective, compared with their food sectors.
7. Improve the coordination within the aquaculture industry to render communication strategies more effectively
8. Invest in aquaculture education.

Examples of platforms:

BarentsWatch (<https://www.barentswatch.no/>)

BarentsWatch is an open information portal operated by the Norwegian government, which provides an overview of activities and knowledge in the coastal zone around Norway. The objective of the portal is to provide the basis for better cooperation, professional development and sharing of information, both for public agencies, trade and industry. The site hosts information on a range of maritime activities such as fishing, spawning grounds, environmental data, weather, sea state and aquaculture.

For aquaculture, users can select each management area and view the most recent information on a farm by farm basis. Areas addressed include:

- Introduction to the site
- Production area
- Species grown
- Licences
- Capacity
- Operator/ company information
- Temperature
- Fish disease (outbreaks, presence, absence, observation zones, treatments)
- Monitoring zones
- Updates on sealice (counts, levels, treatments)
- Escapes
- Treatments

The site is easy to use centred around a base map of demarcated zones. Individual farms can be accessed by week for farm specific data, or alternatively users can search by query for the country or region for specific questions by applying filter for lice treatments, disease type etc. Data sources are provided.



[Aquakultur Info \(www.aquakulturinfo.de\)](http://www.aquakulturinfo.de)

Aquakultur Info is an information platform aimed at the public, but benefits all stakeholders to provide comprehensive information on aquaculture topics, such as techniques and species. The data hosted is supervised by scientists of the *Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries* as well as support from other aquaculture research institutions.

The aim of the website is to provide well-founded information in a databased encyclopaedia of this area of food production. It provides an in depth look at information provided from substantiated sources.

Areas addressed include:

- Animal welfare
- Fish food
- Reproduction
- Genetics and breeding
- Product quality
- Animal health
- Technology
- Economics and marketing
- Environment
- Research and development

The EU has created centralised hub of data in relation to aquaculture.

https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/aquaculture_en

This page offers several infographics containing information on aquaculture production, initiatives and reports. Videos and news updates.

An example of current EU led efforts to promote aquaculture

'Farmed in the EU'

This educational campaign and materials aims to inform younger citizens about aquaculture, the reasons we need aquaculture, the benefits to eating fish, and how fish farming works. The campaign sets out a school kit for teachers to carry out an aquaculture project with their students, encouraging them to invite a guest speaker from the industry or to organise a visit to create links between schools and industry, investigating themes such as healthy eating, sustainable consumption and career opportunities.

The 'Farmed in the EU' resource guide offers 20 pages of information and guidance for teachers on the aquaculture industry and advice for carrying out an aquaculture project including information on science and technology, cooking and nutrition, arts and useful contact information.

This is a good example of a public engagement initiative which engages with the public in a positive and supportive way to familiarise and educate regarding fish farming.

