

# FROM MANAGING FISH TO MANAGING PEOPLE: REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE FISHERIES GOVERNANCE



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FISHERIES/AQUACULTURE GOVERNANCE | COASTAL FISHERIES | LIVELIHOODS | SOCIAL WELL-BEING | SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

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## OBJECTIVE

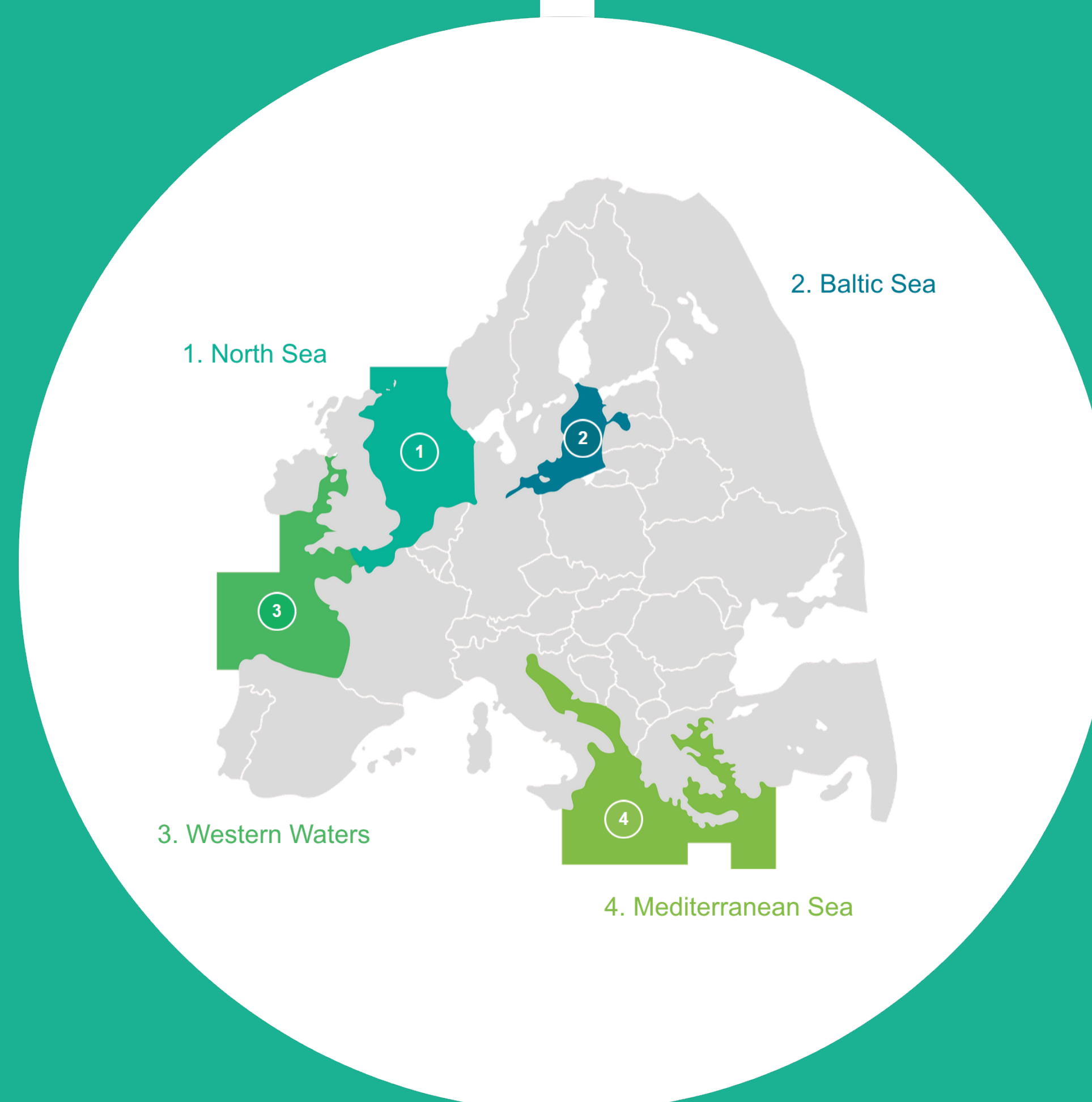
“Why has achieving sustainable outcomes in EU fisheries been a persistent challenge?” We argue that more focus is needed on improving our understanding of the interactions between social actors within fisheries management and, in doing so, identify factors that could make fisheries governance more effective.

