



# TRANSFORMING **SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES** IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

## ASSESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MEDITERRANEAN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES: INSIGHTS FROM A STRUCTURED SURVEY APPROACH



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# CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

[https://www.wwfmmi.org/what\\_we\\_do/fisheries/transforming\\_small\\_scale\\_fisheries/](https://www.wwfmmi.org/what_we_do/fisheries/transforming_small_scale_fisheries/):

## ⚠ Challenges

- *Men and women in the small-scale sector face threats such as **climate change, competition** from other industries, **lack of alternative livelihoods, weak representation in decision-making processes, and limited control over diminishing resources***
- ***Empowered small-scale fishers and their communities** are crucial stewards of marine resources.*
- Even if overexploitation is decreasing, around **58%** of commercial stocks are still **outside sustainable limits** (FAO SoMFi, 2023)



## 🐟 Key Facts on SSF:

- 82% of the Mediterranean fleet
- 61% of onboard jobs
- 26% of total revenue
- 15% of total catch (FAO SoMFi, 2023)

## 🎯 WWF MMI Approach:

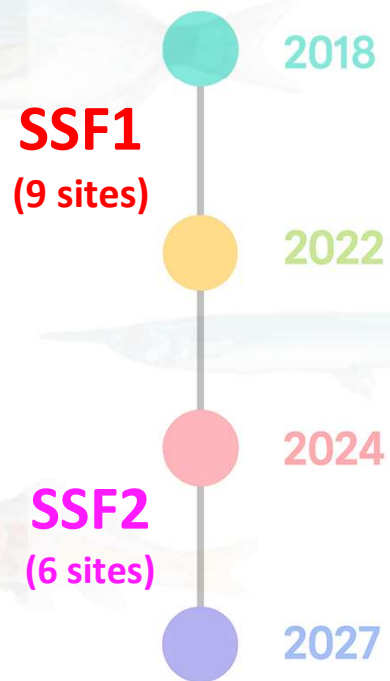
- ❖ Collaborate with local communities
- ❖ Improve fishers' livelihoods
- ❖ Support fishers in identifying and adopting sustainable fishing practices
- ❖ Sustain the participatory management approach, including the Regional Plan of Action for small-scale fisheries (RPOA-SSF) of GFCM.

## 📊 Study's aim: Socioeconomic Analysis of SSFs

- ✓ Socioeconomic conditions
- ✓ Livelihoods
- ✓ COVID-19 impact
- ✓ Fishers' perceptions
- ✓ Labour and gender challenges

