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TRANSNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE

Perspectives on Key Challenges to the Atlantic Area Blue Economy 2025

Interreg Atlantic Area

Co-funded by the European Union

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IMI Institute for Methods Innovation

Donegal Youth Service Youth Work Ireland

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International

Blue economy challenges survey

- Survey about key challenges in the Blue Economy in the Atlantic Area
- 294 responses received across Ireland, Spain, Portugal and France in 2nd edition
- Total of 546 responses over the two editions
- Responses inform ATLIC project actions
- Focus on youth and entrepreneurship development

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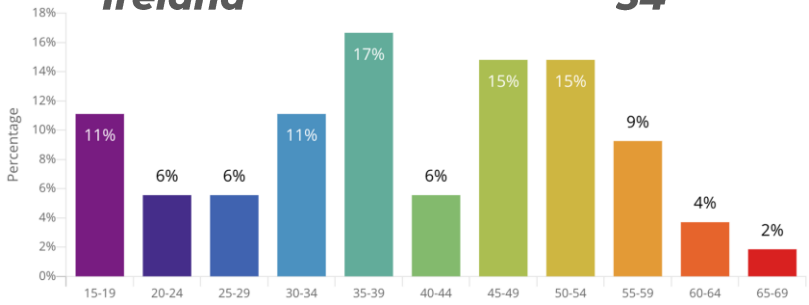
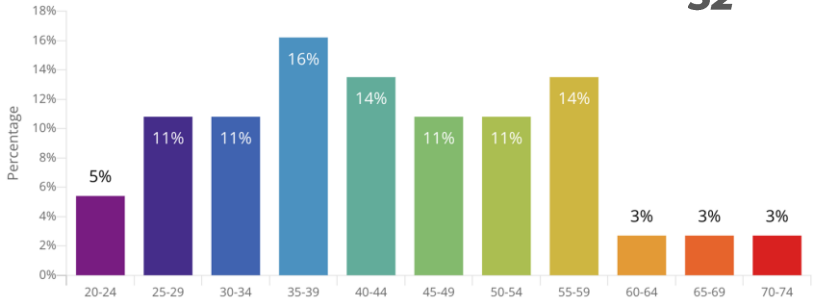
Demographics 2025

