

# Seaweed Smarter, Not Harder: How we can sea-weed together to support the value chain

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Vice-president of the International Seaweed Association



# Danish Seaweed

- Green/blue business for future food
- Collect seaweed






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[Seaweed types](#)
[Why us?](#)
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[Become a dealer](#)
[Why seaweed is healthy](#)


# Danish Seaweed

## - From the pure Danish nature!

Michelin supplier for some of the best restaurants in the world



Click here!

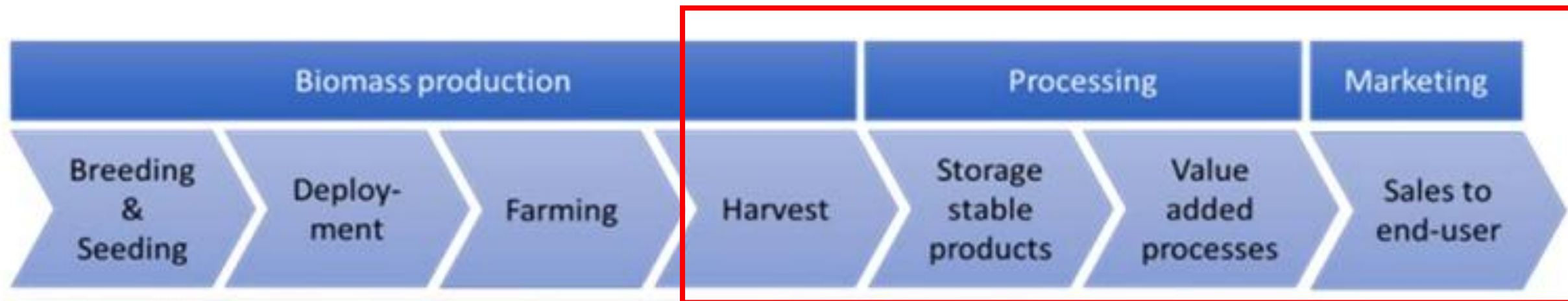




# Seaweed business



# Value chain of seaweed



Urd G. Bak 2019



# Value chain of seaweed



*Urd G. Bak 2019*

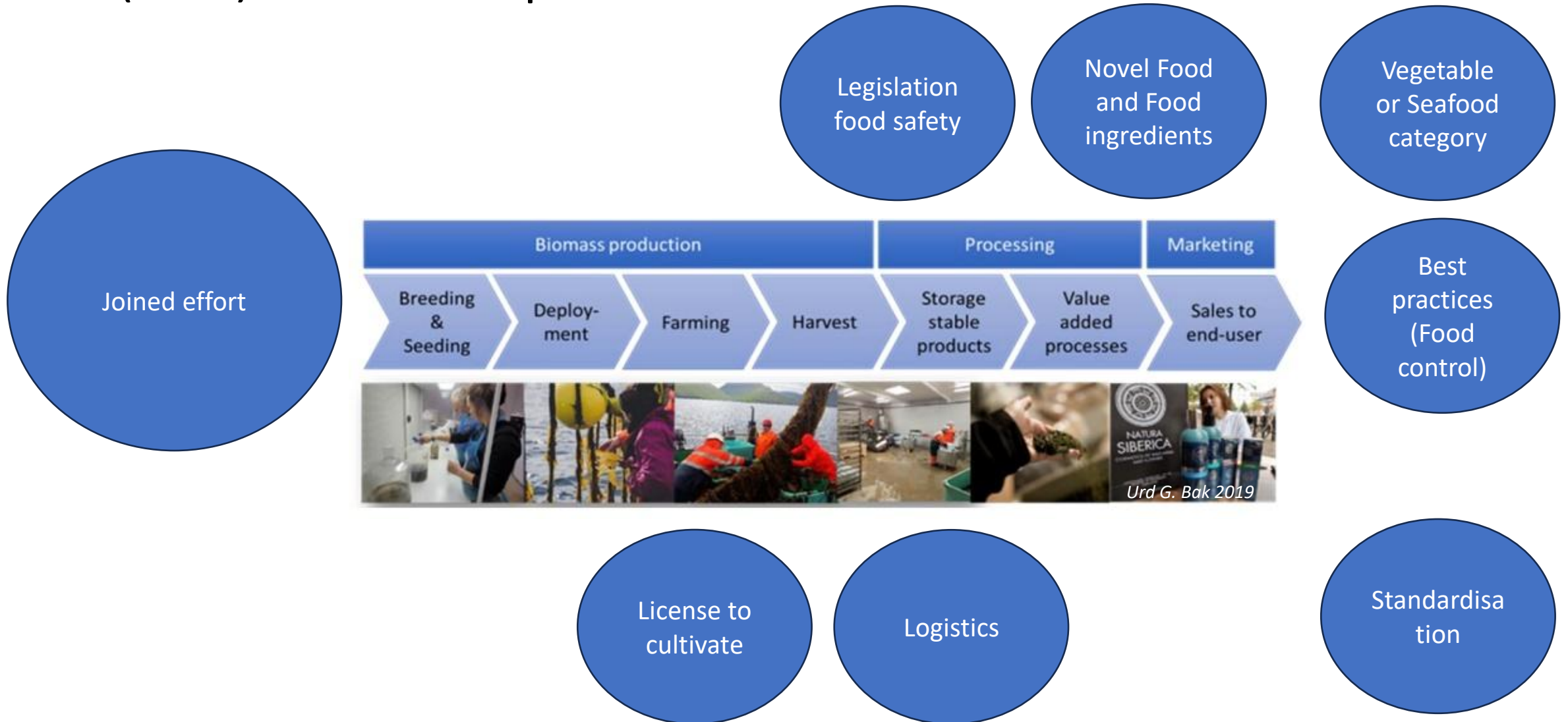
- Each company needs to work on the whole value chain
- And also navigate in a **lack of best practice and clear/no legislation**

