

AQUABALANCE: Balancing economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the European aquaculture industry

AQUABALANCE elaborates on strategies and best practices for balancing economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the European aquaculture industry. It follows a pan-European perspective by focusing on different geographical locations and different sea-basins (North Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Atlantic Ocean), and maps existing and promising solutions boosting the sustainability and viability of the aquaculture industry.

Main goal:

To provide the aquaculture industry and stakeholders with new knowledge and evidence-based recommendations to ensure its social legitimacy and sustainability.

Scientific objectives:

- ➔ to identify barriers and drivers for ongoing transition;
- ➔ to investigate dilemmas associated with rebalancing the economic, environmental, and social dimensions;
- ➔ to explore the role of policy for the transition;
- ➔ to provide recommendations to develop sustainable business models;
- ➔ to develop an assessment method for economic viability and environmental effects of new technological solutions;
- ➔ to assess upscaling pathways for new food solutions for a reduced carbon footprint;
- ➔ to provide knowledge on consumer preferences and deliver communication toolkits;
- ➔ to co-create with stakeholders policy recommendations.



The aquaculture industry needs to reduce its negative environmental impact and increase its positive societal impact

Added value

- ➔ Scientific understanding of the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of food industries.
- ➔ Investigating the various dilemmas and trade-offs coupled with a rebalancing of a controversial industry.
- ➔ Research-based actionable knowledge, recommendations, and practical outputs to support the development and implementation of efficient and smart industry policy.

Research work packages:

- ➔ WP 1: Aquaculture regions in Europe.
12 qualitative case studies in different European hubs; value-chain mapping and taxonomy of business model typologies; a series of research impact workshops for relevant stakeholders.
- ➔ WP 2: Aquaculture technology and supply chains.
TIS analysis of technology options; Socio-technical configuration analysis; a series of research impact workshops for relevant stakeholders.
- ➔ WP 3: Social legitimacy of the aquaculture industry.
Market survey with 1,000 people per country (a total of 4,000 consumers); sustainability communication toolkits for industry stakeholders and practitioners.
- ➔ WP 4: Policy mix for sustainable aquaculture industry.
Lab for policy experimentation; policy recommendations feedback loops with stakeholders; developing a policy roadmap.



Project partners:

- ➔ Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway (coordinator)
- ➔ The Seafood Innovation Cluster, Norway
- ➔ University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- ➔ University of Verona, Italy
- ➔ University of Limerick, Ireland