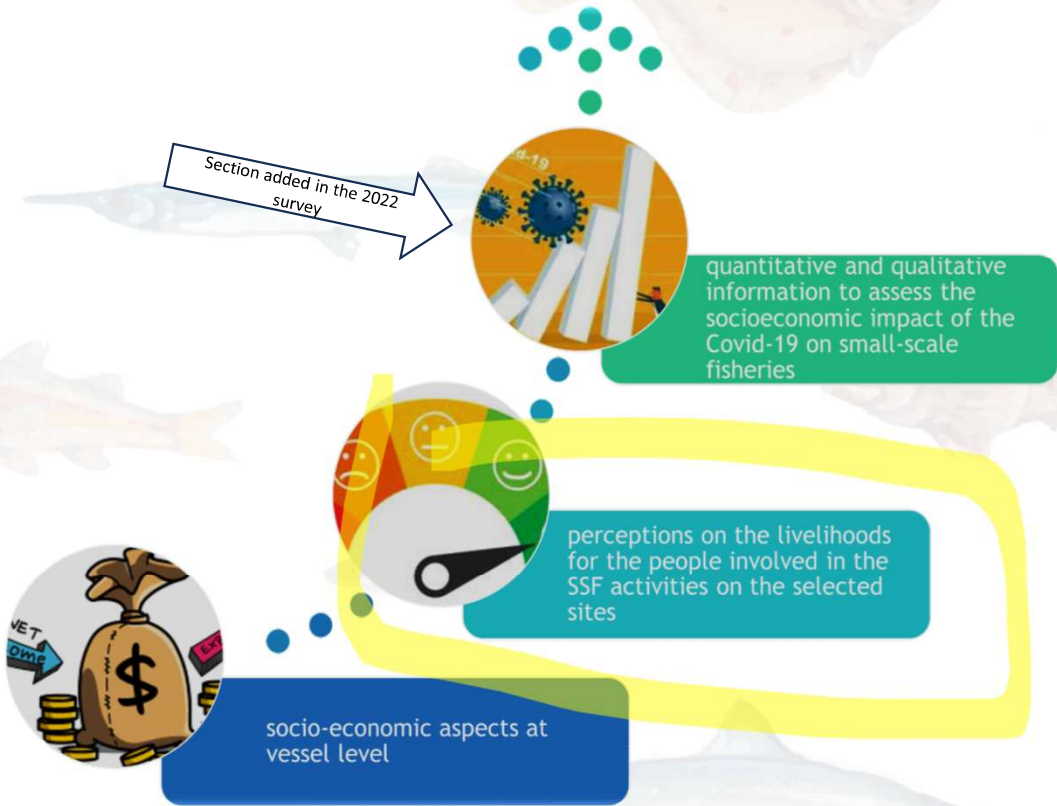
# METHODOLOGY 1/3

## Timelines and study sites



# METHODOLOGY 2/3

## The questionnaire and the IT tool – SFF2 version



Small-Scale Fisheries - Survey

Are you reporting data and information for the socio-economic survey or the household survey?

VESSEL FISHERS

1 Socio-demographics and labour data 2 Livelihoods and access to fish and marine resources. 3 Labour challenges 4 Gender disparities and role of women in the SSF

Small-Scale Fisheries - Survey

1 Socio-demographics and labour data 2 Livelihoods and access to fish and marine resources. 3 Labour challenges 4 Gender disparities and role of women in the SSF

REMINDER TO INTRODUCE SECTION AND EXPLAIN:  
Explain to the interviewee that this section of the survey is to help us to understand more about their perception on wealth, livelihoods and living conditions of small-scale fishers. Please, be aware of the ability of the interviewee to reply all the questions; in case he/she is not, (s.g. if he/she is not key in taking decision for fishing activity) use the option "no reply".

19) Overall, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of your life?

a) Your level of income or wealth  No reply  Very dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very satisfied

b) Your overall health or physical condition  No reply  Very dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very satisfied

c) Your personal feeling of safety and social Small-Scale Fisheries - Survey  No reply  Very dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very satisfied

Small-Scale Fisheries - Survey

1 Socio-demographics and labour data 2 Livelihoods and access to fish and marine resources. 3 Labour challenges 4 Gender disparities and role of women in the SSF

REMINDER TO INTRODUCE SECTION AND EXPLAIN:  
Explain to the interviewee that this section of the survey is to help us to understand more about the current social challenges that the fishery sector is facing in the Med: workforce shortage, job placement of non-nationals (especially extra EU), low generational turnover.

Migration section

23) In your experience, are there any difficulties in finding skilled labour for your fishing activity?  Select value

24) If YES, do you think that the employment of non-national staff can help to solve this problem?  Select value

25) Does your fishing company have non-national employees?  Select value

26) If YES, how many of the total number of employees, including upstream and downstream activities? Provide a n.

27) What is the prevailing nationality?

28) Based on your experience, are there any difficulties in the employment of non-nationals in the SSF in your area?  Select value

29) If YES, in your experience, what are the main difficulties/obstacles related to the recruitment of non-national staff?  
 Lack of skills/know-how  
 Particularly complex bureaucratic procedures  
 Costly bureaucratic procedures  
 Lack of professional requirements (professional certificates)  
 Other (specify):

# METHODOLOGY 3/3

## Survey design

Step 1: Selection of the sample design

*stratified random sampling without replacement*

Step 2: Segmentation of the target population

*Main gear used during the year,  
where “main” stands for the gear  
used most over time*