# From product focus to production (supply security)



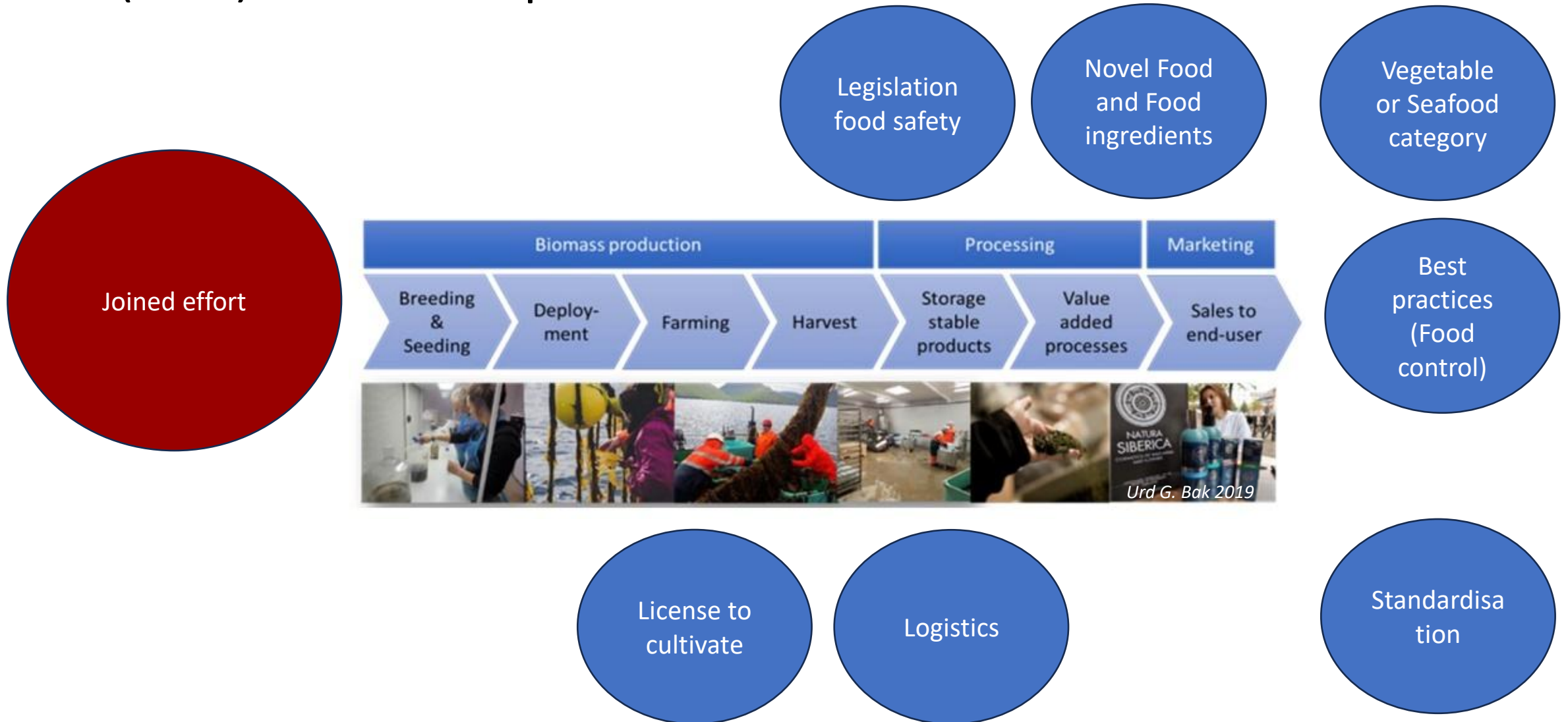


# (full) Landscape of the value chain of seaweed



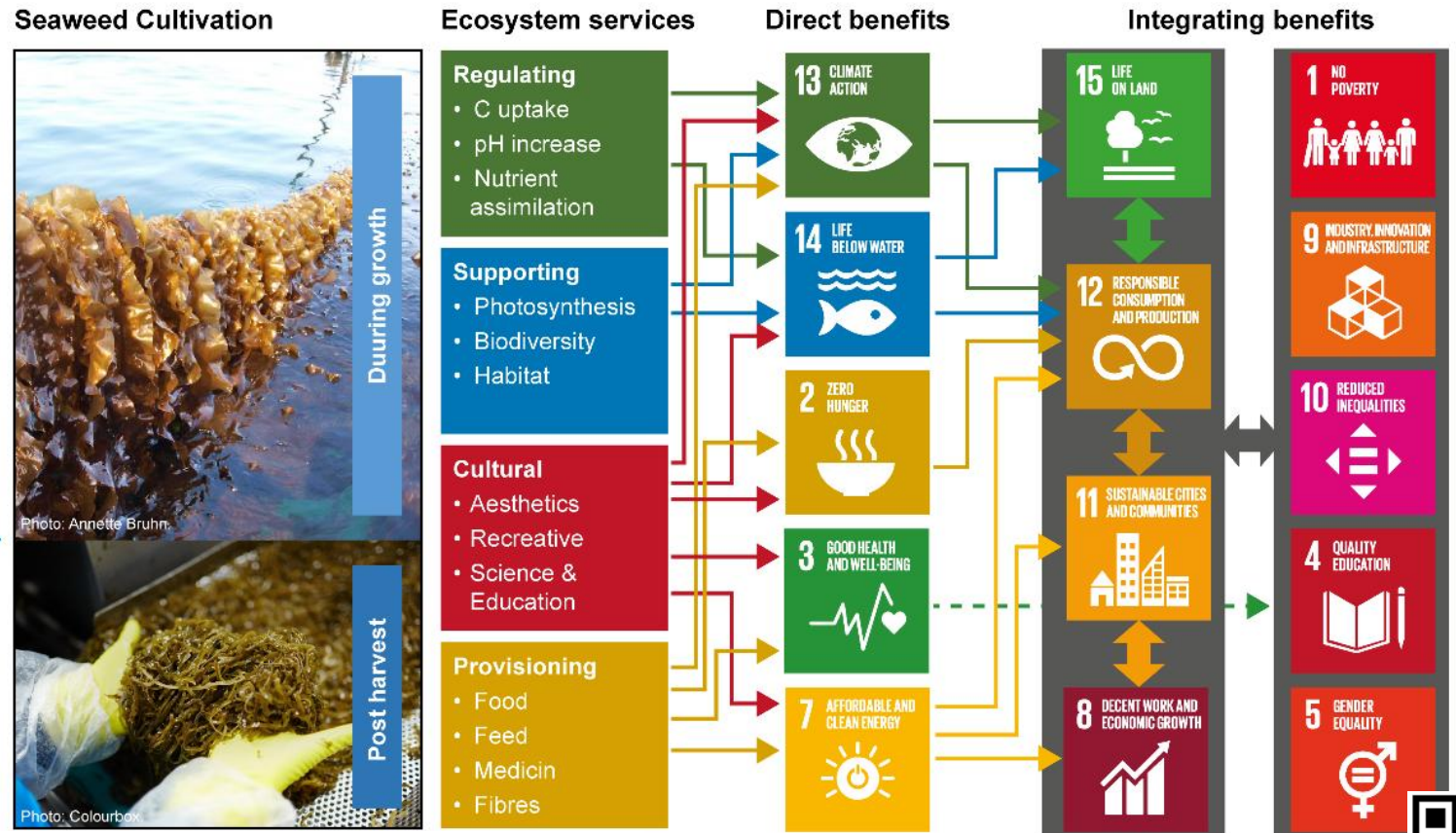


# (full) Landscape of the value chain of seaweed



# Seaweed as the GOAL

Joined effort

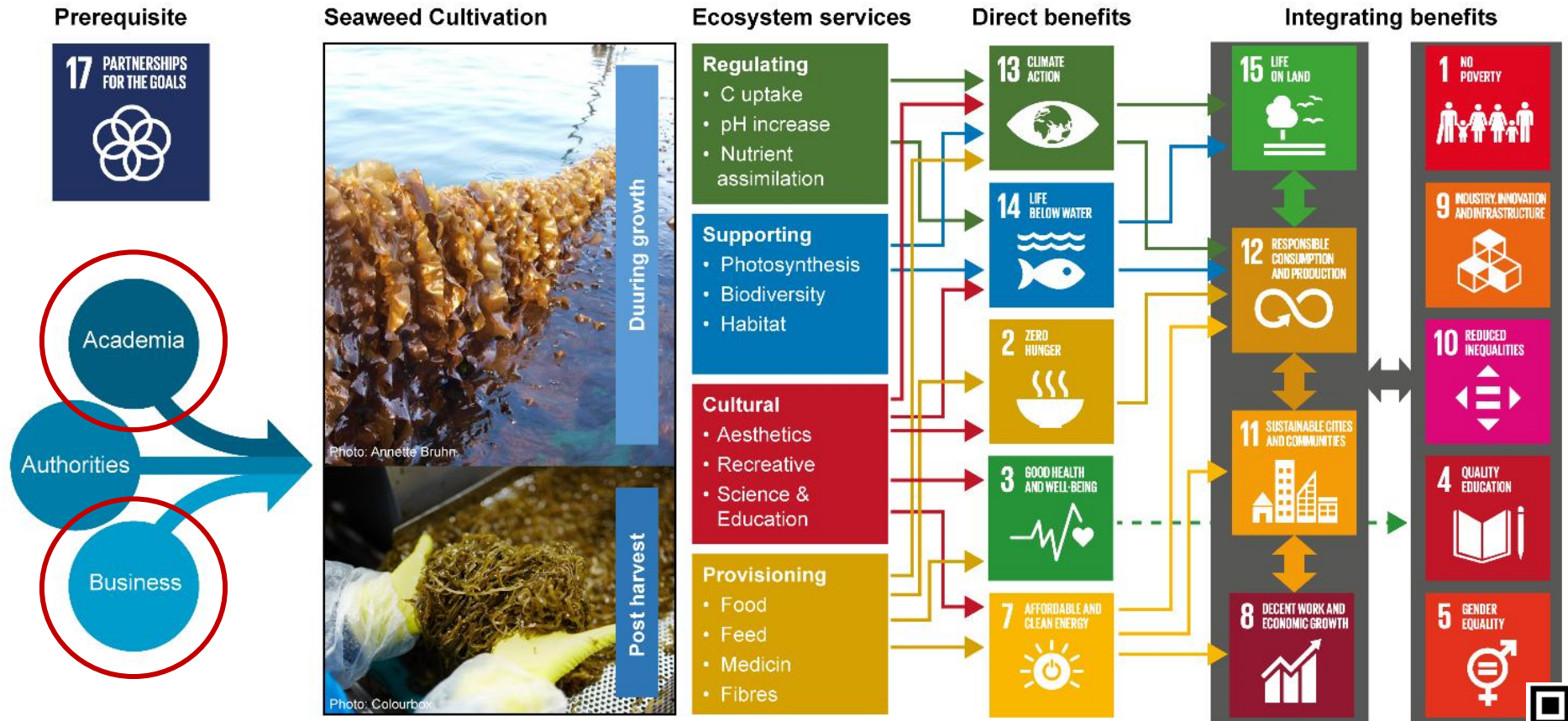


Duarte et al, 2021





# Seaweed as the GOAL



Duarte et al, 2021





# Documentation and knowledge

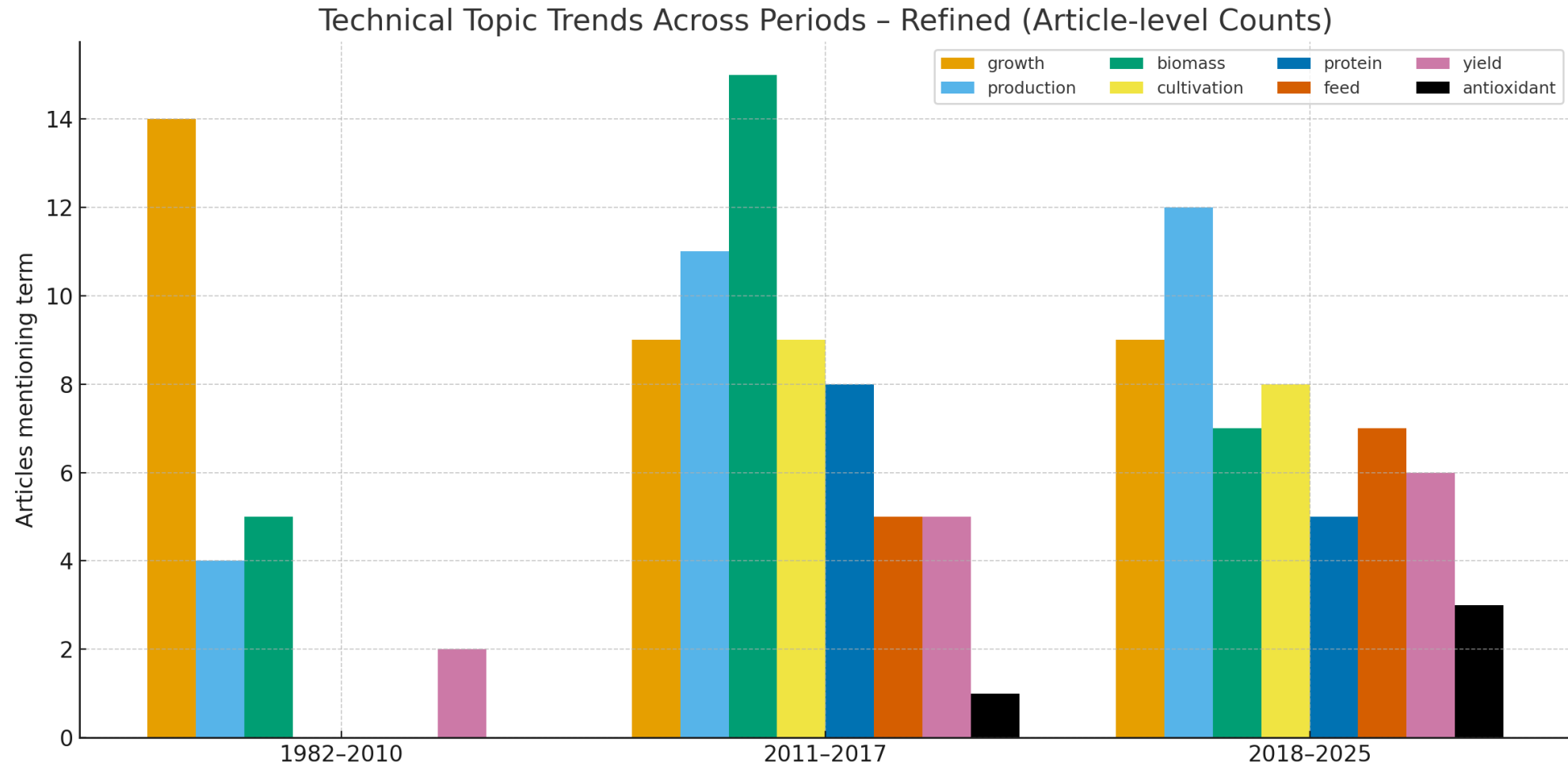
- Seaweed /algae are FOOD
- Convince the authorities about this
  - Documentation necessary
  - Research institutions are objective
- Ensure safe future solutions
- Business within a "reasonable framework"

*AI prompt: make a picture on documentation needed for **Seaweed** as safe future FOOD*





