

Innovative research on aquaculture

A lot of research preceded the first harvest of mussels from a Belgian sea farm. Initiator Colruyt Group was involved in the research projects below. These projects provided a lot of practical experience. As a result, for example, the first Belgian mussels from the 'North Sea Aquaculture' project area could be tasted in [September 2018](#) and in 2019 also the general public could already taste Belgian mussels in ten seaside stores of supermarket Colruyt.



2014-2016 AquaValue

AquaValue realised the development of the **roadmap for integrated aquaculture in Flanders**. The project exploited the expertise available and, in consultation with knowledge institutions and a group of private companies in Flanders, defined a number of promising pilot projects such as Edulis and Value@Sea.



2016-2018 SeaConomy

For the first time, SeaConomy brought together a multidisciplinary consortium of companies, sector organisations and public authorities to identify the **potential of the Flemish seaweed economy**.

2016-2019 North Sea Aquaculture

This overarching research project - which includes the Edulis and Value@Sea projects - studied three challenges: **Innovative cultivation techniques** for shellfish and seaweed, **efficient use of space** in the Belgian North Sea and the development of a market **for new marine regional products**. Among other things, Colruyt Group investigated the (economic) feasibility and marketing of sea-farmed products.



2016-2018 Edulis

Edulis studied the feasibility of **mussel farming** in offshore wind farms 30 to 50 kilometres off the Belgian coast. The project was carried out in collaboration with UGent, five private partners (including Colruyt Group) and a third research partner, OD Natural Environment.



2017-2019 Value@Sea

Value@Sea is the first project in Flanders to demonstrate the biological and technical feasibility of **farming flat oysters** in the Belgian North Sea. This project also took the first steps for **seaweed farming** in the Belgian North Sea.



2019-2022 SYMAPA

As a follow-up to Value@Sea, both industrial partners and knowledge institutions explored the potential **synergies between mariculture** of mussels, oysters and seaweeds, **and passive fishing**. They studied both the economic potential and the possibilities of multiple use of space in the Westdiep zone.



2020-2023 United

Among other things, this European innovation project aims to promote the technical and economic feasibility of multiple use of space at sea. Several pilot projects in the European Union were set up for that purpose. In Belgium, it is taking place in both the Westdiep zone and the Belwind offshore wind farm.

2020-2023 BlueMarine³.Com

The natural occurrence of seeds such as mussels, crustaceans and seaweed in the North Sea is highly dependent on weather conditions. Therefore, BlueMarine³ is researching techniques to promote that in a controlled manner, expanding the knowledge and development of **hatchery technology for various groups of species**.

2023-...

In the future, Colruyt Group **will continue to invest in innovation** with regard to aquaculture and share the insights through **education projects**, among others. It sees a lot of potential in informing and enthusing different target groups about the sea farm in order to increase both their knowledge and involvement.