*Length class of the vessel*

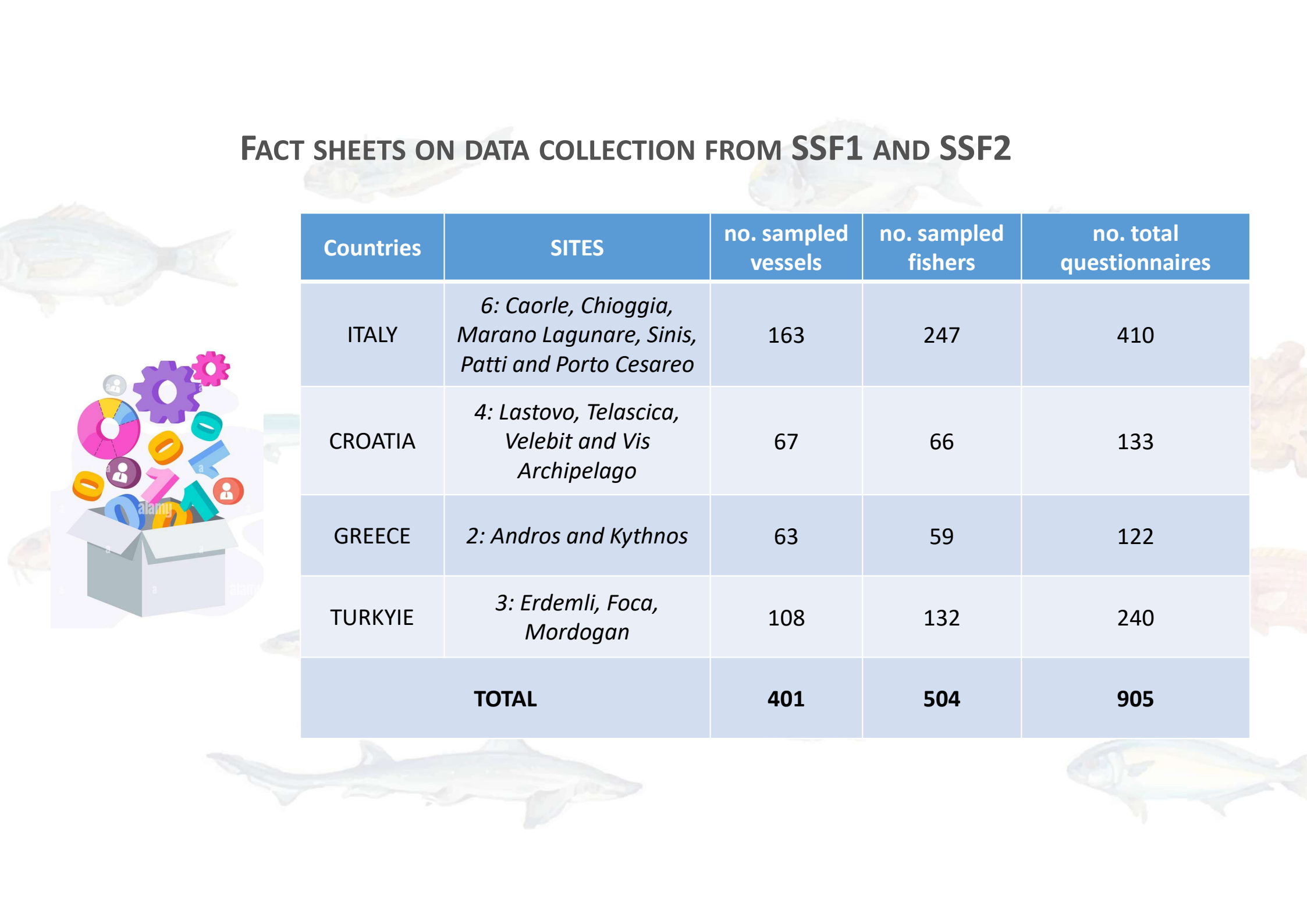
Step 3: Definition of the sample size

*Disproportionate allocation of the sample size in the strata*

- ❖ ‘small-scale coastal fishing’ defined as fishing activities carried out by fishing vessels LOA<12 and not using towed gear
- ❖ GFCM Fleet register at the reference year)

Sample units per stratum	Sampling rate
< 50	50%
50–500	25%
500–2 000	10%
> 2 000	5%

## FACT SHEETS ON DATA COLLECTION FROM SSF1 AND SSF2



Countries	SITES	no. sampled vessels	no. sampled fishers	no. total questionnaires
ITALY	<i>6: Caorle, Chioggia, Marano Lagunare, Sinis, Patti and Porto Cesareo</i>	163	247	410
CROATIA	<i>4: Lastovo, Telascica, Velebit and Vis Archipelago</i>	67	66	133
GREECE	<i>2: Andros and Kythnos</i>	63	59	122
TURKYIE	<i>3: Erdemli, Foca, Mordogan</i>	108	132	240
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>401</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>905</b>

