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Abstracts

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Subsidies from the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund: prefinancing facility for small-scale Mediterranean fishers

This abstract provides an overview of a prefinancing facility co-designed by BlueSeeds and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to bridge the gap between small-scale fishers in the Mediterranean region and European subsidies. Only 3 percent of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund dedicated to the fleet has been assigned to small-scale fishers. Although the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund is a key source of financial assistance for the development and sustainability of the fishing sector, small-scale fishers often encounter difficulties in accessing it. This is mainly due to the complexity of application processes and the lack of upfront capital. BlueMove, a prefinancing facility developed by BlueSeeds and WWF, aims to address the financial challenges faced by small-scale fishers in accessing the necessary resources to transform their activities and develop sustainable practices. It provides upfront funds to eligible fishers, enabling them to meet immediate financial requirements while awaiting the disbursement of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund grants. The prefinancing facility operates through a partnership between relevant local stakeholders such as financial ethical institutions, non-governmental organizations, fisheries associations and governmental agencies. It offers low-interest loans or cash advances based on the anticipated amount of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund subsidies. The pre-financing facility also provides technical assistance and capacity-building programs to enhance the financial management skills of the beneficiaries. By addressing the technical and financial constraints faced by small-scale fishers, this facility contributes to the sustainability of Mediterranean small-scale fisheries. Additionally, it helps strengthen the economic resilience of coastal communities by supporting livelihoods and income generation opportunities.

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The way from invasion to commercialization of illegal, unreported and unregulated rayed pearl oyster (*Pinctada radiata*) fisheries in Greece

The commercial harvesting of the rayed pearl oyster (*Pinctada radiata*) a well-established non-indigenous species (more than 50 years old) in the eastern Mediterranean, is still unregulated. Because of how the non-indigenous species legislation treats it, the bivalve is mislabelled in order to be transported through supply chain channels and the current local exploitation of shellfish by fishers is considered as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. An all-encompassing scientific approach to problem-solving begins with the evaluation of the bivalve stock and provides the seasonal pattern of harvesting. Through market research, including both consumers and the supply chain, the product biochemical profile was identified and marketed. A techno-economic study on processing aiming to add value by raising the revenue of fishers has been also conducted. By submitting fishing regulations for the season and size of the harvest to the government for approval, the legalization of the fishery is promoted.