



## Fish-X

### Engagement report – WP5

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<b>Abstract</b>	<p>D5.2 « Engagement report » provides insights on the relationships with key SSF stakeholders and WWF ANP/Portugal and Sciaena on the field. As described in D5.1 “Existing Projects Report”, one of the use cases to be developed by the Fish-X project will take place in the South coast of Portugal, in Algarve.</p> <p>Therefore, D5.2 sets the scene of past and ongoing projects in which WWF ANP/Portugal and Sciaena are involved which will benefit the successful implementation of the digital solutions proposed by the Fish-X project to reduce Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishery, manage fish resource in a sustainable manner and provide fair income to low-impact fishers.</p>
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## Executive Summary

This paper has been developed in the framework of the Horizon Europe FISH-X' project Work Package 5 "Monitoring Control and Surveillance Use Cases". It fulfills Deliverable 5.2 "Engagement Report" defined in the grant agreement as the following: "Reports about engagement with stakeholders including fishers to identify and coordinate with initiatives in place for monitoring SSF in Portugal, identifying issues and challenges".

Therefore, the scope of this deliverable remains within Portuguese national territory with a short example taken from the Mediterranean co-management programme. The objective is to describe past, ongoing and future engagement activities with stakeholders related to the digitalisation of small-scale fishery in Portugal. As explained in deliverable 5.1 "Existing Projects Report" with the presentation of the four use cases, the Atlantic marine basin will be one of them and will happen specifically in the Algarve region of Portugal, which is the Southern one. The use case is coordinated hand in hand with WWF ANP/Portugal and Sciaena.

The present document details the engagement with various stakeholder groups along the small-scale fisheries sector, from the fishers' community to the scientific and maritime authority communities and the auction ports, wholesalers and retailers. This also provides the possibility to touch upon the challenges of SSF digitalisation in order to insist on the necessity to nurture strong and trusted relationships with actors along the fishing SSF for securing Fish-X outcomes' success.



Finally, a Fish-X public webinar was organised on “How can Portuguese small-scale fisheries benefit from digital technologies?” on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 from 10:00 to 11:30 AM CET<sup>1</sup>. The two keynote speakers were Marta Rufino, Researcher at the Portuguese Institute of the Sea and the Atmosphere (IPMA) and André Dias, fishermen representative from Algarve. Presenters during the panel discussion comprised Luis Bentes (Fisheries Biologist at the Center of Marine Sciences), Helena Cardoso (Director Commercial, Communications and Marketing, at Docapesca), and João Escudeiro (inspector at the Directorate-General for Natural Resource). This provided a good example of cross-sector exchange and rooted even more the Fish-X project and the forthcoming Portuguese use case within the Portuguese SSF landscape.

## 1. Background information

Engaging with the right stakeholders and nurturing good relationships with them is an essential element to the achievement of the objectives of the Fish-X project, for which partnerships with fishers’ associations, academia and government entities are necessary for the work “on the ground” in order to run smoothly. With this project, the objective is to contribute to better monitoring of fishery, with improved and more effective methods. In the long term, this could reduce Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, in collaboration with fishing communities.

### 1.1 Co-management approach

To illustrate that, WWF MMI (Mediterranean Marine Initiative), one of the partners of the project, is actively supporting 10 Mediterranean countries to transform their coastal fisheries

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fish-x.eu/events/>



management and governance through an emphasis on locally tailored management, by putting small-scale fishers at the centre of the solution. It supports a co-management approach that values the roles and contributions of fishers and local authorities as the most effective way to restore fish stocks, protect marine biodiversity and secure better livelihoods for Mediterranean fishers and their families. By empowering fishing communities – through better access to decision-making processes, stronger legal representation, and increased recognition within society – the objective is to end years of mismanagement that created a culture of non-compliance and unsustainability - and ultimately led to overfishing. The goal is to ensure fisheries management becomes a participatory system where adaptive decisions are genuinely shared, and where a greater awareness of environmental issues is fostered to secure a sustainable exploitation of marine resources in the long-term.

This document sheds light on the engagement action taken by WWF ANP/Portugal, a Portuguese non-profit non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in alignment with the WWF's global vision and strategy whose mission is the conservation of national biodiversity and forest ecosystems, the protection of marine biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable fisheries, the conservation of freshwater ecosystems and their water resources. This is a joint partnership with the Portuguese NGO Sciaena that aims to promote a healthy marine environment through the promotion of sustainable ways of exploitation, the involvement of the population and political intervention<sup>2</sup>, based in Faro, Algarve. Both NGOs benefit from strong networks in the Algarve fishing community to implement the use cases in the Atlantic Sea (for further detail, please see Deliverable D5.1 – Existing Projects Report).

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<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from Sciaena official website: <https://www.sciaena.org/en/home-7/>



## 1.2 WWF ANP and Sciaena's connections with SSF stakeholders in Algarve

WWF ANP has been creating a relationship with 14 fishers' associations for more than two years, beyond that, WWF ANP has been building a group of stakeholders through regular meetings for the implementation of a co-management process, as part of the ParticiPESCA project<sup>3</sup>. A total of sixty GPS-loggers were installed in SSF vessels of voluntary fishers along the coast of the Algarve under ParticiPESCA to acquire information about the fleet's areas of activity, trip durations, "soaking" time, among others. Additionally, until the end of 2022, on board data was gathered for monitoring catches.