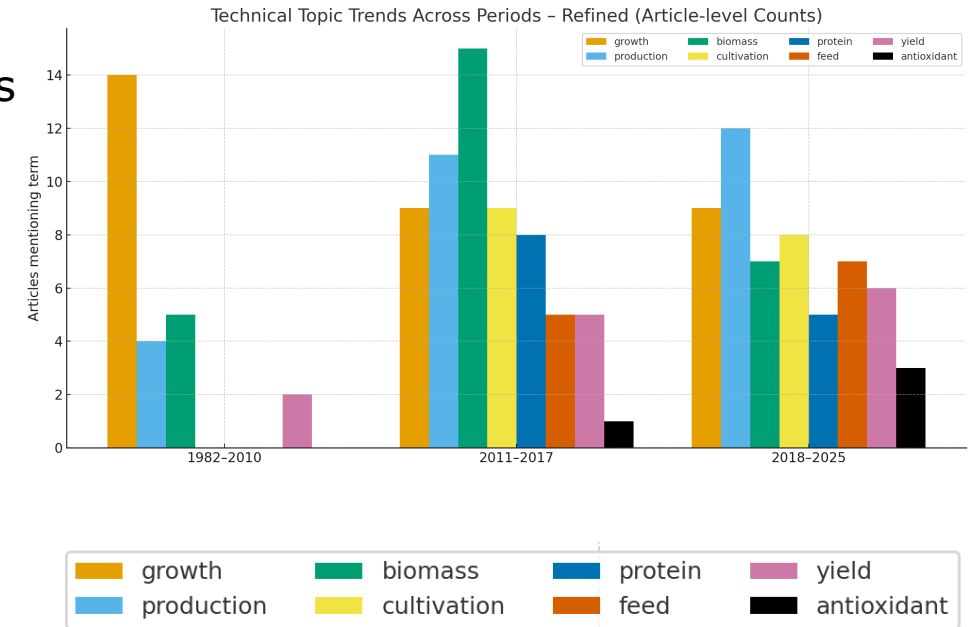
# Articles: Technical Topic Trends Across Periods (title and abstract)



**article-level counting** (each paper counts only once per keyword)

# The research focus in Danish seaweed publications has shifted over time

- **1982–2010:** Early work was dominated by **growth and biomass observations**, with scattered mentions of production.
- **2011–2017:** A transition phase with increased attention to cultivation, production, and protein, indicating a **move toward applied research**.
- **2018–2025:** A clear shift toward valorization and application, with **stronger emphasis on protein, feed, antioxidants, and bioactive properties**, while growth and biomass are less central.



