

PESCAVET - Professionals' innovation for pesca-tourism activities

Erasmus+, KA202 - Strategic Partnerships for vocational education and training

Project N° 2020-1-LV01-KA202-077503

NATIONAL REPORT

ITALY

Project Number 2020-1-LV01-KA202-077503

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Introduction

Professionals' innovation training for pesca-tourism activities – PESCAVET project is co-funded by the European Commission under Erasmus + Programme – KA2 Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices – Strategic Partnerships for Vocational Education and Training. The overall objective is the development of quality and innovative training courses for professionals related to pesca-tourism. The target groups of the project are professionals working in the pesca-tourism sector and/or unemployed professionals who are interested in entering the sector.

The proposed project promotes the implementation of innovative training courses to increase opportunities for sustainable entrepreneurship and develop the expertise of professionals to address the challenges identified in this area. The project will target professionals in order to raise awareness for career opportunities in the fisheries related tourism and the improvement of their skills via the implementation of a Benchmark exercise on new processes and marketing techniques for designing, promoting and review of products or services in pesca-tourism (IO1).

More specifically, under IO1, the partnership aims to develop 4 National Reports in Latvia, Italy, Cyprus and Bulgaria in order to collect information on the current situation of pesca-tourism in each partner country. The present report analyses the national data and results retrieved in Italy from 40 questionnaires answered by professionals who work in the maritime and marine sectors in Italy and who responded the questionnaire given by the partnership of PESCAVET at a local level. The partners underline the idea that a certain set of minimum standards, should always be maintained, regardless of the differences among the pesca-tourism situation in their countries and developed the questionnaire supporting PRISM as the leader of IO1 of the project. It was difficult to collect questionnaires due to the COVID pandemic and the stop of the pesca-tourism activities in the last 18 months. So we managed to collect only 40 questionnaires.

IO1 specific aim is to provide the basis for the development of a common report which will be developed after the elaboration of the 4 National reports from the leaders and co

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leaders of IO1. It is actually a product of joint efforts of all partner countries with the results of 45-50 questionnaires in each partner country in order to collect and present the best practices for pesca-tourism in each national level.

The main objectives of the National Reports are to:

- establish a baseline for knowledge on new processes and marketing techniques for products and services in pesca-tourism;
- provide an optimal knowledge framework for the development and enhancement of pesca-tourism entrepreneurship, to be used not only during the project's duration, but more importantly beyond its completion;
- gain a comprehensive identification and understanding of the challenges, strengths and opportunities related to the design, development and promotion of products and services in pesca-tourism in each partner country;
- check for good practices already developed in the participating countries and compare also with other EU countries;
- Identify and analyze techniques used to design, promote, and evaluate products and services in the partner countries, at the same time, provide the information needed to successfully design and develop concrete and complementary training tools in the participating countries addressed both to learners and trainers;
- assess existing knowledge levels about pesca-tourism and will evaluate best practices with an emphasis on how benchmark data can be used in the training courses of the project;

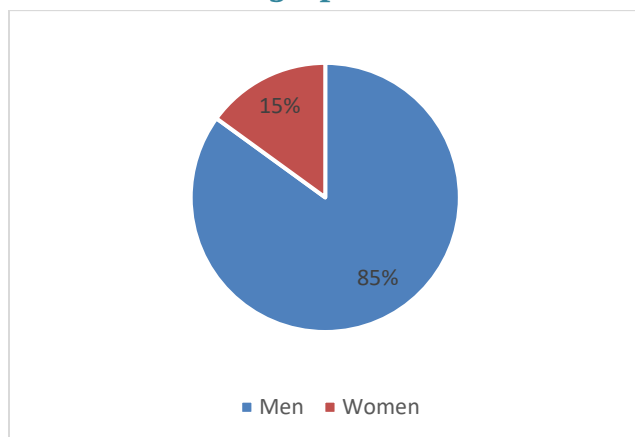
The final 'Benchmark Synthesis Report on new processes and marketing techniques for designing, promoting and review of products or services in pesca-tourism' will contain the identified best practices and their associated performance on pesca-tourism development across Europe. The report will be presented in the participating countries and the Output leader, PRISM with the support of co-leader MARINE CLUSTER BULGARIA will be responsible in preparing this high-quality benchmark exercise after the finalizations of the 4 National Reports.