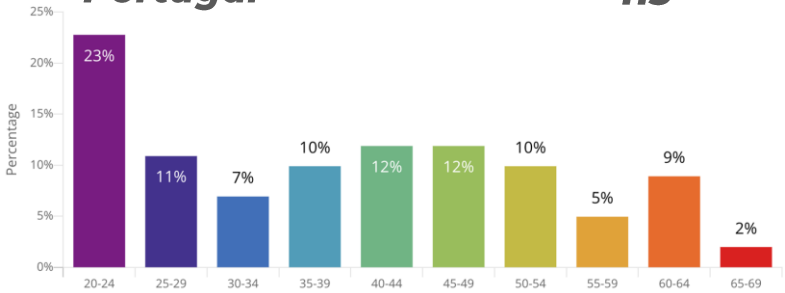
Ireland 54



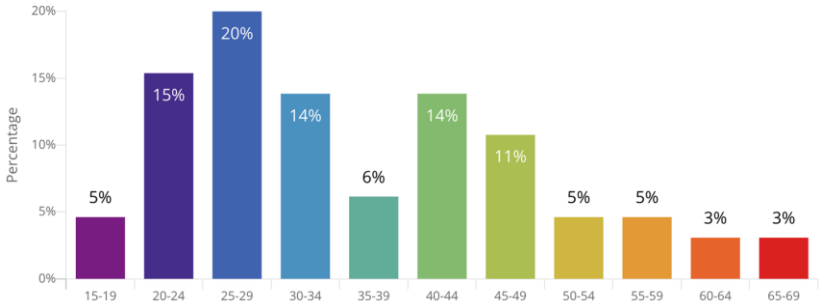
France 52



Portugal 113



Spain 73



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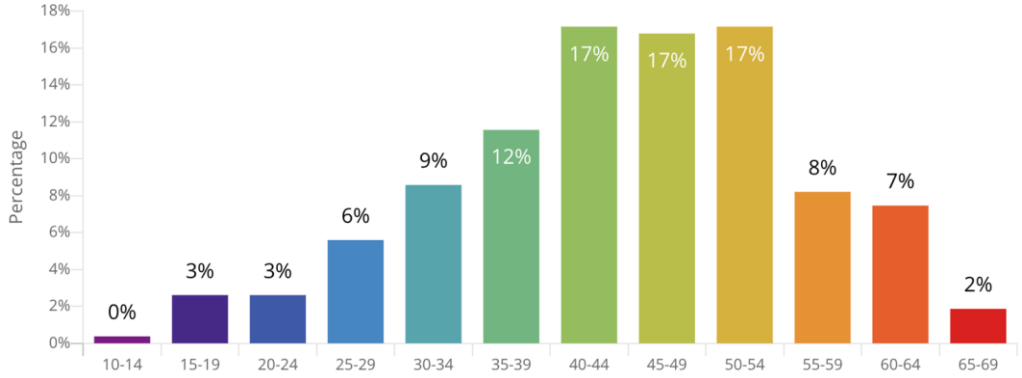
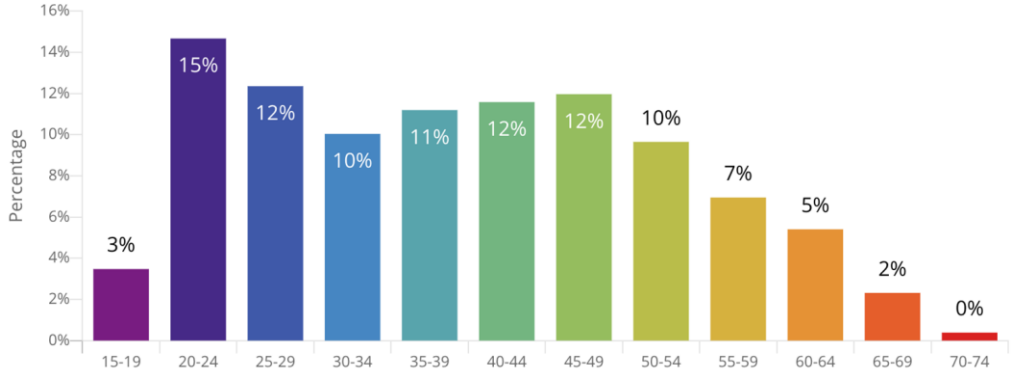
Demographics 2024 vs 2025

2024



2025



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Demographics 2025

Ireland

France

Portugal

Spain

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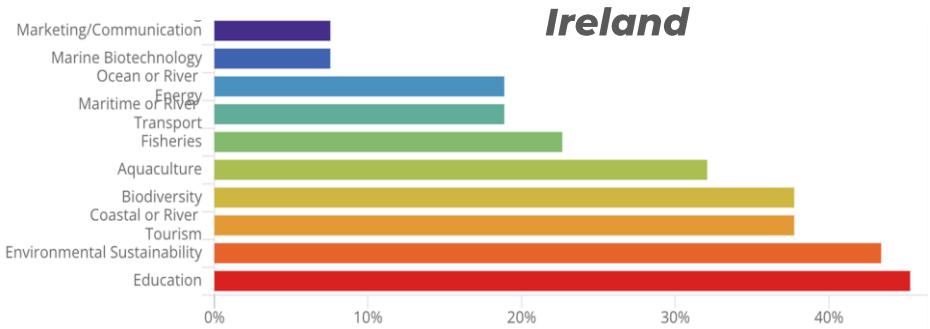
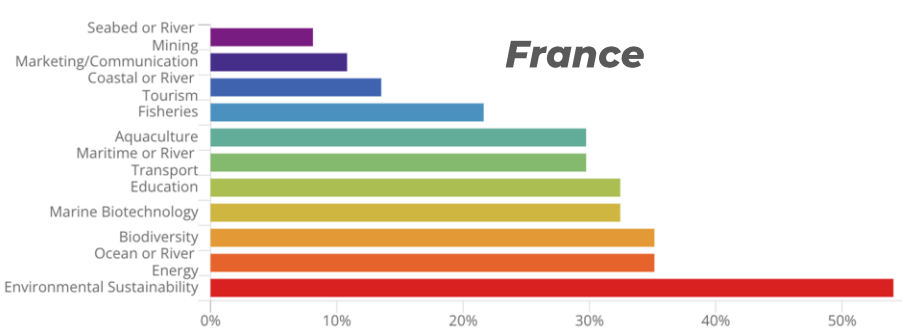
Demographics 2024 vs 2025

