



The Evolving Seafood Industry: Emerging Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges

Aquaculture Expansion, Alternative Proteins, and Market Globalization



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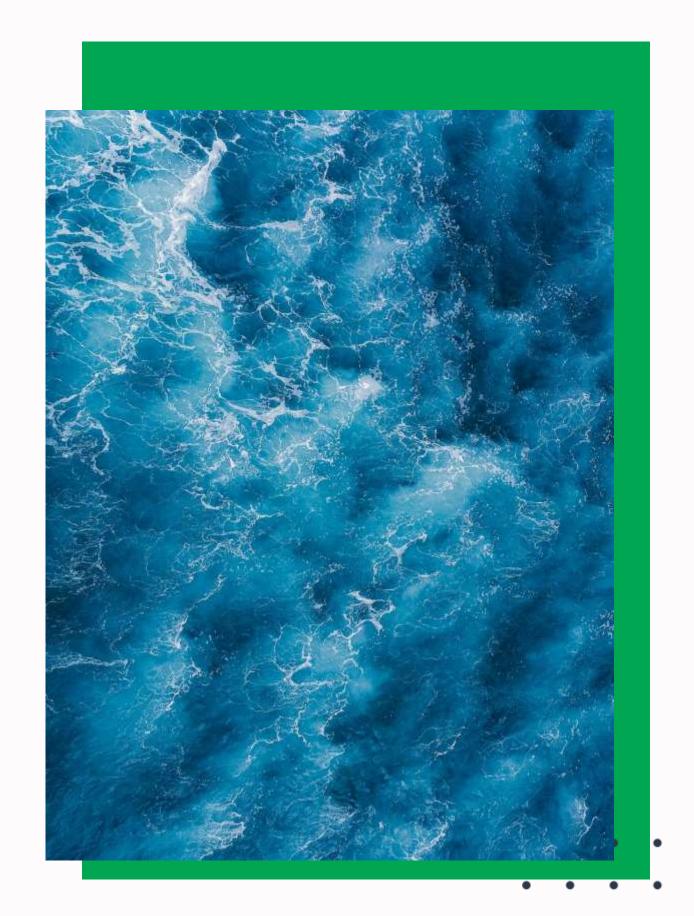
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- # Why seafood matters globally?
- # Seafood's importance & growth drivers
- # Current state of global fisheries & aquaculture
- # Market dynamics & Trade
- # Emerging trend 1: Aquaculture expansion the growth engine
- # Opportunities in aquaculture expansion
- # Challenges in aquaculture expansion
- # Solutions for sustainable aquaculture growth
- # Emerging trend 2: The rise of alternative proteins
- # Types & potential benefits of alternative seafood
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- # Future outlook & research priorities for alternative seafood
- # Emerging trend 3: Market globalization in seafood trade
- # Opportunities & Challenges of Globalization
- # Adapting to global market dynamics
- # Key overarching challenges in the seafood industry
- # Integrated solutions & policy responses
- # Conclusion: Towards a blue transformation
- # Key takeaway & call to action







Introduction

The phrase "Exploration of emerging trends, opportunities, and challenges in the seafood industry, such as the rise of alternative proteins, aquaculture expansion, and market globalization" refers to examining the dynamic shifts occurring within the global seafood sector. A major emerging trend is the rapid expansion of aquaculture, which has significantly increased its contribution to global food supply and is expected to continue growing, potentially supplying over 60% of food fish by 2030. This expansion presents opportunities like meeting increasing global food demand and developing sustainable farming technologies such as Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and offshore aquaculture. However, it also brings challenges, including environmental impacts such as nutrient emissions and contributions to climate change, as well as disease control and reliance on feed resources.

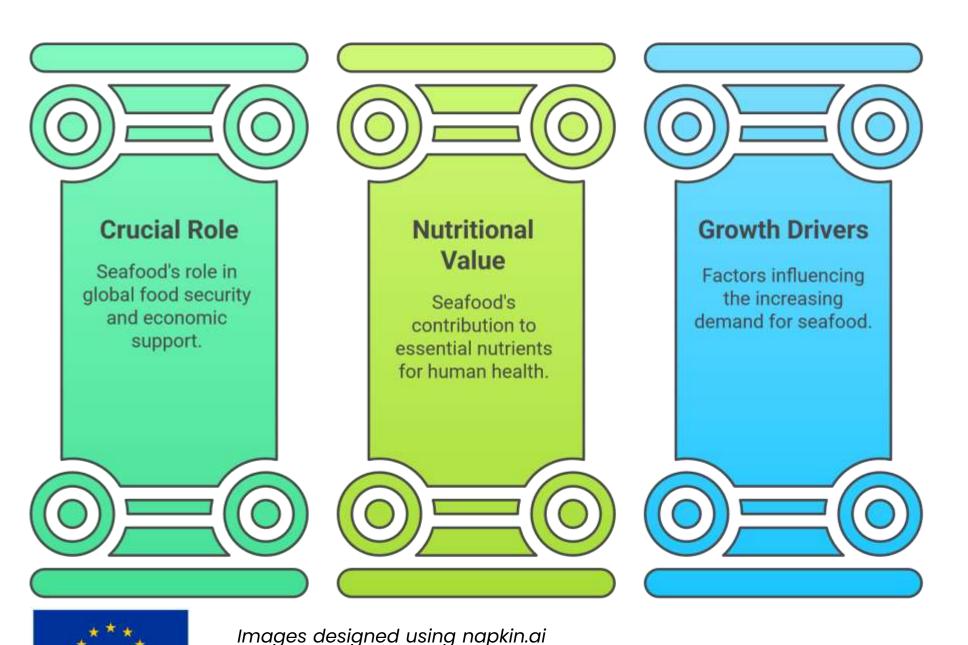
Furthermore, market globalization has made the seafood sector highly interconnected, driven by a quest for resources, reduced production costs, and profitable investments, offering consumers a wider diversity of aquatic food options. This global integration presents challenges such as pressure on wild capture fisheries due to overexploitation, strict sanitary requirements, and potential trade conflicts. An important emerging trend addressing these concerns is the rise of alternative proteins, including plant-based and cell-based seafood. These alternatives offer potential opportunities to alleviate pressure on aquatic ecosystems and conventional seafood by being less resource-intensive, while presenting challenges related to costeffectiveness, scalability, regulatory hurdles, and consumer acceptance.



