

Press Release

Triodos Food Transition Europe Fund takes equity stake in sustainable seaweed aquaculture company Ocean Rainforest

Investment contributes to Triodos' Nature based Solution targets

Driebergen, the Netherlands, 16 September 2024 – Triodos Food Transition Europe Fund is taking a minority equity stake in Ocean Rainforest, a Faroe Islands based sustainable grower and processor of seaweed. With this first investment in the sustainable aquaculture sector, the fund is not only tapping into an attractive global growth market, it also contributes to Triodos' Nature based Solutions targets given the positive impact seaweed has on biodiversity, and because of its carbon capture capacity. The total capital raised by Ocean Rainforest amounts to EUR 2.5m with participation of existing shareholders and new investors. The shareholders in Ocean Rainforest include some of the leading investors in this field globally, like Grantham Foundation, Builders Vision, Katapult Ocean, Twynam and WWF.

Adam Kybird, Fund Manager of Triodos Food Transition Europe Fund: "Ocean Rainforest addresses three impact pillars: from an environmental perspective, cultivating seaweed at scale is associated with significant enhancement of marine biodiversity and water quality. Seaweed-based fertilisers and animal feed also contribute to the sustainable agriculture transition. From a consumer perspective, consumption of seaweed-based products improves the digestive system and brings anti-inflammatory and other benefits. Finally, from a socio-economic perspective, the company creates positive impact for coastal communities, creating jobs and positioning the Faroe Islands at the forefront of sustainable seaweed cultivation."

Ocean Rainforest was founded in 2007 in the Faroe Islands, anticipating massive global demand for sustainable seaweed, and driven by the idea that growing seaweed in the ocean would take up CO₂ and mitigate climate change. Cultivation began in 2013 after years of research and trials. Today the company employs 25 people and expects to produce 400 tons of seaweed biomass in 2024 (240 tons in 2023), making it the largest cultivated seaweed producer in Europe. Key market segments where its seaweed is being used are cosmetics, food ingredients, animal feed, bio stimulants and nutraceuticals.

Olavur Gregersen, CEO and co-founder of Ocean Rainforest: "We see the investment by Triodos Food Transition Europe Fund as a confirmation of our business strategy and our purpose to improve people's wellbeing and make a unique contribution to our blue planet. With the funding provided by Triodos we will be able to further scale our production and capitalize on the huge potential of this global growth market while contributing even more to our sustainability goals."

In addition to its activities in the Faroe Islands, Ocean Rainforest is also growing giant kelp in the US offshore Santa Barbara, California under the first R&D permit for seaweed cultivation in federal US waters. The company recently filed a permit application to grow seaweed for commercial purposes off-shore California. If granted, this would enable Ocean Rainforest to scale-up to the largest open ocean seaweed cultivator in the US.

About Ocean Rainforest

Ocean Rainforest's vision is to create local ocean rainforests around the world. Headquartered in the Faroe Islands, Ocean Rainforest is a leader in offshore seaweed cultivation with fully integrated production from seed to shelf-stable seaweed products, poised for significant expansion. The company is leading and participating in multiple, international R&D efforts in Europe and the United States to develop and optimize cultivation and processing strategies that will allow competitive supply of this sustainable biomass into a variety of products.

Ocean Rainforest has established a U.S. subsidiary in Southern California, where it operates an offshore R&D permit for seaweed cultivation, as well as a pilot processing plant for bio stimulants and fermented feed. This is a critical step towards establishing commercial scale production and processing in the Eastern Pacific. Furthermore, Ocean Rainforest is a 50% shareholder in the land-based seaweed cultivation company Lava Seaweed in Iceland, aiming at producing red seaweed species for food and functional feed.

About Triodos Investment Management

Triodos Investment Management connects a broad range of investors who want to make their money work for lasting, positive change with innovative entrepreneurs and sustainable businesses doing just that. In doing so, we serve as a catalyst in sectors that are key in the transition to a world that is fairer, more sustainable and humane.

We have built up in-depth knowledge throughout our 25 years of impact investing in sectors such as Energy & Climate, Inclusive Finance and Sustainable Food & Agriculture. We also invest in listed companies that materially contribute to the transition toward a sustainable society. Assets under management as per ultimo June 2024: EUR 5.9 billion.

Triodos Investment Management is a globally active impact investor and a wholly owned subsidiary of Triodos Bank NV.