



LIFE AQUAPEF – 2022 Final Meeting

9 November 2022

Promote the effective implementation of the Product Environmental Footprint in the Mediterranean aquaculture Sector

ACTION B4

Consumer communication strategy of sustainable aquaculture products



Objectives

- ✓ Understanding consumer perceptions
- ✓ Raising awareness
- ✓ Informing consumers about impact fish product choice
- ✓ Identifying behavioural change techniques towards more sustainable aquaculture product consumption



Tasks

- B4.1 Literature identification of key themes for sustainable communication
- B4.2 Assess current practices and design communication messages through focus groups
- B4.3 Finetune communication strategies based on insights from web survey
- B4.4 Test effectiveness of communication strategy through choice experiment and/or lab experiment
- B4.5 Development of communication strategy and protocol for adjusting communication strategy to local context



Aquaculture suffers from negative perceptions

Key findings

- ✓ general concern about the health and sustainability impact of food
- ✓ consumers want to be better informed → lack of information on sustainable practices, both in wild fishery and aquaculture
- ✓ confusion regarding the true sustainability impact of their fish choice
- ✓ Misconceptions and negative perceptions of aquaculture



Aquaculture suffers from negative perceptions

What does this imply?

- ✓ Awareness and education campaigns
- ✓ Food labels to convey sustainability information
 - front-of-package labelling, but
 - simple information with maximal transparency
 - proper explanation regarding the label through different communication channels before its implementation



Colour-graded environmental scores might overcome negative perceptions

Key findings

5-level, colour-graded environmental score could play an important role in consumers' fish consumption decisions

What does this imply?

Stimulate adoption of environmental labelling scheme

→ Help consumers in choosing more sustainable products

→ Incentivize producers to adopt sustainable practices

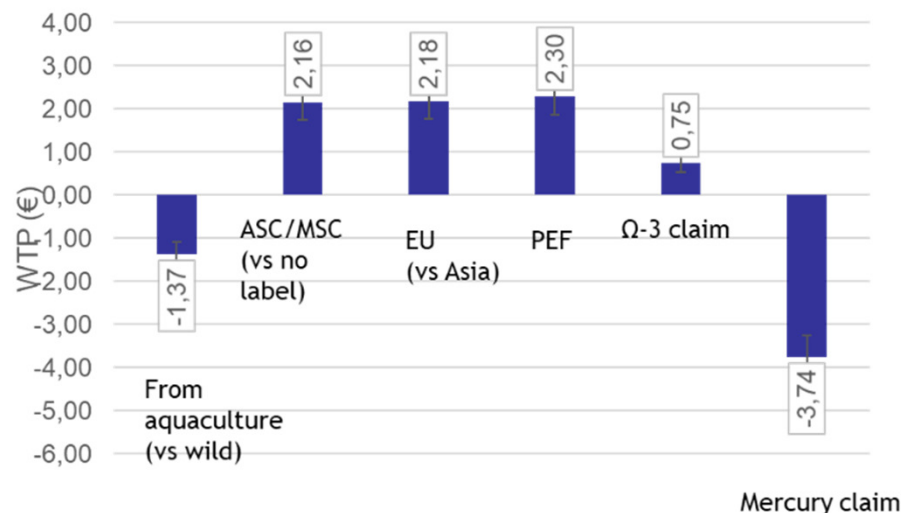


Figure: Willingness-to-pay per attribute



Displaying Enviroscore increases consumers' likelihood to choose more pro-environmental products

Key findings

Adding an Enviroscore to the labels of fresh and packed fish makes consumers 16% more likely to select the most environmentally friendly option.

What does this imply?

Colour-graded scores might help to increase the sustainability of food choices





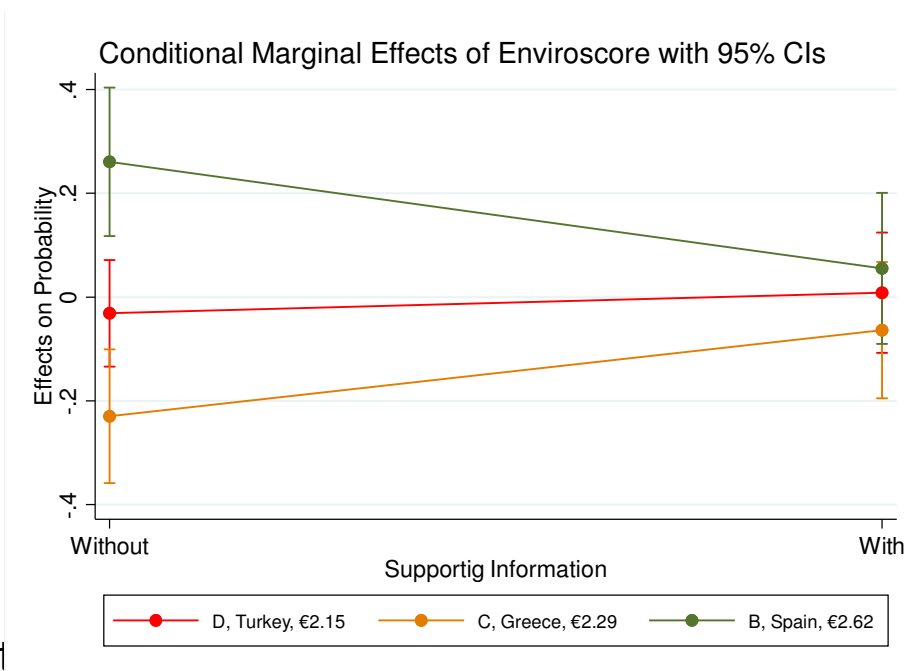
Too patronising information might backfire

Key findings

Supporting information in the food environment that aims to increase the use of Enviroscores, makes beneficial effects of Enviroscores on food choices disappear.

