

UKRI Invests £12 Million in Sustainable Aquaculture Projects Across Southeast Asia

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U.K. Research and Innovation (UKRI), the United Kingdom's national funding agency, has announced a £12 million program to support four pivotal projects aimed at bolstering sustainable aquaculture practices in Southeast Asia. This initiative underscores the U.K.'s commitment to fostering international collaboration and addressing critical challenges within the global aquaculture sector.

The funded projects will focus on diverse aspects of sustainable aquaculture, including supporting small-scale shrimp farmers, improving mollusk farming practices, enhancing the seaweed industry, and developing digital tools for ecosystem safeguarding. The University of the West of Scotland (UWS) will lead a £3 million, three-year project focused on developing affordable, real-time monitoring systems for shrimp farmers in Vietnam and Thailand. These systems will enable farmers to monitor water quality, detect pathogens, and forecast environmental risks, mitigating the impact of disease outbreaks and environmental fluctuations.

Professor Kath Sloman, the project lead at UWS, emphasized that the initiative will empower farmers with actionable data, boosting resilience and productivity. Professor Fiona Henriquez-Mui, co-lead on the project, highlighted the need for accessible technology to address the challenges faced by small farmers in Vietnam and Thailand, both major shrimp-producing nations.

In addition to the UWS project, UKRI will support initiatives led by the University of Southampton to improve mollusk farming in Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia; the Natural History Museum to advance the seaweed industry; and the University of Stirling to develop a digital tool for ecosystem safeguarding in Vietnam. These projects collectively aim to enhance the sustainability and resilience of aquaculture

practices across Southeast Asia, fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship.