

COOL BLUE BALTIC POLICY BRIEF

POLICY BRIEF (max 4 pages)	
Project acronym and number:	[COOL BLUE BALTIC] — [101124475]
Policy impact (max 100 words) <i>How does your project contribute to the policy objectives indicated in the Call document (including more recent policy initiatives at EU or national level).</i>	
[Does your project address a specific EU policy, including sustainable blue economy and international ocean governance, e.g. sea-basin strategy, blue skills and careers, Farm2Fork, blue bioeconomy and algae, offshore renewable strategy, maritime security?] COOL BLUE BALTIC addresses the EU Green Deal, Sustainable Blue Economy Strategy, Blue Bioeconomy Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, International Ocean Governance, Farm2Fork, EU Algae Initiative, Strategic Guidelines for EU Aquaculture, Circular Economy, Net Zero, Just Transition, Mission:Ocean strategies and UN Sustainable Development Goals. [Is your project aiming to reach specific EU/national targets related to e.g. renewable energy, sustainable transport, zero pollution, climate neutrality, or others? Please provide specific figures and indicators.] The project aims to contribute to Mission:Ocean to restore EU waters to good environmental status by 2030 according to 11 pre-defined descriptors. [Does your project aim to improve existing legislation or regulatory frameworks (EU or national level)?] The project aims to improve existing legal and regulatory frameworks at both the national and EU levels, to improve access to space, licences, technology and training for regenerative aquaculture, i.e. cultivation of low-trophic species such as seaweeds and bivalves with zero inputs.	
Impact for citizens and communities <i>Describe the impacts for EU citizens and citizen communities.</i>	
[How can your action improve everyday life of EU citizens?] The project improves the everyday life of EU citizens by providing opportunities for innovative, multi-faceted diversification: in terms of job opportunities, dietary changes, public services, community cohesion and opportunities for education, volunteering and even therapy. [Has the local community benefitted from the project? How?] The local communities in the project represent all 8 Baltic Member States. Stakeholders have benefitted from increased awareness of regenerative aquaculture as a potential new maritime sector and from being connected with each other through the CoolBlueFuture platform. [Has the project created new jobs?] The project has not created new jobs directly, but instead created a network of national facilitators who are the contact points to help fishers and entrepreneurs set up new regenerative aquaculture sites. [Has your project involved specific categories of people (i.e. requalification of professionals from a different sector, youngsters, elderly, women, etc.)?] The project has involved dissemination events to all target groups, young and old. Fishers are also engaged in the project and encouraged to diversify into low-trophic aquaculture.	
Impact for companies and businesses (if applicable) (max 100 words) <i>Describe the impacts for EU companies and businesses.</i>	
[Which are the main concrete (technological and/or non-technological) economic viable outputs of the project? What was the change in TRL?]	

The project has assessed multi-factor readiness levels of each Member State to implement regenerative aquaculture. The average TRL was 5/9; monitoring readiness was 4/9; socioeconomic and social acceptance readiness were both 3/9, while regulatory readiness was estimated at 2/9.

Has the project received additional investments from private or public sector?

The project has a parallel “sister” project “COOL BLUE”, a Horizon Coordination and Support Action which works towards the same goals of assessing the feasibility of regenerative aquaculture as a business model for coastal community enterprises.

Are or will the results of the projects be used/taken-up by projects partners or other stakeholders?

The project aims to assess the feasibility of regenerative aquaculture as a business in the different Baltic Member States. These results should be used by stakeholders to further the development of regenerative aquaculture in the Baltic Sea and beyond.

Have activities of the project the potential to be replicated elsewhere (e.g. in other geographic areas/sea basins)?

Yes, the project’s main objective is to share good practices and experiences in establishing and monitoring new regenerative aquaculture sites, with the explicit goal of rolling out regenerative aquaculture across the Baltic as a widespread method of biomass production which does not harm the environment.

Barriers and future needs (max 100 words)

[What barriers are affecting the successful implementation of your project success?

The main barriers identified are regulation (current regulation is designed for finfish aquaculture only); marine spatial planning (MSP) and competition for marine space; and social awareness of regenerative aquaculture as a potential career path and environmentally benign biomass production system.

Which are the main challenges the project faced in implementing the project, e.g. legal barriers, gaps, funding, lack of standards, consumer readiness?

The main challenges are the regulatory obstacles and not having a dedicated licensing and monitoring process in Member States, which is responsible for aquaculture governance and MSP.

Are there recommendations you can make – based on the project experience and results – for future legislation, policy initiatives, funding and financial instruments?

Based on the assessments made, there is a need for legal, regulatory and monitoring frameworks for regenerative aquaculture in all EU Member States to allow this new sector to emerge and attract investment in e.g. value chain and market development.

What future policy developments could affect your project significantly?

Policies restricting activities at sea could affect the project significantly, whereas concessions for regenerative aquaculture, co-location with offshore energy or test beds in ports and harbours would be a significant enabler.

Market readiness and IPR (if applicable) (max 100 words)

[How far is the development of your product(s)? What is the stage of commercialisation that your project/organisation is in?

The market readiness of regenerative aquaculture as a concept was not assessed, since many products of regenerative aquaculture (e.g. seaweed, bivalves) are already on the market, mostly from other regions. The average TRL was estimated at 5/9 for the whole of the Baltic (technology validated in relevant environment). Although market readiness was not yet assessed, an estimated MRL would be 2/10 (identification of potential business opportunities) according to Hasenaur et al, 2015)

Do you already have clients, or potential clients identified? What types, sectors?

The project partnership includes 1 SME (ECOPELAG) which has successfully launched a pet food product using small Baltic mussels as an ingredient. The partners support regenerative aquaculture practitioners who currently mostly sell seaweed to local restaurants, breweries as well as feed or fertiliser producers in the agricultural sector, though this has potential for much larger scales through e.g. Producer or Interbranch Organisations.

What is the market potential according to you? How is this substantiated (business plan, market research,...)?

The market potential of regenerative aquaculture will be assessed during the course of the COOL BLUE projects. The project model is based on external communication of potential products, services and markets. Advantages are demand, market structure, transfer- and export advantages. However there are currently price and regulation disadvantages. Positive indicators are international pressure, potential for new technologies, government initiatives and industrial turnover indices (e.g. Phyconomy, Eurostat, JRC). Negative indicators are environmental and marine planning legislation. Key drivers will be awareness, availability, affordability, convenience and tangible benefits.

Do you have (granted) patents? Awards?

The University of Gothenburg “Flytevi” blue community garden was a runner up in the New European Bauhaus awards 2024.

Other

Are there any other elements about the project relevant for being mentioned?

n/a

EU funding statement



Funded by the
European Union

HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).
1.1	01.10.2024	Cool Blue Baltic content