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Global **Sustainable**
Seafood **Galicia** Forum

2026 Edition

IV Global Sustainable Seafood Galicia Forum

Responsibility and Impact was the theme of the 4th GSSG Forum held in Vigo in April 2026, which led to the following **conclusions**:

- **Companies** that **act responsibly have a positive impact** on people and the planet, demonstrating their commitment to the future.

- **Aquatic food systems** are part of the **solution to world hunger,** through the growth of sustainable aquaculture, responsible fisheries management and efficient value chains.

- **Certification schemes help to improve fisheries management**, thereby contributing to the health of aquatic populations.

- The success and resilience of the fishing sector are based on **robust and stable rights.**

- **Nature and industrial development must strike a balance**: mangroves increase the resilience of shrimp farming, promote biodiversity and offset CO_2 emissions.

18 Speakers → **+300** Attendees → **7** Sessions

//ABANCA
GRUPO NUEVA PESCANOVA
Cofinanciado pola Unión Europea
XUNTA DE GALICIA
FUNDACIÓN NUEVA PESCANOVA

Speakers ↘

Diana Fernández de la Reguera
FAO International Consultant.

Rupert Howes
Chief Executive of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

Juan Corrales Garavilla
Senior Business Advisor Tri Marine Group.

David Carter
CEO Austral Fisheries.

Marcelo Hidalgo
Seafoodmatter / CCO of the Fishing Industry Association in Papua New Guinea.

Simone Maridueña
Environmental Coordinator of the National Chamber of Aquacultu of Ecuador.

Gianluca Marino
Associate Professor Faculty of Marine Sciences, University of Vig

Nuno Cosme
Chief Sustainability & CSR Officer Nueva Pescanova Group.

Brigitte Fredericks
Mayor of Lüderitz.

Gonzalo Rodríguez
Lecturer in the Department of Applied Economics, University of Santiago de Compostela.

Eduardo Míguez
Deputy Director Puerto de Celeiro Group.

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• The fishing industry creates **wealth and drives socio-economic development:** Lüderitz (Namibia) is an example of how a town of 3,000 inhabitants grew into a thriving city of 25,000.

• **The fishing industry in Galicia helps to keep people in the region:** it is a specialised economy committed to the future.

• **Combating food waste means acting responsibly** and making a positive impact: the more we make use of food, the less waste there is and the greater the efficiency.

• **Marine Protected Areas** are essential for the **health of the ocean**, enabling fish stocks to recover.

• In the face of volatility and geopolitical uncertainty, it is vital to persevere with responsible actions that have a positive impact: **those companies that see sustainability as an opportunity to continue improving will be the ones that survive.** ■



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SESSION I. The Blue Transformation: Results

[FAO / Diana Fernández de la Reguera]

- Aquatic foods are now part of the solution to world hunger: they provide protein and essential micronutrients with lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than land-based foods.
- Total aquatic production in 2024 reached 235 million metric tonnes: aquaculture (103 million) contributed more tonnes than fisheries (95 million).
- The FAO's Blue Transformation promotes a more sustainable sector with greater impact, with the following objectives: sustainable expansion of aquaculture that meets demand and distributes its benefits fairly; effective management across all fisheries, eradicating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and ensuring healthy fish stocks and equitable livelihoods; an inclusive and equitable value chain that ensures the social, economic and environmental sustainability of aquatic food systems.
- In the field of aquaculture, the FAO established the Global Sustainable Aquaculture Advancement Partnership (GSAAP) in 2022, and two years later adopted the Guidelines for Sustainable Aquaculture (GSA). It is currently promoting capacity-building in more than 30 African countries.
- In the fisheries sector, the FAO promotes the agreement on the Management of Fisheries and Aquaculture; advocates voluntary guidelines for small-scale fisheries; and runs programmes for data collection and analysis, reporting and capacity-building for fisheries management.
- It also works on programmes to ensure that aquatic foods are affordable, nutritious and safe for local communities, creating decent livelihoods and minimising food loss and waste.

