

## SMALL-SCALE FISHERS' FORUM

# Promoting strong and innovative SSF value chains

The workshop sessions on “Promoting strong and innovative SSF value chains” focused on best practices for creating competitive economic advantages for the men and women working along the small-scale fisheries value chain.

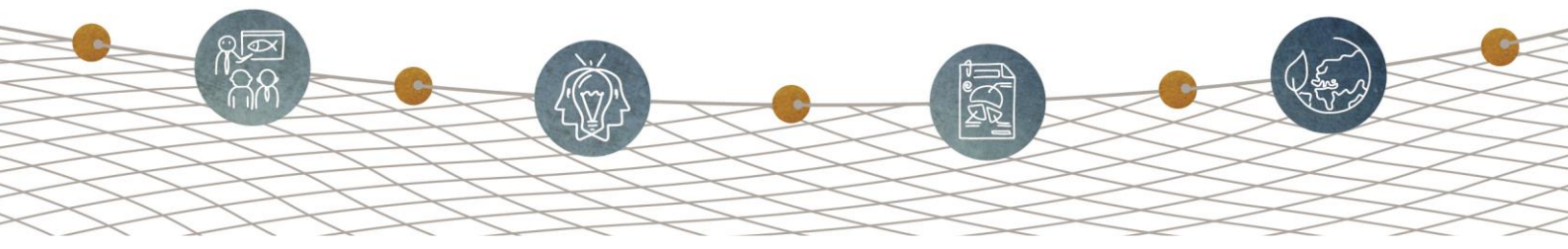
### THE THREE SESSIONS DISCUSSED:

- (i) strategies for expanding and securing markets, including through voluntary labeling;
- (ii) approaches to value addition and packaging;
- (iii) the role and contribution of women in small-scale fisheries value chains.

In the sessions, small-scale fisheries actors - in particular fishers from Tricase, Italy, and members of AKTEA, a European network of women's organisations in fisheries and aquaculture - participated and shared their experiences in addition to the presentations and inputs given by CIHEAM Bari researchers and the questions and inputs from participants.

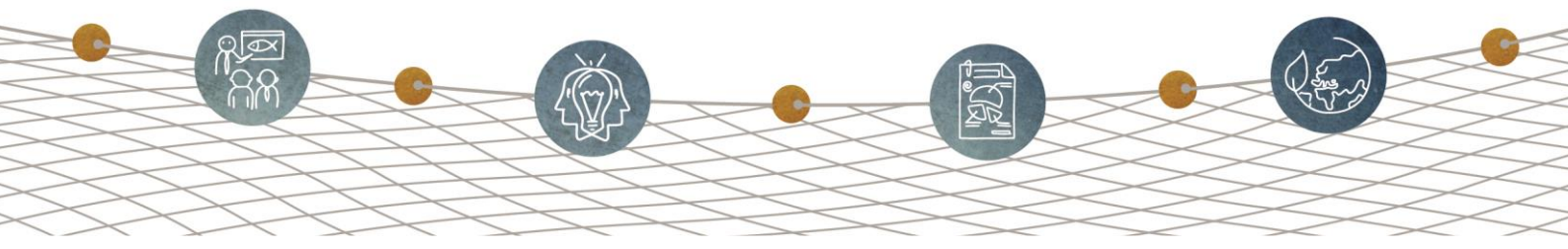
### Summary of key issues and related conclusions:

- Small-scale fisheries value chain actors often face competition from supermarkets, exporters and other larger organized commercial distributors. Moreover, also when small-scale fisheries catches are of superior quality and freshness compared to those from other sources, their products do not always catch higher prices or increased demand as they are not differentiated in the market. The experience from the CIHEAM Bari project in Tricase in Italy indicates that participatory local labeling schemes may help address these challenges by enhancing product value and hence increasing the economic benefits to small-scale fisheries actors.
- Efforts to add value to products and create benefits throughout the value chain need to be linked to fisheries co-management and effectively engaging fishers in decision-making processes. Creating a participatory local labeling system in



partnership with fishers and government authorities can thus lead to a win-win situation with benefits created both in the form of more sustainable fisheries and increased economic benefits for fishers and other value chain actors. Appropriate monitoring and reporting processes are needed to create trust in the system and ensure sustained benefits.

- **Exchanges of experiences from local labeling schemes should be encouraged** and ways of possibly scaling up good practices further discussed. While each small-scale fisheries locality is unique, there may be benefits of having national level labeling systems or common features across different locations.
- When looking for how to add value and differentiate products, it is important to build on traditional products but it is also necessary to understand what consumers want and how their preferences develop and change over time. Not only product itself is important but also the information that comes with it (where is it from, was it sustainably fished etc.) and how to use it as well how it is packaged can make a difference – both for product quality and consumer appeal based on how it is presented.
- If a fish product can be sold at a higher price, for example by providing a higher quality product or a slightly different product appealing to consumers, this may have a beneficial impact on sustainability of the fishery resource and more income can be earned from less fish. **Tourism may be another option for increasing income** of fishing communities but there is a need to understand local circumstances, opportunities and challenges.
- Women work all along the value chain – preparations for fishing trips, making gear, fishing on boats, sorting fish after landing, selling fish... but this work is not always recognized and is often considered as helping or part of family chores. Women tend to need to work more and harder than men to prove themselves and be accepted. The situation is however different in different locations depending on local traditions and customs - from women not being allowed to fish to being well accepted on boats.
- Women bring rich culture and creativity to the sector that need to be valorized. Being organized in associations and networks help women exchange experiences and to understand that they are doing a proper work, not just 'helping', when doing different types of fisheries related work. Women need to recognize their own role to be able to also convey this understanding also to others. Recognising and supporting the role of women is important economically for both men and women and society more broadly.





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With financial support of



- In Europe, there is AKTEA. Women in other countries can strengthen their voices and improve the recognition of their work by getting together. **Exchanges between different women professionals and groups can help so that those who are not in associations can learn how they can get organised**, and AKTEA could perhaps help in reaching out to non-European countries.

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*The SSF Forum is designed to build capacity of small-scale fishers and fish workers on select topics, to share knowledge and to promote the exchange of best practices throughout the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. This initiative responds to the recommendations within the Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RPOA-SSF).*

*Find out more about this initiative*

**#SSFForum**