Overall, the trend shows a progression from **basic biological research** → **cultivation and production** → **application and value-added products**.



# Research made into breakthroughs for industry

- In collaborations with industry



*Urd G. Bak 2019*



**Cultivation**  
New species  
Strain selection  
Seeding





**Cultivation**  
Material  
Site selection  
Upscaling

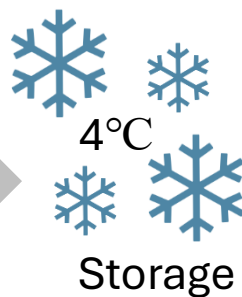






Technologies  
Upscaling  
Mechanization





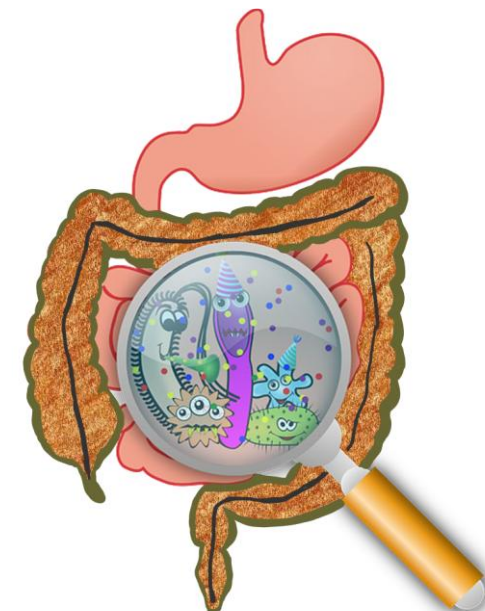
**Technologies**  
Food safety  
Blanching  
Fermentation  
Brining  
Opt-Equipment



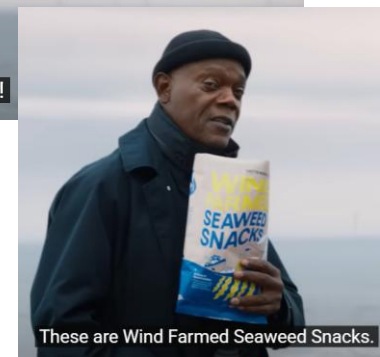




**Multi-extraction**  
 Ingredients  
 Pigments  
 Cosmetics  
 Methan reduction  
 Gut health







"Seaweed snack are serious gourmet sh....!"



Legislations  
Food practice  
Standardisation  
Novel Food



European Commission

Food, Farming, Fisheries

Food Safety

Home Food Safety Animals Plants Horizontal topics

Home > Food Safety > Novel Food > Novel Food status Catalogue (New)

## Novel Food status Catalogue (New)

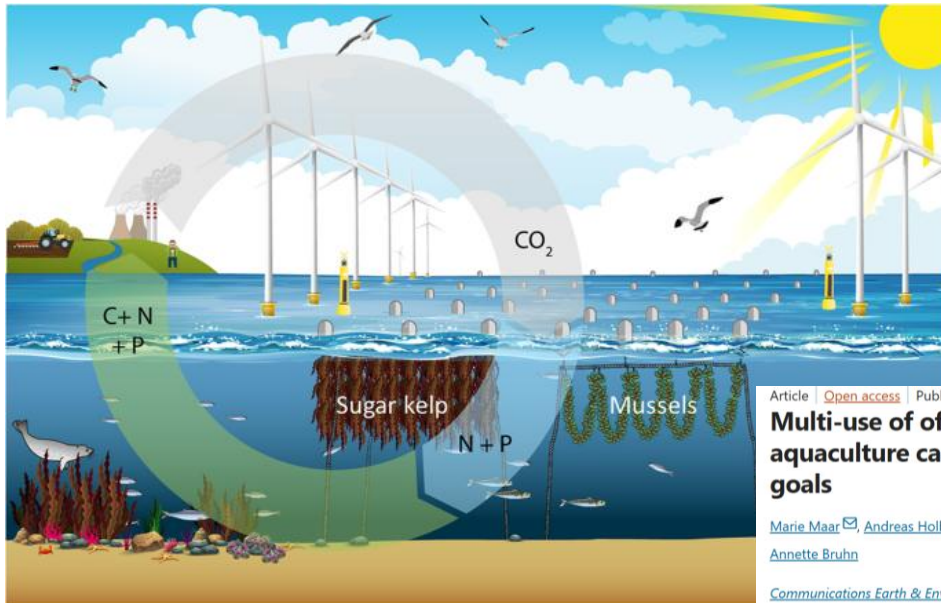
As of 16 November 2023, a revised version of the [Novel Food status Catalogue](#) has replaced the former version. This revised version adds new foods (algal species and food cultures), updates the novel foods status of the foods listed in the catalogue and brings the following new features:







**Environment**  
 Spatial planning  
 Ecosystem services  
 • N and C credits  
 LCA  
 • Identify opt

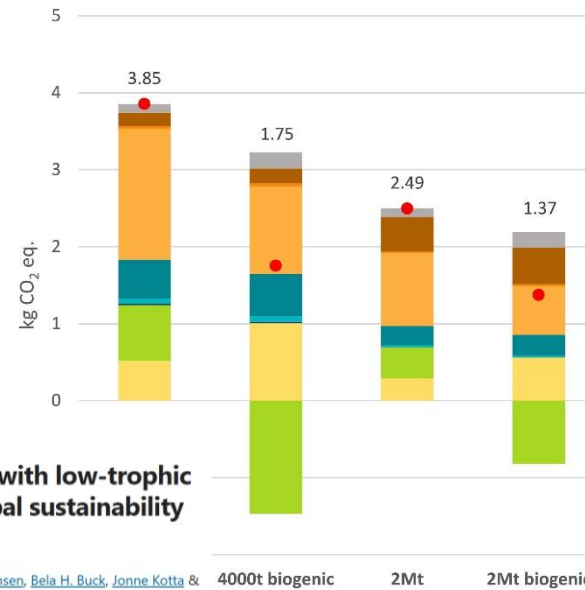


Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 29 November 2023  
**Multi-use of offshore wind farms with low-trophic aquaculture can help achieve global sustainability goals**

Marie Maar , Andreas Holbach, Teis Boderskov, Marianne Thomsen, Bela H. Buck, Jonne Kotta & Annette Bruhn

*Communications Earth & Environment* 4, Article number: 447 (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

18k Accesses | 27 Citations | 48 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)



**Prospective LCA of brown seaweed-based bioplastic: Upscaling from pilot to industrial scale**

Maddalen Ayala <sup>a</sup>, Neill Goosen <sup>b</sup>, Leszek Michalak <sup>c</sup>, Marianne Thomsen <sup>d</sup>, Massimo Pizzol <sup>a</sup>

# Still obstacles in the value chain

- Contaminants/PTE's- new suggestion from EC/EFSA
- New species/Novel Food (authorisation takes 5-7 years)
- Classification codes/best practices:
  - Companies
  - Food authorities for their control visits

Nice to have....

- Standardisation- what are we trading?





