

Terms of Reference

Background:

In July, 2015, the Province announced that it will examine the rules and restrictions that guide the application and approval process to ensure that aquaculture operations are socially and ecologically sustainable and can co-exist with British Columbia's wild fishery resource. Specifically, the government will:

1. Strike a Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Council on Finfish Aquaculture that will include members from the aquaculture industry, non-governmental organizations and First Nations, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.
2. Examine establishing a protocol for receiving advice from the Aquaculture Stewardship Council in regard to tenures for new aquaculture sites.
3. Examine the feasibility of improved microbe detection at aquaculture sites arising from the work being undertaken by Genome BC in tandem with the other scientific evidence already available to the Province.

Recognizing the nature of the work to be undertaken by the Minister of Agriculture's Advisory Council on Finfish Aquaculture (MAACFA), the Province also stated in July 2015, that while these actions are being undertaken, the Province will not consider any further approvals for new salmon aquaculture tenures.

Scope and Purpose

MAACFA will provide strategic advice and policy guidance to the Minister of Agriculture (Minister) about the future of, and issuance of new Crown land tenures for, marine-based salmon aquaculture in BC.

MAACFA's deliberations may include whether or not the Province should pursue development of marine-based salmon aquaculture in BC and if so, should yield recommendations to guide the application and approval process to ensure that aquaculture operations are socially and ecologically sustainable and can co-exist with British Columbia's wild fishery resource.

Principles

MAACFA will seek to provide a balanced and reasoned approach, mindful of divergent views, supported by staff and subject matter experts.

MAACFA is expected to reach consensus in providing recommendations. If not possible, MAACFA should reflect the different views of the members. MAACFA is not a decision-making body.

Operation

MAACFA may receive presentations from interested parties. MAACFA may be asked to review and comment on proposals and will have the ability to request briefings from the industry or other experts.

Confidentiality

Conversations within MAACFA must be held in confidence. MAACFA members must not discuss or disclose the nature or content of these conversations with the public or the media as Cabinet confidentiality applies to advice and recommendations to be considered by a Minister or by the Executive Council (Cabinet). Similarly, written submissions and background materials prepared to inform MAACFA discussions must not be disclosed publically.

Membership

MAACFA will report directly to the Minister. MAACFA will have an appointed Chair and Vice-Chair to provide neutral and unencumbered leadership. The Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) will provide the supporting secretariat. Officials from AGRI, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNR) and the Ministry of Environment (ENV) will support the secretariat as required. MAACFA will be comprised of representatives from:

- First Nations (1 or more members, 1 alternate)
- Marine-based finfish aquaculture producers (1 or more members, 1 alternate)
- Non-governmental organizations (1 or more members, 1 alternate)
- Academia (1 or more members, 1 alternate)
- Marine planning (1 member, 1 alternate)
- Seafood industry/wild salmon harvest and processing (1 member, 1 alternate)
- The Deputy Minister of Agriculture or designate (1 ex officio member and advisor)
- The Deputy Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations or designate (1 ex officio member and advisor)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) will participate as an observer and provide advice as appropriate.

In addition, other representatives with technical and academic expertise in the BC agrifoods and seafood sectors may be involved in short-term, task-focussed working groups.

Term

MAACFA will sunset 18 months after endorsement of the Terms of Reference. Immediately prior to dissolution, MAACFA will deliver a final report to the Minister.

Expenses

The Ministry will be responsible for travel costs, subject to government travel guidelines and requirements.

Secretariat Support

- James Mack, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI), and Executive lead for the BC Seafood Secretariat
- Jim Russell, Director, Strategic Seafood Initiatives (AGRI)
- Officials from AGRI, FLNR and ENV as required.

The Ministry will provide meeting space, teleconferencing access and logistical organization.

Meeting schedule

MAACFA will report to the Minister on progress, within 100 days of establishment and subsequently as directed by the Minister.

Meetings will be convened at least once per quarter or more often as required.