

National SEA for Aquaculture Development in South Africa
Meeting Notes

National Strategic Environmental Assessment for Aquaculture
Development in South Africa

Focus Group Meeting #1

Date: 30 September 2016
Venue: Mountain View Seminar Room, CSIR Stellenbosch
Focus areas: Northern Cape and Western Cape

Attendees:

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Apologies / Invited but did not attend

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List of acronyms

AASA	Aquaculture Association of South Africa
ADZ	Aquaculture Development Zone
AFASA	Abalone Farmers Association of South Africa
BCGT	Blue Cap General Trading (Pty) Ltd
BSASA	Bivalve Shellfish Farmers Association of South Africa
BSP	Blue Sapphire Pearls CC
CCT	City of Cape Town
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
DBA	Deep Blue Aqua
DBAF	Doring Bay Abalone Farm (Pty) Ltd
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
DWS	Department of Water and Sanitation
ERG	Expert Reference Group
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
FOSAF	Federation of South African Flyfishers
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
HIK	HIK Abalone Pty Ltd
JSP	Jacobsbaai Sea Products (Pty) Ltd
KMC	Kleinzee Mariculture CC
KOC	Knysna Oyster Company (Pty) Ltd
NBA	National Biodiversity Assessment
NC DENC	Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation
NFEPA	National Freshwater Ecosystems Priority Areas in South Africa
NRE	Natural Resources and Environment (CSIR)
RU	Rhodes University

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SA	South Africa
SAIAB	South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
SANParks	South African National Parks
SBOC	Saldanha Bay Oyster Company Pty Ltd
SUN	Stellenbosch University
TSA	Trout South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
WC CN	Western Cape CapeNature
WC DEADP	Western Cape Department of Environmental Affairs & Development Planning
WC DEDAT	Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism
WC DoA	Western Cape Department of Agriculture
WC TFA	Western Cape Trout Farmers Association
WDL	Wemmershoek Diagnostic Laboratory

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1. Overview of Aquaculture SEA – approach, objectives, scope, key outputs & stakeholder engagement

- Presentation by Lizande Kellerman (CSIR)
- Paul Lochner (CSIR) asked if there are any other stakeholders that are key to this process, but haven't been identified.
- Prof Mike Bruton suggested the inclusion of independent consultants and experienced research specialists at Rhodes University.
 - Paul Lochner (CSIR) responded that specialists will be consulted for evaluation of certain species and potential environmental impacts during the assessment phase of the SEA process.
 - Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) commented that the permitting requirements mainly focus on production systems, therefore both a production systems approach as well as aquaculture species will be considered.
- Kevin Ruck (BSP) asked if the aquaculture industry is informed and enquired whether the invitations went out to every relevant stakeholder. He also commented that the industry is already saturated with SEA type studies e.g. Aquaculture Development Framework, etc.
 - Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) responded stating that all stakeholders on the DAFF Marine Rights Register and heads/chairs of aquaculture associations were invited. Stakeholders in the freshwater aquaculture industry were asked to forward the invitation to other relevant interest and/or affected parties. Meeting participants were requested to provide the SEA Team with contact details of other stakeholders that are considered important for inclusion in the stakeholder database.
- Paul Luckhof asked if any fish processors are involved to bring a market perspective to the SEA process.
 - Sally Paulet (HIK) commented that the Abalone Farmers Association also represents processors.
- Ferdi Endemann (WC DoA) stated that Operation Phakisa has identified the market potential and economic viability of the aquaculture industry. He is concerned that there might be a strong environmental lobby without a counterbalance from industry.
- Gert Le Roux (SUN) commented that there are three ongoing assessments for ADZs in Saldanha Bay, Amatikulu and Algoa. He enquired if the SEA will look at economic perspectives as well or only at ADZs from location and environmental perspectives.
 - Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) responded stating that the SEA will assess the environment for suitable areas where aquaculture can be developed. There is an urgent need for location data for existing aquaculture facilities for mapping purposes since some are known but lat-long data is lacking. Location data for marine facilities are more readily available than for freshwater ones.
- Steven Nhlabathi (DWS) and Pierre de Villiers (CapeNature) asked about the SEA timelines and when the project is anticipated to be completed.