# Danish Networks' Meetings, Conferences, Dissemination & Business Involvement

Aspect	Tangnetværket Seaweed Network in DK (2008- now)	Algecenter Danmark (2010- now)	Danish Seaweed Organisation (2015-2020)
Meetings & Workshops	Member meetings, excursions	Internal working groups	Workshops, exhibition
Conferences & Events	Company visits Public events Reason for getting <b>ISS 2016 to DK</b>	<b>Nordic Seaweed Conference</b>	Food Expo (Seaweed bussiness as one/unit SME's pitched at ISS
Dissemination	Newsletters, Tangnet.dk	News, project updates	One entry website to seaweed, food safety
Business Involvement	Inclusive membership, science, chefs, SMEs, general public	Science-Industrial Network	Joint sales, trade pro



# Summary of SWOT Evolution- Danish Seaweed Business

Category	2012 (Key Points)	2021/23 (Key Points)
Strengths	Trust, <b>community</b> , green transition, political attention, species diversity	<b>Knowledge sharing, openness</b> , lifestyle trends, fundraising



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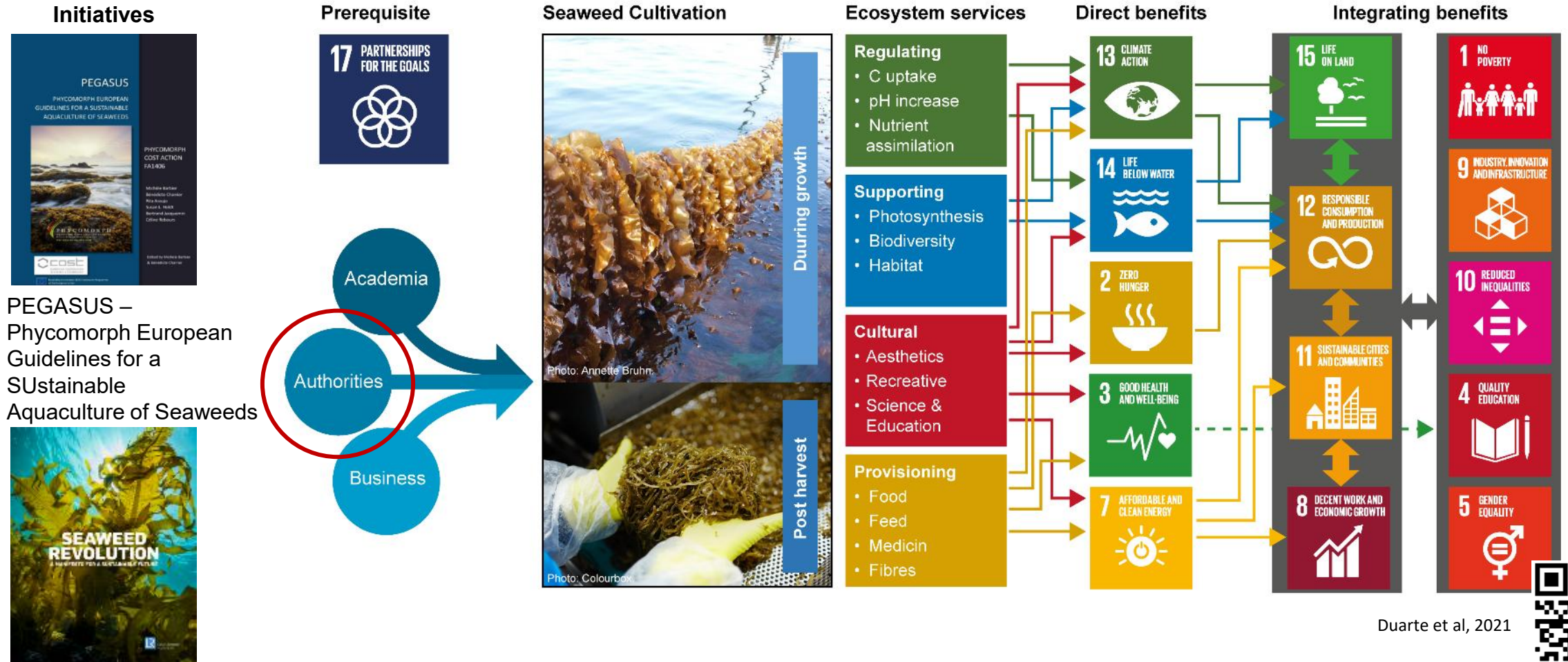
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Threats	Climate change, <b>legislation, heavy metals</b> , lack of capital	Scaling risks, competition (Norway), sea space, diseases, image risks