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1. Key Findings about Pesca-Tourism in Italy

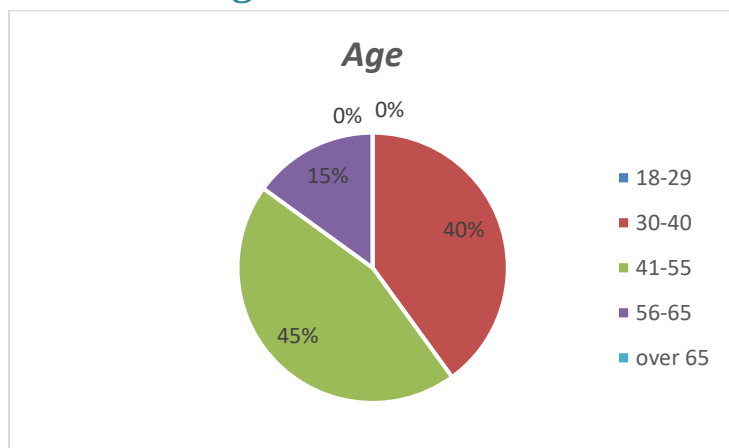
1.1. Demographics



Graph 1: Gender

Professionals that participated and answered the aforementioned questionnaires of PESCAVET Project under IO1 are in the majority **men** with a **85%** percentage and a **15%** of **women**. Pesca-tourism and fishing in general, are activities mainly practiced by men in Italy.

1.2. Age



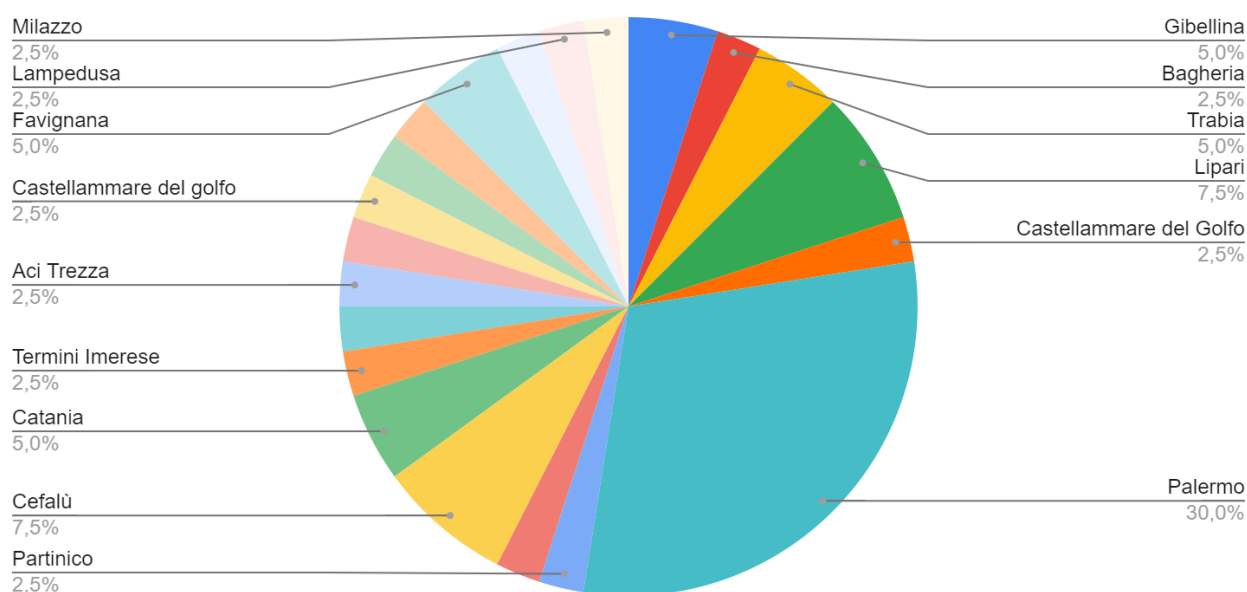
Graph 2: Age

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Their age nonetheless differs, in Italy most of the responders were **41-55 years old** (45%) while the following dominant age group is 30-40 (40%) followed by the age group of 56-65 (15%). It is quite clear that fishing and pesca-tourism are not “youth-friendly” activities in Italy.

