

POLICY BRIEF 11

EXTRA-SMEs
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund



Peter Gugert

Career opportunities & professional development in aquaculture

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THE EXTRA-SMES PROJECT

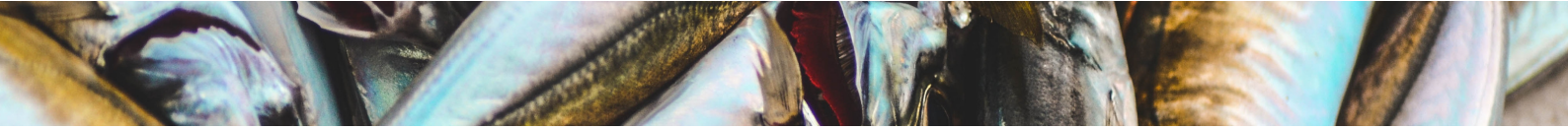
The EXTRA-SMES is an Interreg Europe project that aims to foster the competitiveness, extraversion, and internationalization of rural and coastal SMEs participating in aquaculture value chains.

To that end, the project assists 8 relevant public authorities and businesses in the aquaculture value chain from 7 countries to join forces and exchange experiences on how aquaculture SMEs could:

- Simplify administrative procedures.
- Expand their access to new markets.
- Innovate by producing value-added products and solutions.
- Up-skill their personnel.
- Resolve conflicts of interest together with stakeholders.



POLICY BRIEF OVERVIEW



This policy brief discusses career opportunities and professional development in the aquaculture sector, based on the issues raised in the context of EXTRA-SMEs Activity 3.4 “Interregional workshop on the skills and expertise required by public administrations’ staff”.

The aim of the workshop was to underline the field’s potential and establish it as a competitive and promising sector. At the same time, it promoted the call for young specialists in the field, aiming at catching their attention and making aquaculture an attractive youth career opportunity.

The conclusions of this workshop can be consulted by relevant public authorities and actors, in order to boost blue economy in their regions and increase the employability of young specialists in the field.

PAVING YOUTH CAREER PATHS

A significant point discussed during the workshop was the **lack of young specialists in blue economy**, which, since 2016, has hampered the sustainability and development of the field, a problem still dominant, especially in the aquaculture sector.

Given the millions of young people in Europe, who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and the concurrent difficulty of blue businesses in finding the required workforce, skills, and profiles, **raising awareness on blue economy has been identified as the best practice to bridge this gap and bring mutual benefits to both sides.**

Therefore, **universities, research centers, and marine clusters** at the European level should work together to spread the word and make blue careers popular among young people. In the context of aquaculture and its high demand for expertise, **academic training** is required for kick-starting a career in the field. Additionally, academic programs comply with the needs of the market, preparing students not only for the work field (e.g. production and preparation) but also for alternative career paths, such as research or education and training.

BLUE CAREERS IN AQUACULTURE

What is a blue career?

Blue careers are the employment opportunities in the fields relevant to sea and maritime activities, including aquaculture (including also maritime transport, cruise tourism, offshore oil, and gas).

Why choose a blue career in aquaculture?

Global seafood consumption has more than doubled during the past 50 years and has outpaced the population growth, **turning aquaculture into a growing industry with employment opportunities** abounding worldwide. At the European level, aquaculture is strongly developed in the Eastern Mediterranean, providing 15% of the European aquaculture production as well as 80% of the production of sea bass and sea bream. Overall, **the EU is the largest seafood market** in the world, **employing 75,000 people from around 75,000 businesses**. Furthermore, the processing sector (including preparation, preservation, and production) **employs around 126,000 people from 3,800 businesses around Europe**.

JOB POSITIONS



Various academic subjects converge on the field of aquaculture, such as agriculture specialists, applied chemical and biological scientists, aquaculture scientists, biologists, environmental scientists, marine scientists/ oceanographers, veterinary scientists, and zoologists, who join their forces in a common blue career path.

Indicative aquaculture professions are the following:

In the production phase

- Habitat biologist
- Feed production technician and inspector
- Processing line supervisor/ operator
- Waste management technologist
- Aquaculture development specialist

In the seafood value chain

- Fish and seafood sales and marketing expert.

Specializations in marine life

- Marine Biologist
- Marine Geologist
- Ichthyologist

PROJECT PARTNERS



**Region of Peloponnese
(EL)**



Liguria Region (IT)



**Northern Chamber of
Commerce in Szczecin
(PL)**



**Bucharest-Ilfov Regional
Development Agency
(RO)**



**Lapland University of
Applied Sciences (FI)**



University of Patras (EL)



**Western Development
Commission (IE)**



**Liguria Cluster for
Marine Technologies
(IT)**



**Public institution
National Regions
Development Agency
(LT)**

About Us

EXTRA-SMEs is co-funded by INTERREG Europe / European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

Contact Us

Project email: extrasmes2018@gmail.com
Web: www.interregeurope.eu/extra-smes/

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