



SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN COASTAL ECUADOR & THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS

Small-scale fisheries (SSF) in Ecuador take place in the coastal and oceanic area, as well as in the insular region (specifically the Galápagos Islands). They are fundamental to food security, employment and the economy, and the cultural identity of numerous communities. More than 58,000 people are directly involved in SSF nationwide, through a fleet of approximately 15,500 vessels. In the insular region, more than 500 families depend directly on SSF, and hundreds more indirectly, an activity carried out exclusively by individuals registered as fishers with the Galápagos National Park and regulated under strict rules.

**Diverse
Dynamic
Complex
Valuable**

SSF are a driver of sustainability and innovation. Revaluing and elevating the fundamental role of fishers as guardians of the sea, creators of value, producers of sustainable food, and agents of change who promote proper resource management – along with improving the working conditions of those involved in the sector and making visible the diversity of local knowledge – are essential steps toward achieving the sustainability and long-term viability of SSF.

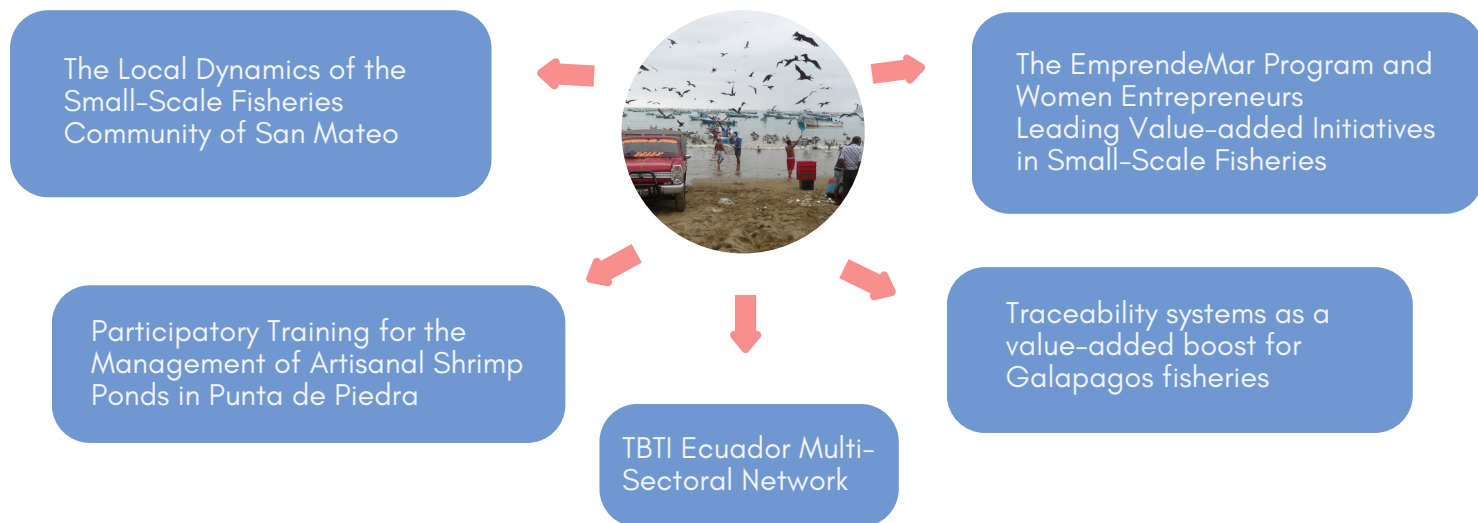
Opportunities for change

- 📌 **Women empowerment:** Play strong productive, social and cultural roles
- 📌 **Local strategies activation:** Enhance bio-cultural values, geographic mobility, and livelihood diversification
- 📌 **University-community engagement:** Reinforce legitimacy through participatory mapping and improve traceability through record-keeping systems

Governance challenges

- 📌 **Ineffective management:** Weak governance and insufficient resource monitoring
- 📌 **Ecosystem degradation:** Overexploited stocks, protected species under pressure from bycatch, and climate change impacts
- 📌 **Social vulnerability:** Conflicts, inequity, precarious working conditions, limited social protection, and emerging threats such as violence associated with illicit economies

SSF as a Promising Sector



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Small-Scale Fisheries are Too Big To Ignore