
Demonstration of Innovative Functional food production systems based on more sustainable value chains of marine and freshwater raw materials for conscientious EU consumers



**From Sea to Fork –
Scientific Innovation for More Sustainable Food Systems
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The contribution of aquaculture to the SDGs

Aquaculture holds immense potential to contribute positively to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by world leaders at the historic United Nations Summit in September 2015. Among others, the aquaculture sector can contribute to the following goals:



Inclusion and gender equality in the EU aquaculture sector



Socio-labour inclusion

Integrating socio-labour inclusion and gender equality is essential for fostering resilient economies and communities. In aquaculture, inclusive practices can enhance sustainability, innovation, and growth.



Legislative framework

As a component of the fisheries sector, aquaculture falls under the scope of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), with shared competences between the EU and its Member States.



European Parliament

Regarding the fisheries and aquaculture workforce, the EU emphasizes the need for improved data collection, the development of specialized curricula, and enhanced qualification opportunities for women.

What do we mean when we talk about social inclusion?

Social inclusion is the process of ensuring equal opportunities, allowing everyone, regardless of their background, to reach their full potential in life. Empowering vulnerable groups to become active members of society through employment or other forms of work can be a powerful tool for fostering social inclusion.





Who do you think are the vulnerable groups within the EU aquaculture sector?

VULNERABLE groups in aquaculture



Long-term unemployed



People with disabilities



Elderly



Women



Young people



Minorities



Challenges and recommendations for socio-labour inclusion in the EU aquaculture

Lack of skills and training opportunities

Vulnerable groups often face significant barriers to employment in the aquaculture sector due to a lack of training opportunities and a lack of attention to the characteristics and needs of vulnerable groups.



Implement apprenticeship and mentorship programs to foster technical and soft skills



Develop accessible learning methodologies ensuring an inclusive and flexible training



Provide multicultural learning opportunities addressing language and cultural sensitivity



Collaborate on initiatives with social organizations to outreach vulnerable groups



Promote multicultural events related to the blue economy to raise awareness



Acknowledge inclusive initiatives within the aquaculture sector



Social and personal challenges

Vulnerable individuals often face social exclusion due to the lack of supportive networks like family, friends, or community ties. This isolation is further compounded by psychological barriers such as low self-esteem, mental health issues, and a sense of disempowerment.

Inflexible work structures and limited accessibility

The aquaculture sector is often associated with physically demanding work, limited accessibility and inflexible job structures, such as the absence of part-time, remote, or flexible work options.



Adopt inclusive recruitment and hiring strategies that prioritize vulnerable groups



Address the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities in the workplace



Promote diversity and inclusion within the workforce through workshops and initiatives



Develop raising awareness campaigns to create connections with local communities



Produce engaging videos that highlight the positive impact of aquaculture



Host informative sessions to inspire young students



Negative public image and difficulties in sector renewal

The perception of the fisheries and aquaculture sector as offering unstable and low-paying jobs contributes to its negative public image. As a result, the sector faces significant recruitment challenges, particularly in terms of renewing the workforce.

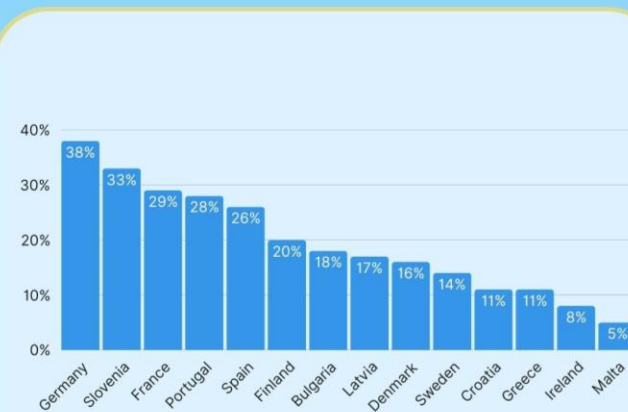




Challenges and recommendations for gender equality in the EU aquaculture

What do we mean when we talk about gender equality?

Gender equality refers to equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2024) underscores that gender inequality in employment costs the EU €370 billion annually.



Proportion of female employees in EU aquaculture sector (2020)

Limited training and development opportunities

Women face significant barriers to career growth and economic participation due to limited access to training and development opportunities in critical areas such as technology, business management and entrepreneurship.