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Seafood's Importance & Growth Drivers

Seafood's Global Impact



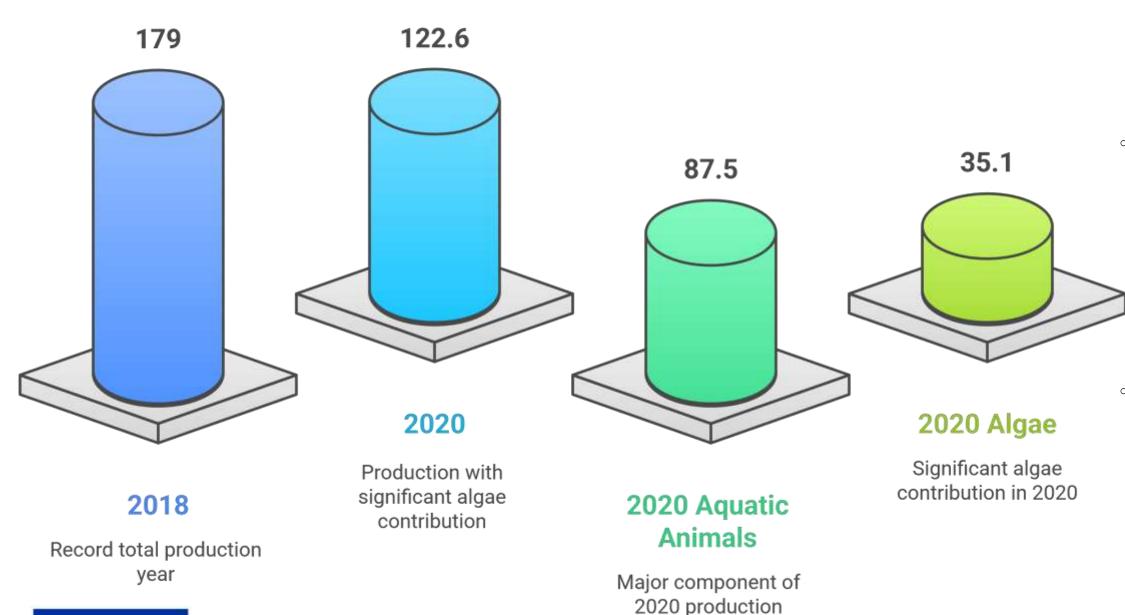
- **Crucial Role:** Seafood is an integral part of the global food system, providing food, employment, and income to millions, especially in low- and middle-income economies (Kelling et al., 2023).
- Nutritional Value (FAO, 2007): It's a key source of high-quality proteins, lipids, and essential micronutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals.
 - Over 1 billion people depend on fish as their main animal protein source.
 - For 3.3 billion people, aquatic foods provide at least 20% of their average per capita animal protein intake.
- Growth Drivers: Global population growth, rising incomes, and urbanization fuel increasing seafood demand.
 - . Global fish consumption per capita rose to 20.5 kg in 2018 (FAO, 2022).



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Current State of Global Fisheries & Aquaculture

Global Fisheries and Aquaculture Production



- Production Overview: Total fisheries and aquaculture production reached a record 179 million tonnes in 2018, and 122.6 million tonnes in 2020 (87.5 million aquatic animals, 35.1 million algae) (FAO, 2022).
- **Capture Fisheries:** Production has largely stagnated since 1990 (FAO, 2022).
 - About 60% of fish stocks are fully fished, and over 34% are overfished.
 - Concerns persist regarding overexploitation and ecosystem stress.
- **Aquaculture:** Has accounted for the growth of seafood production since 1990, supplying more than half of all fish eaten since 2014.
 - In 2020, aquaculture production grew in all regions except Africa (Egypt and Nigeria, though other African countries saw 14.5% growth).
 - Asia continues to dominate world aquaculture, producing 91.6% of the total (FAO, 2022).