City and country of residence



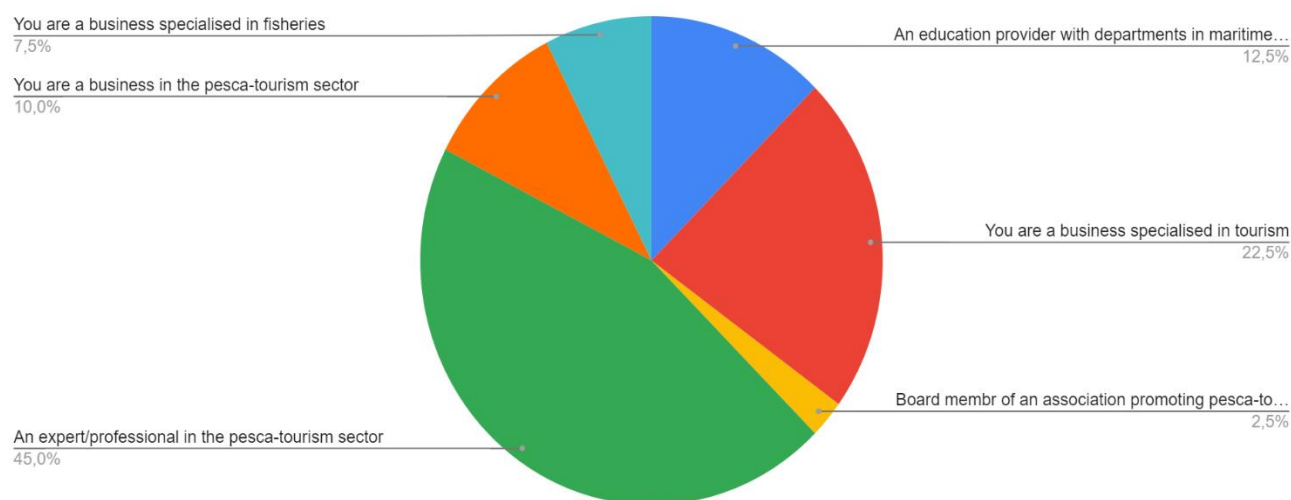
Graph 3: City and Country

The professionals mostly involved with fisheries and work in maritime and marine sectors in Italy are mostly from Palermo for the 30% of the responders and others from minor islands of Sicily and different cities on the sea coast, from a wide geographical area across Sicily.

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1.3. Profession

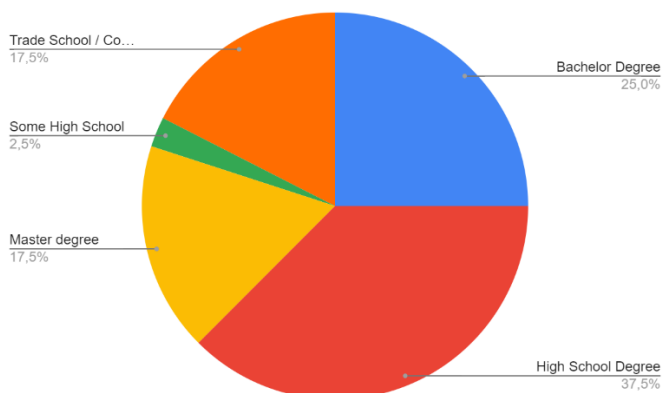


Graph 4: Profession

As it concerns the profession of the responders it can be seen that with the biggest percentage the responders are experts and professionals in fisheries and tourism (45%). With a percentage of 22.5% they are business specialized in tourism, 12,5% are Marine Superintendents. Only 10% are a business in the pesca-tourism sector and 7.5% are a business specialised in fisheries. One respondent was a member of a board in an association promoting pesca-tourism.

2. Education Level

2.1. Highest degree or level of education



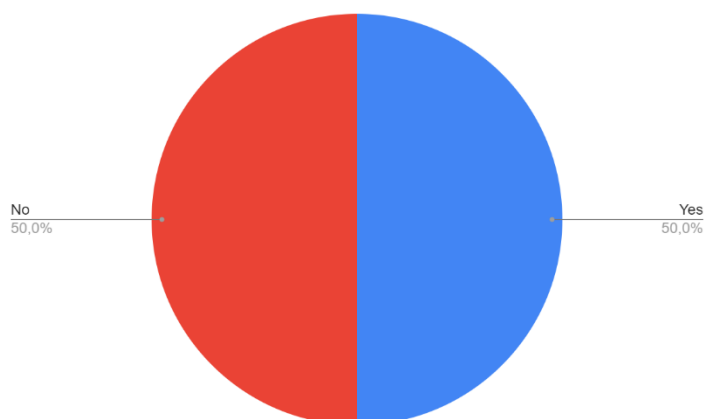
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Graph 5: Level of Education

Concerning their level of education, the respondents have answered that their highest level of education is a High school Degree (37,5%) and Bachelor Degree (25%). 17,5% has a Master Degree and a Trade School/college education. Only 2,5%, one the respondent has not finished high school.

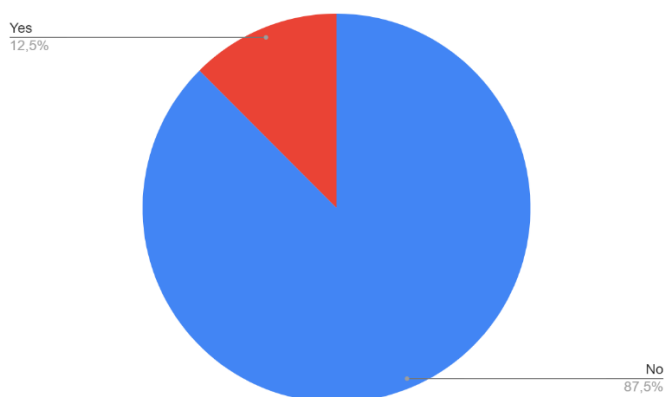
2.2. Previous Training on Fishing



Graph 6: Previous Training on Fishing

In a question if they have been trained on fishing the respondents answered **NO** with 50% and **YES** with the same percentage.

