



Commission proposes action to fully harness the potential of algae in Europe for healthier diets, lower CO2 emissions, and addressing water pollution

Brussels, 15 November 2022

Today, the Commission adopted the Communication '[Towards a strong and sustainable EU algae sector](#)', a pioneering initiative to unlock the potential of algae in the European Union. The Communication proposes 23 actions to create opportunities for the industry to help it grow into a **robust, sustainable and regenerative sector capable of meeting the growing EU demand**. The EU is **one of the biggest importers of seaweed** products globally, and the demand is expected to reach €9 billion in 2030, especially in food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and energy production.

23 actions to boost the algae sector

The Commission identifies 23 actions, which aim to improve business environments, increase social awareness and acceptance of algae and algae-based products by consumers, and close the knowledge, research, and technology gaps. Some key actions include:

- developing a new algae farmers' toolkit;
- facilitating access to marine space, identifying optimal sites for seaweed farming and including seaweed farming and sea multi-use in maritime spatial plans;
- together with the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN), developing standards for algae ingredients and **contaminants**, as well as for algae biofuel;
- assessing the market potential, efficiency and safety of algae-based materials when used in fertilising products;
- examining the algae market and proposing market-stimulating mechanisms to support the transfer of technology from research to market;
- funding pilot projects for career reorientation and supporting innovative SMEs and projects in the algae sector;
- conducting studies and discussions to gain better knowledge, amongst others, on seaweed climate change mitigation opportunities and the role of seaweed as blue carbon sinks, define maximum levels of contaminants and iodine in algae;
- supporting, through Horizon Europe and other EU research programmes, the development of new and improved algae processing systems, novel production methods and algae cultivation systems;
- promoting awareness-raising actions and analyse availability of algae-related data.

The people and organisations active in the algae sector will be key partners for implementing the proposed actions. All those concerned are welcome to [join the EU4Algae Forum](#) launched by the Commission in February this year.

Next steps

The Commission will discuss today's communication with the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission will coordinate putting the 23 actions into practice with the Member States, industry (e.g. via the EU4Algae Forum) and other relevant stakeholders.

The Commission will prepare a report assessing progress in implementing the Communication by the end of 2027.

Background

At the end of 2019, the European Commission's Blue Bioeconomy Forum published the Roadmap for the blue bioeconomy, after consulting around 300 stakeholders. The Roadmap concluded that the development of algae cultivation has been hindered by factors such as high production costs, low-

scale production, limited knowledge of the markets, consumers' needs, environmental impacts of algae cultivation, and fragmented governance framework. Following the Roadmap, the Commission initiated and supported several algae-related initiatives, which are currently in an implementation or planning phase (2021-2023). For example, the Commission created the European Algae Stakeholder forum (EU4Algae Forum) in February 2022 as a unique space for collaboration among European algae stakeholders and a single information hub on algae funding calls, projects, business-related information, intelligence and best practices.

Algae can be used in a wide variety of markets, such as food, animals and fish feed, pharmaceuticals, bio-packaging, or biofuels.

The farming of macroalgae can help regenerate the ocean and seas by removing nutrients that cause eutrophication. It has a low carbon and environmental footprint and a promising potential for carbon sequestration. Microalgae production can also be done on land and far from the sea. They are source of carbon compounds and have applications in wastewater treatment and atmospheric CO2 mitigation.

A stronger European algae sector would thus support the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Farm to Fork strategy](#) as we need to transit to more sustainable food systems and a more circular economy.

For More Information

[Questions and Answers on Strong and Sustainable Algae Sector](#)

[Commission Communication "Towards a Strong and Sustainable EU Algae Sector"](#)

[EU4Algae initiative](#)

[Sustainable blue economy communication](#)

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Members of the college said:

Stronger EU algae farming and processing sectors can respond to demand in a wide range of industries, starting with food, animal feed or bio-based plastic to cosmetics, pharmaceuticals or biofuels. Algae biomass can serve as an alternative to raw materials that now are usually fossil-fuel-based, which is very much in line with the European Green Deal's decarbonisation ambition. With this initiative we approach the EU algae sector in such a holistic way as never before

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