Support mentorship programs focus on technical skills



Offer scholarships for women to support their education



Collaboration with NGOs to facilitate the inclusion of women



at the academic and professional level.

Create impactful resources that showcase the role of women



Raise awareness about women's role with dissemination activities



Seek support on the media to shape public perceptions



Gender stereotypes and traditional roles

The aquaculture value chain has long been viewed as a male-dominated industry, a perception reinforced by deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. These stereotypes reduce their opportunities for career advancement and limit their participation in leadership roles within the sector.

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Barriers in the work environment

Women contribution is often undervalued, with a focus on post-harvest roles that offer lower pay and fewer opportunities. Poor working conditions, such as informal employment, wage gaps, and challenges in achieving work-life balance, further exacerbate inequality.



Promote equal pay and work-life balance



Implement gender equality plans and assessment tools



Foster an inclusive workplace and engage men as allies

Support women through policies that promote gender balance



Facilitate women's entrepreneurship by providing tailored guidance



Encourage women's role through workshops and networking events



Underrepresentation in leadership roles and decision-making

Women in aquaculture are underrepresented in leadership roles, limiting their influence on policies and strategies, and are often overlooked as key drivers of change and innovation. Women's networks focus on increasing female representation in decision-making processes and leadership.





***Do you know of any other initiative
that you would like to share?***



Key takeaways:

- **Aquaculture** holds immense potential to **contribute positively to the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda, adopted by world leaders at the historic United Nations Summit in September 2015.
- Bringing a certain group out of exclusion does not necessarily mean redistributing money: sometimes it is more important **to give people a voice, a chance to contribute to decision-making, or to create an opportunity for them** to serve the local community.
- **Socio-labour inclusion and gender equality** is a long-term process that cannot be effectively achieved individually or through isolated projects. **Social organizations and NGOs play a pivotal role** in this endeavour by acting as bridges between vulnerable groups and the broader community.
- **Diversity**, if harnessed effectively, increases not only staff well-being, but also **productivity, creativity and awareness**, thanks to staff collectively having a broader range of skills, experiences and perspectives.

Self-assessment tools



  Funded by the European Union

Key categories for inclusion and gender equality

- **Policies and practices**

This category focuses on the organization's policies and procedures that directly impact the inclusivity of its workforce and the engagement external partners.
- **Staff Support**

This category examines the measures taken by the organization to provide support to its staff, ensuring they have the necessary resources and opportunities to succeed in an inclusive environment.
- **Organizational Culture**

This section delves into the organization's culture and how it nurtures an inclusive and diverse environment, including values, beliefs, and behaviours.





NOVAFOODIES – Social inclusion and gender equality

The infographic is divided into several sections:

- The SUSTAINABLE development of the EU aquaculture sector:** Discusses the potential of aquaculture to contribute to the 2030 Agenda and lists four goals: 1. NO POVERTY, 5. GENDER EQUALITY, 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH, and 10. REDUCED INEQUALITIES.
- Socio-labour inclusion:** Emphasizes integrating socio-labour inclusion and gender equality to foster resilient economies and communities.
- Legislative framework:** Mentions the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and shared competences between the EU and its Member States.
- European Parliament:** Highlights the need for improved data collection and specialized curricula.
- Research:** Notes that diverse and inclusive teams perform better than homogeneous teams.
- What do we mean by social and labour INCLUSION?:** Defines inclusion as the process of ensuring equal opportunities and lists three pillars: DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, and EQUITY.
- VULNERABLE groups in aquaculture:** Lists long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, elderly, women, young people, and minorities.
- Challenges and RECOMMENDATIONS:**
 - Lack of skills and training opportunities:** Recommends implementation of apprenticeship and mentorship programs, accessible learning technologies, and multilingual training.
 - Social and personal challenges:** Recommends support for vulnerable individuals through networks and addressing psychological barriers.
 - Inflexible work structures and limited accessibility:** Recommends adjusting recruitment, addressing accessibility needs, and promoting diversity.
 - Negative public image and difficulties in sector renewal:** Recommends developing training, engaging stakeholders, and creating alternative careers.
 - Absence of reliable data and inadequate policies:** Recommends developing technological solutions, conducting periodic research, and collaborating with NGOs.
- JOIN US!** with contact information: WWW.NOVAFOODIES.EU, @NOVAFOODIES, and @NOVAFOODIES.





Thank you very much for your attention!



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