# Seaweed as the GOAL

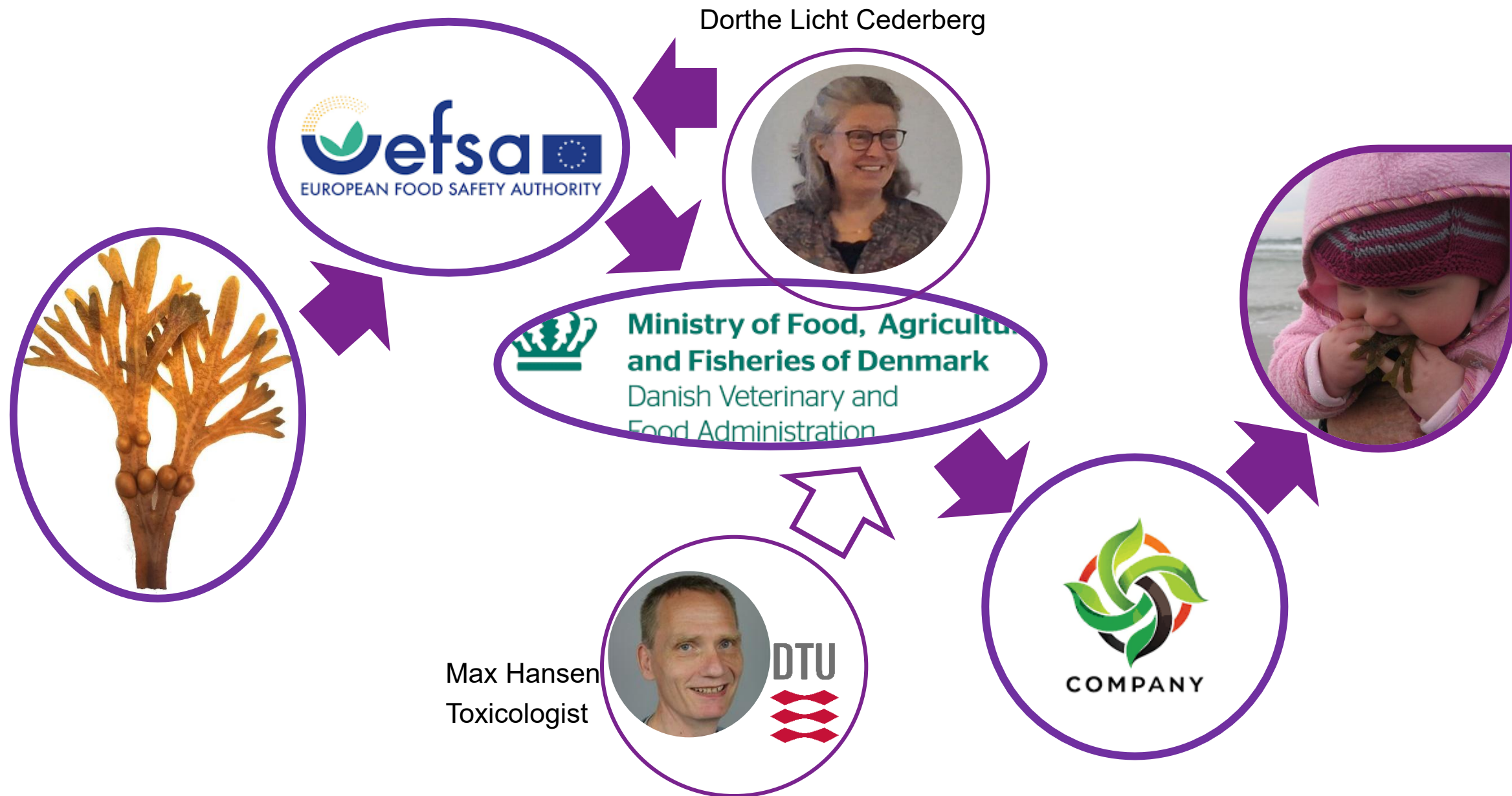


Duarte et al, 2021

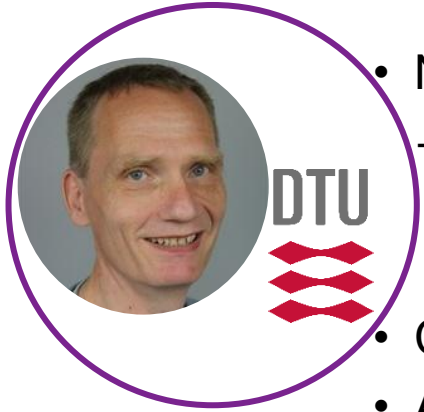


Seaweed manifesto  
<http://www.seaweedmanifesto.com/>





# Food advice to the authorities - DTU Food



- No limits on iodine
  - If limits people think it okey to eat it (and plenty) if below the threshold level
- Collect seaweed from clean waters.
- Avoid seaweed species with high arsenic content (hijiki and bladder-bearing sargassum).
- Eat seaweed on special occasions (not every day). This also applies to producers.
- The more seaweed you eat, the more important it is to choose species with a low iodine content.
- Denmark (and Norway)

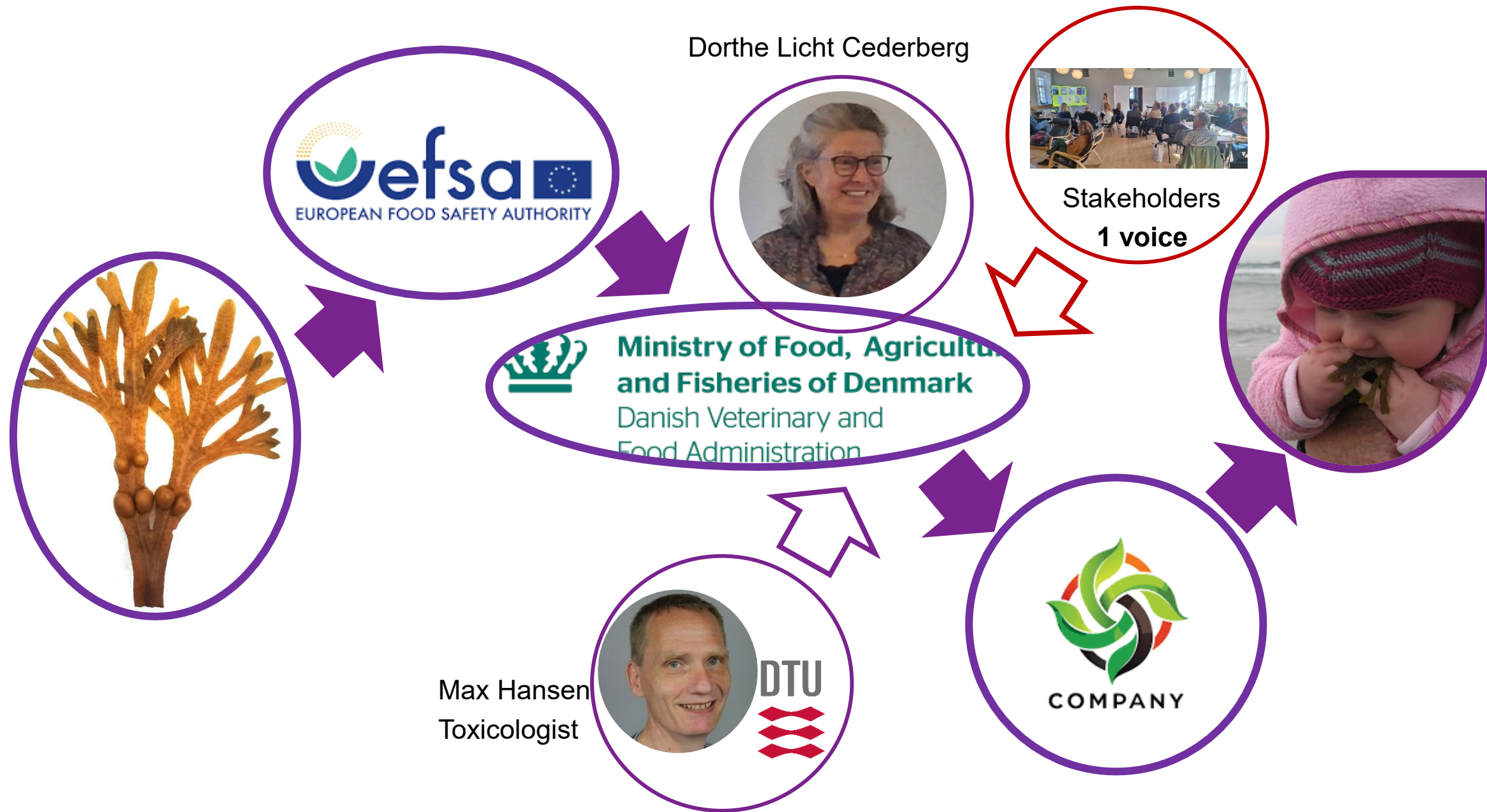




# Stakeholder meeting Sept 26, 2025







# 2 to TANGO: Seaweed and microalgae – in step for the future of food

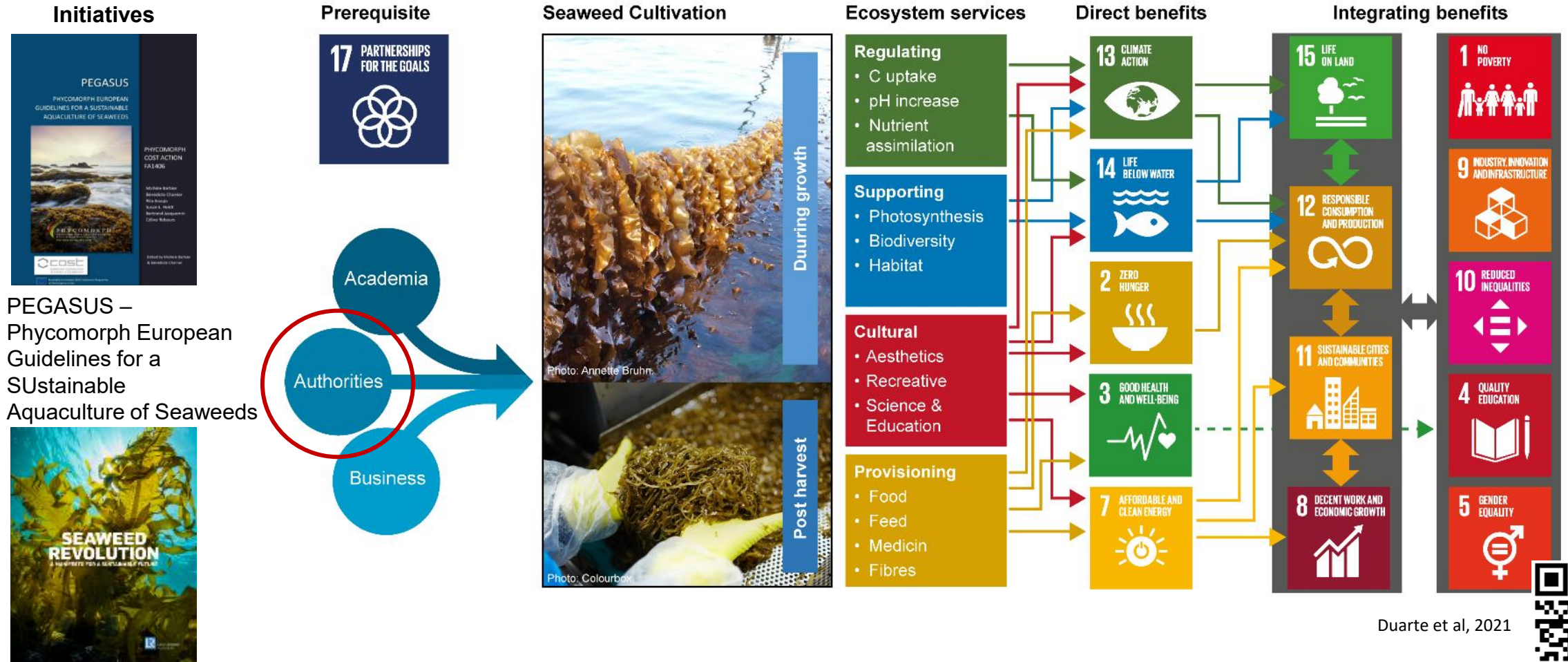


- Industry organisation
- Novel food-more species approved for food
- Control guidelines
- Dietary advice
- Much more....

