

Project Title: Developing value added and market-oriented sea vegetable products for the Irish SMEs.

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Keywords: Seafood, Sea vegetables, Market orientation, Value added, Market research, New product development, New food product development.

Project Summary:

The seafood sector in Ireland is worth approximately €1.1 billion a year and is characterised by a high proportion of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Over 30,000 tonnes of sea vegetables are harvested in Ireland every year and can contribute an array of nutrients including vitamins, minerals, protein, and fibre and can be easily incorporated into a variety of food products to elevate them to value added food products. A strong market orientation and a consumer driven new product development (NPD) process are critical NPD success factors. Successful NPD requires knowledge exchange between the food related organisations, supply chain partners and the consumer. The Irish seafood industry lacks a market-oriented approach to its NPD activities. The Irish seafood industry is not in a position to capitalise on global trends as there are too many SMEs working in isolation. As a result, there is a lack of coordination and cooperation between supplier, producers and a lack of connection with the consumer and customer. This study aims to examine the use of consumer insights in the development of more sustainable and value-added, new sea vegetable product concepts. Including products with sea vegetables as an ingredient, this process aims to increase consumer acceptance. The methodology employed will be qualitative and quantitative. If this innovation, data and other information gathered is managed correctly, in a formal process, then there is a significant opportunity for Irish food businesses to capitalise on the value-added market. This research highlights appropriate methods of gathering and managing customer insights during the NPD process, specifically the initial stages and applying it to the development of a seafood concept that uses sea vegetables.

Candidate Qualifications/Requirements:

To apply, candidates must be qualified to undertake a Master/PhD Degree (Minimum 2:1 Honours Bachelor Degree). The successful candidate will undertake taught modules to support their research journey.