2.3. Previous Training on pesca-tourism



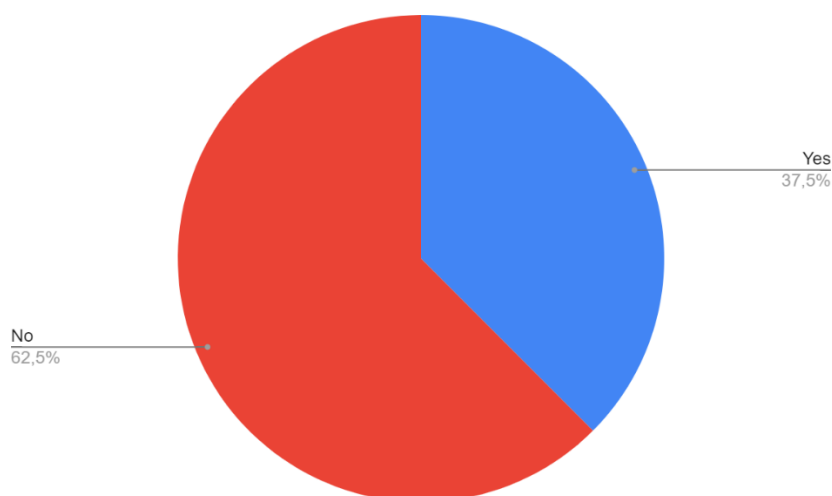
Graph 7: Previous Training on Pesca-Tourism

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In a similar question if the respondents have been trained on pesca-tourism the answer was **NO** with **87,5%** percentage.

2.4. Previous Training on entrepreneurship, innovation and business

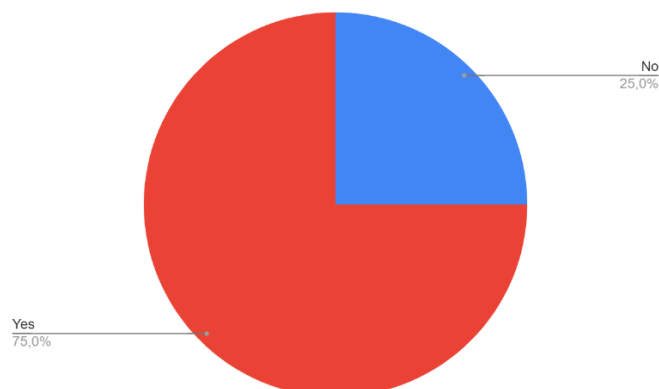


Graph 8: Previous Training on Entrepreneurship, innovation and business

The responders seem not to have a previous training on entrepreneurship, innovation and business with **62,5%** and 37,5% have been trained on those domains.

3. Previous experience in tourism and fisheries

3.1. Previous Work Experience in the pesca-tourism business



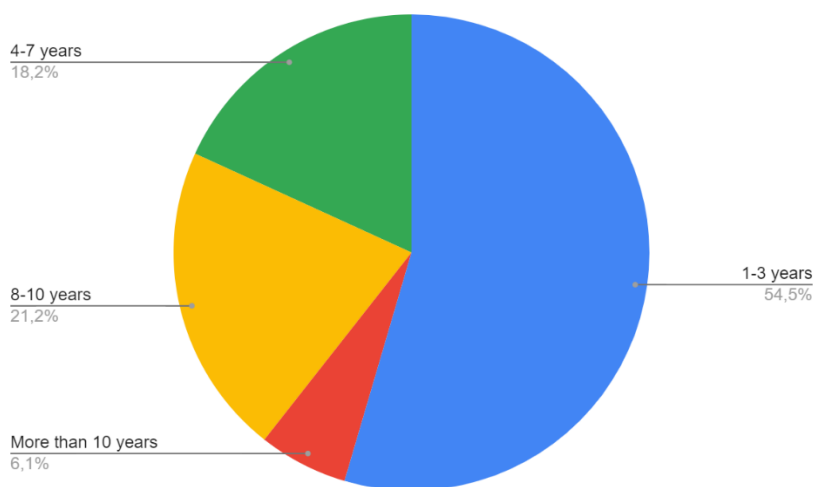
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Graph 9: Previous Work Experience in Pesca-Tourism

Respondents have work experience in the pesca-tourism business in the past with a high percentage of 75% and 25% had no previous work experience in the sector.