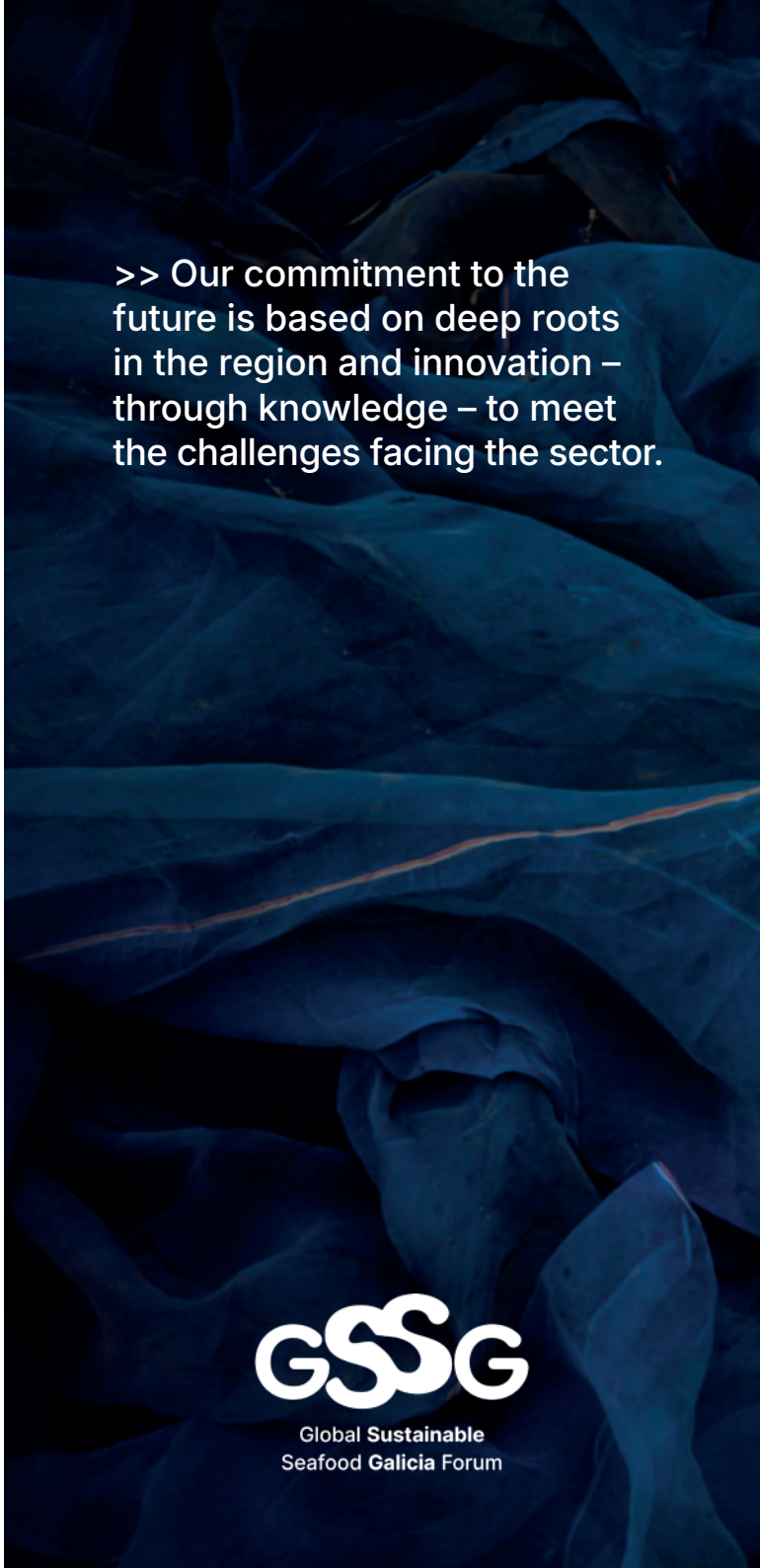
SESSION II. Responsible fishing and impact: Fishery certification schemes and outcomes

[MSC / Rupert Howes]

