



***International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF), Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE)***

***and Asociación de Mulleres Salgadas***

IYAFA Regional workshop: Getting the story straight and envisioning a fair future for small-scale fisheries in Europe

Vilanova de Arousa, Galicia, Spain, 13-16 November 2023

**CONCEPT NOTE**

**Context**

The UN General Assembly has proclaimed 2022 as the [International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture \(IYAFA 2022\)](#) with FAO as the lead agency. This provides an opportunity to further reiterate the objectives and promote the implementation of the Small-scale Fisheries Guidelines. The implementation of the SSF guidelines is expected to guide and encourage governments, fishing communities and other stakeholders to work together and ensure secure and sustainable small-scale fisheries for the benefit of small-scale fishers, fish workers and their communities as well as for society at large.

Fishing is far more than just an economic activity and forms part of the culture, identity and way of life of marine and inland fishing communities, with their own customs, food habits, rhythms of life, rituals, spiritual beliefs, value systems, traditions and social organisations. Approximately 90% of the 140 million people engaged in fisheries globally work in the small-scale fisheries sector. For each fisher person in the small-scale sector, at least four other people are engaged in land-based fisheries activities, such as the preparation of equipment, fish processing, and marketing. This means more than 500 million people around the world depend on small-scale fisheries for their livelihoods. In Europe, small-scale fisheries employ around 80,000 fishers, representing approximately 80% of the EU fishing fleet, and 48% of employment in European fisheries.

As a predominantly family-based activity, fishing in Europe makes a direct contribution to household food security and food sovereignty. Women play a particularly important role, yet this role is largely unrecognised and undervalued. In addition to their roles as household food providers and caregivers, women make key contributions all along the value chain – including preparing gear, fishing and shellfish harvesting, processing, managing family fishing businesses, and marketing. In Galicia, for example, shellfish harvesting done by *mariscadoras* is a particularly important subsistence and semi-commercial activity carried out in coastal communities across the region. Many *mariscadoras* are also active small-entrepreneurs selling fish, yet they are facing increasing pressure caused by declining landings from small-scale fishing activities, and the direct marketing of small-scale fisheries products. Changing economic, production and consumption trends in Europe are impacting women's roles in fishing, and forcing the closure of traditional activities, while simultaneously opening up new opportunities in sectors such as tourism.

In the context of IYAFA, [ICSF](#), its members and partners have organised three regional workshops and women's exchanges in Asia (May 2022)<sup>1</sup>, Latin America (November 2022) and Africa (February 2023), in partnership with fishworker organizations globally to discuss matters concerning SSF. As a continuation of this series, the European regional workshop is being organized from 13-16 November 2023, at Vilanova de Arousa, Galicia, Spain in collaboration with [Asociación de Mulleres Salgadas](#) – a member of the [AKTEA platform](#) and [Low Impact Fishers of Europe \(LIFE\)](#)

## **Objectives of the Workshop**

The major objectives of the workshop are to:

- Create a Positive Narrative of SSF in Europe
- Strengthen Governance Transition and Related Processes associated with SSF in Europe
- Strengthen Capacities of SSF and Support Organizations and Building Alliances
- Amplify the voices and perspectives of women small-scale fisheries;

## **Participants**

The workshop will include 40 participants from community-based organizations, local and national fishworker organizations, networks of women in fisheries, Indigenous Peoples associations, civil society organizations and academia across Europe. Participants will also be drawn from organizations involved with the preparation, negotiation and implementation of the SSF Guidelines since 2011, as well as fishing communities and organizations that ICSF members work with in their local and national contexts.

## **Methodology**

The workshop objectives and agendas are framed through a consultative approach, including multiple stakeholders ranging from representatives from fishworker organisations, civil society organisations and academia. The workshop will be for four days, and will focus broadly on discussing the obstacles fishworkers face in accessing resources, fishing areas and markets, and how communities and organizations mobilise to address these challenges and the changing role of women in European small-scale fisheries. Some of the sub-themes that may emerge in the workshop, and which are central to ICSF's work, include: human rights of fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples; social protection; impacts of 'blue economy' agendas on small-scale fisheries; impacts of climate change and mitigation and adaptation initiatives on small-scale fisheries; roles of fishworkers' organisations, associations and cooperatives; mainstreaming gender equality/equity in fisheries; and promoting decent work and social development in fishing communities.

The workshop involves:

---

<sup>1</sup> The Asia workshop took place from 5-8 May in Bangkok, Thailand and included 60 participants from 11 South and Southeast Asia countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. More information on the workshop can be found here: <https://www.icsf.net/resources/asia-workshop-iyafa-2022-celebrating-sustainable-and-equitable-small-scale-fisheries/>

- Collaborative discussions and activities in which fishworkers are able to share their experiences and perspectives, learn from each other, and develop collective strategies and plans of action for addressing these issues in their local and national contexts.
- Exchanges between women in fisheries, which highlight their experiences, the challenges they are facing, and the creative approaches they use to address these challenges.
- Field trip to understand the Galician co-management system to understand the role of women in the process.
- Open, inclusive spaces for fishworkers and like-minded organizations to meet face-to-face and deepen their cooperation on advocacy work.

The general structure of the workshop includes:

- **Day 1:** Creating a positive narrative for SSF in Europe - Group activity and discussions on small-scale fishworkers' struggles in Europe, including access to fisheries resources, areas and markets, and solutions for addressing these challenges and the exploring the idea of an equitable and just SSF in Europe
- **Day 2:** Field visit with women shellfish harvesters to learn about their roles in fisheries, their organizations and networks, how they are working to address some of the challenges they face, and their vision for the future.
- **Day 2:** Discussions on Governing Access to fishery resources and fishing areas (TACs-quotas, effort control & fishing areas), Boosting co-management in Europe-Governing fisheries activities to ensure fairness, equity, sustainability and viability in the context of the Blue Economy, Governing access to sustainable and fair food systems and Towards a Participatory Guarantee System for SSF in Europe.
- **Day 3:** Strengthening Capacities of SSF and Support Organizations and Building Alliances Development of a collective Regional Action Plan.
- **Day 4:** Women in Fisheries Panel Discussion Reflecting on day1, 2 and 3 and draft workshop statement preparation

Workshop outputs:

- Collective Regional Action Plan and/or statement developed by workshop participants
- Workshop Communications including website and social media postings
- Photos and videos
- Final workshop report