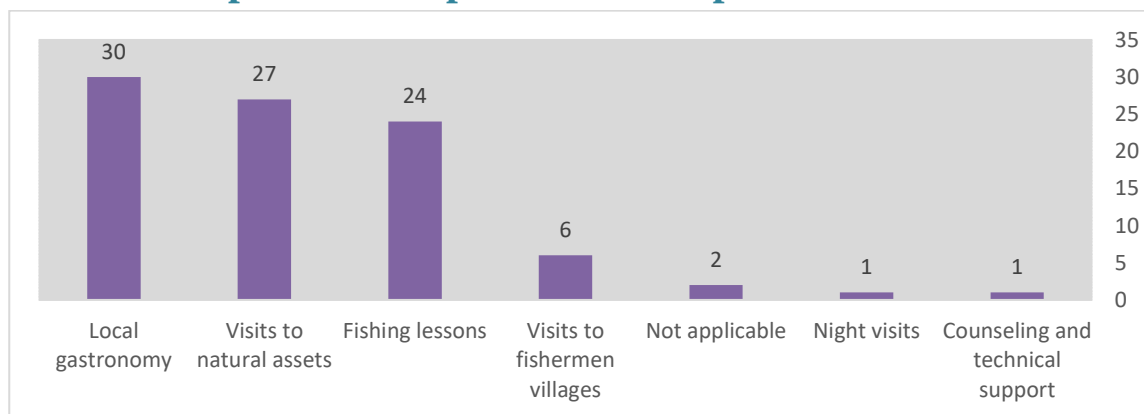
3.2. Duration of Work Experience in Pesca-tourism



Graph 10: Duration of Work Experience in Pesca-Tourism

As it can be also seen from the graph above, 54,5% of the respondents have 1-3 years' experience in the sector. 21,2% has 8-10 years' experience, 18,2% has 4-7 years' experience and only the 6,1% has more than 10 years' experience in pesca-tourism, being this activity a quite young one in Italy.

3.3. Services and products of pesca-tourism provided



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Graph 11: Services and products

The main product/service offered by professionals is the local gastronomy, equaling the 75% of the respondents with 30 answers. Visits to natural assets scored 27 answers, representing the 67,5% of the services offered by pesca-tourism operators. Fishing lessons represent the 60% of the services/products offered with 24 answers, Visits to fishermen's villages scored 6 answers equaling the 15% of the total.

3.4. Communication and marketing activities in Pesca-Tourism

To the question: "Which communication and marketing activities do you perform in your pesca-tourism activity if applicable?", respondents answered as follows:

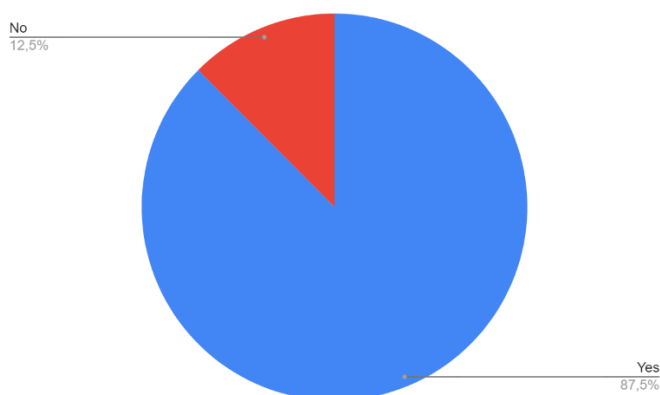
- Social networks (7)
- Hotels and restaurants from the local area (5)
- Internet (5)
- Tour operators (4)
- Newsletter, mailing (3)
- Office for local tourism promotion (2)
- Word of mouth (2)
- Travel agencies (2)
- Online platform on pesca-tourism
- Skipper and owner
- Contacts with trade professionals,
- Website
- Local network
- Tourism trade fairs
- Flyers

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Communication and marketing activities that the responders perform in their pesca-tourism activity are mainly connected with social media and the internet, together with hotels and restaurants from the local area and tourism professionals such as tour operators and travel agencies.

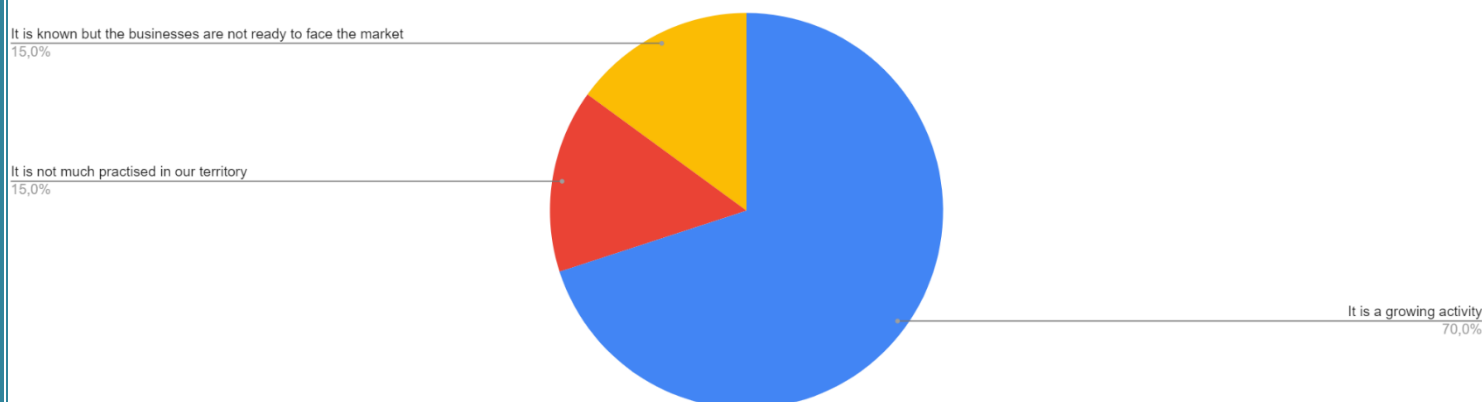
3.5. Fishing - an established tourist activity in Italy