- The collapse of fisheries due to overfishing and the need to ensure a supply of fish-based protein drove the development of the MSC certification scheme, which connects the industry and consumers.
- The MSC's vision is to protect marine ecosystems so that they remain healthy and productive, safeguarding the supply of marine protein for future generations. The MSC standard is based on fishing practices that ensure the long-term sustainability of fisheries, with thriving fish stocks and healthy ecosystems.
- MSC certification currently covers more than 800 fisheries (over 21 per cent of fish stocks). "We are proud of certified fisheries such as the Iberian sardine, Namibian and South African hake, and New Zealand hoki, the latter of which has held certification for 25 years."
- The market places its trust in credible certification schemes that guarantee the protection of the ocean and use sustainability as a business driver. Without a healthy ocean, there can be no health for our planet.

[TRI-MARINE GROUP / Juan Corrales]

- The success of global tuna conservation began in 2009 with the creation of the International Sea Sustainability Foundation (ISSF), a coalition between the tuna industry, the scientific community, and WWF. Today, 97% of tuna catches come from healthy stocks: when science provides guidance and cooperation follows, large-scale sustainability is possible."



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• Fishing is part of the solution: a delicious source of protein with a low carbon footprint, a source of food and a way of life for millions of people, and a legacy of coastal communities.

[AUSTRAL FISHERIES / David Carter]

• Solid and stable fishing rights help to align the community's expectations with the operator's interests.
• Austral Fisheries has held MSC certification since 2011, and in 2016 it became the first fishing company to achieve carbon-neutral certification. Origin, sustainability, fishermen and carbon neutrality are hallmarks of its brands and a constant focus of attention. The company promotes responsible production and consumption through traceability and transparency in the supply chain.

>> ROUND TABLE / IDEAS [Moderated by: SEAFOODMATTER / Marcelo Hidalgo]

• For the MSC, the market is the other side of the coin: scientific evidence must be used to connect with consumers and bring about change. "When I started out, there were only six certified fisheries and there were doubts as to whether certification would be accepted outside Northern Europe; today, the MSC is present in Asia and Europe and continues to grow." (Rupert Howes).
• "What really motivates us is doing the right thing and inspiring others to do the same; being honest and thinking about the future." (Juan Corrales). "It's important to do things properly; there's no room for others to do them badly. Drawing on science helps us understand how to improve." (David Carter).
• The MSC standards are based on the FAO's principles of responsible fishing, which apply to all fisheries, regardless of their size. A third of current certifications are for small-scale fisheries, and a portion of the funds generated by these certifications is used to support them. (Rupert Howes).
• Tri Marine joined the Seafood Task Force to monitor working conditions on board fishing vessels; the challenges were enormous and the improvement in working conditions remarkable. All labour practices are auditable and the entire European fleet operates in accordance with the APR standard. (Juan Corrales).
• The sector is volatile and, since the COVID-19 pandemic, has become accustomed to constant change. "It is important to get the basics right and be prepared for every challenge, confident that we will gain more than we lose." (David Carter).
• "We build trust by being honest, working with science, sharing our mistakes, investing, educating and supporting the blue transition. We have a Board and a Council made up of industry leaders. Good governance, science and transparency." (Rupert Howes).
• There are already countries in Africa where fish such as sardines and anchovies are consumed. "A greater redistribution of consumption takes time and will depend on disposable income." (Juan Corrales). "This brings us to the issue of global equality: sustainable resource management will make it possible to feed a larger population in the countries where fishing takes place." (Rupert Howes).
• The MSC is responsible for certification, and all consumers have access to certified products. "Germany and the US sell their products at significant discounts and are committed to the MSC. Furthermore, trawling is not inherently negative, and a significant number of these fisheries are MSC-certified. We are equally concerned about fishing and conservation." (Rupert Howes).