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- Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) responded stating that the SEA is planned as an 18-month project with anticipated completion date around December 2017.
- Steven Hlabathi (DWS) further enquired whether the identification of potential ADZs will be based on existing facilities; because there are more than 300 dams located nationally that could be considered for potential aquaculture development.
- Henk Stander (SUN) commented that alien aquaculture species can pose biodiversity and conservation concerns.
- Ferdie Endemann (WC DoA) stated that there is a document on net fisheries in freshwater research in South African Farmers Support. He further referred to Operation Phakisa documentation where work was done on aquaculture with alien species and that market potential of these species was identified, production volumes and the challenges of the marketability are also known. This should answer many questions on economic accountability.
- Khalid Salie (SUN) mentioned the massive demand for abalone and asked if the SEA will address the economic rationale.
 - Paul Lochner (CSIR) responded stating that the SEA will assess potential socio-economic opportunities and constraints. The commercial business case of aquaculture is outside the scope of the SEA.
- Pierre de Villiers (CapeNature) stated that there is a need to support aquaculture farmers.
- Ferdie Endemann (WC DoA) commented that DAFF is in the process of developing an inland fisheries policy for aquaculture.
- Pierre de Villiers (CapeNature) asked about the scope for risk assessment; will it only assess placement of aquaculture facilities or will it also consider the import of species/feeds/products and/or local harvesting i.e. upstream/downstream, supply chain, food chain, hence full aquaculture lifecycle assessment. He is also concerned about the import of contaminated water with e.g. black sea urchin. He stated that environmentally sensitive areas that have not yet been compromised should be excluded from aquaculture.
- Sally Paulet (HIK) stated that there are already areas where ADZs are priority, but some projects are not working. She asked what lessons can be learnt from these failures.
 - Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) responded that the Gansbaai aquaculture failed project is being investigated by CSIR (NRE) as part of the NBA and results will be incorporated into the SEA.
- Chris Fouche (DAFF) commented that there are strategy streams in technology for GMO sterile fish that cannot reproduce and cause environmental problems.
- Mike Bruton (RU/Imagineering) commented that aquaculture markets have been studied and the demand for aquaculture species are known, but markets and associated social aspects are dynamic and change all the time.
- Warren Dreyer (DWS) commented that it is important to include DWS in the Intergovernmental Authorisational Committee, because water is essential for aquaculture.

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- Simon Moganetsi (DEA) responded stating that DWS is to provide contact details of regional representatives to provide spatial data on provincial level to the SEA team.
- Additional questions/comments from participating stakeholders included the following:
 - The SEA should check aquaculture definitions of terms such as abalone ranching, wild fisheries, angling, etc. according to the FAO.
 - Wild seed supply of species into aquaculture industry is important to consider.
 - Traditional fishing methods e.g. kraals in Kosi Bay and Van der Kloof Dam should be considered.
 - Conflict of interest between introduced species, because one cannot alter the habitat to accommodate one species while destroying the habitat of another. Compatibility between different species in the same environment is important to consider.
 - In response to the question whether the ERG has been established yet, Lizande Kellerman (CSIR) responded stating that the ERG has been established and the first ERG meeting took in June 2016. The ERG consists of national and provincial scale competent authorities, NGOs, research, experts/specialists and industry. The next ERG meeting scheduled for 22 November 2016 and a wider invitation list has been developed drawing inputs from the Focus Groups and other meetings.

2. Legislative context for the Aquaculture SEA

- Presentation by Rudolph du Toit (CSIR)
- Henk Stander (SUN) mentioned that a consultant was asked to do a similar literary study for the Western Cape aquaculture industry and he will provide the SEA team with a copy. He further commented that there is currently very little to no policing of the aquaculture sector e.g. a student wanted to do research on Zambian Tilapia species at SUN, and experienced no checking at border controls or airports of stock brought into the country. Often people obtain permits, but nobody checks its validity.
- Ferdie Endemann (WC DoA) commented that a Western Cape permit to transport aquaculture species/products takes two to three weeks to issue, but in other provinces it could take months. He asked why permits are needed for aquaculture activities, but not for sheep and cattle farming.
- Kevin Ruck (BSP) commented that SA is very controlled and restricted by government regulation, though many people are unaware of Acts, permitting requirements, etc.
- Sally Paulet (HIK) asked why the aquaculture should be as strictly regulated or regulated at all and also used the sheep and cattle farming issue as an example. She commented that there is an urgent need to streamline and integrate current legislation.
- Paul Hardcastle (WC DEADP) commented that the SEA cannot be used to change legislation. One should be careful of stating there is “over regulation” without knowing the background

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on how and why the legislation was formed. Every sector is trying to emphasise its importance and thereby complicates the legislative landscape. Something like aquaculture straddles many sectors, therefore many requirements. This SEA process will not change legislation, but by integrating and streamlining the legal requirements could allow for reduction of approval processes.