Graph 12: Fishing in national level

In a question of fishing is an established tourist activity in Italy respondents agree with 87,5% that in Italy in the areas of their residences fishing is a custom and tradition while 12,5% do not consider fishing as a tradition in their areas.

3.6. Practiced activity in local level



Graph 13: Practiced Activity in local level

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In a similar question and to what extent the pesca-tourism is a practiced activity in their territory, respondents have the following answers:

with a percentage of 70% they agree that pesca-tourism is a growing activity in Italy, 15% responded it is not much practiced in the territory and 15% responded that it is known but businesses are not ready to face the market.

3.7. Local maritime natural heritage and traditional fishing culture in Italy

In a question if the respondents want to promote a local maritime natural heritage or traditional fishing culture that they like in Italy, these were the answers:

- Smaller islands (6)
- Local culture and traditions (3)
- Knowledge of the coastal area (3)
- Fishing techniques of the minor islands of the past (2)
- Castellammare coasts (2)
- Cefalù (2), Norman Arab itinerary
- Favignana (2), old tonnara
- Zingaro natural reserve
- Egadi islands
- Local fish
- Squid fishing
- Sant'Agata di Militello area
- Skiing, small coasters fishing
- Entrance to nice ports, scuba diving
- Swordfish fishing
- Acitrezza and Capomulini were born as small seaside villages
- Stromboli
- Lipari, Aeolian Islands

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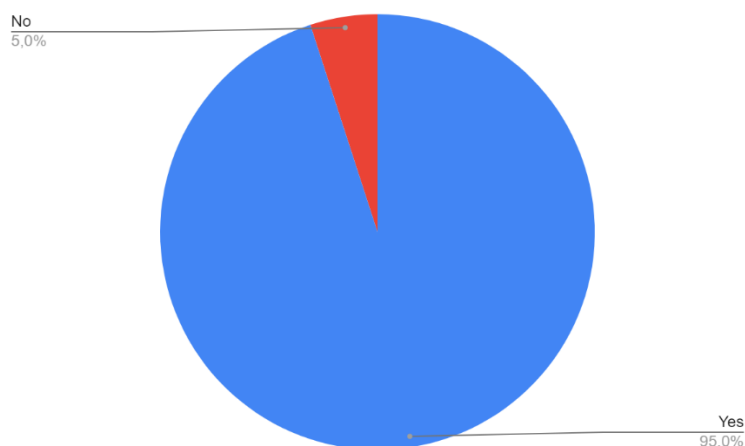
3.8. Best practices on local pesca-tourism businesses

Best practices on pesca-tourism businesses in Italy:

- Offshore excursions with fishing trips, including final barbecue (5)
- Boat excursion and visit to the sea coves to a swim (4)
- Fleet of fishermen of Sant'Agata di Militello (2)
- Castellammare del Golfo, small fishermen
- Story of the territory to tourists by the fishermen
- The amateur one
- Trip on board, fishing lessons and lunch with the catch of the day
- Boat trip with a stop for a swim in suggestive places, notions of fishing and stop in fish restaurants
- Usually the excursion consists in visiting peculiar coves and suggestive seaside places with a swim stop
- Visit to the most evocative natural places and exemplary fishing trips
- Visit to the Zingaro reserve, swim break and explanation of the main fishing methods
- Excursion to the most suggestive landings, swim break and fishing lessons / simulations