# IN-DEPTH LOOK AT SSF2 PRELIMINARY RESULTS: EXAMPLE OF DATA COLLECTED 1/2

## Topics covered:

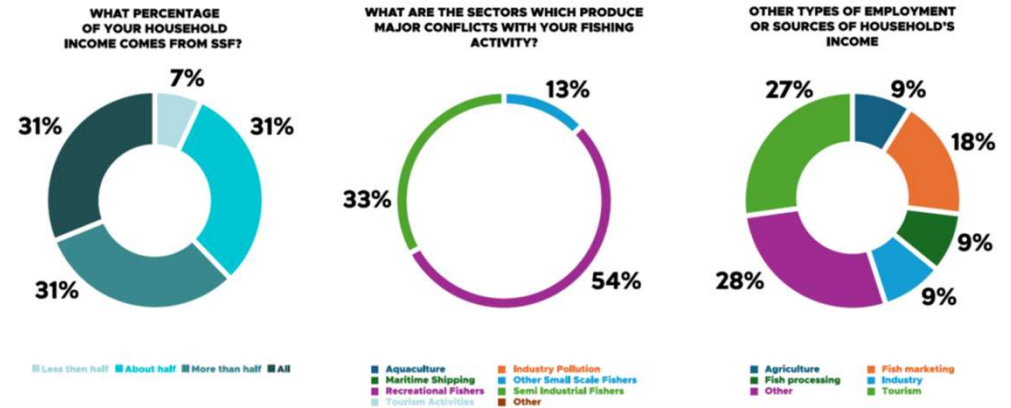
- ❖ Sources of income and job security (SSF dependance)
- ❖ Conflicts with other marine activities
- ❖ Livelihoods and access to fish and marine resources
- ❖ Satisfaction around the engagement in the management process

## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES



SSF2

INCOME DEPENDENCE, ACTIVITY CONFLICTS



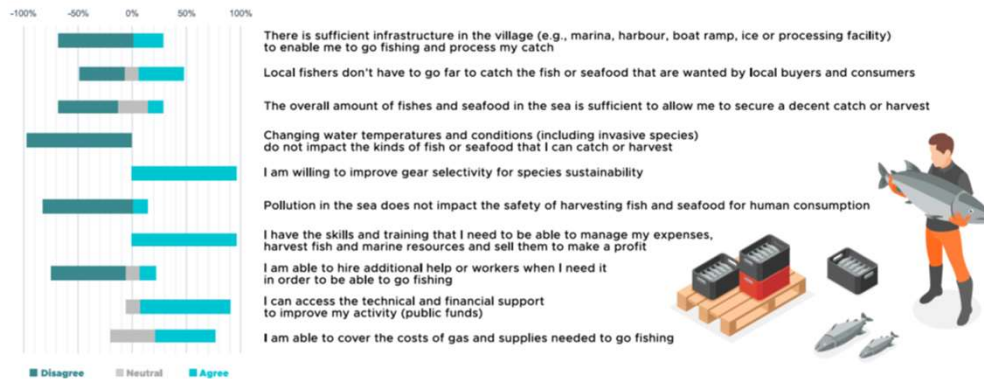
## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES



SSF2

PERCEIVED ACCESS TO RESOURCES

### LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

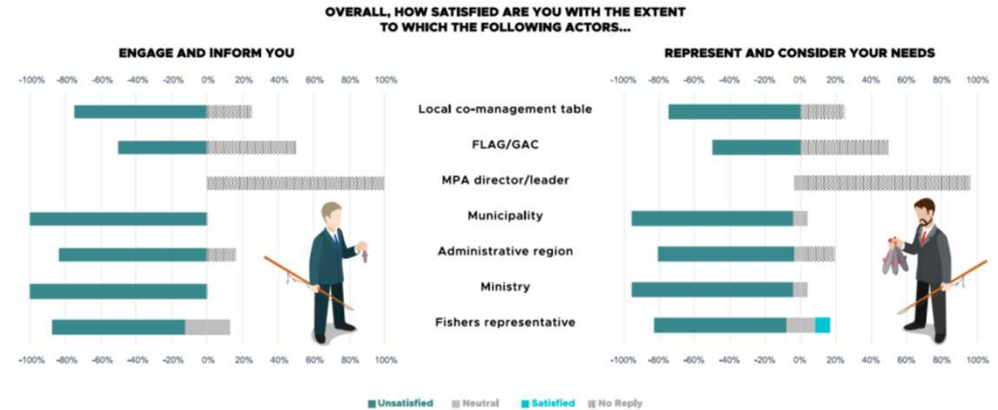


## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES



SSF2

SATISFACTION WITH FISHERIES MANAGEMENT



# IN-DEPTH LOOK AT SSF2 PRELIMINARY RESULTS: EXAMPLE OF DATA COLLECTED 2/2

## Topics covered:

- ❖ Labour challenges: integration of foreign workforce and generational turnover
- ❖ Gender challenges: role of women and obstacles

## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

PATTI

SSF2

### LABOUR CHALLENGES 1: GENERATIONAL TURNOVER

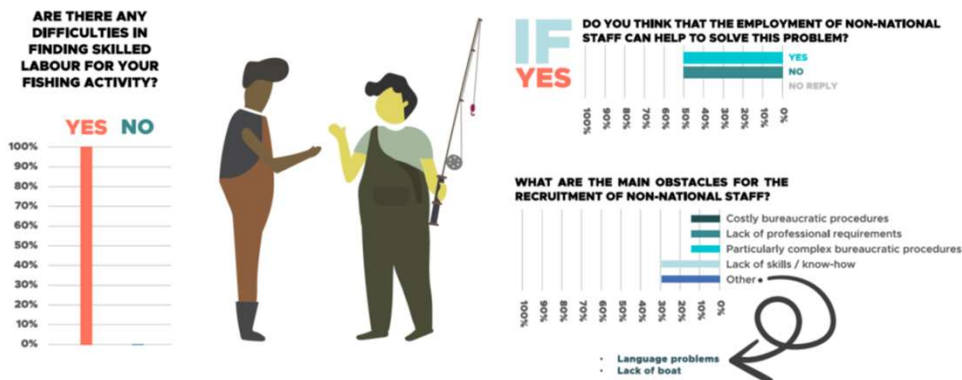


## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

MARANO LAGUNARE

SSF2

### LABOUR CHALLENGES 2: FOREIGN WORKERS

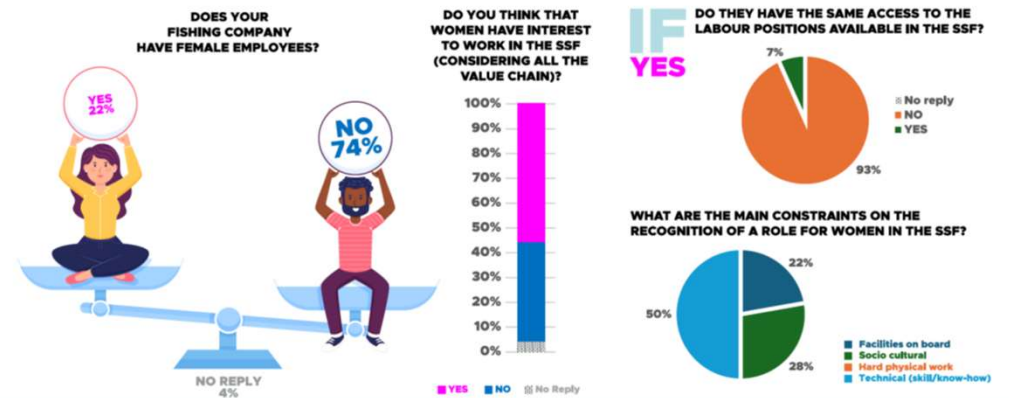


## TRANSFORMING SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

MORDOGAN


SSF2

### GENDER DISPARITIES



# IN-DEPTH LOOK AT SSF2 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY RESULTS: KEY INSIGHTS 1/2

## 1. Sources of Income & SSF Dependence

 **74%** of fishers rely on SSF for **more than half** of household income.

 **Exception – Mordoğan: 46%** report <50% of income from SSF (alternative sectors:

 industry,  tourism).

