

Seafarers' Ministry and COVID-19 Worldwide Survey Report

By Kevin WALKER, NAMMA.

In July and early August of this year, ICMA surveyed its members about how COVID-19 had affected seafarers' welfare in their areas, what kinds of services they were offering them, what approach they were taking to protecting seafarers *from* COVID-19, and how COVID-19 and emergency funding had affected their finances. We received 95 responses. These are the results¹ of that survey, with a regional comparison included at the end.

¹ Responses in some cases required editing or regrouping, and for the sake of presentation the wording of some of the questions has been changed.

1: COVID-19 and Seafarers' Welfare

COVID-19 Affectedness

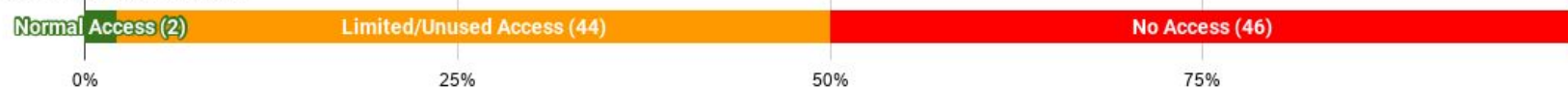


- **Roughly $\frac{3}{4}$** ministries reported being in areas that were **somewhat or more affected by COVID-19**, while roughly **$\frac{1}{8}$** reported being in areas that were **totally shut down**.

Access to Shopping and Supplies



Access to Shore Leave



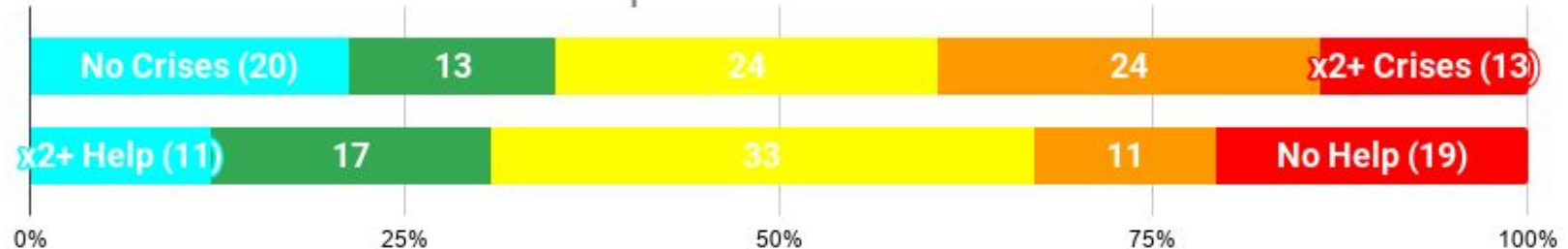
Access to WiFi



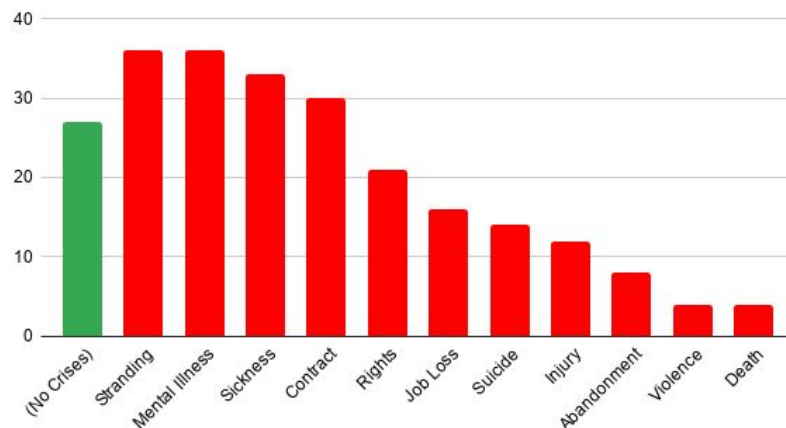
- The seafarers' wellbeing situation in ports themselves was somewhat more grim: without the help of port ministries, access to **shopping, shore leave, and wifi were all judged impossible in over $\frac{1}{3}$ of ports**. **Shopping and Shore leave were difficult or limited in $\frac{3}{4}$ of ports, while wifi was a bit more accessible in about $\frac{1}{3}$ of ports.**

