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# BLIND SPOTS IN BIOECONOMY POLICY PLANNING IN LATVIA: THE FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SECTOR

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**Abstract** – Aquaculture, which is the specialized breeding or cultivation of fish and other aquatic organisms in inland and marine waters, opens up opportunities for bioeconomy growth in Latvia, while reducing environmental pollution, promoting the production of nutrient-rich food and contributing to the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. The potential of aquaculture in Latvia has not been fully realized, despite the implemented bioeconomy policy and significant investments from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund. However, it is developing as a rapidly growing, productive and competitive fisheries sub-sector worldwide. The aim of the study is to identify and analyze factors that limit the development potential of aquaculture in Latvia, evaluating the bioeconomy policy for the period from 2014 to 2027, its effectiveness and sustainability, as well as revealing shortcomings or blind spots in policy planning and implementation. The study identifies the main barriers to the development of the sector and identifies possible policy improvement instruments. The study draws on a wide range of literature on good governance practices and strategic risks in bioeconomy policy planning. It also includes a survey of Latvian aquaculture companies, which combines closed and open-ended questions with in-depth interviews. These are used to assess the current problems, needs and risks related to the development of the sector. The study is significant because it can serve as support for bioeconomy policymakers and aquaculture sector developers, providing a practical guide for effective policy analysis with key performance indicators (KPIs) for assessing the development of the sector. The study also includes recommendations on long-term measures to be implemented to promote the development of fisheries and aquaculture in Latvia.

**Keywords** – *Aquaculture; bioeconomy policy; fisheries; policy planning; sustainability*

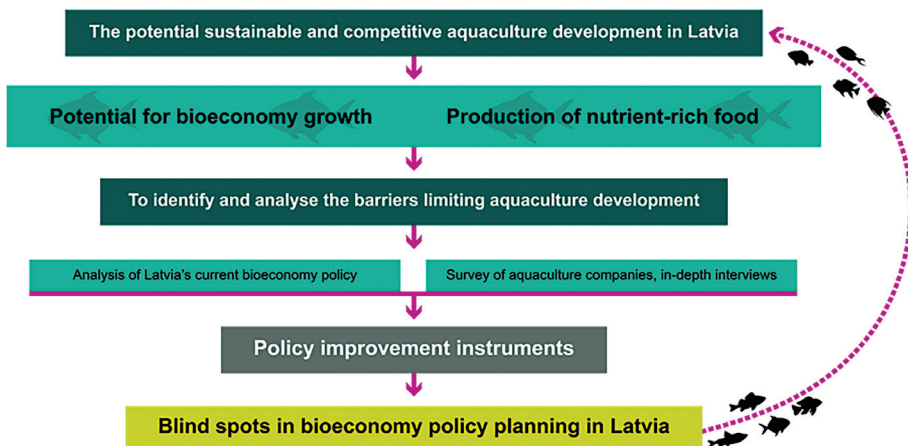


Fig. 1. Progressing towards sustainable aquaculture

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