SESSION III. Responsible aquaculture and impact: Blue carbon

[CNA / Simone Maridueña]

• Ecuador is the world's leading exporter of prawns. In 2020, of its 216,610 hectares under cultivation, 31 per cent were located in mangrove areas, which have experienced a dual trend: between 1984 and 1995, their area declined, whilst between 1995 and 2022, it stabilised and grew.
• Ecuador's climate is influenced by the equatorial current of warm air – which carries large amounts of moisture westwards – and by the Humboldt Current – whose cold waters flow northwards along the coast. The El Niño phenomenon brings higher temperatures and increased rainfall, whilst reducing the salinity and oxygen levels in the water; La Niña, on the other hand, brings lower temperatures and periods of drought.
• Mangroves retain sediment, organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorus, thereby regulating oxygen levels, turbidity, temperature and water stability. Mangroves capture and store carbon. The healthier the mangrove, the better the water quality and the lower the health risks and carbon footprint.
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[CIM-UVIGO / Gianluca Marino]

• The oceans act as a CO_2 sink and, since the Industrial Revolution, have absorbed some of the emissions. Ocean warming affects all ecosystems and threatens biodiversity. The exchange of CO_2 between the ocean and the atmosphere is regulated by its concentration in both: the ocean can

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act as either a source or a sink.
• Through biological processes, the ocean utilises CO_2 and sunlight. Some organisms, such as molluscs, precipitate the HCO_3^- ion, forming calcium carbonate, thereby releasing CO_2 and reducing the alkalinity of the water and the acidification of the ocean. These are complex processes that must be integrated across spatial and temporal scales in order to better understand the rate of CO_2 absorption and emission in the oceans.
• Mangrove cultivation has a high carbon density, due to CO_2 sequestration both at the surface and below it.

>> ROUND TABLE / IDEAS [Moderated by: NUEVA PESCANOVA / Nuno Cosme]

• With 151,000 hectares of mangrove forest, Ecuador's Constitution prohibits – and penalises – any alteration to them. The industry withdraws ASC certification from anyone who clears or reduces their area; the State entrusts the monitoring of the mangroves to local communities. The National Chamber of Aquaculture (CNA) oversees the protection and restoration of the mangroves. (Simone Maridueña).
• The carbon cycle – with its inputs and outputs – operates on long timescales, in contrast to the rapid changes brought about by human activity. (Gianluca Marino). The CNA has prioritised preventing the conversion of mangroves into shrimp farms, and work is now underway to reforest and strengthen this ecosystem. (Simone Maridueña). "I would like to highlight the work carried out by Nueva Pescanova in Ecuador, Nicaragua and Guatemala, which has resulted in the sequestration of 40,000 tonnes of CO_2 across 5,900 hectares of planted land, equivalent to 47 per cent of its emissions." (Nuno Cosme)."
• CO_2 uptake by mangroves below the surface presents a real opportunity: uptake figures are between 4 and 10 times higher than those recorded at the surface. (Gianluca Marino).
• When an ecosystem becomes unbalanced, the biodiversity of mangroves helps to control pathogens, thereby providing an ecosystem service. There are technologies that help to manage the effects associated with El Niño and La Niña: water management and the analysis of planting densities enable these effects to be mitigated. (Simone Maridueña).

SESSION IV. Responsible processing and impact: Employment and socioeconomic development

[LÜDERITZ / Brigitte Fredericks]

• In 1990, Namibian President Sam Nujoma urged the company NovaNam to invest in Lüderitz: the significant investment made in fishing and processing revitalised the town's economy, with the population rising from 3,000 to over 25,000. Fishing companies, in addition to catching fish, add value by processing their catch onshore, thereby contributing to industrial development and other services, such as net-making workshops, cold stores and engineering. Consequently, the port of Lüderitz was expanded and housing, schools, banks, shops and medical facilities were built.
• NovaNam was the first fishing company to introduce collective bargaining and the first in the world to obtain FISH labour certification on board its vessels. It also played a part in the hake stock achieving MSC certification.

[USC / Gonzalo Rodríguez]

• When discussing responsibility and impact, it is essential to consider the social aspect, the creation of value and a commitment to the environment and its future. With a turnover of 8,000 million and 21,000 jobs, the fishing sector in Galicia generates economic and social value.
• Impact is achieved when companies and their industry form an interconnected system with suppliers and customers. In Galicia, moreover, the sector contributes to territorial equity along its more than 1,500 km of coastline.
• The fishing sector – in Europe, Spain and Galicia – serves as a model in terms of its environmental impact, its regulatory framework, and its compliance with and monitoring of fish stocks and measures that promote sustainability.
• Our commitment to the future is based on deep roots in the region and innovation – through knowledge – to meet the challenges facing the sector. Fishing and aquaculture are examples of innovation – as Pescanova was with on-board freezing, or as turbot and mussel farming are today – where industry and technical centres innovate together. The Galician industry has an ecosystem of suppliers and a wealth of knowledge-based resources, which together form a specialised system.

