Science, technology and society initiative to minimise unwanted catches in European fisheries – the MINOUW project

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The MINOUW project (http://minouw.icm.csic.es/) is a Research and Innovation Action (RIA) of the Europe’s Horizon 2020 Framework Programme, addressing the topic “Towards a gradual elimination of discards in European fisheries”. Built around a Consortium of 15 beneficiaries and 4 linked parties, the Consortium includes fisheries technologists, fisheries scientists, universities, non-governmental organization and local fisheries managers. The project overall objective is to minimise unwanted catches by incentivising the adoption of fishing technologies and practices that reduce pre-harvest mortality and post-harvest discards, while avoiding damage to sensitive marine species and habitats. The project aims at contributing to the gradual elimination of discards on a case by case basis, using the best available scientific advice, taking into account the economic impacts on the industry, and promoting innovations and changes in the fish harvesting tools and technologies. The project will follow a holistic approach to minimizing the problem of unwanted catches by developing activities in seven workpackages. Practical solutions will be developed in 18 case studies, representing the three main European fish harvesting fleets: bottom trawl, pelagic purse seine, and small scale fleets. Both valuation of the real dimension of by catch and discards, as well as technological solutions are envisaged. In dialogue with end users involved in fish harvesting and representatives of policy makers and civil society, technologists and scientists will explore solutions to the discard problem, covering the domains of technologies, bio-economic models and policies. The solutions will be investigated and demonstrated in case studies, in cooperation with end users. The project encompasses a diverse range of activities to achieve the objectives: research, experimental, consultation, participatory, mathematical modelling, knowledge transfer, outreach and capacity building.

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