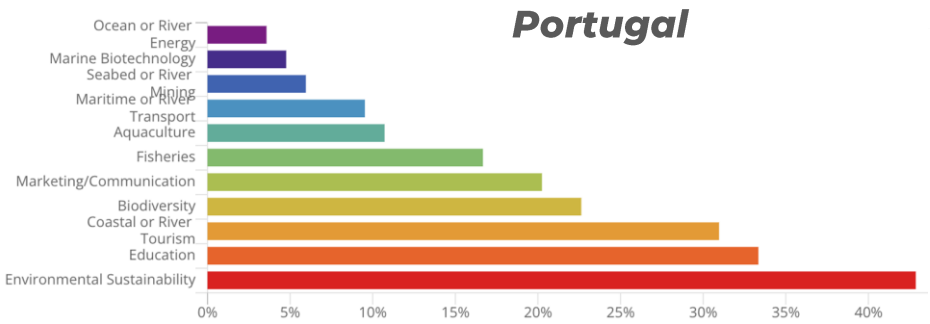
2024

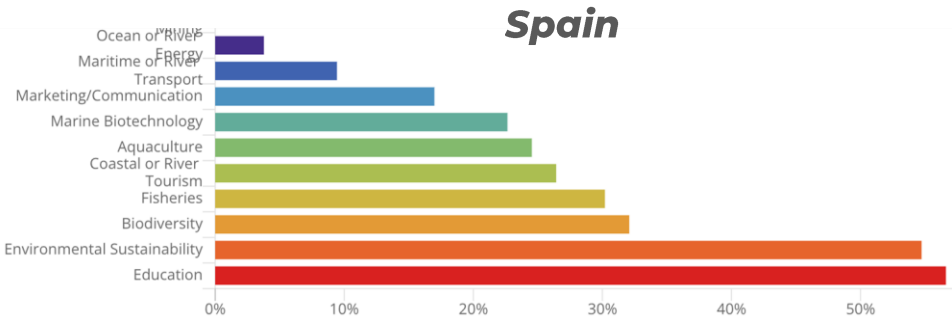
2025

Blue economy sectors represented 2025









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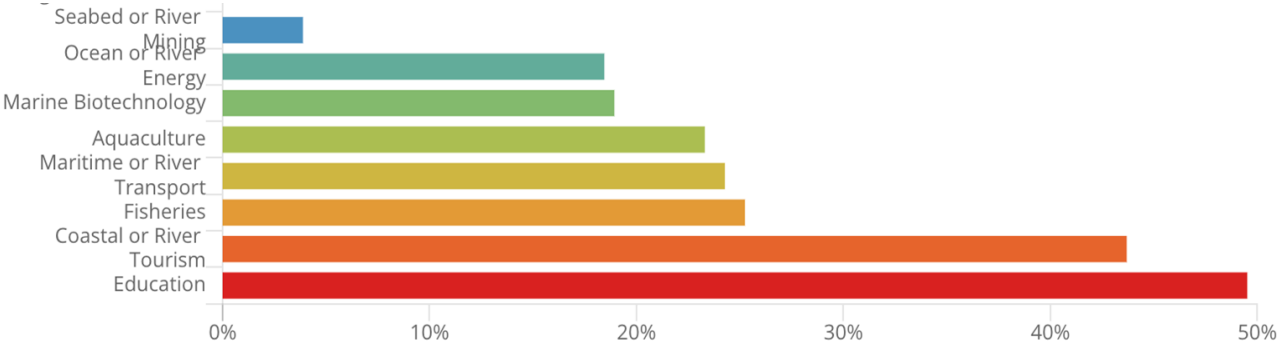
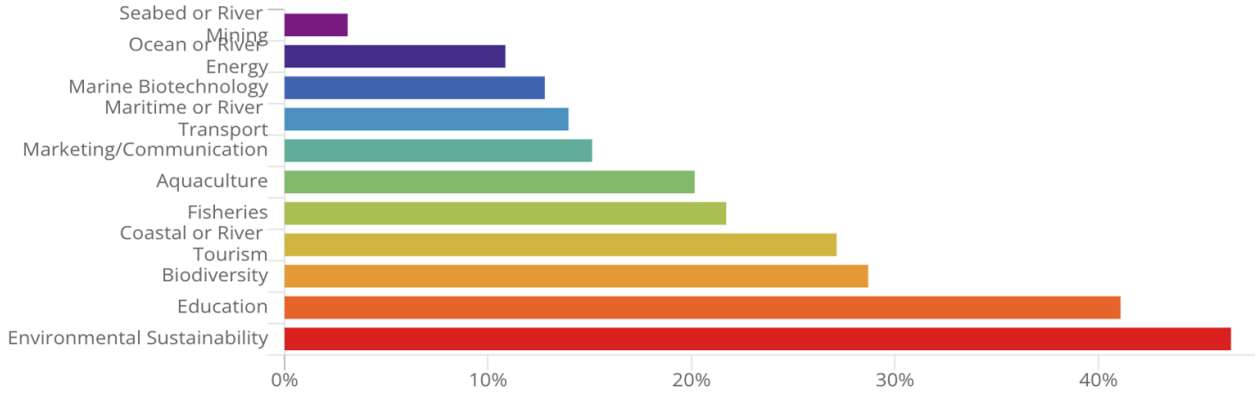
Blue economy sectors 2024 vs 2025

