



(<https://womeninseafood.org>)

International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry

[WSI](#) [WHAT WE DO \(HTTPS://WOMENINSEAFOOD.ORG/WHAT-WE-DO/\)](https://womeninseafood.org/what-we-do/)

[RESOURCES \(HTTPS://WOMENINSEAFOOD.ORG/RESOURCES/\)](https://womeninseafood.org/resources/)

[YOU & WSI \(HTTPS://WOMENINSEAFOOD.ORG/YOU-WSI/\)](https://womeninseafood.org/you-wsi/)

Women in top seafood management: modest improvement

🕒 1 October 2020

What position do women occupy in the seafood industry leadership? WSI analyses again the gender composition of corporate bodies of the 100 top seafood companies¹. In 2020, women at top positions (executives and board) grew to 14%, the highest ever recorded.

4% female CEOs

Based on the world's 100 largest seafood companies (as listed by Undercurrent News in 2019), only 4% of CEOs are women. Companies run by women include Bumble Bee Foods and American Seafoods Group from the USA, Marusen Chiyoda Suisan from Japan and Vinh Hoan from Vietnam. In contrast, here's how the seafood industry compares with other industries at the rear end of this metric: mining industry 4%; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) 3% and Oil & Gas 1%.

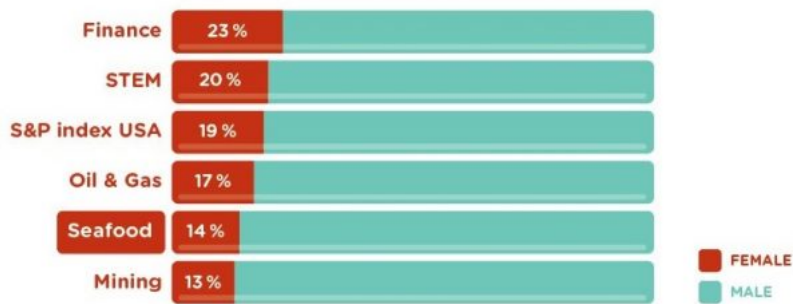
Overall 1/3rd are male-only driven

- We analysed the corporate bodies composition (executives and board of directors) of 80 companies considered as the largest worldwide.
- Over a third of all seafood companies analyzed (28 out of 80) have exclusive male corporate bodies.
- None of the 100 companies had exclusive female members corporate bodies however.
- No more than 5% of the companies (4 out of 80) have more than 40% women. The only instance with more than 50% women holding top position is Vinh Hoan, from Vietnam. Vinh Hoan² is run by a female CEO assisted by 10 women and 2 men.

We're making progress, albeit very slow

Across 80 companies, comprising 1,042 members of corporate bodies, a mere 150 are women, i.e. 14.4%. This however still reflects progress compared to 2016 (sample of 71 companies analysed) rate of 9.1%. To mark another improvement, the percentage of companies with less than 20% female representation in corporate bodies has declined from 81% in 2016 to 64% in 2019.





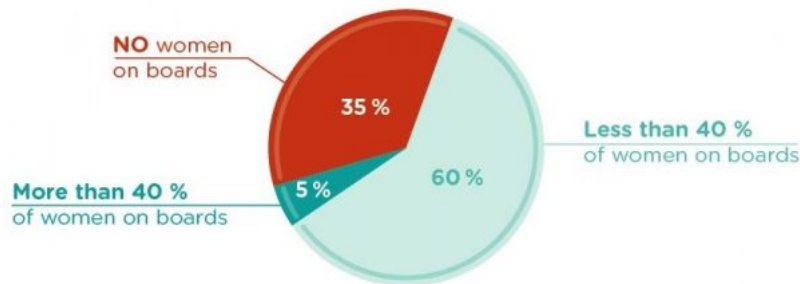
That said, there seems to be a remarkable resistance in equality between men and women: no more than 5% of companies recorded over 40% women in corporate bodies, exactly the same ratio as 2019.

If we put executive positions under a magnifying glass, the rate of women sadly falls down to 9%.

Percentage of women holding corporate bodies seats

	2016	2019
0%	54%	35%
< 20%	27%	29%
20% to 40%	15%	31%
41% to 50%	4%	4%
> 50%	0%	1%

SEAFOOD COMPANIES CORPORATE BODIES: COMPOSITION BY GENDER



Vinh Hoan, a Vietnamese seafood company is the only shining light with a greater than 50% women representation on the board. It is run by Ms. Nguyen Ngo Vi Tam, supported by 10 women and 2 men in the board of directors.

Highest female participation in corporate bodies: Top seafood companies

	% women in corporate bodies
Vinh Hoan (Vietnam)	83%
Zhanjiang Guolian Aquatic Products (China)	47%
Austevoll Seafood (Norway)	40%
Bumble Bee Foods (USA)	40%
SalMar (Norway)	38%
Labeyrie Fine Foods (France)	38%
Sanford (New Zealand)	36%

Sirena Group (Denmark)	35%
Grieg Seafood (Norway)	33%
Zoneco Group (China)	32%

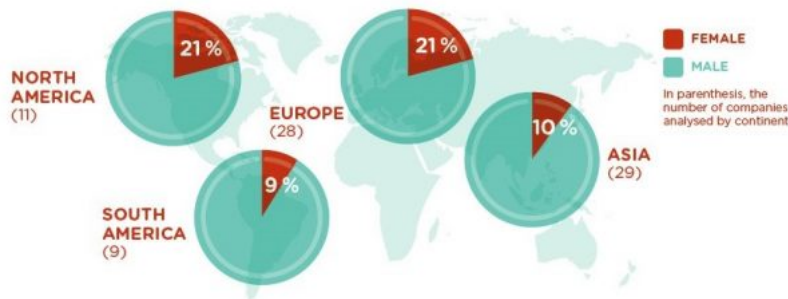
% WOMEN IN CORPORATE BODIES: TOP 10 SEAFOOD COMPANIES