Market Dynamics & Trade

Seafood Market Dynamics & Trade

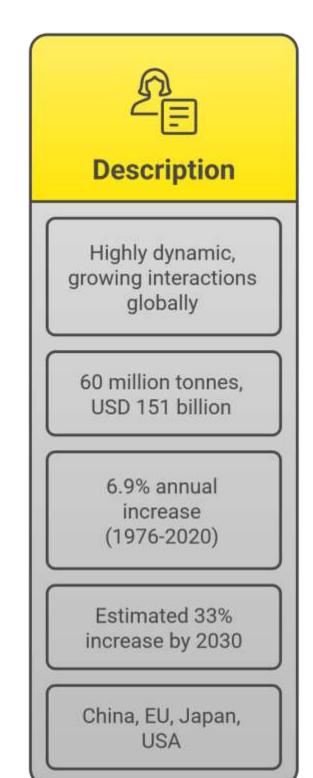
Globalization

Trade Volume

Export Growth

Price Trends

Major Players



- Globalized Sector: The seafood sector is highly dynamic and increasingly global, with growing interactions across countries and continents (Han et al., 2024).
- **Trade Volume:** Seafood is among the most traded food commodities. In 2020, world exports of aquatic products totaled about 60 million tonnes, worth USD 151 billion.
 - The value of global exports increased at an average annual growth rate of 6.9% in nominal terms from 1976 to 2020 (FAO, 2022).
- **Price Trends:** Prices of internationally traded aquatic products are estimated to increase by 33% in nominal terms by 2030 (OECD/FAO, 2021).
 - This is driven by increased incomes, population growth, strong demand, reduced supply, and increased production costs (e.g., feed, energy, fish oil).
- Major Players: China is a major exporter and importer of aquatic food. The European Union, Japan, and the United States of America are also significant importers (FAO, 2022).

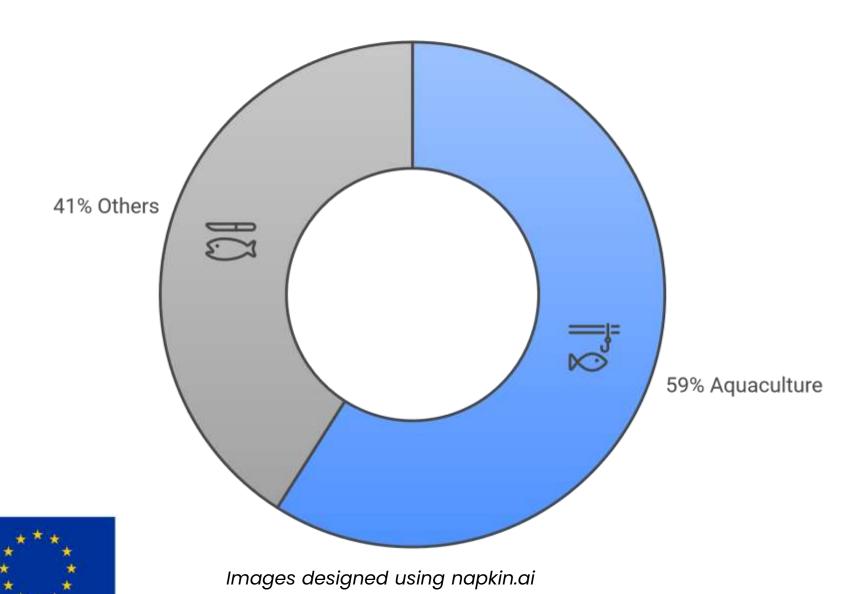




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Emerging Trend 1: Aquaculture Expansion – The Growth Engine

Contribution of Aquaculture to Aquatic Food Supply by 2030

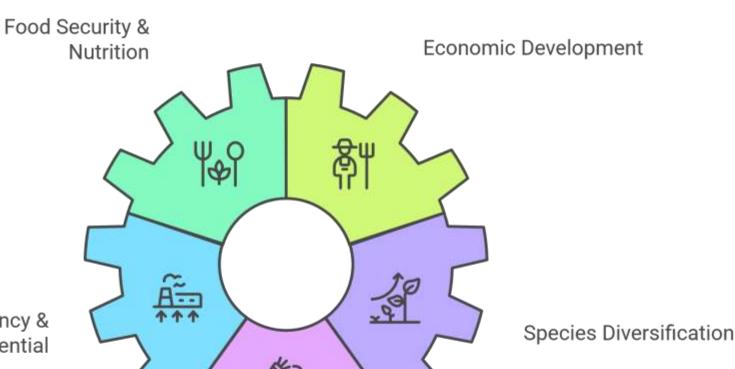


- Primary Growth Source: Aquaculture is the most rapidly expanding sector in the food industry worldwide and is the main driver of increased seafood supply (FAO, 2022).
- Future Projections: Aquatic animal production is forecast to grow another 14% by 2030, mainly due to sustained aquaculture growth (OECD/FAO, 2023).
 - Aquaculture production is projected to reach 106 million tonnes in 2030.
 - It is expected to contribute 59% of aquatic food available for human consumption by 2030, up from 56% in 2020.
- Technological Innovation: Rapid development is due to massive private sector investment and technological innovation, including intensification with higher stocking densities, increased feed use, and energy for water management (FAO, 2022).
 - Modern aquaculture is capital and knowledge intensive.



