**Theme 1 – Marine Food Impact**

*Description*

How can producers and consumers of marine food reduce their impact on the natural marine ecosystem?

The production of marine food (fisheries, aquaculture, blue biotech, etc.) puts pressure on the marine ecosystem in many ways. At the same time, consumers also have a clear impact, e.g. through their eating habits and preference for certain products and producers. In order to get an overall picture, we need to map the impact of the entire supply chain. Undoubtedly the marine policy will have to be adapted and the importance of communication and awareness at all levels should not be underestimated if we want to reduce the impact and achieve a balance between marine production and the 'natural' ecosystem.

*Discussion points / concrete topics*

1. CO2-emissions, use of antibiotics and emissions of all kinds, loss of fishing nets and constructions, use/overlap/deficiency of space, impact on natural systems (e.g. coupling extractive aquaculture and nature restoration), mussels vs. oysters, etc.?
2. What is the impact of the entire supply chain: fresh water use, transport, reuse (recirculation) of materials/parts/food residues, packaging/energy consumption, etc.?
3. What is the consumer's impact: preference for fish/shellfish/marine plants; vegetarian vs. fish, preference for producers/retailers, (over)consumption, food surpluses, etc.?
4. How can raising awareness contribute? Effect of nutritional value of various products (proteins/calories)? Importance of information about complete production process and consumption/waste pattern? What do we actually need to live 'healthy'? Will eating less fish lead to social drama? Is the impact of production and consumption of shellfish larger or smaller than that of seaweed?
5. What is the carrying capacity of the natural ecosystem and how can production be brought into balance with the natural system? Can or should there be mediation between different parties? What needs to change in the production in order to reduce the impact? Which changes are the most beneficial?
6. How can policy convince producers/retailers and consumers to reduce the impact and keep/restore the marine ecosystem 'natural'?

*Motivation*

This topic is multisectoral, multidisciplinary and of general interest. Aquaculture and blue biotech are receiving more and more attention (and space), possibly at the expense of natural production (fisheries) and naturalness. But should we actually opt for natural or farmed fish or for jellyfish or seaweed? And above all: can we map out the total impact of the entire supply/consumption chain and in this way, through correct communication and a targeted policy, make both producer and consumer aware of the 'optimal' choices so that the carrying capacity and resilience of the marine ecosystem can be optimally utilised?