Percentage of women in corporate bodies (by country)

Country	Total	Number of women	% women
Japan (18)	381	18	5%
Chile (6)	99	8	8%
Norway (9)	91	25	25%
China (5)	63	18	29%
Canada (2)	56	15	25%
Spain (7)	50	7	14%
Thailand (3)	47	4	9%
USA (9)	43	6	14%
UK (4)	41	5	12%
Denmark (6)	36	9	25%
Vietnam (2)	22	11	50%

CORPORATE BODIES IN SEAFOOD: FEMALE MEMBERS BY CONTINENT



Interestingly enough, the percentage of women in top positions varies based on the total number of members of corporate bodies per country. Japan, for instance, has 18 companies that are part of the top list. Among them are 381 board members, but only 18 are women, i.e. 5%. In the case of Chile, out of a

total of 99 members of corporate bodies, only 8 are women, i.e. 8%. In both countries, it's likely that existing corporate cultures rooted in traditional cultural norms have made it difficult to incorporate



women in top positions.

Norway, the first country to introduce a gender quota on boards (2003) has seen the participation of women dropping from 31% to 27%. Vietnam offers an astounding picture but only two companies are included in the sample.

Case of Norway: thanks to the mandatory quota

In many regards, Norway leads the way in gender equality in the professional sphere. Thanks to a mandatory quota law introduced in 2003, the boards of public limited companies (listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange) must have at least 40 percent female directors. The companies concerned in our sample below fully comply with the law. But what about the conspicuous unbalance in executive management where no regulatory constraints?

Company	CEO	Female Executives	Female Board members
Mowi	Male	20%	40%
Austevoll Seafood	Male	33%	43%
SalMar	Male	17%	57%
Grieg Seafood	Male	20%	60%
Norway Royal Salmon	Male	0%	50%
Insula	Male	22%	0%

Source: Bloomberg, Companies' websites

In our sample of top seafood companies, the executive committees are far less gender-balanced and not a company has chosen a woman for CEO. Is the sector failing to attract women or is it the result of gender bias of the selection? Linda Hofstad Helleland, when Norway's minister for children and equality explained: "three-quarters of recruitment is down to informal networks: Men recruit men. Men recruit CEOs that look like themselves. We need to challenge these attitudes."

Slightly progressive landscape

These preliminary results tell us that compared to 2016 results, 2020 shows a slightly progressive landscape in terms of gender diversity in top positions in seafood corporate bodies. But we are far from being gender-equal on corporate bodies, with only 5% of companies having >40% females.

These results also call for further research digging into the capital structure and sources. Many companies for instance are family companies; therefore, integration of women in top positions is a matter of kinship and not necessarily one of merit. The topic of corporate cultures deserves to be further explored to better understand the barriers and opportunities that women experience to access top positions.

-
- Undercurrent News December 2019: World's 100 Largest Seafood Companies 2019
 - <http://vinhhoan.com/our-story/who-we-are-what-we-do/> (<http://vinhhoan.com/our-story/who-we-are-what-we-do/>)
 - Financial Times: Enlightened Norway's gender paradox at the top of business (<https://www.ft.com/content/6f6bc5a2-7b70-11e8-af48-190d103e32a4>)
-

✉ womeninseafood@wsi-asso.org (<mailto:womeninseafood@wsi-asso.org>)
🐦 [@seafoodwomen](https://twitter.com/SeafoodWomen) (<https://twitter.com/SeafoodWomen>)
📷 [@women.in.seafood](https://www.instagram.com/women.in.seafood/) (<https://www.instagram.com/women.in.seafood/>)



Methodology

Data collected for this study corresponds to the gender composition of executives teams, board members and CEO's from the top 100 seafood companies. From the 100 top seafood companies studied, corporate bodies data were found for 80 of them. Furthermore, for 19 companies, no information on executive teams was available. Therefore, full gender information about executive teams and supervisory boards is available for 61 companies only. The information collected was found on corporate websites and on business websites such as Bloomberg. To make sure that the information about CEOs was as upto-date as possible, it was corroborated in articles on media seafood websites such as Intrafish and SeafoodSource. Some of the companies are part of large economic groups, which are also listed in the 100 top seafood companies list (e.g. Tri Marine Foods belongs to Bolton Group). However, the information available to the large economic groups was not used to make up for the lack of information for some of their own companies.

← [Previous Post](#)

[Why using a gender lens to analyse COVID-19 impacts on the seafood industry?](#)
(<https://womeninseafood.org/why-using-a-gender-lens-to-analyse-covid-19-impacts-on-the-seafood-industry/>)

[Next Post](#) →

[Redressing a persistent imbalance](#)
(<https://womeninseafood.org/redressing-a-persistent-imbalance/>)

STAY IN TOUCH

Newsletter

(<https://womeninseafood.org/you-wsi/>)

STAY INFORMED

Receive the Watch

(<https://womeninseafood.org/you-wsi/>)

FOLLOW US ON



(<https://twitter.com/SeafoodWomen>)



(<https://www.instagram.com/women.in.seafood>)



(<https://www.linkedin.com/company/wsi-asso/>)



(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3>)