1.1 Seafarer Crises

Seafarer Crises and Crisis Help



Incidence of Seafarer Crises

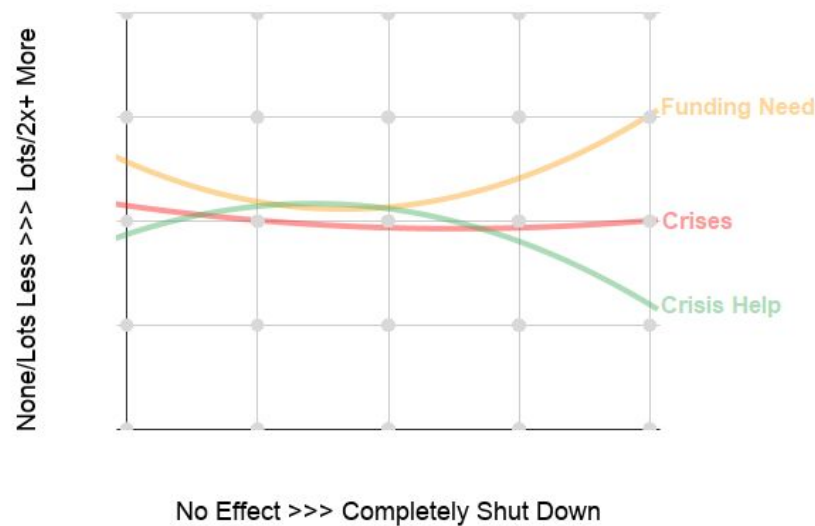


- There was **little consistency** in how ministries reported **COVID-19's effects on seafarer crises** and **help given**.

- In the grand scheme, the average change in **crises** was a **slight increase** and in **help** was a **slight decrease**.

- **Stranding, mental illness, sickness, and contract violation** all were reported by about **1/3** of ministries. Unfortunately, **1/6** reported suicides.

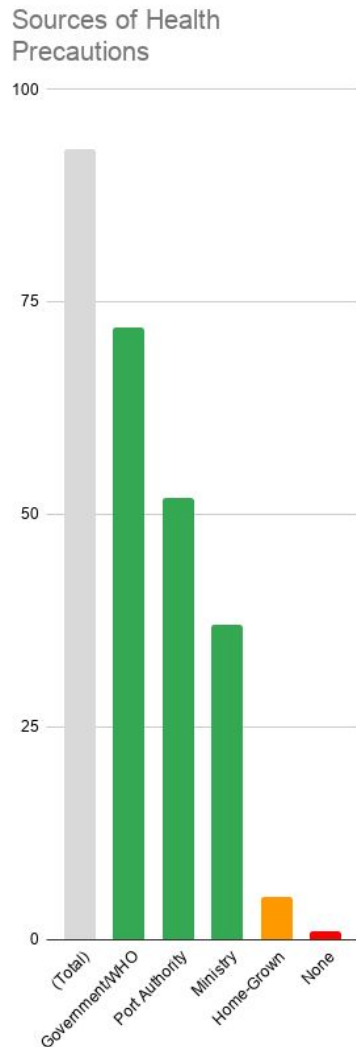
Effects of COVID-19 Severity: Funding Need, Seafarer Crises, and Crisis Help



- There was **some correlation** between **severity of COVID-19** in a ministry's area, the **reduction in the amount of help** it was able to give to seafarers in crisis, and its **need for emergency funding** (see section 6).

- Interestingly, there was **more or less no correlation** between the **severity of COVID-19** and the **increase or decrease of seafarer crises** reported. Overall, **seafarer crises are as frequent as ever, although COVID-19 seems not to have exacerbated them as consistently as it has ministries' ability to respond to them.**