Opportunities in Aquaculture Expansion (FAO, 2022; Hilborn et al., 2018)

Aquaculture Expansion Opportunities







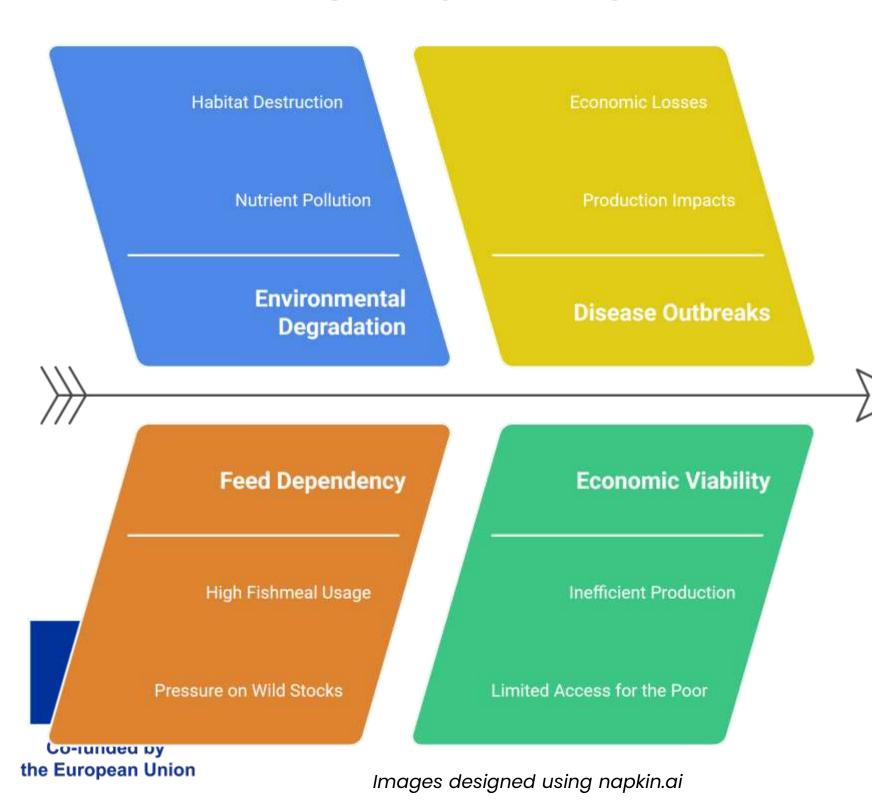
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- Food Security & Nutrition: Addresses global food demand and security, offering healthy diets rich in fatty acids, proteins, vitamins, and minerals.
- Economic Development: A Key feature of food security and local economies, generating income and employment, especially in rural areas.
- Efficiency & Sustainability Potential: A relatively young industry with vast potential to innovate toward low environmental impact systems.
 - Aquaculture production can have lower environmental impacts than many other livestock productions (e.g., beef) (Hilborn et al., 2018).
- Species Diversification: Development of new species like tuna and cod is being farmed, alongside established ones like tilapia, carp, and Pangasius/catfish, which show the fastest growth.
- Cost Reduction: Immense opportunities to reduce costs through genetics research and feed substitutions. The Norwegian salmon industry reduced costs by 60% in 20 years through biotechnology and management.



Challenges in Aquaculture Expansion (FAO, 2007; OECD/FAO, 2022)

Challenges in Aquaculture Expansion



- Environmental Degradation: Unsustainable practices lead to nutrient pollution, reduced oxygen levels, soil contamination from effluents, and habitat destruction.
 - Closed systems, while reducing nutrient emissions, can have significant energy requirements, often from fossil fuels, contributing to climate change impacts.
- Feed Dependency: Feed production and usage are important drivers of environmental impacts.
 - Fishmeal represents 50-70% of fish feed material and 60-70% of farm operating expenses.
 - Demand for fishmeal and fish oil will likely become stronger, increasing pressure on diminishing wild marine fish stocks.
- Disease Outbreaks: Major disease outbreaks in aquaculture (e.g., Early Mortality Syndrome in shrimp, ISA in salmon) heavily impact production.
- Public Health Risks: Intensification leads to excessive use of harmful chemicals, steroids, and antibiotics, contributing to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and human morbidity.
- Economic Viability: For countries with nascent aquaculture sectors, an "Aqua-Nationalism" approach (inward focus) can lead to less efficient production, higher prices, and reduced access for the poor due to limited technology transfer and import barriers.



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Solutions for Sustainable Aquaculture Growth (FAO, 2022)

Strategies for Sustainable Aquaculture Growth



Youth Engagement & Capacity Building Renewable Energy

- **Policy & Governance:** Develop and implement or enhance national aquaculture plans for sustainable development. This includes streamlining licensing and establishing good environmental practices.
- Improved Feed Options: Prioritize new and more environmentally-friendly feed options.
 - Replacing fresh fish with trimmings in fishmeal and fish oil (FMFO) production is more environmentally friendly than insect/algal meal.
 - Utilize alternative protein sources like blood meal, poultry by-product meal, black soldier fly, soybean, and seaweed to reduce reliance on fishmeal.
- **Sustainable Production Systems:** Invest in Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and offshore aquaculture to minimize nutrient emissions, reduce impacts on water quality, and achieve economies of scale.
 - Promote Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) to optimize nutrient use and reduce feed needs.
- **Biosecurity & Disease Control:** Implement Progressive Management Pathway for Improving Aquaculture Biosecurity (PMP/AB) to manage risks and prevent disease spread.
- **Youth Engagement & Capacity Building**: Address the aging workforce by attracting and engaging a new generation of skilled and technology-smart youth.
- **Renewable Energy:** Promote the use of solar PV, biofuels, geothermal heat, and micro-hydroelectric systems in aquaculture value chains to reduce fossil fuel dependence and costs.