Any initiative in other EU countries  
- please let me know



# Seaweed as the GOAL



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Seaweed manifesto  
<http://www.seaweedmanifesto.com/>



PRESS RELEASE Nov 15, 2022

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



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.

DG Mare: Supported  
€ 550 mill over the  
last 5 years

### 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.



## Network and knowledge sharing

### Outreach and collaboration with authorities

- EABA
- AlgaEurope
- ISAP
- EU4Algae
- Global Seaweed Coalition
- ISA- International Seaweed Association



# The Danish Seaweed Company

In dialogue with politicians- take them out in waders

Join research projects

Join networks and business collaborators



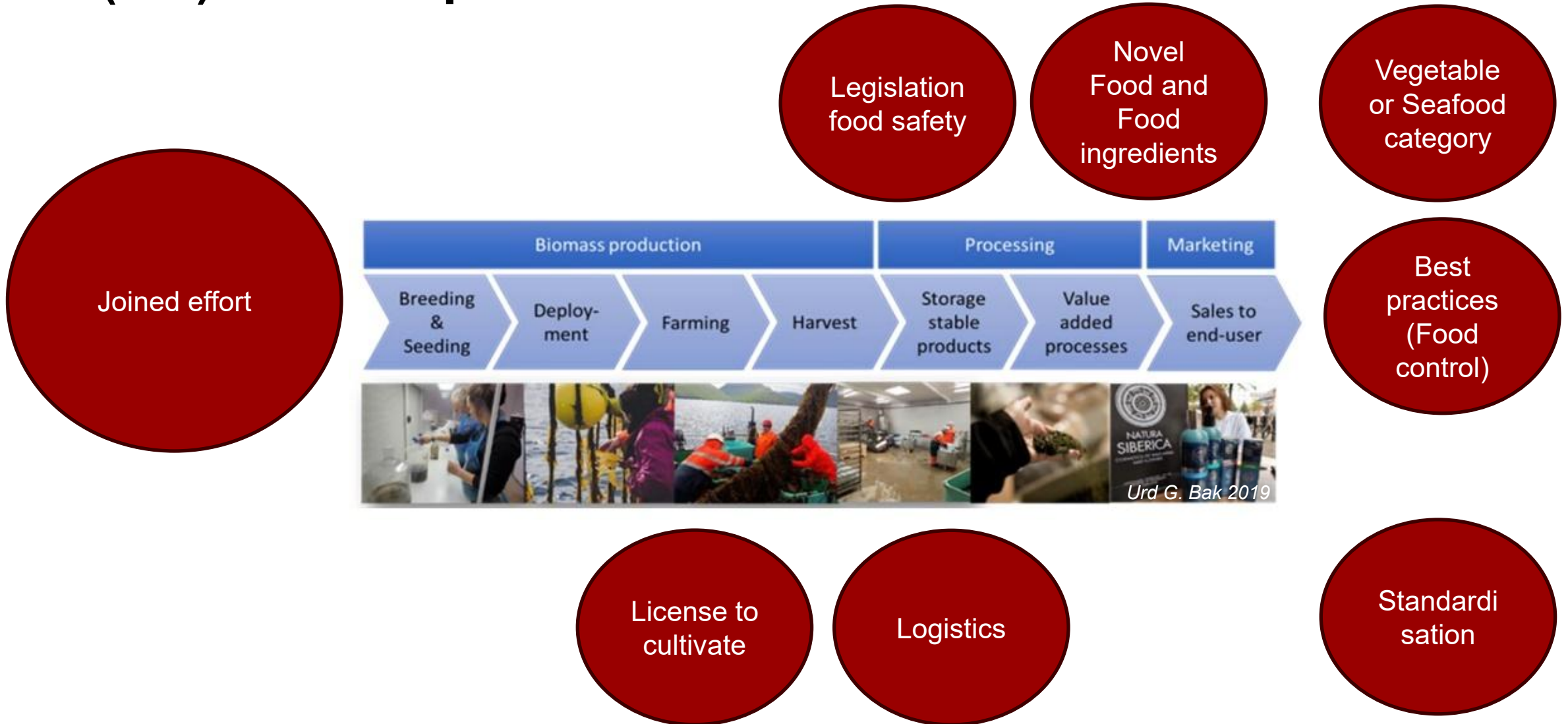
## Long progress but:

- Just prolonged their existing cultivation license 10y more (but not answer yet on expanding/new licenses)
- New approved cultivation area
- Cultivation of new species?

License to  
cultivate



# (full) Landscape of the value chain of seaweed





# Friendly competitors

- We see each other as friendly competitors – working together to build the sector, even while competing



# Product information

- Norway is making a good example in the Norwegian Seaweed Association
- Quality control
- Seaweed got a new name- brand
- SEA GREENS FROM NORWAY
- Registered, certified, HCAAP

Vegetable  
or Seafood  
category

Best  
practices  
(Food  
control)



Kvalitetsstandard for merkevaren «Sea Greens from Norway»

## Daglig kvalitetskontroll

Følgende dokument skal fylles ut på hver produksjonsdag.

Skjemaene skal lagres og være tilgjengelig for revisjon inntil 2 år etter at varens holdbarhetstid har utløpt.

Date for utfølling:

Værforhold under høsting (sol/regn/overskyet) og lufttemperatur under høsting:	
Lagring mellom høsting og videre prosessering (emballasje, sted, temp., tid):	
Er produksjonen registrert hos Mattilsynet?	
Er produksjonen GFSI-sertifisert (BRC, FSSC 22000 eller tilsvarende)?	
Følger produksjonen HACCP prinsippet? HACCP prosedyren må kunne fremlegges.	
Er produksjonen/produktet økologisk sertifisert?	



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---	--

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--	--

## 2. Kvalitetskontroll (gjøres i siste ledd før stabilisering/prosessering)

Sjekk minimum 10 individer pr. batch

Dato og sted for kvalitetskontroll, ansvarlig person:

.....

### a) Visuell inspeksjon og sortering

	Ja	Nei	Kommentar
Er festeorganet fjernet:			
Har taren frisk lukt:			
Er taren blank/fuktig og brun, uten grønne flekker, og ikke tørket ut:			
Har taren fast og fin tekstur, ikke falt sammen og blitt myk:			
Har taren blitt skylt/vasket?			
Hvis ja, spesifiser metode og vannkvalitet.			
Er taren sortert? Hvordan?			