2024



2025



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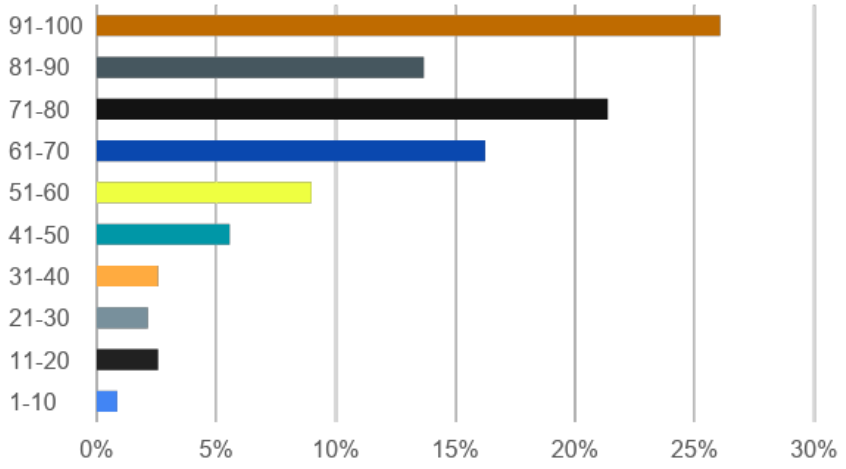
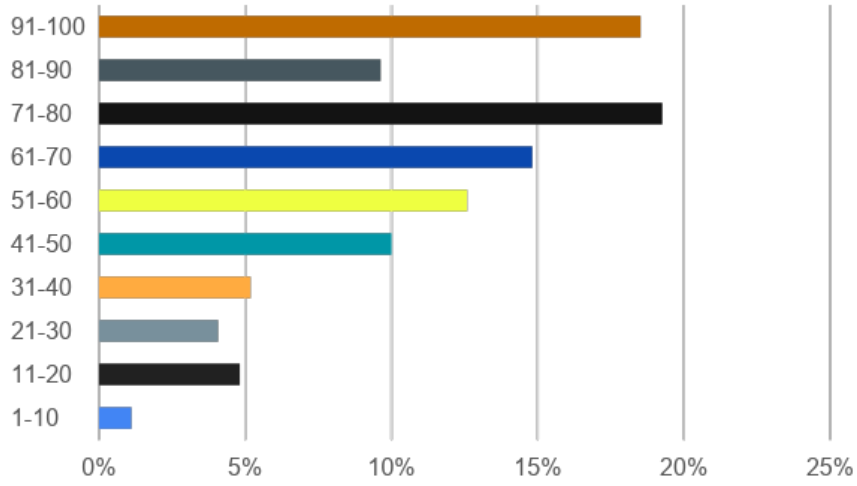
Importance of Economic Growth 2024 vs 2025

