The status of extensive and semi-intensive aquaculture practices in Southern Europe — articles from the EU SEACASE project
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, has taken up the aquaculture agenda, with a special workshop held at OECD headquarters in Paris on 15-16 April 2010.

The full title of the workshop, “Advancing the Aquaculture Agenda: Policies to Ensure a Sustainable Aquaculture Sector” was organised with the support of the Government of France and provided a platform for policy makers, technical experts, international organisations, the private sector and NGOs to examine policy challenges that OECD governments face in aquaculture development. It also informed participants about critical economic, environmental and social aspects of the aquaculture sector and analyse interactions with other sectors.

In his opening address to participants Mr Bruno Le Maire, French Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, proposed that all forms of aquaculture, both sea- and land-based, be developed in four directions:

- At the European level, he called for aquaculture to become a pillar of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), along with fishery resource management and the organisation of the markets. The European Union’s development strategy, launched during France’s Presidency of the EU and adopted under the Czech
Presidency in 2009, was a first step. The forthcoming reform of the CFP, to be completed by 2012, should be an opportunity to build a genuine aquaculture policy for the EU.

- At the national level, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernisation Bill, to be debated in the French Senate as from 18 May, provided for new regional marine-aquaculture plans to foster dialogue and set aside areas for expansion in the sector.

- Funding was required for research into effluent treatment and improvements to fish feed. As environmental concern grew, it was crucial to implement good farming practice and there was still room for improvement in effluent management and feed (less fish meal/fish oil and more plant proteins).

- Funding was also required for public relations exercises to enhance the industry’s image and highlight the nutritional value and quality of aquaculture products.

The first session provided an overview of the latest developments in aquaculture, providing participants with a snapshot of the latest ‘state of the art’ in aquaculture. The session explained the contribution of aquaculture to world fisheries supplies and food security, highlight technical developments and address industry trends (consumption, processing, marketing). It included a wide ranging presentation on climate change and food security, with policy implications for ensuring the continued green growth & sustainable development, by Albert Tacon.

Session 2 addressed best practices in aquaculture management and provided specific country case studies and the inventory of conditions in OECD member countries on aquaculture production, as best practices around three specific topics which subsequently can provide input into domestic policy formulation. The three key topics were (i) governance, (ii) dealing with the environmental externalities caused by aquaculture and (iii) dealing with externalities that impact on aquaculture production. All three topics addressed economic, environmental and social interactions within and beyond the aquaculture sector.

Session 3 focused on enhancing economic conditions for aquaculture and analyzed factors that affect the business environment for aquaculture production. It looked into areas of action for the different players involved in the aquaculture sector: (i) public authorities and (ii) the private sector. In addition, it considered (iii) cross-cutting issues with an international dimension.

Finally, session 4 was a round-table discussion that looked at lessons for policy makers: What future for aquaculture? The session was moderated by the French government fisheries and aquaculture advisor and former EAS President Philippe Ferlin and drew from the discussions and the identification of best practices. The session addressed the question of how to develop national and international policy strategies for aquaculture development and identified specific potential areas of work for the OECD COFI.

The full programme and presentations are available through the fisheries pages of the OECD website www.oecd.org and a summary document is currently under preparation.