Sciaena has been active in ParticiPESCA by participating in almost all its stakeholder meetings by representing PONG-Pesca, the Portuguese NGO Platform on fisheries, and hence meeting and developing a working relationship with several representatives of fishers' associations. This same representative work has been done by Sciaena in other participatory meetings for several issues concerning, for example, marine protected areas, and other *fora*, such as conferences.

Outside of the fishing communities, both ANP WWF and Sciaena have longstanding professional relationships with research teams at IPMA, the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere, and CCMAR, a research center based at the Algarve University specialized in marine biology and fisheries, as a result from previous projects and meetings over the years. Additionally, these years on the field have also enabled both these NGOs to have good contacts with Docapesca (public-private entity that manages seafood sale auctions), municipalities, maritime authorities and stakeholders within the seafood supply chain.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://participesca.pt/>





In the context of another project, Sea2See<sup>4</sup>, WWF ANP and partners will participate in a case study with the Fuseta community, which is a large community of octopus fishers in the Eastern Algarve, already involved in ParticiPESCA. The main objective of Sea2See is to significantly increase consumer confidence and acceptance of sustainable fisheries or aquaculture products in Europe. It intends to achieve this purpose through the development and demonstration of an innovative traceability model (blockchain) along the entire value chain and the application of social and sectorial strategies for co-creation, communication and awareness of the benefits of sustainable fisheries or aquaculture products. This project focuses on increasing sustainable consumption of fisheries and aquaculture, among European consumers, involving them in providing reliable traceability information. All contacts made within Sea2See will play a fundamental role in the dynamics of interaction with fishers in the Fish-X use case, as good relationships have been built with the Fuseta community.

## 2. Data collection and sharing requirements

In Portugal, data collection, holding and handling of geo-referencing is usually done by the Portuguese Institute for the Ocean and Atmosphere (IPMA). During these months, WWF ANP, Sciaena and CLS approached them to propose a collaboration in the framework of the Fish-X project. Legal, technical, bureaucratic and practical terms were discussed for a better understanding between all parties and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is currently being developed to specify how the partnership will unfold, particularly regarding potential sharing of data. In any case, the Fish-X project will respect the European General Data

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<sup>4</sup> <https://sea2see.eu/>



Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>5</sup> with regards to data processing and personal data protection.

## 3. Community engagement

### 3.1 Fisher community

WWF ANP and Sciaena have had regular contacts with key fishers' representatives as a first approach, providing information about the project and have prepared a list of target associations thanks to inputs from researchers specialized in SSF in the Algarve. Contacts with these associations are now ongoing and meetings are being arranged to discuss possible partnerships for the use case.

In terms of identified challenges for fishers to participate in use cases, the fishing community may:

- Find it difficult to change their habits and attitudes;
- Find all processes and technologies inherent to the project too complex;
- Demonstrate a lack of interest in the transparency that technology can bring, as illegalities bring benefits to some;
- Have problems collecting data on board for various reasons, which can be due to the lack of technological literacy (capacity building is necessary), lack of time, space on board, increased responsibilities by adding tasks to their routine, etc.

The benefits of the technological devices, such as data use for improved maritime space planning, have to be demonstrated to fishers in order to convince them.

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<sup>5</sup> Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)



The last webinar held on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and some working group meetings as part of Fish-X events' programme are specifically related to the Portuguese reality, hence several fishers' associations were invited to kick off the discussion on the digital solutions' adoptions.

## 3.2 Scientific community

Several informal and formal conversations have taken place between ANP WWF, Sciaena, CLS, IPMA and CCMAR researchers during the first year of Fish-X to explain the objectives of the project, think about possible collaborations and make sure there is no duplicated efforts among different projects. These have been fruitful discussions and IPMA researchers in particular have expressed their opinion that Fish-X should target longline, gillnet and trammel net fisheries, for which there is almost no information about when it comes to SSF in the region.

The Fish-X consortium is also making sure that these research teams receive information and invitations to its public events, such as webinars and working groups, hence reaching out to ensure transparency and discussions to exchange knowledge and experiences.

## 3.3 Maritime authorities

Contact with maritime authorities is ongoing as shown by the participation of João Escudeiro, inspector at the Directorate-General for Natural Resources, Safety and Maritime Services (DGRM), in Portugal, at the fourth Fish-X webinar on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023. The public webinar gathered 86 participants and focused on the benefits brought by digital technologies for the Portuguese small-scale fisheries sector in Algarve.

Indeed, mapping procedures and hotspots in fishing ports and coastal areas are crucial to avoid Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. The tested technology could help to



avoid fraud from auction when the ship-owner does not renew fishing licenses for not selling the minimum amount in the auction or may lose the right to fish a certain species for not having fished it legally in the past. That situation can happen with species that are rarely caught but that have a high commercial value, and when sold illegally, the value increases even more.

### 3.4 Supply chain stakeholders

Collaboration is ongoing with Docapesca, which is a state-owned company and is responsible for the provision of services of First Sale of Fish, as well as the support to the Sector of Fishing and its respective ports. Helena Cardoso, Commercial, Communication and Marketing Director at Docapesca, was one of the panellists at the 4<sup>th</sup> Fish-X webinar on 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 2023. She is also working at the fishing port of Aveiro, all ports of Algarve and all ports of the North of Portugal.

NUTRIFRESCO is a private company, based in the Algarve, Portugal, that distributes high-quality seafood in several countries and with whom Sciaena and ANP WWF have had meetings with in the past. Due to its potential to create change in the supply-chain, the consortium will approach NUTRIFRESCO to better understand its supply chain and gather data which could be useful for the traceability work of Fish-X.