2024



2025



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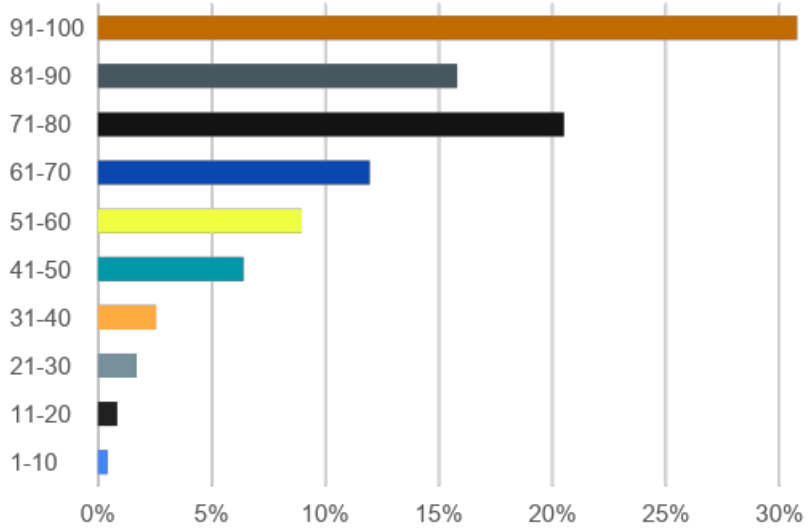
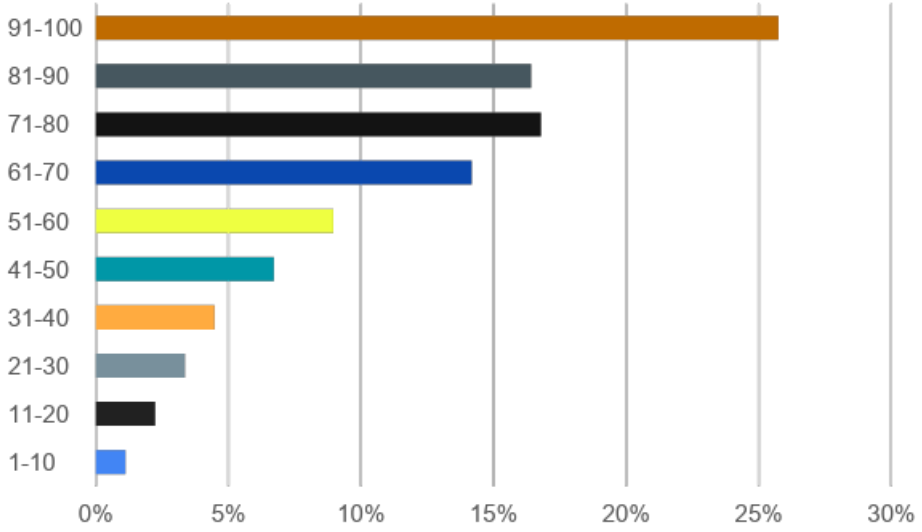
Importance of Social Equity 2024 vs 2025

2024



2025



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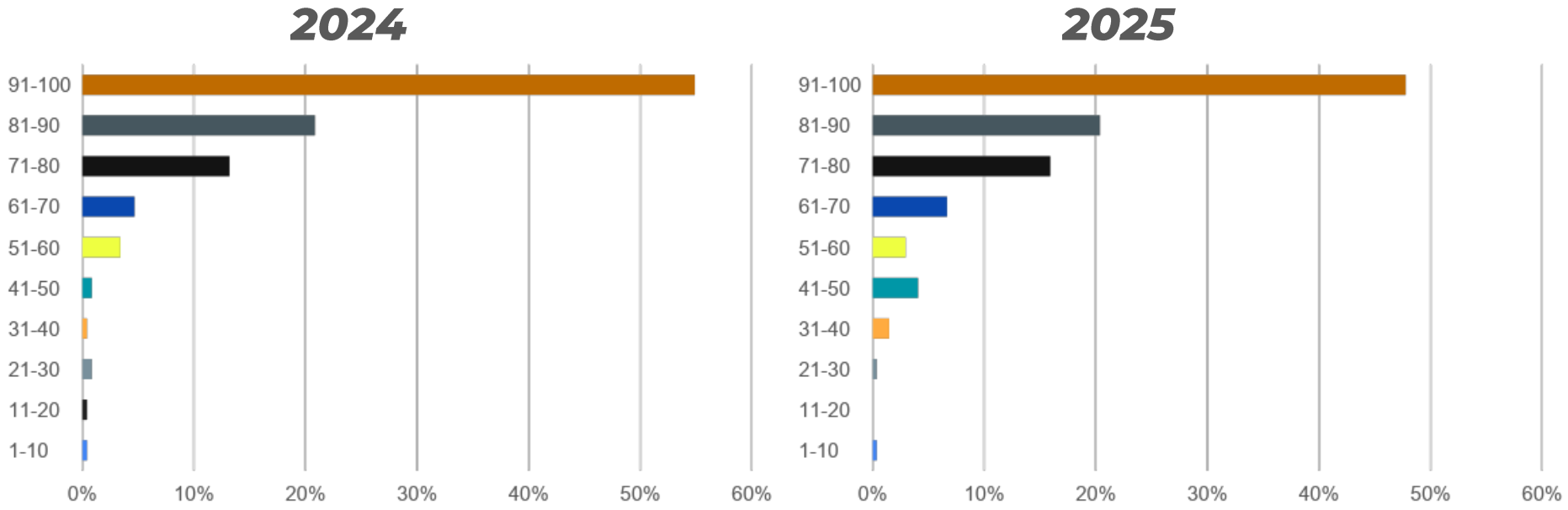
Importance of Environmental Protection 2024 vs 2025