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Emerging Trend 2: The Rise of Alternative Proteins (FAO,

2022; Jessica et al., 2021; OECD, 2010)

Comparing Alternative Seafood Market Dynamics

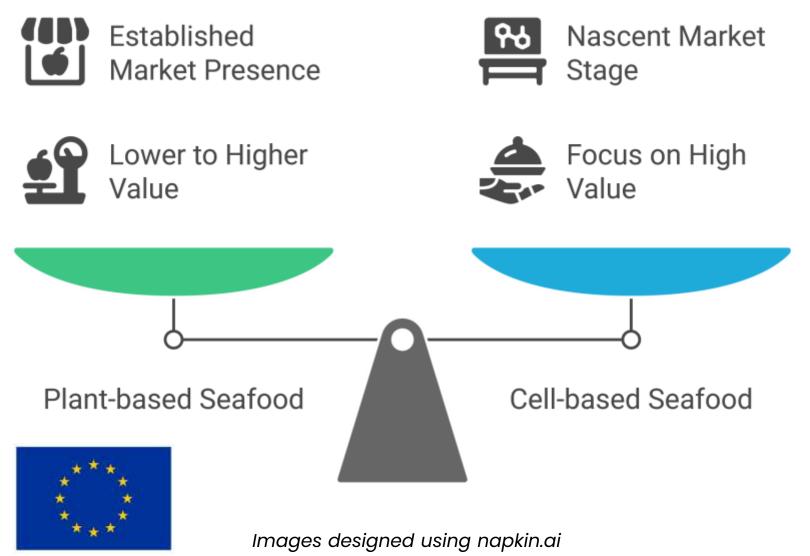
- Addressing Demand & Sustainability: Alternative seafood (plant-based, fermentation-derived, and cell-based) is emerging as a new food source with potential to augment future seafood supplies.
 - . This development could complement existing initiatives for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

Types of Alternative Seafood:

- **Plant-based seafood:** Made from plants (terrestrial or aquatic), including fermentation-derived. Products range from lower value (canned tuna, fish burgers) to higher value (raw tuna, salmon, shrimp).
- Cell-based seafood: Manufactured through cell culture. Focus currently on higher value species like bluefin tuna, salmon, shrimp.

Market Status (Update):

- Plant-based seafood has already entered markets in Asia, Europe, and North America. The global market was estimated at USD 22.5 million in 2019.
- . Cell-based seafood is nascent (<10 companies), sales not anticipated until 2022 (licensing expected).





Fits existing habits,

similar sensory

experience

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Types & Potential Benefits of Alternative Seafood (FAO, 2022;

Jessica et al., 2021; OECD, 2010)

Alternative seafood benefits range from mimicry to local production.



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Fewer public health

concerns, specific

nutrients

Livelihood diversification,

localized production

- **Mimicry & Consumer Appeal:** Designed to mimic the taste, texture, appearance, and/or nutritional properties of conventional seafood.
 - Can have greater appeal if they fit existing consumption habits and provide similar sensory experiences.
- Yield Efficiency: Produced at essentially 100% edible yield, avoiding the ~60% yield loss of conventional seafood production.
- Health & Safety: Offers fewer public health concerns (e.g., contaminants, zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance).
 - Can be developed with specific nutrient profiles to address deficiencies.
- Environmental Impact: Potential to be less resource-intensive (energy, water, land) than conventional animal protein production systems.
 - Avoids issues like overfishing, bycatch, and direct release of pollutants.
- Livelihoods & Local Production: Offers opportunities for livelihood diversification or conversion.
 - Lends itself to localized production schemes, potentially enabling access in currently inaccessible places.

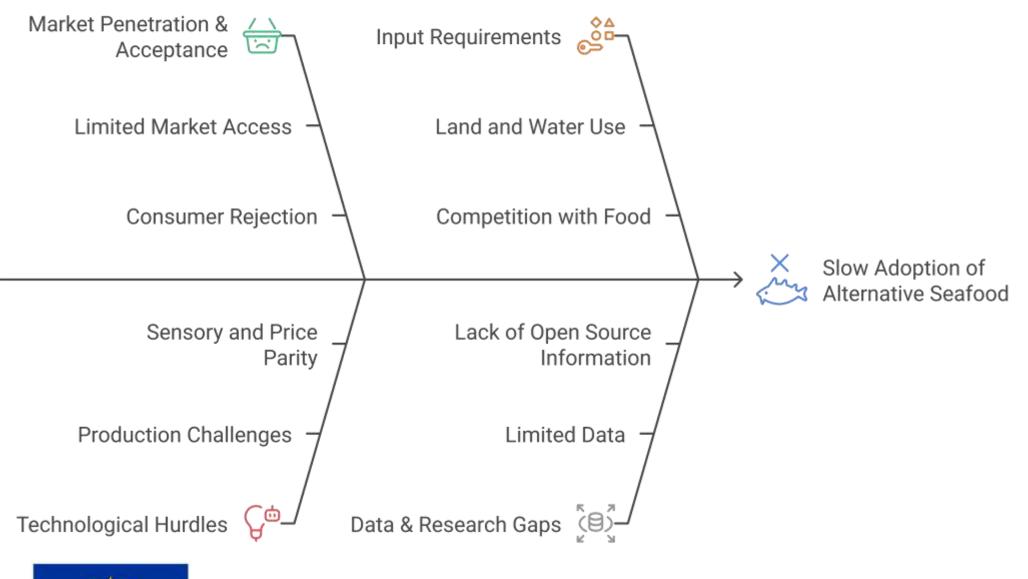


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Challenges for Alternative Seafood (FAO, 2022; Macusi et al., 2023;