>> ROUND TABLE / IDEAS [Moderated by: PUERTO DE CELEIRO GROUP / Eduardo Míguez]

• "Fishing in Lüderitz provided employment in Namibia, particularly in the Karas region, where the town is situated." (Brigitte Fredericks).
• "People are not aware of the importance of fishing to our economy: the sector does not communicate its message boldly, and there is a



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reluctance to highlight its successes. We must tell the public that we produce healthy food and that we also generate significant value." (Gonzalo Rodríguez).

• "We want to attract more investment to Namibia, particularly to Lüderitz." (Brigitte Fredericks).

• "In the EU, there is talk of 'smart specialisation', and in Galicia, that sector is fishing. Looking for alternatives is simply running away from the problem: general proposals may be of interest elsewhere." (Gonzalo Rodríguez).

• "Lüderitz depends on fishing, which is its main source of income and livelihood. NovaNam's arrival in Lüderitz changed its history." (Brigitte Fredericks).

SESSION V. Responsible consumption and impact: Eliminating food waste

[FIAB / Paloma Sánchez]

• In April 2026, the Food Loss and Waste Prevention Act came into force, establishing a hierarchy for the management of surplus food: prevention, donation for human consumption, animal feed, by-products for use in other industries, as well as waste, recycling and energy recovery are all covered.

• Businesses must draw up comprehensive prevention plans, including waste management, self-assessment, prevention measures and a surplus management plan. The law sets out criteria for the management of donations and distinguishes between 'best before' dates and 'use-by' dates. It also establishes a strict system of penalties.

• The food industry and the fisheries sector have established best practices to prevent waste. FIAB has published five guides – one general guide and four sector-specific guides – which provide guidance on processes and operations; packaging redesign; improvements to logistics and stock management; staff awareness; and collaboration agreements.

[VEGALSA-EROSKI / Ricardo Castro]

• Vegalsa-Eroski has a turnover of more than 1.7 billion euros and employs more than 8,000 people. Over the past year, it has prevented 9,949 tonnes of produce from going to waste.

• Food shops waste just 0.37 per cent of the food they sell, and are doing a great job of reducing this figure – a goal that is currently a priority for supermarkets. Vegalsa has a multidisciplinary team dedicated to preventing waste and works on stock control, orders, planograms, expiry dates, wastage, quality standards and marketing options. Any unsold stock is donated at the point of sale.

>> ROUND TABLE / IDEAS [Moderated by AECOC / Nuria de Pedraza]

• The sector has long been working to reduce food waste and promote food donation: the Act serves to bring order to the sector. (Paloma Sánchez). "At Vegalsa, the Act helps us to organise ourselves, establish indicators, quantify figures and set targets. Waste management is now more structured; we try to donate as much as possible and ensure that collection takes place in-store" (Ricardo Castro).

• There are challenges and opportunities: companies must measure and monitor their operations to improve their production processes, avoiding the manufacture of items that will not be sold and making their logistics and storage processes more efficient. "Consumer awareness is key: we must focus on re-use, distinguish between 'best before' and 'use by' dates, and make the most of the food consumed in the hospitality sector." (Paloma Sánchez).

• We must restore value to food: "combating food waste means challenging our lifestyles" (Ricardo Castro). It is about reclaiming and changing habits, and being aware that food waste is linked to its impact on the environment (Paloma Sánchez).

• "Technology will be key to preventing and reducing food waste." (Paloma Sánchez). "We need to restore value to food." (Ricardo Castro). "This is not just a legal issue, but one of business strategy and reputation." (Paloma Sánchez).