What does this imply?

Important to maintain the feeling of choice freedom
Avoid information overload in shopping environment





EnviroScore works, but not because people deliberately consider it

Key findings

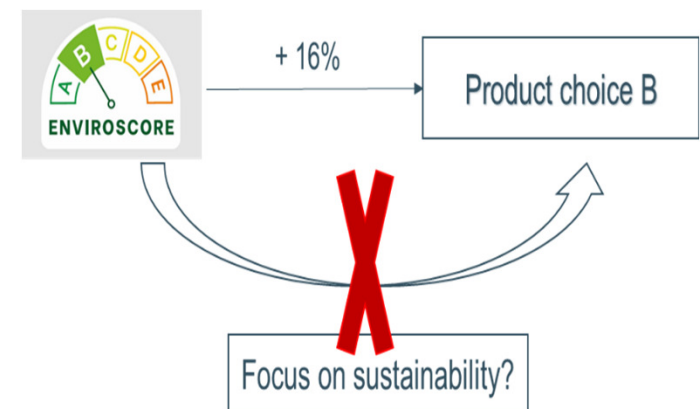
The display of EnviroScore does increase the likelihood to choose more pro-environmental products, but this is not because people focussed more on sustainability. The consumer reacts mostly in an intuitive/heuristic way to the scores

What does this imply?

When several colour-coded scores are jointly displayed as FOP labels with opposite colours, it becomes very difficult to value products at a glance.

The outcomes of a disaggregated combined scoring system are likely to be much less effective

scoring system that allows for both within as well as across category comparisons of products.





Enviroscore makes consumers faster and more accurate in identifying sustainable alternatives

Key findings

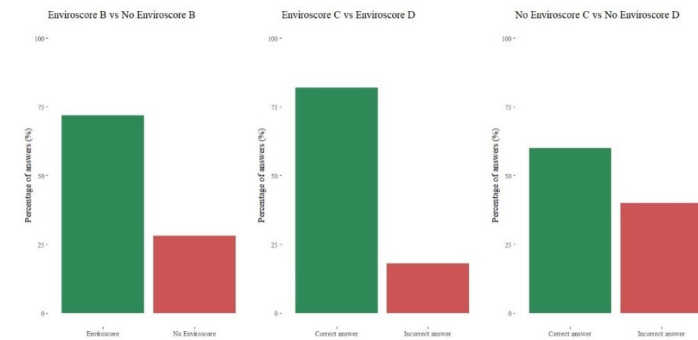
Enviroscore allows to better assess the sustainability of product

Sustainability evaluations are performed quicker and better when the Enviroscore is present

What does this imply?

Enviroscore facilitates the sustainability judgements, making them faster and more accurate.

It can be used as a differentiation tool, as it also makes a product with a positive Enviroscore rating look more sustainable.





To optimize trustworthiness of an EnviroScore in the aquaculture sector, this information should be communicated by trusted public bodies.

Key findings

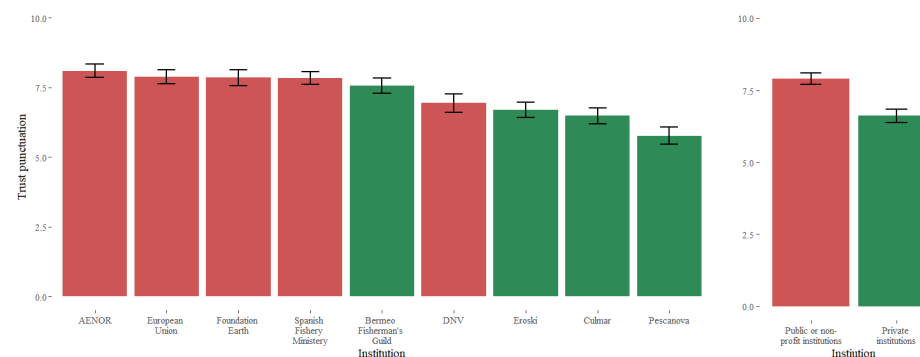
It is key that consumers trust and rely on this information.

Consumers find environmental impact information provided by a public entity more trustworthy than information provided by a private one.

What does this imply?

If a private institution implemented a sustainability impact index, its effect could be lower than expected due to the diminished levels of trust in the provided information.

Trust in sustainability information for public and private institutions





EnviroScore does not affect visual behaviour or patterns while shopping

Key findings

EnviroScore increases the selection of more sustainable products, but the shopping time, i.e. time spent looking at products does not change

using the EnviroScore does not lead to more or less comparisons between the different products available

What does this imply?

Adding the score modifies the shopping behaviour of consumers, but it does not modify their visual behaviour. Consumers did not experience a sensory overload. It supports the finding that the color-coded environmental impact label is used by consumers in a more automatic way, without requiring additional cognitions.



Q&A

For more info: see AQUAPEF deliverables