Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö
Jord- och skogsbruksministeriet
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

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Declaration
Energy Transition in Capture Fisheries – From Visions to Actions

The Conference on Energy Transition in Capture Fisheries – From Visions to Actions was held in Helsinki 4-5 November 2025. The Conference was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and hosted by Finland as part of its Presidency of the Council. The conference brought together stakeholders such as industry leaders, researchers, experts, technology providers, environmental organizations and policymakers to share innovations, align policies and co-develop solutions.

The Conference program provided an overview of the current situation in the fishing fleets and its possibilities for decarbonization as well as the importance of building viable business models and resilient and healthy fish stocks. Also, the importance of the policy was discussed, both the fisheries policy and fishing fleet management, as well as financial incentives for the fishing fleet. The debate also covered the energy solutions in the maritime industries and ports and their importance for the fisheries sector.

Based on the discussions the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland, as the organizer of the Conference concluded and pointed at the following actions:

Making the transit to new energy forms

- While fishing vessels using active gear may use the same fuels and hybrid solutions as in the maritime transport sector, small-scale fishing vessels would more often turn to electricity (among other promising technologies).

    - Start projects and investments for the adoption of solutions (fuel, engine, propulsion etc.) from the maritime transport sector to fishing vessels especially fishing offshore and/or using active gear, including solutions that monitor and reduce the use of energy.

- Start projects and investments for adoption of solutions based on electricity as the main power for small fishing vessels fishing close to the coast and/or using passive gear, including solutions that monitor and reduce the use of energy.

- Start projects and investments for developing the supply of new energy forms and develop the electricity infrastructure in fishing ports and legislation so that vessels can be charged and vessel batteries used as an electricity source for the grid.

- Start projects and investments in readily available technology that quickly reduces emissions and increases energy efficiency (e.g. energy use controls, fish counters, route optimizing, charging infrastructure in fishing ports, installing modular systems that allow for upgrading etc.).

- Establish a regulatory sandbox in fisheries policies in order to provide a controlled test environment for new technology and innovations.

Rebuilding fish stocks

- Manage and utilize fish stocks responsibly and based on science so that stocks are resilient and healthy and the catch per unit effort (CPUE) increases while less fuel is used in the catching process.

Financial incentives

- The energy transition does not only require large investments from private and public sources, but also viable business models adapted to the needs of tomorrow to ensure better socio-economic conditions in the sector.

    - Mobilise and provide adequate and directed public and private financing for investments in energy transition projects both onboard and in ports as well as in RDI, while not contributing to overfishing and ensuring a level-playing field.

    - Modify without delay the European Maritime and Aquaculture Fund and national legislation on public financing for fisheries, so that the transition can be boosted trough investments and RDI.

    - Ensure a stable investment environment to attract private investment.

    - Analyze the tax systems including exemptions to identify indirect or direct taxes that need to be geared to support the energy transition in capture fisheries.

    - Develop legislation or schemes that allow the use of fishing companies ITQ´s or TFC´s as a security for energy transition loans from financial institutions.

Management of fleets

- Regulating fishing fleet capacity hinders progress in the energy transition.
    - Reshape the capacity regulations and definitions to promote the energy transition of fleets, while avoiding the development of overcapacity and taking account of regional aspects and the situation in different fleet segments.
    - Ensure that fisheries are managed with TAC:s and effective controls to achieve a sustainable transition.

Ensuring a skilled workforce and collaboration

- A skilled workforce on fishing vessels, in ports and shipyards is crucial.
    - Support cooperation and education within the sector to share best-practices and knowledge transfer.

Consumption of aquatic food

- Aquatic foods are rich in nutrients, have a significantly lower greenhouse gas footprint compared to other animal proteins, and can contribute to healthier diets.
    - Promote the consumption of fish in accordance with the Nordic Nutrition Recommendations 2023 and national food recommendations.

These conclusions and actions are by the organizer of the Conference recommended to both public authorities as well as stakeholders in the capture fisheries sector.