## CONTEXT

Study focuses on **four regional seas**: North Sea (includes Eastern English Channel); Baltic Sea; Western Waters (includes English Channel, Celtic Sea, and Bay of Biscay); and Mediterranean Sea.

**Governance** is a *social process*, mediated by interactions between variety of social actors—governments, regional authorities, industry, the public, and civil society—aimed towards a specific goal.

**Fisheries governance** is the overall framework of politics, policies, laws, norms, values, regulations, and institutions that guide the management and conservation of fishery resources (within a specific region).



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

“We would like to see greater emphasis on co-management and whilst there is lip service paid to the idea too often there is little reality behind initiatives.”

– respondent at organisation representing fishers in the UK, North Sea



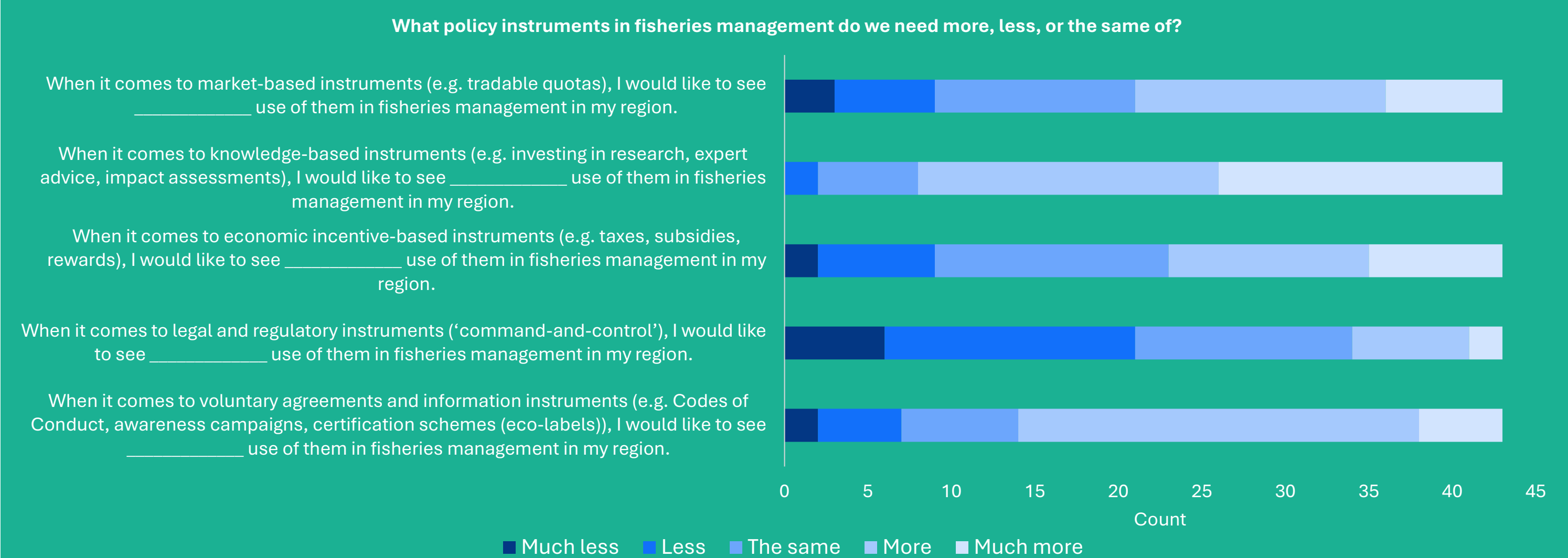
“It is important that fishermen and their representative associations be more involved in decision-making processes and that more account be taken of their experience and opinion in order to define rules that are as widely shared as possible and, therefore, respected.”

– respondent at union representing workers employed by fishing enterprises and cooperatives in Italy, Mediterranean Sea

Across all regions, **the top policy instrument that respondents wanted to less of were legal and regulatory instruments** (‘command-and-control’) in EU fisheries management.