4. Ideas/perception on entrepreneurship and innovation

4.1. Tradition of fishing



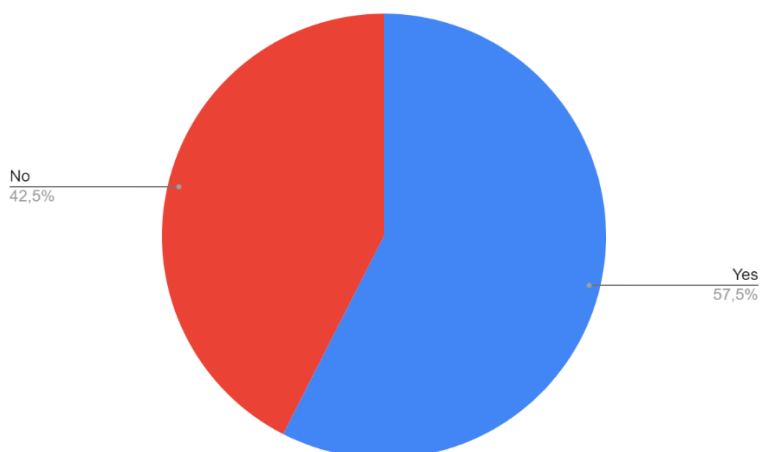
Graph 14: Tradition of Fishing

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Respondents agree that fishing is a tradition in their areas with 95% positively and 5% negatively.

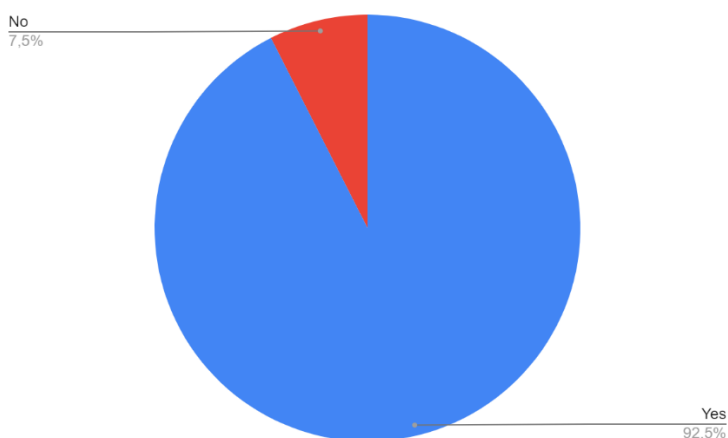
4.2. Innovative strategies of any kind in day-to-day businesses



Graph 15: Innovative strategies of any kind in day-to-day businesses

Respondents agree that they adopt innovative strategies of any kind in their day-to-day business (57,5%) while 42,5% declared they don't.

4.3. Pesca-tourism as an alternative option to support daily fishing businesses or fishing businesses in local level



Graph 16: Pesca-tourism as an alternative option

92,5% agree that Pesca-tourism can be an alternative option to support their daily

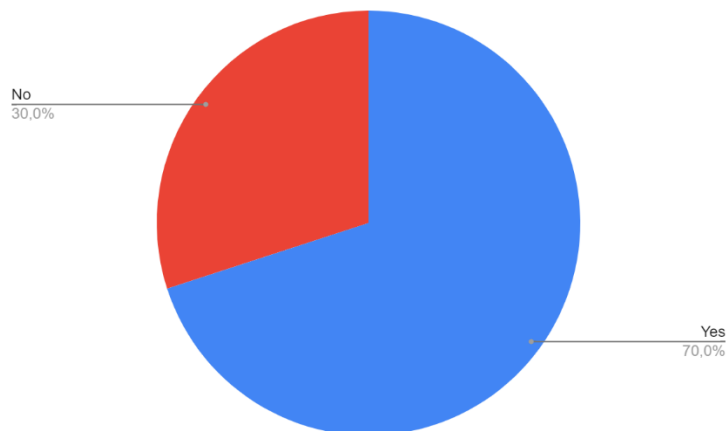
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fishing business or in order to support fishing business in their areas. 7,5% do not agree with that statement.

5. Access to funding sources and training resources

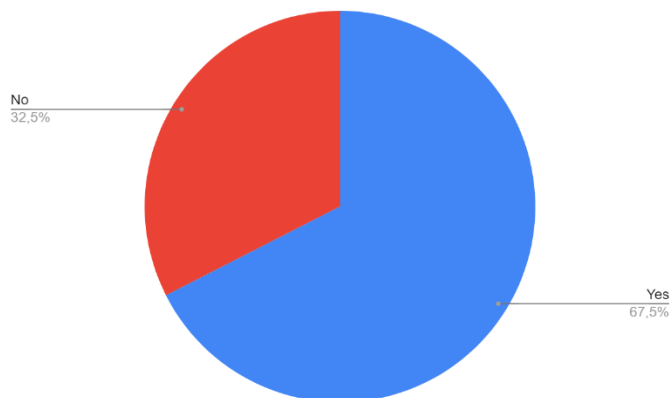
5.1. Access of fishermen to regional/national funds



Graph 17: Access of fishermen to regional/national funds

The responders of PESCAVET questionnaires agree that fishermen do have access to finance and regional or national funds with a percentage of 70% and 30% do not agree with that statement.

