

EU4ALGAE WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

WG Name	Macroalgae cultivation	WG Number	1
Facilitator	Adrien VINCENT	Organisation	SYSTEMIQ
Identified Constraints, Obstacles, and Issues			
<p>A robust demand for high-quality, traceable, sustainably grown seaweed is expected to increase significantly in the coming years. However, if this demand is met through imports, Europe will miss out on many of the benefits associated with seaweed farming (e.g. innovation, ecosystem services, coastal jobs). Satisfying this growing demand translates into the need to produce millions of tonnes of fresh seaweed each year, which is far above current production levels. While Europe can build on expertise and know-how from decades of science, wild harvesting and processing activities, production growth of this magnitude will depend on cost-efficient farming scaleup, which must meet sustainability criteria.</p> <p>Today, cultivated European seaweed is insufficient in volume, too expensive and produced by a fragmented supply chain. So far only a few companies have managed to secure a license for large-scale operations and leverage sufficient funding to expand.</p> <p>Besides, high quality, traceability and local sourcing are value-adds that can justify a price premium for European seaweed versus imported Asian products. However, European seaweed will not be viewed as an economically viable source of large-scale future supply if the price structure does not change – the current price premium often makes it ten times as costly as imports. To enable this change and help propel European producers up the ladder of preferred sources of supply, production costs in Europe have to be cut drastically. Economies of scale will naturally occur as farms grow bigger in size and assets like boats or seeding and harvesting machinery can be amortised.</p>			
General Objective			
Support the sustainable and cost efficient scale-up of European seaweed cultivation			
Specific Objectives			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create useful centrally accessible knowledge and facilitate knowledge and experience sharing between seaweed farmers ▪ Create a bridge between the seaweed farmers community and other stakeholders groups (e.g., policy makers, journalists, investors, etc.) ▪ Inspire new entrants to launch and develop a seaweed farm in Europe, by providing them with the right tools, role models and support to access financing 			
Working Groups Actions			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A.1. Upgrade and maintain up to date the Licensing Toolkit developed by Seaweed for Europe - A.2. Organise knowledge and experience sharing sessions with farmers from other continents - A.3. Organise webinars presenting latest scientific developments and new technical solutions for seaweed cultivation - A.4. Facilitate organisation of on-site trips for journalists and policy-makers/ politicians to visit farms and meet seaweed farmers - A.5. Explore potential to create a public seed bank at European level 			

- A.6. List and profile success stories of seaweed farmers
- A.7. Identify potential sources of financing for seaweed farmers (types of capital + potential partners)
- A.8. Host 5x WG meetings (online or in-person) with rotational chair / host

Outcomes

- O1. Online licensing toolkit available on EU4Algae online forum, enriched with more country profiles and maintained up to date
- O2. 3 sessions organised (1 per year) with farmers from e.g, Asia, North America, Africa
- O3. 3 webinars organised (1 per year) presenting latest scientific developments and new technical solutions for seaweed cultivation
- O4. 3 on site farm visits for journalists and policy-makers/ politicians (1 per year) co-organised with local partners in e.g., France, Netherlands, Portugal
- O5. Scoping document for the set up of a public seed bank at European level
- O6. Fact sheets/ profiles of European seaweed farmers success stories
- O7. Mapping of potential sources of financing for seaweed farmers (types of capital + potential partners)
- O8. 5x WG meetings (online or in-person) with rotational chair / host

Next Steps

- S1: organise dedicated session on legislation with Technopolis late November
- S2: organise a webinar on hatchery, genetics, species domestication in Q1 2023
- S3: organise an experience sharing webinar with farmers from Korea and Japan in Q2 2023
- S4: Prepare template for seaweed farmer profile/ interview by next WG meeting
- S5: Organise next WG meeting late January with new (temporary) WG Chair Paul O Connor (This is Seaweed)
- S6: Assess feasibility of an onsite visit for policy makers / journalists at the Seaweed Company
- S7: Start mapping and sharing list of available EU funding sources for seaweed farmers and associated stakeholders (by Q2 2023)