- Simon Moganetsi (DEA) responded confirming that the outcomes of the SEA will not change legislation, but will provide for recommendations to streamline existing regulations. The purpose of the SEA is to try and streamline the legislation and identify priority areas to promote industry development in the ADZs.
- Henk Stander (SUN) commented that authority officials taking decisions need to have a basic understanding of aquaculture, because there they don't have the confidence to take a decision and that then drags out the process by asking for more information.
 - Rudolph du Toit (CSIR) responded that by law authority officials in charge should have some knowledge and experience of aquaculture activities.
- Mike Bruton (RU/Imagineering) commented that there is a lot to learn from Australia. Fish hybridize easily hence the threat of losing local genetic strains, which is not the case with cattle and sheep.
- Paul Hardcastle (WC DEADP) commented that the SEA should look at the different statutes and what is the typical information a regulator requires for decision making. He recommended that those information requirements should be addressed in the SEA.
- Additional questions/comments from participating stakeholders included the following:
 - The Oceans Bill should be considered in the SEA as Aquaculture should be in the Oceans Bill.
 - The SEA should closely consider Operation Phakisa documentation.
 - Asanda Njobeni (DAFF) responded that a National Spatial Planning Framework process is currently underway (which has been gazetted for review) and will inform the Aquaculture Bill, but will not substitute the SEA or the Bill.

3. Data capture and mapping exercise for aquaculture facilities

- Presentation by Luanita Snyman-van der Walt (CSIR)
- Based on discussions with participating stakeholders the following questions / comments were received:
 - It is important that the SEA team meet with provincial government and relevant industry stakeholders to gather more complete information re locality data of all marine and specifically freshwater aquaculture facilities in the Western Cape.
 - Reports compiled for the Algoa ADZ and the Gouritz catchments should be considered as an indication of the level to which data have been mapped (spatial data available from DAFF), in addition to other projects done by consultants for DEA and DAFF as there is much information available on aquaculture.

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- Impacts of climate change should be considered in the mapping exercise e.g. Langebaan Lagoon; also to consider all land uses e.g. mining, conservation, IDZs, etc.
- Philip Ivey (SANBI) commented that the SEA should consider failed or decommissioned aquaculture facilities, as well as historic/closed projects and investigate reasons contributing to the failure of these projects, so we can learn from these project failures.
- The upstream and downstream impacts of an aquaculture facility on an ecosystem or water body should be considered, as well as the ecological sensitivity and current state of rivers. SANBI's Surveys and Mapping unit has a barrier layer (with natural and/or artificial barriers such as dams) that should be considered.
- Although there was a request to include Environmental Authorisation (EA) status of facilities in the SEA spatial database, Rudolph du Toit (CSIR) responded stating the the CSIR does not currently know which facilities are permitted, which ones are legal and which ones are operating illegally, hence the exclusion of EA status in the spatial database at this stage.
- Will the SEA consider artificial reefs and fish parks, and if so is there spatial data available to map these features.
- Diseases of aquaculture species should be mapped and the potential risks associated with import of brood stock, etc. should be considered in the SEA process.
- The SEA should consider special planning of areas suitable for aquaculture, especially in terms of potential land use conflicts i.e. available land and sea space.
- The SEA should include the NFEPA data in the screening exercise.
- The particular feeding method at an aquaculture facility should be included as a data field.
- Provincial officials that can assist in the mapping exercise include Boyde Escott (KZN) and Mervyn Lotter (MTPA). Prof Olaf Weyl (RU) and Heather Terrapon (SANBI) would also be able to assist with spatial data such as cultural barriers and species suitability.
- Simon Moganetsi (DEA) commented that the outcomes from the SEA's spatial mapping exercise will feed into the National Environmental Screening Tool being developed by DEA.

End of Meeting