5.2. Access to government funding for various actions



Graph 18: Access to government funding for various actions such as withdraw of boat,

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premature retirement

In a similar question the responders were asked if there is any access to government funding for various actions such as withdraw of boat. Premature retirement etc. And as it can be seen the answer is yes for most of them with 67,5% while 32,5% do not agree with the statement.

5.3. Supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators

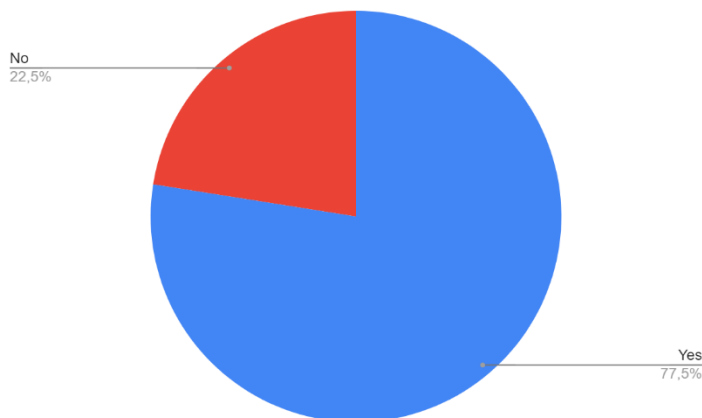
According to the supporting tools for pesca-tourism operators, respondents have mentioned the following:

- Fishing consortia (4)
- The European Fisheries Fund (4), but I have never looked into it
- Tour operators (3)
- Tourist information offices (2)
- Funds for boat adaptation, costs for marketing (websites), financing for fish tourism (2)
- Consultants in the subsidized financing sector
- Unfortunately, none, other than slow and difficult bureaucracy
- Relief on diesel
- Participation in the project previously and funds for the adaptation of boats
- Thanks to the "Tourismed" project and the funds to which I had access, I was able to perfect my business
- I would like to know the supporting instruments from the EMFF (European Fisheries Fund)
- Funding to support fishing tourism
- Training courses
- European, national and regional funding
- Social media
- I would like to explore the instruments of the European Fund for Maritime Instruments and Fisheries

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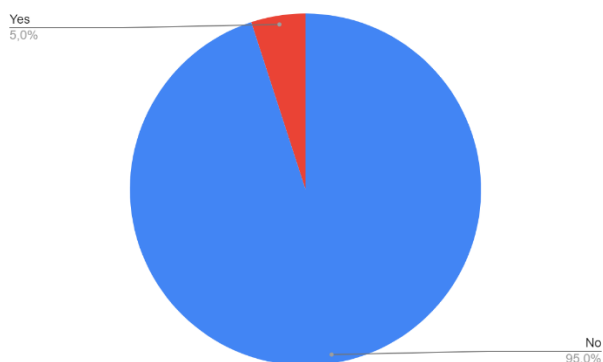
5.4. The need for training to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism



Graph 19: The need for training to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism

The majority of the respondents agree that there is a need for training to convert fishing activity to pesca-tourism (77,5%) and 22,5% do not agree with the statement.

5.5. VET courses on pesca-tourism



Graph 20: Availability of training courses on pesca-tourism

As it concerns VET courses on pesca-tourism, respondents do not know if there are VET courses in Italy for pesca- tourism (95%) although 5% support that there are VET Courses in their local and regional area. Respondents who said “Yes” left these answers:

- I do not know

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- Legacoop, Federpesca, trade associations training courses
- Training courses organised by the Sicilian Region

6. Needs in education/lifelong learning

6.1. Start a business in pesca-tourism

Respondents to the question: “If you want to start a business in the pesca-tourism business, which are the areas you want to deepen?” answered as follows:

Tourism Marketing 32 (80%)

Foreign languages 18 (45%)

Planning 17 (42,5%)

Business management 10 (25%)

Administration 10 (25%)

Hospitality 7 (17,5%)

Finance 7 (17,5%)

Culture and traditions 5 (12,5%)

Biology 4 (10%)

Informatics Digital Technologies 3 (7,5%)

Human Resources 0%

Tourism marketing is by far the most requested topic for a new pesca-tourism start up, followed by foreign languages (45%), planning (42,5%), business management (25%). It is interesting to note that human resources scored 0%.

6.2. Necessary training programmes at local level which are not available yet

Training programmes necessary at local level that are not yet available could be, according to the responders:

- Tourism marketing (9)
- Business planning (6)
- Foreign language courses (3)
- Information technology (3)
- How to manage the European funds of the new EMFF programming (2)
- Fishing techniques and their application
- attendance winter courses
- All-round training on the sector
- History
- It would be necessary to further promote the experience of fishing tourism to make it a less niche activity
- It would be necessary to make the activity known and not to make it an incidental experience discovered by chance
- Fishing tourism is linked to the initiative of individuals, it would be useful to create consortia or multiservice companies