SESSION VI. Responsible science and impact: Marine Protected Areas

[UNESCO-IOC / Fanny Douvere]

• Marine Protected Areas are scientifically proven mechanisms for restoring biodiversity in the oceans. The international agreement reached at the Montreal Biodiversity Summit sets a target of protecting 30 per cent of the oceans by 2030.

• When marine areas are protected and their uses regulated, biodiversity recovers: 81 studies across 37 countries reveal that fish stocks and catch sizes increase by 34 per cent, with neighbouring areas also benefiting.

• Marine Protected Areas provide long-term sustainable benefits for fishing communities. There are



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17,000 Marine Protected Areas, covering 9.79 per cent of the ocean, leaving nearly 90 per cent of marine biodiversity unprotected. We must move from areas on paper to areas that are actually protected, as 25 per cent of them have not yet been implemented.

• Marine Protected Areas need to be integrated into a national ocean strategy and complemented by other measures. A sustainable fishing industry must prioritise the quality of the Marine Protected Areas to be established, governed by scientific criteria and integrated into national plans.

[IEO-CSIC / David Díaz]

• To talk about Marine Protected Areas is to talk about management, not conservation or prohibition. The aim is to achieve tangible benefits through management, by adapting use to allow for the recovery of biodiversity, in terms of both species and habitats.

• There are examples of success in the Mediterranean, such as the Medes Islands – where species have recovered in terms of abundance, size and biomass – or the Columbretes – where the lobster population has recovered, with a spillover effect on surrounding areas.

• Marine Protected Areas are natural laboratories for ecologists, and an effective fisheries management tool that brings benefits to small-scale fisheries.

>> ROUND TABLE / IDEAS [Moderated by CETMAR / Rosa Chapela]

• Marine Protected Areas present a dual reality: in small ones, it is difficult to study the entire life cycle; in large ones, far from the coast, not much happens. "We must choose the right areas: the fishing industry wants to see the benefits, but that is not possible without suitable areas." (Fanny Douvere).

• Any activity near the sea helps to increase our understanding of it; Cousteau used to say that only what is known can be conserved. "In diving, the more you see, the better you understand." (David Díaz). "Success breeds success and inspires hope: let's tell consumers what is being done well and let them decide what they want to consume." (Fanny Douvere).

• "To draw up any management plan, you have to bring together all the stakeholders and then make decisions: the best results come when participation is broad and positive and the authorities make the final decision, or when there is agreement between the industry and scientists. The Balearic Islands are an example of self-management: the fishing industry, acting on scientific advice, phased out a particular type of fishing gear, and this led to better results." (David Díaz).

SESSION VII. Impact economy. Responsibility, impact and persistence

[WBA/ Gerbrand Haverkamp]

• Seafood companies operate in a world of interconnected risks, which become increasingly urgent over time. The oceans are warming, becoming more acidic and losing biodiversity, which affects fish stocks, disrupts migration patterns and threatens the livelihoods of millions of people. For businesses, this means supply chain instability, rising operating costs and increased regulatory scrutiny: an environmental and business continuity issue. Furthermore, it is an industry that has had to contend with labour abuses.

• In Europe, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive will require reporting on environmental and social impacts: illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, labour abuses and biodiversity loss.

• Platforms focused on climate action, nature conservation, human rights, living wages and ethical AI are holding their ground and increasing their membership. Investors and banks remain committed. Whilst 2025 was a difficult year for sustainability, it is not going to disappear. Climate change, biodiversity loss and inequality will persist beyond electoral cycles.

• In the long term, successful companies will be those that prepare for the future: the transition to carbon neutrality, the adoption of practices that benefit the environment, and supply chains that treat workers and communities fairly. Ignoring these factors is risky. 'In the future, regulations will be stricter, investors and banks will demand greater transparency, and consumers will reward responsible brands whilst shunning those that are not.'

• "Speak publicly about your impact – on the climate, nature and people – and how this affects your business. The fishing industry depends on the wealth of our planet. Demonstrating this interdependence – and what you are doing about it – is the most effective way to drive an impact economy. Together, we can build a system where responsibility, accountability and a commitment to continuous improvement form the basis of business success."