Marwaha et al., 2023)

Challenges in Alternative Seafood Adoption



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- Market Penetration & Acceptance: Currently, mainly accessible in wealthier markets.
 - Consumers may reject novel or nontraditional foods.
 - Potential changes in sensory attributes (texture, flavor, color) could affect acceptance.
- Technological Hurdles (Cell-Based):
 - · Optimized and scalable production remains an issue, including developing appropriate cell lines, scaffolding, optimized media, and bioreactor designs.
 - Achieving comparable sensory experience and price parity.
- Input Requirements (Plant-Based): Increased reliance on plantbased feeds requires substantial areas of farmland and fresh water, along with considerable energy for production and transport.
 - · Questions remain if this might compete with use as human food or animal feed.
- Data & Research Gaps: Limited sector data and research hinder robust projections and impact assessment.
 - Lack of open-source information about fundamental aspects of technologies.
- 。 Cost-Effectiveness & Scalability: High initial investment and advanced technical expertise are required for some technologies.
 - Production costs must fall for alternative seafood to compete in the mass market.

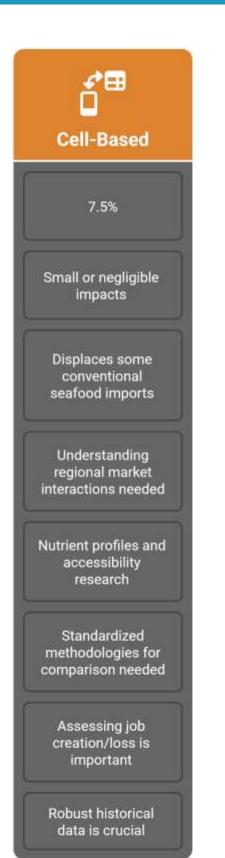


Future Outlook & Research Priorities for Alternative

Alternative Seafood: Future Outlook & Research Seafood (FAO, 2022; Bohnes et al., 2022)

Priorities

Plant-Based **Projected Market** 0.14% Share (2030) Impact on Food Small or negligible impacts Security Indirect Displaces some Environmental seafood imports Impacts Understanding Market regional market Development interactions needed Nutrient profiles and Nutritional Contribution Standardized Environmental methodologies for Impacts comparison needed Assessing job **Employment** creation/loss is Impacts important



- Projected Market Share (2030): Even with high-growth scenarios, plantbased seafood is projected to hold 0.14% and cell-based seafood 7.5% of the global food fish market by volume (Costello et al., 2020)
 - This suggests small or negligible impacts on food and nutrition security and livelihoods in low- and middle-income countries in the next decade.
- Indirect Impacts: Can indirectly benefit small-scale fishers and reduce pressure on aquatic ecosystems by displacing some conventional seafood imports to developed markets.
- Research Priorities:
 - Market Development: Understanding how markets will develop in different regions and interact with conventional seafood.
 - Nutritional Contribution: How alternative seafood can best contribute to food and nutrition security, including nutrient profiles and accessibility.
 - **Environmental Impacts:** Developing standardized methodologies for comparison with conventional seafood and exploring how changes can improve aquatic ecosystem health.
 - **Employment Impacts:** Assessing job creation/loss, especially for women and marginalized groups.
 - Data & Modeling: Robust historical disaggregated data is crucial for future foresight modeling.



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Data & Modeling

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Robust historical

data is crucial

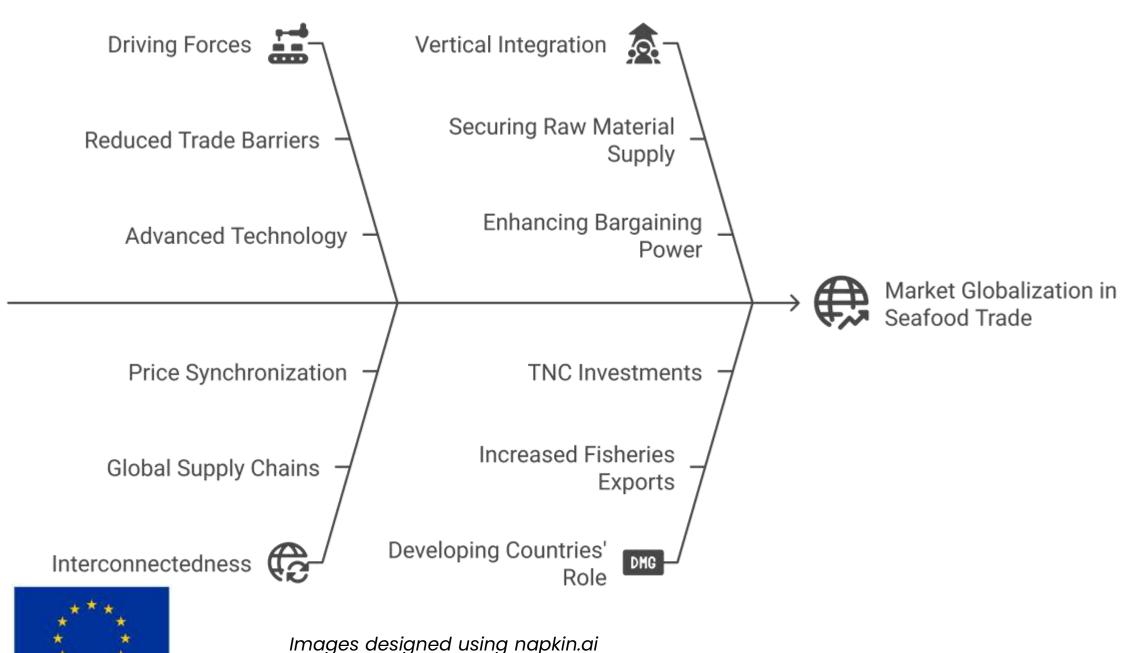


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Emerging Trend 3: Market Globalization in Seafood