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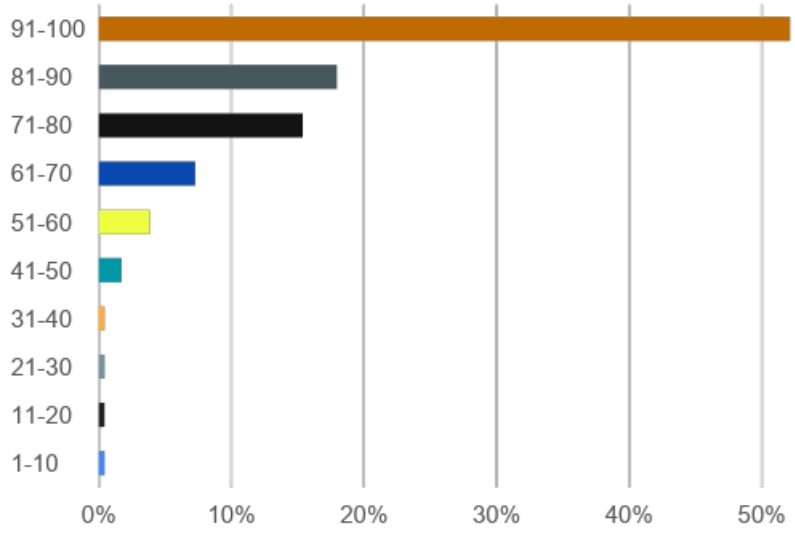
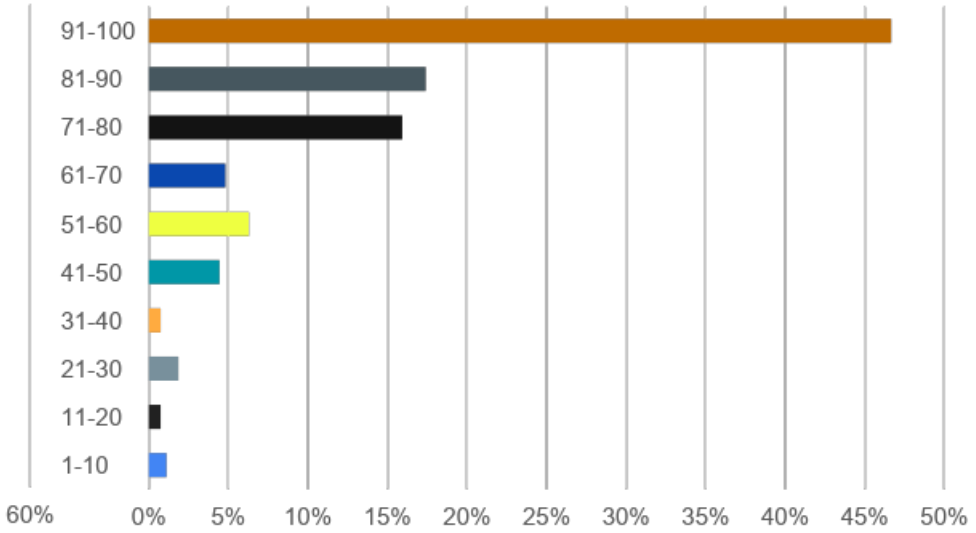
Importance of Sustainability 2024 vs 2025

