

AquaTT
Unit 3, Olympic House
Pleasants Street
Dublin 8
Ireland

Date: 10 February 2016

Deirdre Morgan
Secretary to the Independent Review Group
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
National Seafood Centre
Clonakilty
Co. Cork
aquaculturereview@agriculture.gov.ie

Submission to the Independent Aquaculture Licence Review Group

We at AquaTT welcome the establishment by Minister Michael Creed TD of the independent review group on marine licencing in Ireland. The issue of licencing has been the greatest obstacle and impediment to the sustainable development of the seafood industry in Ireland for two decades now.

AquaTT is an SME, with a not-for-profit mandate. It was founded in 1992 under the EU COMETT programme as the University Enterprise Training Partnership (UETP) for the European aquaculture industry, to coordinate the training requirements of the industry through a single body.

At AquaTT we believe that scientific research can, and should, enrich our lives and help deliver a sustainable future for humanity. We understand that, for this to happen, the results of this research must reach the relevant decision makers, policy creators, scientists, industry groups and the wider public, so we work with European funded scientific projects to help ensure that the new knowledge they generate is effectively transferred to create maximum positive impact. However, new advances in science will make no difference to the Irish Seafood industry as long as it remains curtailed due to unreasonable and impracticable legislation.

The lack of progress in putting in place a workable transparent system, which has the confidence of all parties and stakeholders, has discouraged investment and has had a negative effect on the reputation of the industry and Ireland's ability to deliver quality seafood to meet market demand.

In summary, our belief is that the aquaculture sector needs a properly managed licence system that has:

- A clear and transparent licencing application process

- Definite timelines – where licences are automatically granted if deadlines are missed by official bodies
- Renewals of licences based on adherence to licence conditions and monitoring results
- A reduction in the cost of the extremely complex Environmental Impact Statements required
- More experience of the business within the department itself – similar to the knowledge contained within other sections in relation to farming beef, sheep or dairy
- More transparency in the process for all stakeholders

We believe that the current situation is stagnating the industry at a time when demand for Irish seafood products is very high, but this demand cannot be met without a better, more efficient licensing process.

We hope that the results of this review will highlight the need for immediate action and we look forward to new processes being put in place and the resulting overdue growth in the Irish Seafood industry.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further input.

Yours Sincerely,

David Murphy