Trade (FAO, 2022; Ruben et al., 2025; Russo et al., 2023; Han et al., 2024)

Analyzing Market Globalization in Seafood Trade



- Driving Forces: Globalization in seafood is driven by reduced trade barriers, advanced information and transport technology, and the quest for access to resources and raw material.
- Interconnectedness: Markets are increasingly interconnected within global supply chains, and prices become more synchronous.
 - 39% of seafood production is traded by value internationally.
- Vertical Integration: Major fish processing companies pursue strategies of vertical integration (backwards into harvesting/aquaculture, and forwards into sales/branding) to secure raw material supply, enhance bargaining power, and adapt to market trends.
- Developing Countries' Role: Developing countries have an increasing participation in fisheries exports.
 - Transnational corporations (TNCs) invest in aquaculture in developing countries for raw material supply, lower labor costs, and suitable environmental conditions.



Opportunities & Challenges of Globalization (FAO, 2022)

Balancing Globalization's Opportunities and Challenges



Economic Benefits



Market Access



Value Addition



Technological Transfer



Economic Equality



Resource Pressure



Regulatory Complexity



Intense Competition



Trade Conflicts



Policy Inertia



Opportunities:

- **Economic Benefits:** Brings substantial benefits to the world economy, supporting poverty reduction and food security.
- Market Access: Allows access to markets and greater availability of aquatic foods globally.
- Value Addition: Enhances the value-added sector, especially in developing countries.
- **Technological Transfer:** Facilitates the transfer of knowledge and innovative technologies.

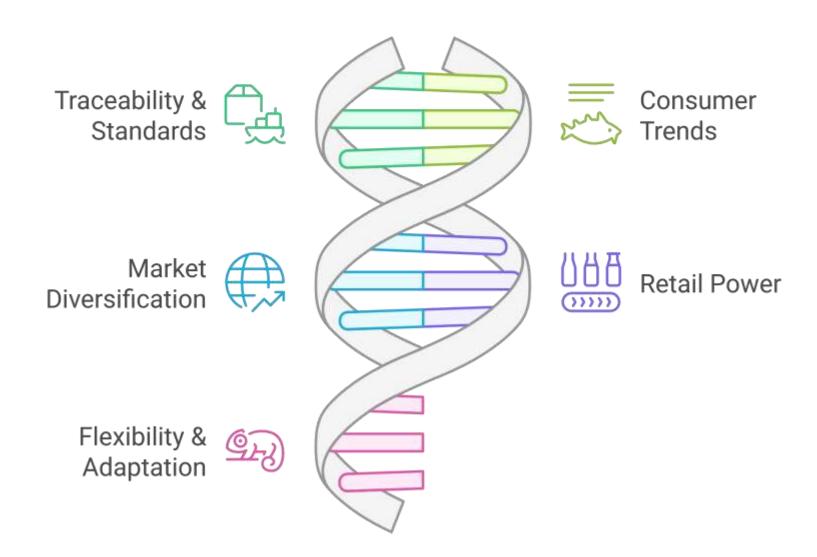
Challenges:

- **Pressure on Resources:** Global demand pressures capture fisheries, which are often overexploited.
- Regulatory Complexity: Meeting higher sanitary and phytosanitary requirements set by markets.
- **Competition:** Intense competition for feed ingredients like fishmeal, as well as competition from other protein sources (e.g., pig, chicken production).
- Trade Conflicts: Increased uncertainty in global trade can lead to trade disputes, highlighting the importance of diversifying trade partners and risk management.
- **Economic Inequality:** Export revenues may not always be distributed to benefit the poor, leading to mixed impacts on food security and well-being.
- Policy Inertia: Failure to implement fisheries management and aquaculture strategies that accommodate globalization can undermine resource sustainability.



Adapting to Global Market Dynamics (FAO, 2022)

Navigating Global Seafood Markets



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- Traceability & Standards: Need for traceable seafood supply chains and safety management systems as food safety standards advance.
 - Certification schemes (e.g., ASC, MSC, MarinTrust, organic) gain importance for sustainability and traceability (
- Consumer Trends: Respond to growing consumer demand for healthy, nutritious, convenience, and additive-free foods.
 - Providing user-friendly recipes can increase familiarity with seafood.
- Market Diversification: Companies are diversifying products and markets, with examples like China processing for re-export and Southeast Asian/Latin American suppliers rising against Chinese tilapia dominance.
- Retail Power: Retail outlets (supermarkets, chain restaurants) are increasingly important distribution channels, driving demand for quality, portion control, and steady supply, leading to more longterm contracts.
- Flexibility & Adaptation: The industry needs to be flexible and adaptable to market conditions, constantly changing and evolving.