2024



2025



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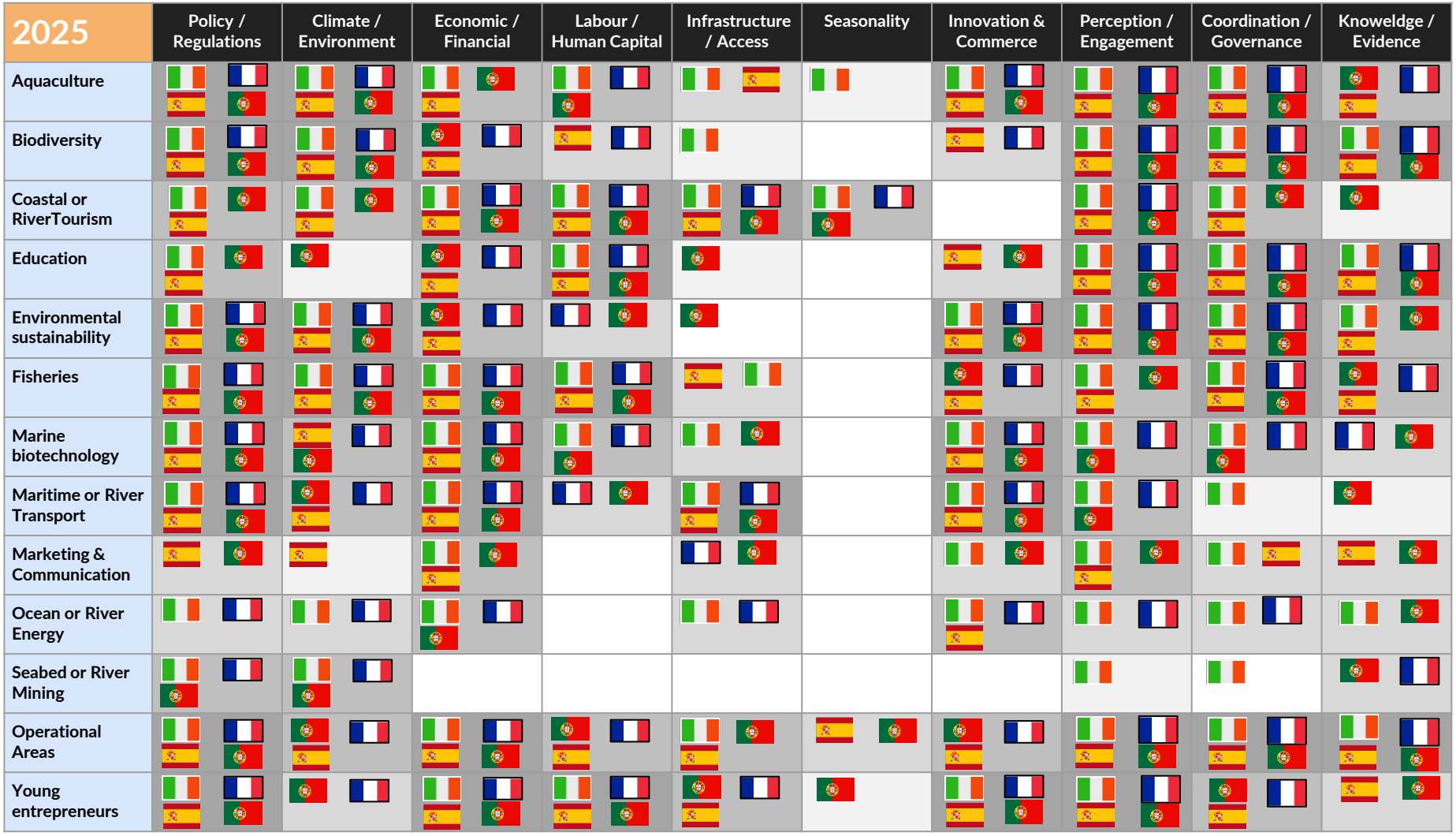
Challenges: Meeting the Blue Economy Goals

- Regulations / Policy
- Climate / Environmental Risks
- Economic / Financial
- Labour / Human Capital
- Infrastructure / Access
- Seasonality
- Innovation / Commercialization
- Perception / Engagement
- Coordination / Governance
- Knowledge & Evidence

2025	Policy / Regulations	Climate / Environment	Economic / Financial	Labour / Human Capital	Infrastructure / Access	Seasonality	Innovation & Commerce	Perception / Engagement	Coordination / Governance	Knowledge / Evidence
Aquaculture										
Biodiversity										
Coastal or River Tourism										
Education										
Environmental sustainability										
Fisheries										
Marine biotechnology										
Maritime or River Transport										
Marketing & Communication										
Ocean or River Energy										
Seabed or River Mining										
Operational Areas										
Young entrepreneurs										


2025
Policy / Regulations
Climate / Environment
Economic / Financial
Labour / Human Capital
Infrastructure / Access
Seasonality
Innovation & Commerce
Perception / Engagement
Coordination / Governance
Knowledge / Evidence
Aquaculture
Biodiversity
Coastal or RiverTourism
Education
Environmental sustainability
Fisheries
Marine biotechnology
Maritime or River Transport
Marketing & Communication
Ocean or River Energy
Seabed or River Mining
Operational Areas
Young entrepreneurs

