



## Stakeholder assessment and engagement activities

**Stakeholder engagement has been fundamental to the success of SEARCULAR. Involving stakeholders at every stage of the design and development process helped to ensure the project's solutions – for reducing marine litter from fisheries – are both technically feasible and socially acceptable. SEARCULAR's report on stakeholder engagement demonstrates the project's flexible and solution-specific approach to engage fishermen, industry representatives, researchers, public authorities, ports, recyclers and other key actors through workshops, interviews, questionnaires and direct collaboration.**

Stakeholder contributions played a key role in the co-development and validation of SEARCULAR's four solutions: 1. Recycled polyamide dolly ropes, 2. Marine biodegradable demersal seine ropes, 3. Biodegradable Fish Aggregating Devices (BIOFADs), and 4. Smart port-based systems for managing end-of-life fishing gear. **Their insights helped guide decision-making, identify operational challenges, provide testing opportunities and improve the relevance of the solutions for end users.**

Through dedicated workshops and continuous dialogue, SEARCULAR identified practical solutions to challenges in circular fishing gear and marine litter prevention. **The project demonstrated that successful innovation relies not only on technological performance but also on deep-rooted trust, collaboration, and stakeholder acceptance.**



Transitioning to sustainable-by-design gear involves risk for the fishermen and manufacturers taking up solutions. **Engagement is most effective when started early and tailored to the specific fishery, region, and individuals implementing the solutions.** Maintaining ongoing industry relationships prior to and beyond the project are also invaluable to the success of the collaboration.

These lessons offer valuable guidance for future initiatives aiming to accelerate a more circular and sustainable fisheries sector.

This report summarises SEARCULAR's report on stakeholder assessment and engagement activities carried out under SEARCULAR WP5. It details how stakeholder engagement was designed, adapted and implemented across the project, and how stakeholder input contributed to [SEARCULAR's 4 solutions](#).

