



# AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION FOR FAMILY FARMERS



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## BLUE FASHION

### What is the innovation?

Using marine biomaterials and by-products as an innovative and sustainable material source for the fashion industry.

### Why is it innovative?

Blue Fashion supports the use of overlooked resources, such as seaweed and fish skin – which would otherwise be discarded as waste or

sold at a very low price – to create sustainable fashion alternatives thus improving livelihoods in small-scale fishing communities and creating local jobs.

### How does it work?

FAO, through its Blue Growth Initiative, aims to promote greater collaboration and increased dialogue on successful practices that have spurred sustainable development, and to support innovative industries and markets that offer a competitive advantage, while balancing the needs of people and the planet.

One interesting and creative example uses fish skin to create elegant fashion designs. Though fish leather is relatively new to the market, it offers several advantages. Each fish skin has a unique natural pattern, and perch skin, for example, absorbs colours extremely well. The resulting material is also far lighter than, for example, cow leather.

### Where?

The innovation is being carried out in the Faroe Islands and Kenya.

### Who are the beneficiaries?

Small-scale fisheries value chain actors (including fishers, fish processors and traders), women's cooperatives and their communities.

### What are the results?

Blue Fashion is an emerging sector in the Blue Economy, given the fashion industry's status as one of the most resource-intensive industries in the world. The innovative and increased use of aquatic resources in the fashion industry can increase the sustainability of both the fashion and fisheries sectors.

The capture fisheries and fish farming sectors generate enormous amounts of fish skin, which are most often discarded as waste. In addition to being better for the planet, the production of fish leather and other products from locally caught or farmed fish can add value to the catch (meaning higher incomes) and also create alternative employment opportunities for local communities. Seaweed cultivation, which is on the rise across the North Atlantic, can serve as a renewable material source while storing carbon and helping to combat ocean acidification.



SDGs the innovation contributes to: SDGs 14, 8 & 12

### Looking to the future:

The innovation is expanding to other countries, including Brazil, which is also producing fish leather from artisanal fisheries resources.

FAO will continue to support the development of new uses for aquatic materials by supporting the capacity development and livelihood diversification of small-scale producers through increased access to the financial and technological resources they need to participate in the emerging Blue Fashion industry. FAO will help promote this fledgling industry trend and continue to highlight the positive social, economic and environmental benefits of using sustainably-sourced aquatic materials in a cradle-to-cradle design approach for the fashion industry.

### Related links:

<http://www.fao.org/fao-stories/article/en/c/1171688/>

<http://www.fao.org/blogs/blue-growth-blog/from-ocean-sourced-fashion-to-luxury-seafood-large-ocean-nations-forum-on-blue-growth-opens-in-malta/en/>

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