	PORTUGAL	FRANCE	SPAIN	IRELAND
Regulations / Policy	• Complex licensing bureaucracy. • Lack of knowledge for effective regulation. • Ineffective monitoring	• Heavy regulation • Bureaucracy and complexity • Achieving regulatory compliance is difficult.	• Bureaucratic hurdles • Fragmented, insufficient regulation exists • Inconsistent international regulations Administrative barriers hinder licensing.	• Licensing and permitting processes are slow. • Fragmented regulation. • Policies disadvantage small-scale fishers. • Red tape and bureaucracy.
Climate / Environmental Risks	• Pollution (plastic, chemical, sewage) • Climate change and erosion threaten coastal infrastructure. • Habitat destruction • Invasive species.	• Climate change drives acidification. • Pollution / Contamination. • Vulnerability to climate events	• Climate change impacts ecosystems, currents, and sea routes. • Contamination threatens water quality. • Habitat destruction. • Sea level rise	• Marine pollution (plastic, oil, nutrient runoff) • Overfishing and ghost fishing. • Ocean warming and acidification. • Increased storm intensity and erosion.
Economic / Financial	• High R&D costs • Funding is limited • High operational costs • Green tech transition lacks infrastructure.	• Funding is difficult; investment is scarce. • High entry cost. • Operational costs and energy costs. • Reduce LCOE (cost of energy) to stay competitive.	• Lack of financing is a barrier • High investment required • Cost of transitioning • Tax pressure	• Lack of funding and investment • High operational costs • Low-barrier grant funding unavailable • Marine investment viewed as high risk / slow returns.

	PORTUGAL	FRANCE	SPAIN	IRELAND
Labour / Human Capital	• Skills gaps exist for new blue economy demands. • Young people lack interest in traditional fishing sector. • Insufficient training	• Attractiveness of careers is low. • Need better training. • Renewing fishermen is crucial. • Difficulty living/working on the French coast.	• Generational renewal failure • Lack of specialized training • Mismatch between university and industry needs.	• Skills shortage is huge • Difficulty retaining qualified personnel • Lack of job opportunities. • Education curriculum often lacks relevance.
Infrastructure / Access	• Aging ports and waterways • Lack of clean fuel refuelling infrastructure • Geographic isolation increases costs.	• Housing scarcity and high costs. • Port infrastructure needs modernization. • High infrastructure cost is barrier	• Aging infrastructure • Lack of charging and clean fuel infrastructure • High initial cost of infrastructure • Digital connectivity is a challenge.	• Inadequate/aging infrastructure • Grid constraints (e.g., West of Galway). • No specialized facilities for maritime education
Seasonality	• Seasonal demand limits continuous tourism. • Tourism jobs are often precarious.	• Short season conflicts with year-round living. • Precarious and seasonal employment.	• Seasonal dependence limits year-round viability. • Tourism overcrowding strains services	• Heavy reliance on peak tourism season • Seasonal tourism stress local infrastructure
Innovation & Commercialization	• Struggle with market scalability. • Market acceptance hurdles. • Slow adoption.	• Need diversification • Scaling-up innovations is difficult. • Financing is key • Develop new fishing techniques and tools.	• Need to adopt sustainable technologies • Diversification necessary. • High investment and long-term support.	• Innovation is slow; • Businesses stuck in old models. • Research funding focuses too narrowly on new products.

	PORTUGAL	FRANCE	SPAIN	IRELAND
Perception / Engagement	• Low public awareness of the sector's importance. • Bad public image of some sectors (e.g., aquaculture). • Difficulty promoting sustainable products. • Communication efforts need stronger advocacy.	• Social acceptability is needed for Ocean Energy. • Public misunderstanding exists around blue economy sectors. • Lack of recognition for biodiversity's value/role.	• Public perception of fishing is negative. • Difficulty communicating complex marine issues • Low awareness of blue economy careers • Greenwashing by companies	• Negative narrative around aquaculture • Low public awareness of marine careers • Tourism messaging drowns out small local businesses. • Lack of clear sustainability metrics.
Coordination / Governance	• Fragmented leadership • Sectoral conflicts exist over resource use • Institutions lack articulation for effective collaboration.	• Ecosystem fragmentation hinders collaboration. • Lack of flexibility for innovative individuals. • Need strong will for social equity.	• Conflicts of interest exist • Lack of alignment among institutions • Policy fragmentation • Local communities conflict with large tourism investors.	• Fragmented leadership • Government departments lack sufficient capacity • Lack of support for local voices • Policy conflicts
Knowledge & Evidence	• Insufficient data for policy decision-making. • Low public investment • Lack of knowledge in specific areas • Weak culture of technology transfer in academia.	• Lack of knowledge about microbial biodiversity. • Absence of data on deep sea mining impacts. • Need better digital tools for fishing observation.	• Lack of open data • Limited knowledge about ocean culture • Desire for more conservation education • Misinformation regarding climate change and natural resources.	• Limited marine data / knowledge for decision making. • Insufficient research in small-scale fisheries. • Gaps in understanding • Siloed knowledge areas impede innovation

Discussion points:

What opportunities are there for young people in the blue economy?

Question for young people: Are there issues that we have missed?

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