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The following note is the result of an investigation lead by Marie Christine Monfort, seafood market analyst (www.marketing-seafood).

With a short 9.1% of women at leadership level, the seafood industry confirms its “male DNA”.

Two years after the first investigation on the position of women in seafood high ranks, this analysis based on the 2016 list of the 100 top seafood companies confirms the flagrant gender unbalance: womens’ representation at top positions remains dramatically low in the seafood industry.

The following elements are based on the analysis of the gender identity¹ of the leaders of the top 100 world seafood companies listed by Undercurrent News in 2016, including members of executive and non-executive boards. Out of these 100 companies we accessed the boards’ composition for 71 companies. In this work, we aggregate the executive teams and the supervisory boards.

Compared to the 2014 investigation (Undercurrent News sept 19, 2014), 7 new comers are amongst the top 100 companies. This prevent us to draw direct comparisons, but we can see that the situation has not progressed.

One company, the Japanese Marusen Chiyoda Suisan is the only one headed by a woman. This compares with 7% in the FTSE 100 companies listed at the London Stock Market.

Women at top position in the seafood industry: percentage of board seats held by women:

% women in board	Nber of companies	% of companies
0%	38	54%
< 20%	21	30%
21% to 40%	9	13%
41% to 50%	3	4%
> 51%	0	0%

Source: MC Monfort based on Undercurrent News Top 100 companies

Over half (38) of the 71 seafood companies have 100% male boards with no woman holding leadership responsibilities. An exclusive male leadership team is nowadays a very rare situation in large listed group. In the observed sample no companies has a 100% female leadership team.

Overall 84% of all companies have less than 20% of female in boards.

¹ The identity is informed from the individual companies’ and Bloomberg websites.

Out of the 762 board members sitting at the advisory board, the executive committee or in some case at both, of the 71 companies, 69 of them were women, i.e.9.1%. This year again, the seafood industry still confirms its “male DNA” at top level.

Percentage of board members being women, by country

	Board members	% women
Norway (6)	71	31%
China (4)	44	20%
Iceland (3)	24	17%
Denmark (3)	22	14%
Canada (3)	37	14%
South Africa (2)	17	12%
Thailand (3)	60	8%
Spain (2)	13	8%
USA (10)	79	6%
UK (2)	24	4%
Japan (19)	266	2%
Chile (5)	48	2%

Number of companies observed in brackets

Executive or non-executive?

The outstanding position of Norway is partly explained by the 2003 law requiring that at least 40 % of public limited company board of directors be women. The impact of the law has long been debated, with pro and cons, but all agree that without regulatory intervention women would not have access to these top position in such proportions. Thus, should be noted that the proportion of women at executive and senior management positions, which is not regulated, is noticeably lower.

% of women in Norwegian Stock Listed Seafood Companies

	Board of directors	Executive management
Norway Royal Salmon	50%	0%
Grieg Seafood	67%	14%
SalMar	43%	17%
Marine Harvest	67%	33%
Austevoll Seafood	43%	33%

Source: Individual companies' websites

Cultural barriers are one of the major explanations for women being barred from decision making positions and many studies around the world have provided evidences that gender diversity and inclusiveness enhances corporate performance. Time has come in the seafood industry to provoke changes and tolerate, if not encourage women to participate more widely at decision making levels.

*Marie Christine Monfort is a senior seafood market analyst and co-founder of the newly established **International Association for Women in The Seafood Industry (WSI)** which aims to raise awareness of women's contribution in the seafood industry.*