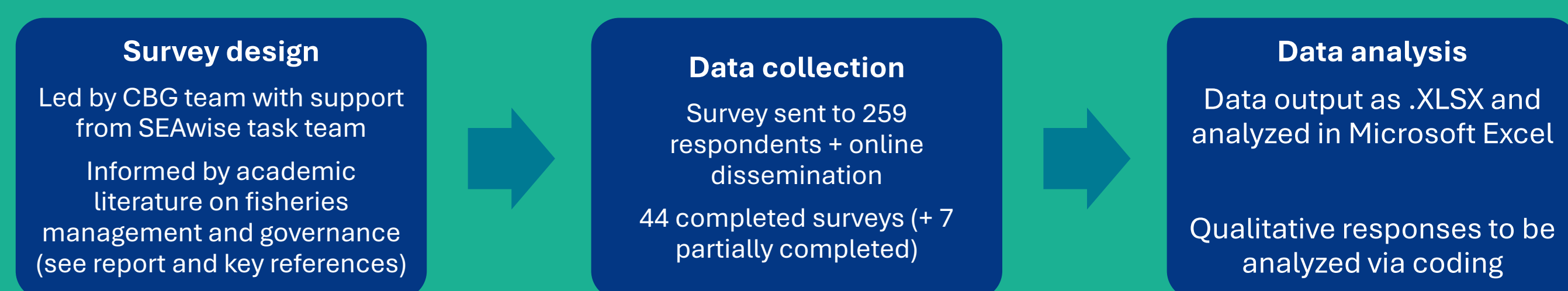
Across all regions, **respondents wanted to see more use of voluntary agreements and information-based instruments** (e.g. Codes of Conduct, awareness campaigns, and certification schemes).

Comparing the five policy instruments across all regions, **the largest need was focused on knowledge-based instruments** (e.g. investing in research, expert advice, impact assessments), followed by voluntary agreements and information-based instruments.



## METHODS

Data was collected via an **online survey**, using Ramboll SurveyXact over a **six-month period** (Feb – Aug 2024). The survey consisted of **31 questions** using the Likert scale and optional text boxes. Survey data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel.



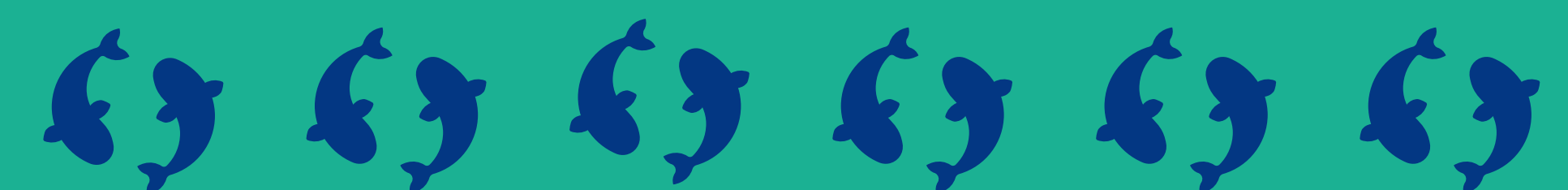
## RESPONDENTS - BACKGROUND

Most respondents are from **organisations representing fishers or academia** and the majority have **more than 15 years of experience** working in EU fisheries. The top 5 countries represented are: **Italy, Denmark, Spain, Ireland, and Belgium**. Nearly half of the respondents’ focus on the **Mediterranean Sea region** and almost one-quarter on **North Sea region**.



“Trust between different actors (industry, policymakers, industry, NGOs, primary sector, processors) seems to be at the lowest level in recent years. To ensure any kind of cooperation and positive synergies, the level of trust needs to be improved through more engagement, more personal connections and sharing of perspectives to improve mutual understanding. In addition, more weight should be given to stakeholders in decision-making to ensure legitimacy of measures and provide incentive for stakeholders to collaborate.”

– respondent at Advisory Council in Belgium, North Sea

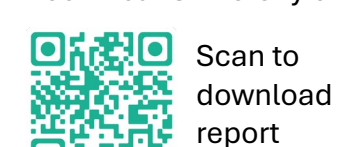


“Improve the accessibility, accuracy (quality) and reliability of data/information. The data handled by the administrations are, for the most part, those provided by the catches of the professional fishing sector. Interpretative conclusions are extrapolated from them, which are not always in line with reality. This creates a continuous mistrust between those who provide these data (the fishermen) who live and act on the ground every day and those who interpret them, both from the centres and/or bodies in charge and from the offices of the administrations. All of this creates confusion among people and their organisations.”

– respondent at organization representing fishers in Spain, Mediterranean Sea



For more information, see SEAWISE report: Hegland, T. J., Asif, F., van Tatenhove, J., Raakjaer, J., Rathcke, K., Kraan, M., Frangoudes, K., Bitetto, L., & Rindorf, A. (2023). SEAWISE report on requirements for fisheries governance to be effective. In SEAWISE report on requirements for fisheries governance to be effective [Report]. Technical University of Denmark. <https://doi.org/10.11583/DTU.24199137>



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### About the SEAWISE project

SEAWISE is a research programme aimed at understanding the current state-of-play of fisheries management across Europe and facilitating the widespread implementation of Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) in the region.



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