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Responsibility

Undervalued and invasive species hold value for products consumers want, say researchers

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Nofima's BlueCC examining bycatch species and byproducts like crustacean shells for biopolymers

BlueCC, a project led by Norwegian food research institute Nofima, is developing ways to use undervalued and invasive species to manufacture consumer products like cosmetics and dietary supplements.

Researchers at BlueCC are extracting biopolymers like collagen and chitosan from bycatch species as well as invasive species harvested in European fisheries, citing a [collagen market](https://www.forbes.com/sites/yolarobert1/2021/11/15/heres-why-wellness-brands-are-investing-into-collagen/?sh=356f59e53a13) worth more than \$8 billion. Lumpfish, starfish and jellyfish may become valuable sources of collagen, while chitosan is extracted from the shells of crustaceans like shrimp and crab.

“We have taken a more consumer-driven approach to this research. This means that we are conducting surveys to identify consumer demand and can adjust our research accordingly,” said Nofima’s Runar Gjerp Solstad, who leads the project from Nofima in Tromsø, Norway. “We will then try to extract



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collagen and chitin from marine co-products using more sustainable methods,” which he explained typically involves the use of acids or alkalis to extract the raw material.

BlueCC has eight partners from six different countries and has been allocated funding of €2 million from the **BlueBio Cofund** (<https://bluebioeconomy.eu/about-2/>). Seven academic partners and a Norwegian industrial partner are part of the project, which runs until next year.



(<http://info.globalseafood.org/goal-2022-save-the-date>).

“Right now we are looking at using a special strain of bacteria for extraction purposes,” said Solstad, adding that it is from research partner IME Fraunhofer in Germany. “We are going to find new methods for turning marine residual raw materials into prototypes for new and eco-friendly products. We believe that pushing oneself to explore something new is valuable in itself.”

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