

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Blue Economy Initiative



Aquaculture Pathway

A large yellow ribbon graphic with a folded top edge, serving as a background for the award title.

Aquaculture Champion

Leonor Baldaque da Silva
Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics

Our Interviewees



João Rito: Founding Partner at SEAentia



Natalia Ospina-Alvarez: Head of Biodiversity & Blue Economy at AIR Centre



Andreia Cruz: R&D Senior Manager at Oceano Fresco



João Cotter: Founder and CEO at Aquaponics Iberia

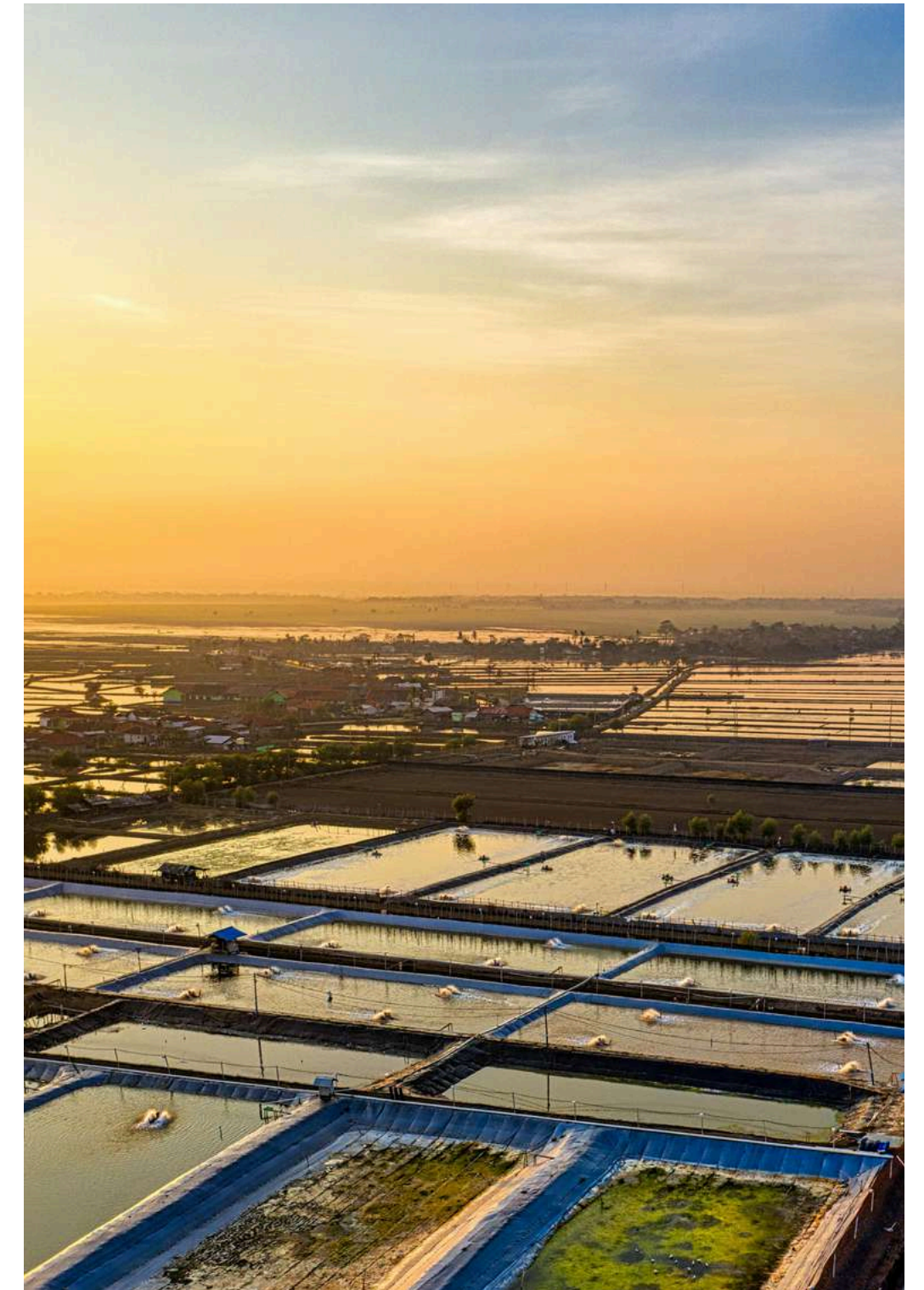
Overview

The aquaculture sector in Portugal is full of growth opportunities

- Portugal imports nearly two-thirds of the fish it consumes (Expresso, 2024), indicating that more can be done for fish production in Portugal. Aquaculture has the power to be the tool for this growth.

Portugal is an emerging potential leader

- The successful implementation of Portugal's national ocean strategy can position Portugal as an international leader in ocean governance. (CESAM, 2025.)



Highlights

Strong Research and Education Opportunities:

- Many diverse degree and certification programs exist in Portugal.
- Polytechnic Institutes, Universidade de Lisboa, and Universidade do Algarve stand out for their ocean-focused degrees and research.



Emerging Trends

Increased demand for professionals who can bridge science and society

Skills required for the sector are varied:

- Research and technological skills are valuable in the industry – but not enough
- *“Employers increasingly seek professionals who combine technical expertise with the ability to drive actionable insights across business units.”* (CSE, 2025.)
- Soft skills such as time management, problem-solving, and communication are highly valued.



Emerging Trends

- A **shift towards sustainability** in all elements of life, including nutrition. This may prove to be beneficial for the Aquaculture sector.
 - There is increased demand for sustainability in the food sector, which is predicted to surpass nearly 1 trillion USD before 2034. (Fortune Business Insights, 2026.)

Aquaculture Career Pathway Opportunities

- Aquaculture provides a breadth of career pathways for **all education levels**, from vocational certificates to PhDs, reducing barriers to workforce participation.
- **Salaries increase significantly with education:** Entry-level jobs start at 950 € per month, and senior roles reach upwards of 2000 € per month.
- Higher-level roles have lots of growth potential, specifically RAS engineers, business director, and sustainability roles. These require **cross-disciplinary training** that bridges **biology, engineering, and business.**

Challenges

Lack of Investment

Innovation and expansion are not possible without investment.

Important steps have been taken; more support is needed.

Bureaucracy and Innovation

Innovation is happening, but policy is not always clear, making it difficult to move forward.

The Gap: Education vs Industry

Workers are entering the workforce with lots of knowledge, but a lack of soft skills and the ability to adapt to different areas and competencies required.

Low Public Awareness

Lack of knowledge and awareness of Aquaculture and misconceptions amongst the general public impact the growth of the sector.

Our Recommendations

More Investment into Aquaculture Initiatives

- Proper investment enables expanded innovation, scaled production, increased marketing to reach more citizens, and better education.

Expanded Interdisciplinary Education

- Involving aquaculture and blue economy education in curricula informs citizens of all ages of the importance of the aquaculture sector within the blue economy.

Strengthened Industry Academia Links

- Education that develops and encourages both soft and hard skills allows for a better-equipped aquaculture workforce and, therefore, greater efficiency.



A CALL TO ACTION

**Aquaculture research and technology are advanced,
with the industry valued at USD 607B.
(Fortune Business Insights, 2026.)**

**Now, Portugal needs to integrate Aquaculture into
society through effective marketing, education and
investment.**