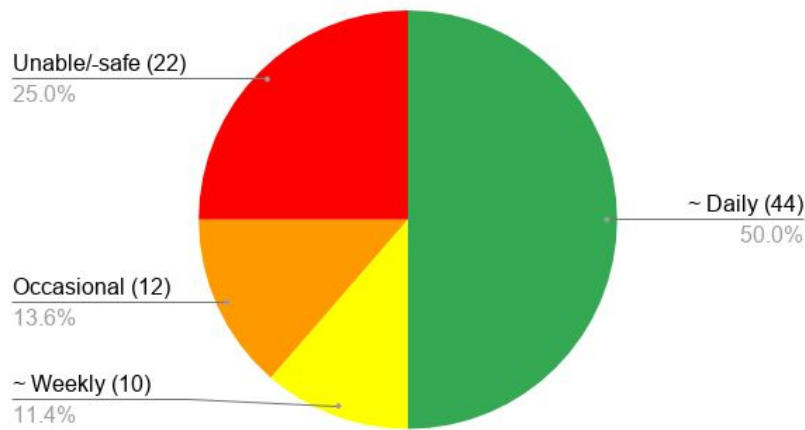
1.2: Health Precautions



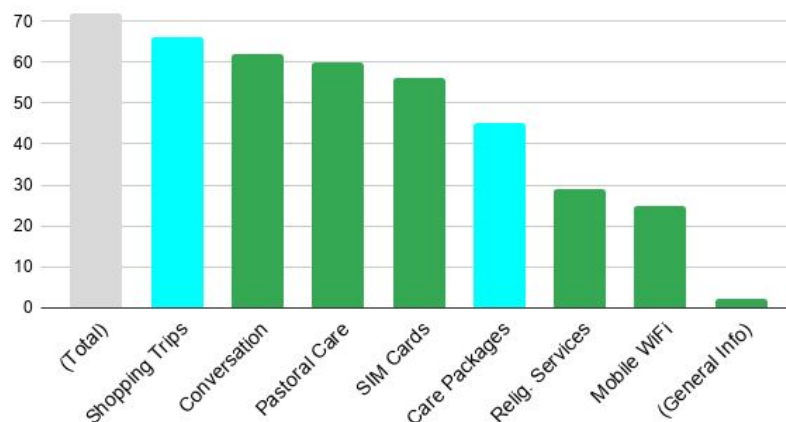
- **Almost all ministries were using health precautions**, often taken from governments organizations (including the UN and the WHO), port authorities, or from their society's head or other seafarers' non-profits (including ICMA itself's guidelines).
- Many ministries took **health precautions from multiple sources**.
- A small minority just made their own health precautions, and **an even smaller minority had no precautions**.
- More information on the different kinds of health precautions ministries took when visiting ships, when receiving seafarers in their centres, and when transporting seafarers, can be found in sections **2**, **3**, and **4** respectively.

2: Ship Visits

Ship Visiting

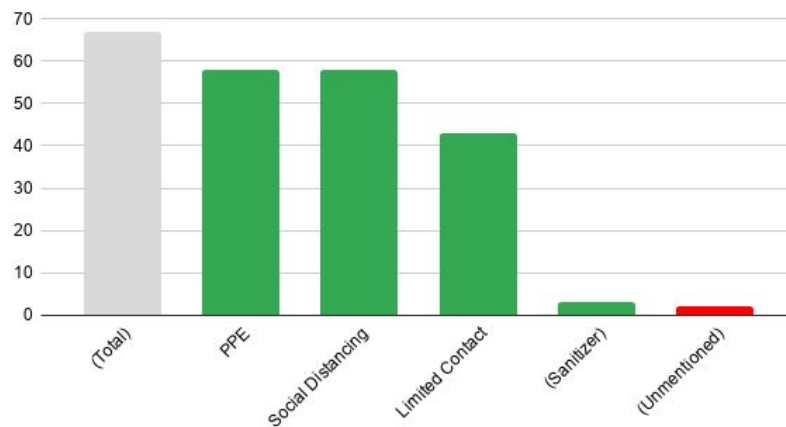


Ship Visiting Ministries

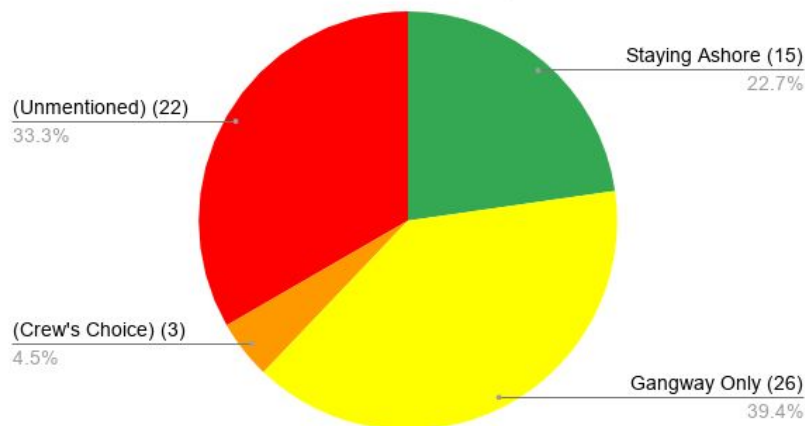


- $\frac{1}{2}$ of all ministries that ship-visit regularly were doing ship visits on a roughly **daily** basis, while $\frac{1}{4}$ had either been forbidden or decided that it was unsafe to do so.
- **Almost all** ship visiting ministries provide **conversation**, **pastoral care**, **SIM card** sales, and **shopping trips** on seafarers' behalf.
- **About $\frac{1}{2}$** included **religious services**, **mobile WiFi units**, and **care packages**.
- A few ministries also mentioned providing **general information** about the port or COVID-19 on ship visits - this was not asked about, so many more may do this than reported.
- **Shopping trips** and **care packages** have emerged as particularly significant forms of ministry - they have their own subsections below.