Key Overarching Challenges in the Seafood Industry (FAO,

2022; The World Bank, 2013)

Seafood Industry Challenges

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Environmental Sustainability

Food Safety & **Public Health**

Economic Vulnerabilities

Ethical Considerations

Policy Implementation Gaps Co-funded by

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implications

- Environmental Sustainability: Overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution (wastewater, plastic ingestion), and biodiversity loss remain critical issues.
 - . Climate change poses an additional challenge to freshwater aquaculture and capture fisheries (IPCC for climate impacts).
- Food Safety & Public Health: Concerns about bacterial contamination, unapproved drugs, and antimicrobial resistance are prevalent.
 - . The seafood industry faces the challenge of ensuring fresh, safe, and high-quality products to maintain consumer confidence.
- Economic Vulnerabilities: Supply chain disruptions (e.g., from COVID-19 and geopolitical conflicts) highlight market vulnerabilities.
 - . Fluctuations in raw material prices and dependence on fishmeal/oil.
- Ethical Considerations: Ethical dilemmas posed by genetic interventions in fish breeding and animal welfare issues.
- Policy Implementation Gaps: Many policies have failed due to an inability to anticipate far-reaching implications on environmental and socio-economic variables.



Integrated Solutions & Policy Responses_01 (FAO, 2007;

FAO, 2022; The World Bank, 2013)

Integrated Solutions & Policy Responses

Sustainable Sustainable Food Policy & Feed & **Collaboration &** Characteristic **Technology Food Systems** Research Governance Resource Management Technological Circular Economy Proactive International Approach Holistic Framework Advancement Formulation Principles Cooperation **Emerging Novel Aquafeed Publicly Funded Focus UN SDGs Emerging Issues** Processing Research Ingredients Technologies Strengthen **Foster Capacity** Improve Shelf Life, Address Global Reduce Reliance on Goal **Building and** Environmental Quality, Safety Wild Fish Challenges Education Governance





Integrated Solutions & Policy Responses_02

- Holistic Frameworks: Adopt sustainable food systems (SFS) frameworks (aligned with UN SDGs) to address food, agriculture, and natural resources challenges globally.
- Policy & Governance Innovation: Develop proactive policy formulation based on identifying emerging issues.
 - . Strengthen environmental governance to ensure the world does not exceed planetary boundaries.
- Technological Advancement: Invest in food technology and emerging processing technologies (e.g., HPP, cold plasma, edible coatings) to improve shelf life, quality, and safety with energy efficiency.
- Sustainable Feed & Resource Management: Accelerate research and adoption of novel aquafeed ingredients (e.g., insects, algae, processing by-products) to reduce reliance on wild fish stocks.
 - Promote circular economy principles for waste valorization, such as using fish processing by-products for new ingredients.
- Collaboration & Research: Foster international cooperation, capacity building, and education in fisheries and aquaculture.
 - Prioritize publicly funded research to advance the sector sustainably.

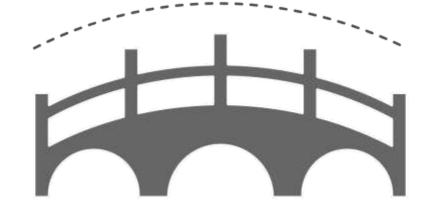




Conclusion: Towards a Blue Transformation (FAO, 2022)

Transforming aquatic food systems for sustainability and nutrition.







Unsustainable Sustainable **Systems**

Ecosystems are threatened.

Future

Healthy ecosystems and food security.



- **Blue Transformation:** A vision by FAO to sustainably transform aquatic food systems, ensuring food security, nutrition, and environmental/social well-being.
- **Key Pillars:** Involves intensifying and expanding sustainable aquaculture, improving fisheries management, and innovating value chains.
- Integration is Key: Requires holistic and adaptive approaches that consider complex interactions in agri-food systems and support multi-stakeholder interventions.
 - Responding to Future Demands: By 2030, aquatic food production is forecast to increase by a further 15%, mainly from aquaculture. This growth must preserve aquatic ecosystem health, prevent pollution, and protect biodiversity (The World Bank, 2013)
- Seafood as a Superfood: Diverse aquatic foods are recognized as a unique source of nutrients (superfoods), vital for physical and cognitive development.
 - Promoting diversified consumption of aquatic foods through nutrition strategies is essential.



Key Takeaways & Call to Action (FAO, 2022)

Strategic Framework for Seafood Industry





000 Dynamic Industry

shaping the seafood sector.



Balancing Act

Emphasizes the need to balance production with sustainability.



Innovation & Collaboration

Focuses on technological advancements and partnerships.



Informed Policy

Stresses the importance of evidence based policy.



Call to Action

Encourages support for sustainable aquaculture and fisheries.

- **Dynamic Industry:** The seafood industry is undergoing significant transformations driven by aquaculture, alternative proteins, and globalization.
- Balancing Act: Future success depends on balancing increased production with environmental sustainability, food safety, and social equity.
- Innovation & Collaboration: Technological advancements (e.g., emerging processing, novel feeds, offshore aquaculture) and strong partnerships (publicprivate, cross-sectoral) are crucial.
- Informed Policy: Proactive, evidence-based policy formulation is essential to guide the sector towards desirable futures.
- 。Call to Action: Support Blue Transformation efforts by investing in sustainable aquaculture, promoting responsible fisheries management, and fostering innovative, transparent, and equitable value chains.



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