# Friendly competitors

- Every time we give consumers a good experience with seaweed- we all benefit
- Market is large enough
- .... And growing



# (full) Landscape of the value chain of seaweed

- Growing....specially if some of these issues are matured

Joined effort



Legislation  
food safety

Novel Food  
and Food  
ingredients

Vegetable  
or Seafood  
category

Best  
practices  
(Food  
control)

License to  
cultivate

Logistics

Standardi  
sation

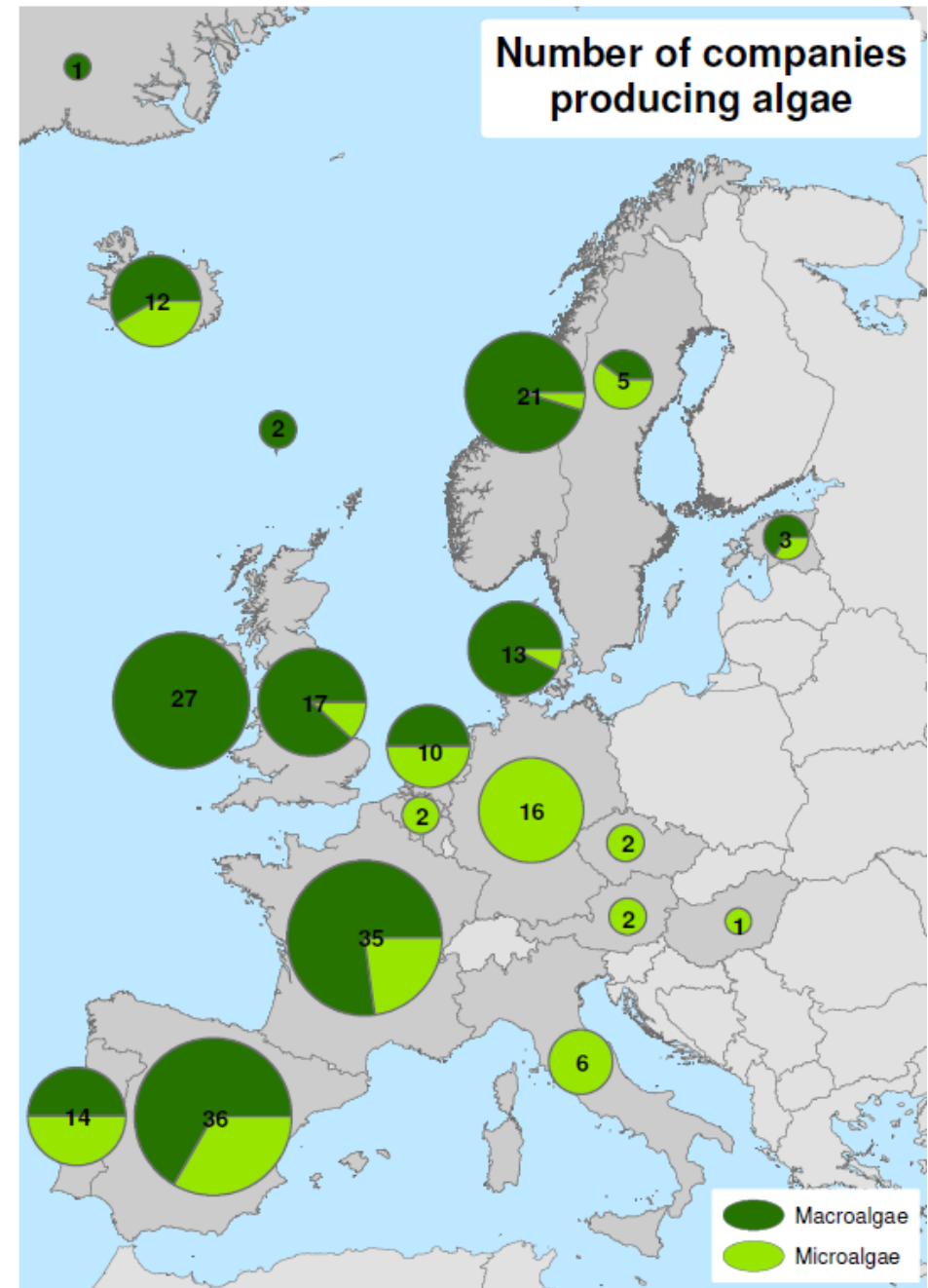


# Distribution and number of companies

- Seaweed companies are located along the coasts
- Main actors:
  - Ireland, Spain, France, Norge

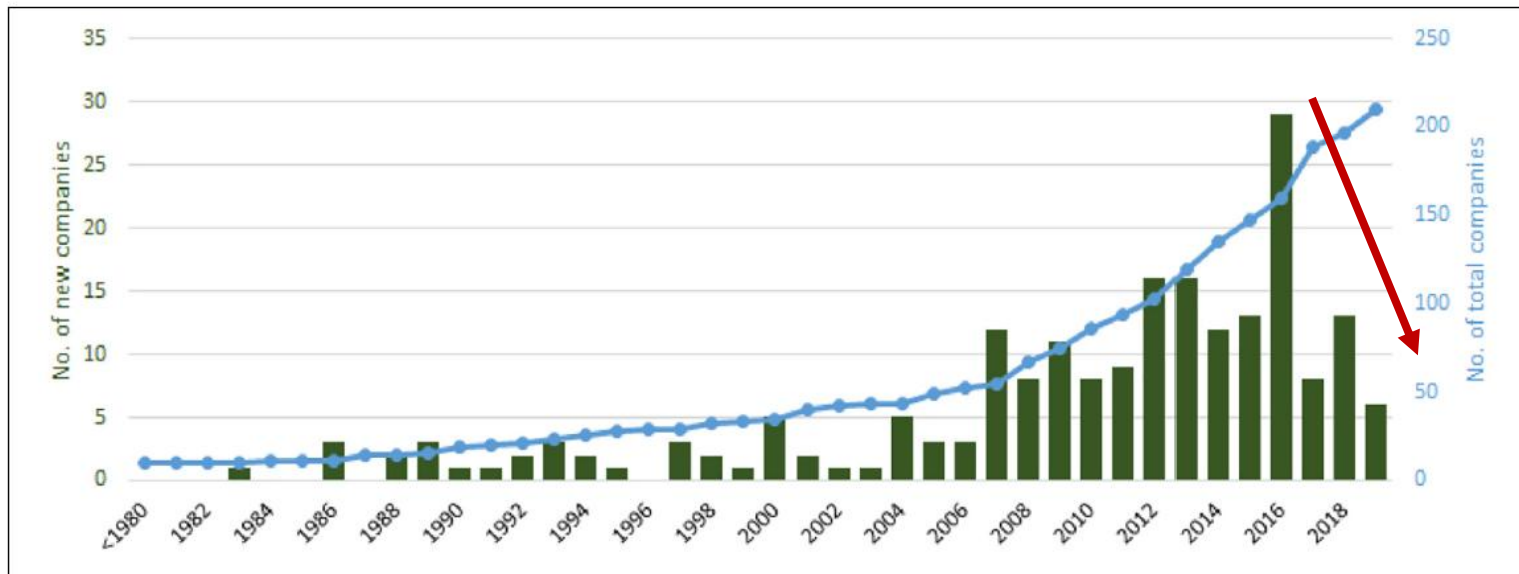


Araújo et al 2021



# Companies cultivating microalgae and seaweed

- Linear increase in total companies over the years (approx 200 in 2020)
- New companies activity in the last decade increasing with 150%
- Decrease in new companies since 2016



**FIGURE 5** | Number of algae producing companies currently operating in Europe (starting activity since 1926). The values shown represent the number (left axis) and the accumulated (right axis) number of companies per year from the companies currently active.

## Some constraints for sector expansion:

- small market size for algae commodities in Europe
- variability in the annual biomass supply- supply security
- current state of technological development in the production and processing of biomass
- complexity and/or inexistence of some EU and national regulations in aspects:
  - cultivation licenses
  - limit values for harmful metal
  - organic certification

Araújo et al 2021

# Conclusions

- Seaweed is a great food opportunity and business
- The whole value chain needs to be addressed
- Seaweed smarter- work with friendly competetors
- Joined force between academia, business and authorities
- Information and documentation
- More great collaborations and synergies needs to be enforced  
For the future seaweed food opportunity to be realised  
Give seaweed business a "reasonable framework"