Visiting Health Precautions



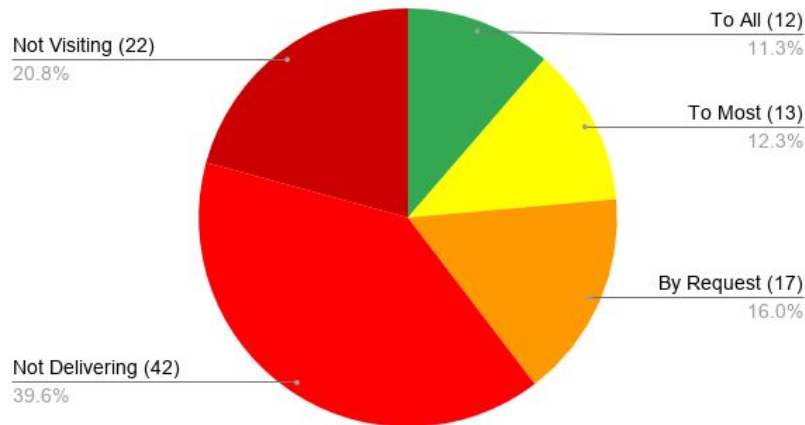
How Visitors Limit their Contact with Ships



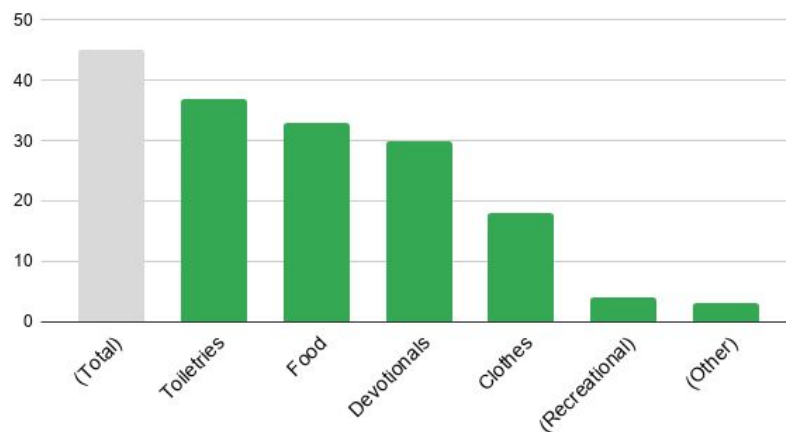
- **Almost all** ministries conducting ship visits reported taking *some* kind of health precaution - **PPE** and **social distancing** were **nearly universal**.
- **2 ministries mentioned no health precautions**, (though they also did not declare that they had none).
- **About 2/3 stayed on the gangway** or **ashore**, though **3 ministries** independently reported that they would come aboard at the crew's discretion - more may do this besides.