 Other complementary income sources:

 Tourism

 Fish marketing

 Fish processing

## 2. Conflicts with Other Marine Activities

Major conflict with **recreational fishers**  (**44%** of responses), often **unlicensed**

Additional conflicts reported:


 **22%** with **non-SSF commercial fishers**

 **9%** with other SSF operators

 **9%** mention **pollution (industry's waste)** as a source of conflict

## 3. Perceptions & Access to Marine Resources

 Over **30%** of fishers **unsatisfied** with available infrastructure

 Major concerns about environmental factors (**40–80%** dissatisfaction):

 Pollution

 Climate change

 Status of fish stocks

 Positive perceptions:

 Ownership of skills




 Family and societal support

 Strong **willingness to act sustainably** (e.g. gear selectivity)

## 4. Satisfaction with Management & Representation

Greater satisfaction  with **local-level representatives** seen as **engaging, informative, and protective** of SSF interests

 **Decreasing satisfaction** with higher levels of governance:

-  **Municipality** – most satisfactory
-  **Regional/administrative** level – moderate
-  **Ministry** – least satisfactory

## IN-DEPTH LOOK AT SSF2 PRELIMINARY SUMMARY RESULTS: KEY INSIGHTS 2/2


### 5. Generational Turnover


 **92%** perceive a **lack of generational turnover**


 Age breakdown of respondents:


 **55%** are over 51 years old


 **23%** are over 61

 only **5%** are 20-30 years old

 Main reported reasons for youth disengagement:

 Loss of traditions & changing lifestyles (**25%**)

 Better-paid, more attractive jobs (**24%**, rising to **50%** in **Vis Archipelago**)

 High-risk work context for **10%**, peaking at **28%** in **Chioggia**

### 6. Integration of Foreign Workforce

 **77%** perceive **difficulty in finding skilled workers**

 **55%** believe **foreign workers** can help fill the gap

 Key integration obstacles:

 Complex bureaucracy (**44%**)


 High administrative costs (**15%**)

 Lack of skills (**22%**) or formal qualifications (**8%**)

 Language barriers

### 7. Gender Challenges in Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF)

 **100%** of respondents (fishers) are **male**

 **Only 22%** of fishing enterprises surveyed **employ women**

 **Women's Roles**

**Pre-harvest:**

 Boat cleaning – **30%**

 Meal preparation – **32%**

**Post-harvest:**


 Admin/bookkeeping – **50%**

 Sorting/cleaning/selling – **50%**

 **Barriers to Entry**

~**40%** believe women are interested in fisheries

 ~**50%** of those say access is **limited**


 In **Mordogan**, **93%** report **unequal access**

 **Main perceived barriers:**

 Technical skills/know-how – **45%**

 Socio-cultural norms – **31%**





 Onboard facilities – **21%**

 Physically demanding work – **3%**

# TAKE HOME MESSAGE: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

## Why Social Dimensions Matter in Fisheries



### Management

- Fishing = **livelihood + cultural identity** in coastal communities
- Ignoring social context can lead to:
  -  Resistance
  -  Low compliance
- Social inclusion helps:
  -  Fair benefit sharing
  -  Protect vulnerable groups

### Need for better data:

Go beyond existing DCF data  
(→ STECF/EWG highlights new needs)

## More social data: A Key for Inclusive Development

- ❖ The project shows that expanding socio-economic data collection, including **more data on the social dimension (livelihoods, income sources, labour and gender challenges) as well as on fishers' perception and satisfaction** is both feasible and essential
- ❖ Social data supports:
  -  **Inclusive and participatory development**
  -  Alignment with **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
- ❖ Enhances decision-making in fisheries beyond just economic and biological aspects



# IMPACT STORY

Strengthening Women's Role in the Mediterranean Fishing Industry:  
A [Landmark Event](#) in Split organized by WWF Mediterranean

April 7 – 8. 2025 Split, Croatia

- *Fishing remains male-dominated, yet women play **vital, often overlooked roles** across the sector*
- *WWF Mediterranean and WWF Adria hosted the first Mediterranean gathering of fisherwomen*
- *30+ participants from 7 countries (Croatia, Tunisia, Greece, Spain, Italy, and more)*
- *Aimed to build networks, share experiences, and discuss common challenges*
- *Exhibition "Invisible Strength in Fisheries" by Ivana Vareško **highlighted women's unseen contributions***
- *Emphasis on gender justice as a foundation for environmental justice*
- *Women represent 28% of the Mediterranean fisheries workforce (FAO, 2024) — **yet remain underrepresented***
- *Participants committed to advocating for recognition, inclusion, and sustainable fisheries*
- *Strong message of resilience: "I've never been afraid, not even during storms" – Laura Ferrari, fisherwoman*





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**THANKS FOR THE ATTENTION!**

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