
GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 1414 OF 2006

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND TOURISM

PUBLICATION OF DRAFT POLICY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE SECTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA

I, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, hereby publish for notice and comment the draft policy for the development of a sustainable Aquaculture Sector in South Africa.

Interested and affected parties may submit written comment to Marine Aquaculture Management at the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism: Branch Marine and Coastal Management ("the Department"), Private Bag X2, Roggebaai, 8012. Written comments may be posted by registered mail to above address; or faxed to (021) 402-3911; or emailed to aqualculture@deat.gov.za. All written comments must be received by the Department by no later than 16h00 on **TUESDAY 31 OCTOBER 2006**. Comments received after this time may not be considered.

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ACRONYMS USED IN THE TEXT

ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth initiative
BBBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
DoA	National Department of Agriculture
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
SMMEs	Small Medium and Micro Enterprises
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this document, Aquaculture is defined as:

The farming of aquatic organisms including fish, molluscs, crustaceans and plants in controlled or selected aquatic environments, with some form of intervention in the rearing process to enhance production, such as regular stocking, feeding, protection from predators etc. Farming also implies individual or corporate ownership of the stock being cultivated. This definition includes Sea Ranching as a marine aquaculture activity.

The principal challenges that the South African Government seeks to address are poverty and unemployment. The contribution of capture fisheries to food security and employment has been reducing since the 1950s due to a decline in stocks. This has been exacerbated by shifts in distribution of some fish species, resulting in the closure of a number of fish processing establishments and job losses, mainly along the West Coast. Similar to the rest of the world, therefore, South Africa will experience a shortage in fish supply in the medium to long term. Many nations are looking to bolster their fish supply using aquaculture.

Aquaculture is one of the fastest growing food production systems in the world. Over the past 15-20 years it has developed into a global industry with over 60 countries engaging in the production of more than 250 species of fish, shellfish, crustaceans and aquatic plants. Despite this phenomenal growth in global aquaculture, South Africa's contribution has remained disconcertingly low, accounting for less than 1% of the African aquaculture production which in turn contributes about 1% of global production. The current production profile of the sector is highly skewed, with most of the farms occurring in the Western Cape. In addition, the industry is dominated by large commercial enterprises farming mostly with abalone.

The purpose of this document is to communicate the broad guiding principles for the development of aquaculture to all stakeholders in the public sector (all spheres of government), private sector (industry, tertiary institutions, environmental interest groups, consumers and the general public). The implementation of the policy will be guided by a Sector Development Plan which will spell out the strategy for developing the sector. Sector Specific guidelines will also be developed for various types of aquaculture activities.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The policy has the following objectives:

- a) To create an enabling environment that will increase the contribution of aquaculture to economic growth within the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for SA (ASGISA) framework.
- b) To transform and encourage broader participation in the aquaculture sector.

- c) To develop regulatory and management mechanisms aimed at minimising adverse environmental impacts associated with aquaculture practices (e.g. sea ranching, sea-based cage farming etc.)
- d) To increase the resource base of aquaculture from the few species being farmed currently to a more diverse suite of species.

3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

a) **Creation of an enabling environment**

It is envisaged that attempts will be made to reduce entry transaction costs through streamlining of administrative processes such as permitting. Cooperative governance will be encouraged through coordination of the activities of the relevant spheres of government. The DoA will be the lead agent for freshwater aquaculture, and the DEAT for marine aquaculture. Other institutions relevant to the implementation of the aquaculture policy include DST, for research and technologies, the DTI for capital investment, trade and business skills development, and DWAF for water resource planning and permitting. It is envisaged that the Provincial Departments responsible for Economic and Environmental Affairs will develop local Aquaculture economic opportunities and oversee the issuing of **EIA** authorisations for land-based operations. To promote better co-ordination, an Aquaculture Advisory Forum will be established to provide a "one stop shop" for deliberations and generation of advice to the lead Departments viz DEAT and DoA. The proposed forum will provide integrated advice in order to save time and costs. The current legislative framework will be reviewed to ensure that the objectives of this policy are achieved, to ensure that the legislative regime does not provide unreasonable barriers to entry and to ensure that there is adequate and focused regulation.

Incentives in the form of long-term rights will be investigated as well. It is proposed that in order to attract local and foreign investor's, long-term aquaculture rights may be linked to tenure security within designated aquaculture zones.

b) **Transformation and broadening of participation**

It is proposed that a variety of tools will be used to encourage broader participation within the sector. Tools that support **SMMEs** and community-based initiatives such as hatcheries, advisory and extension services will be encouraged. Access to funding opportunities will be encouraged through the establishment of public-private partnerships. The current legislative framework will also, if necessary, be revised to promote broader participation.

c) **Control of environmental impacts**

Appropriate Environmental Quality Standards, guidelines, penalties, monitoring systems as well as appropriate technologies will be applied to regulate and

manage the potential adverse impacts of, inter alia, possible pollution. The introduction of exotic species and genetic contamination resulting from aquaculture activities will also be controlled. A shellfish sanitation and seafood quality management programme will be operated in accordance with international food safety standards, protocols and quality systems.

Quality assurance and performance standards for disease and water quality management will be developed. These will be in line with international food and safety standards, protocols and quality systems.

d) **Expanding of the resource base**

Research expertise will be harnessed in government, the private sector and academic institutions to provide information on new species, and technologies. Guidelines will be developed for specific sector farming. These will include new activities such as sea ranching, stock enhancement, aquarium-ornamental trade farming and sea-based cage farming. There will be encouragement of technologies ranging from less sophisticated to highly sophisticated.

In preparation for the implementation of this policy a legal review process is currently being undertaken. This involves a review of all legislation that has a direct influence on aquaculture. It aims to also identify gaps and overlaps. It is envisaged that the outcome of the review may lead to the amendment of Marine Living Resources Act, alternatively, the drafting of new legislation.

Comments to be sent on or before 30 October 2006 to the following address:

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