

SeaMark Kick-off meeting 30. aug. á Hotel Hafnia

Good morning and welcome to the kick-off meeting of the SeaMark project.

Today you are all writing history. Because you are partners in the first research and innovation project ever, funded by the Horizon Europe programme and led by a Faroese Project Partner.

Even though the Faroe Islands are not part of the EU, we have had the opportunity to participate in the EU research and Innovation program for many years.

Our parliament has funded the Faroese participation all these years, and we have all been waiting with great excitement for this day to come. The day, when we finally hit the jackpot in the European research system and got the lead of a research project with potential global significance.

For Ocean Rainforest, and not least for Ólavur Gregersen, it has been a long and hard journey. You have built your business from scratch and worked your way, project by project, up through the EU research system, for the better part of your working life.

You have been a partner in many exciting international projects, and you have also managed to get substantial international funding before.

Perhaps the most remarkable until today, has been the big funding for the seaweed farming projects in USA.

And now you finally succeeded to get to the top in the EU research system. Congratulations!

The Seamark project is addressing big and important questions for the whole world.

As you all know, better than most people, seaweeds are a fantastic resource.

- They can be harvested and grown sustainably.
- They are bursting with health benefits for humans and animals.
- They are tasty, and they add to the flavour in other foods.
- They need neither feed nor fertilizer to grow.

- And they can be used for both food and feed, for textiles, plastics, fuels, you name it.

What's not to like?

Seaweed can be instrumental in solving some of the big global challenges.

And the best part is, that we here have the chance to develop a truly sustainable industry from the beginning.

We have the chance to create an industry that is good for our environment. An industry that brings food and health benefits to the world, and an industry with plenty of opportunities for both researchers and entrepreneurs.

We trust that all of you will use your combined brainpower, to scale up the seaweed industry without creating new problems to the environment. And that will be an historical achievement.

In Ocean Rainforest you have always based your work on both research and production, and it seems to be a clever choice.

Because there is still so much more to explore, at the same time as the market and the production are being built up.

It will take a lot of research, tests, and trials, to find the best ways to grow seaweed with respect to the local environment.

And it takes even more research to find ways to extract all the good nutrients and harvest all the potential benefits in the many kinds of seaweed.

It will also take great effort to bring the products to market, and to get the industry to use seaweed on a large scale in foods, feeds, bioplastics, textiles, fuels, and many other applications.

The SeaMark project is an important step for Ocean Rainforest as an international research partner, and for the Faroe Islands as a hub for seaweed research.

And I believe it is a step leading to many other exciting projects for both research and industry in the Faroe Islands, not least with in the blue bioeconomy.

With all this potential and the great challenges, many partners are needed, from all over the world.

The SeaMark project has an impressive list of partners. I am confident that we have with us some of the very best researchers and companies in their field.

I hope you all will benefit greatly from the cooperation, and that you will reach your goals with the project.

I also hope that you will enjoy your stay in the Faroe Islands. That you will find the facilities and our country inspiring and uplifting. Good luck and the very best wishes for the SeaMark project.