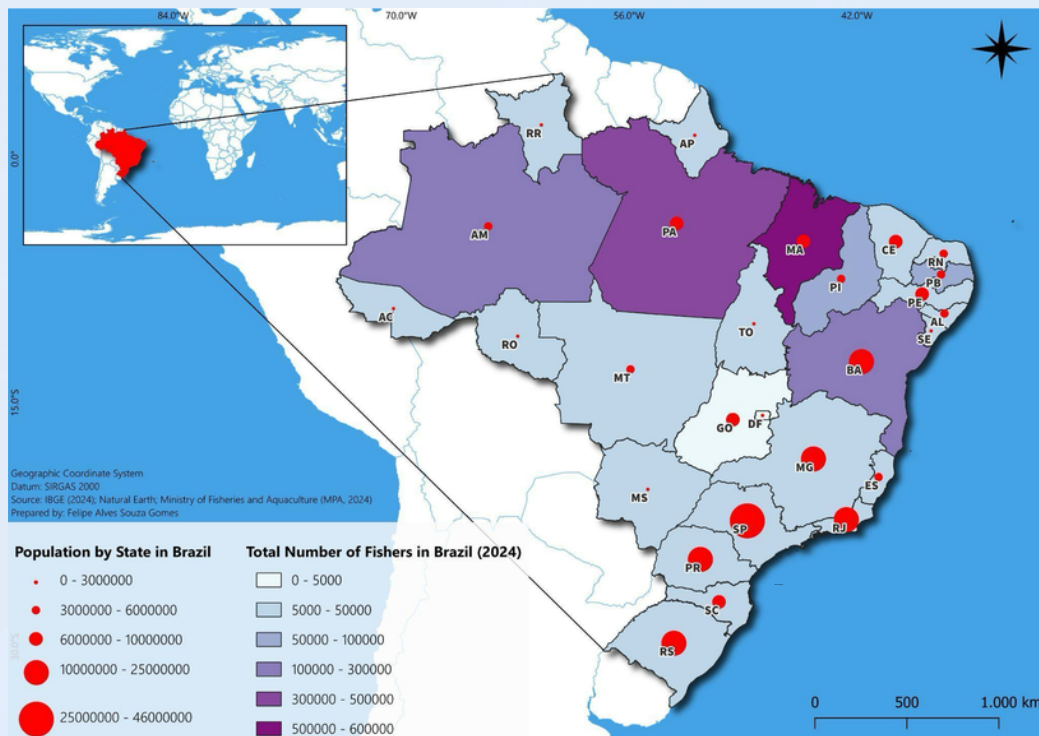




TRANSFORMATION IN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES OF BRAZIL: *THINK TOGETHER, ACT NOW*

Brazilian Epistemology of Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF)



Source: IBGE (2022) and MPA (2026)

- SSF in Brazil are a thriving economic activity, mostly in the North and Northeast regions, involving almost two millions people, at least half of them are women.
- Traditional SSF communities are recognized as culturally distinct groups with their own social organization, occupying and using territories for cultural, social, religious, ancestral, and economic reproduction, with knowledge transmitted between generations.

Challenges facing SSF in Brazil are complex and multi-dimensional. Their realities are different from what people from outside the communities see them. Often fishers, both women and men, face institutional invisibility and the denial of fundamental rights, while dealing with severe socio-environmental impacts, such as technological disasters and oil contamination, and pressures stemming from existing (mis)governance models that often fail to recognize their existence. Yet, SSF communities have capacities and capabilities developed over the years, with knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation, which help them to maintain their territories, resisting the tides of modernization and dispossession. It is through collective actions that keep them on their own navigation routes.



THINKING AHEAD About SSF Brazil



TRANSFORMATION & SCENARIOS

DEALING WITH VULNERABLE TERRITORIES

Environmental disasters and industrial expansion, overfishing and habitat degradation, gender invisibility and social inequality, and maladaptive conservation measures are key issues affecting SSF. They need to be dealt with through transformative pathways, aligning with how collective identities, solidarity networks, and traditional ecological knowledge structure the very fabric of SSF and coastal society.



METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

INNOVATION & BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE

Challenging the traditional methodological paradigm, centering around bioeconomic aspects of SSF is a key strategy in moving forward. Methods that are underused or unfamiliar in mainstream fisheries management science and policy can enrich the discussion by bringing epistemologies from the social sciences, geography, and other disciplines. They are as important as those from biology, ecology, oceanography, and fisheries engineering.



GOVERNANCE

RECLAIMING TERRITORIES & THE BLUE BIOECONOMY

Transforming SSF from marginalization and vulnerability into a strong and sustainable model of existence and way of life requires alternative governance arrangements. One of the focuses is on creating an enabling framework and mechanisms for power to be shared between the state, local government, and communities, such as through co-management and self-governance, and using tools like territorial rights and Blue Justice.



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CONTACT US

tbtibrasile@gmail.com