2.1: Care Packages

Care Package Distribution



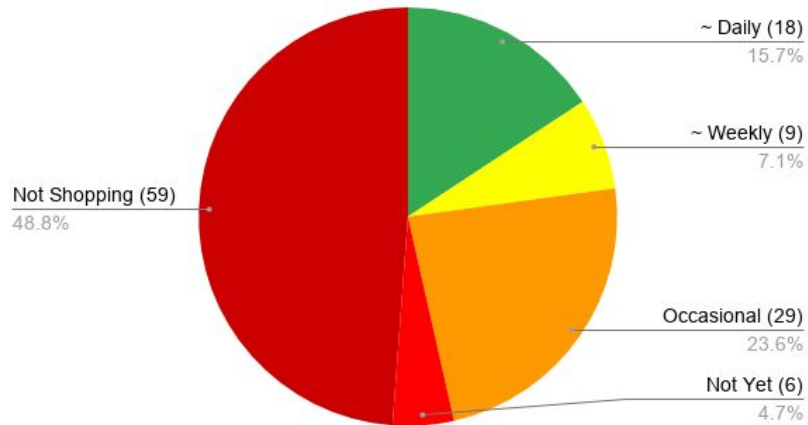
Care Package Contents



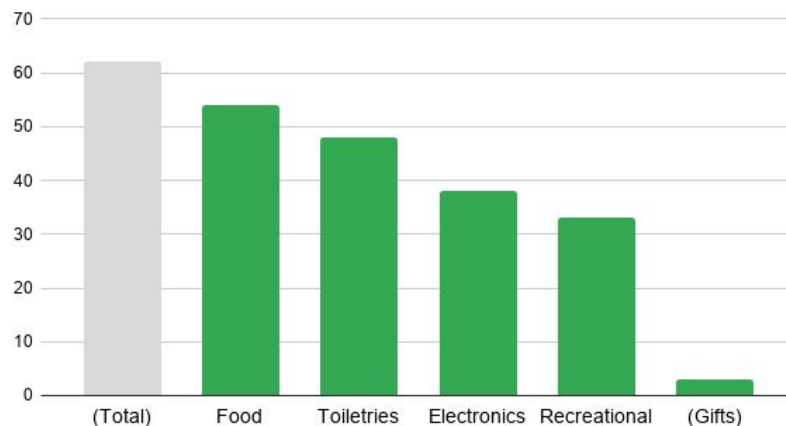
- The **majority** of ministries doing visits (or about $\frac{1}{2}$ overall) also distributed **care packages** to seafarers at some rate.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of visiting ministries ($\frac{1}{4}$ overall) delivered care packages to **most** or **all** seafarers.
- **Toiletries**, **food** (including snacks and drinks), **devotionals** (or other literature) were **all** included in **most** care packages.
- **Other** items (including **recreationals**) included **face masks**, **COVID-19 information**, **children's toys**, and **board games** - more ministries may have included these than reported.

2.2: Shopping for Seafarers

Shopping Trips for Seafarers



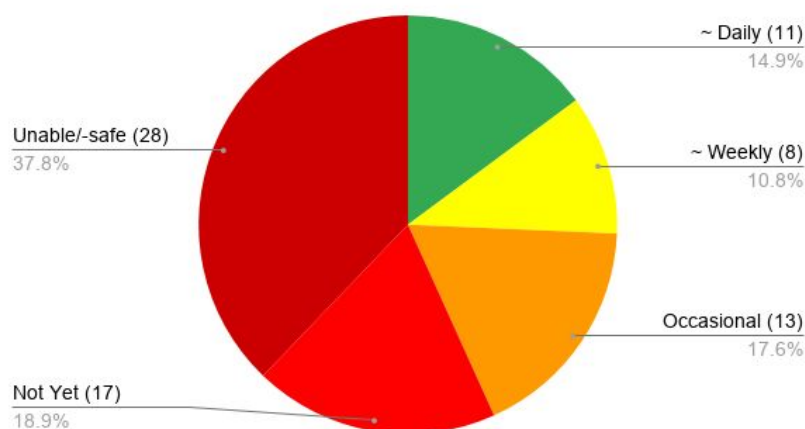
Items Bought for Seafarers



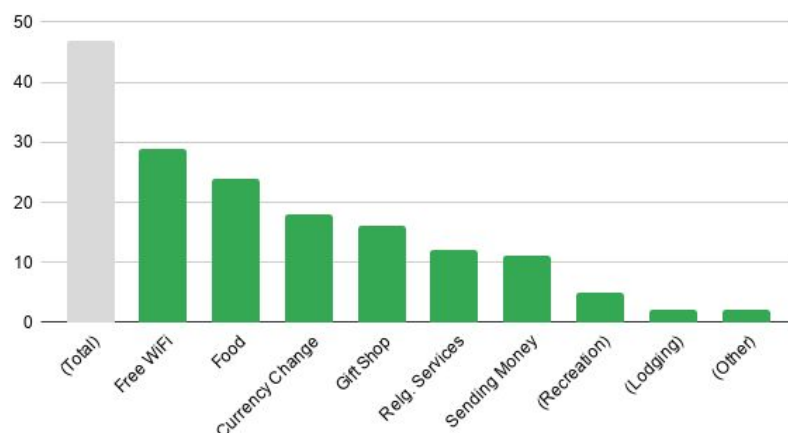
- **Slightly less than ½** of all ministries were shopping for seafarers, and a few more were able and willing to do so but had not had the occasion.
- This statistic is all the more significant given that access to supplies was **non-existent** or **more limited** in **more than ¾** ports (see section 1).
- **Food and drink**, **medications** (including vitamins), **electronics**, and **recreational** items were frequent purchases.
- Some ministries also reported buying **gifts** on seafarers' behalf (including, in one case, a wedding ring!); since this was not asked about, more may besides.

3: Seafarers' Centres

Centre Visits

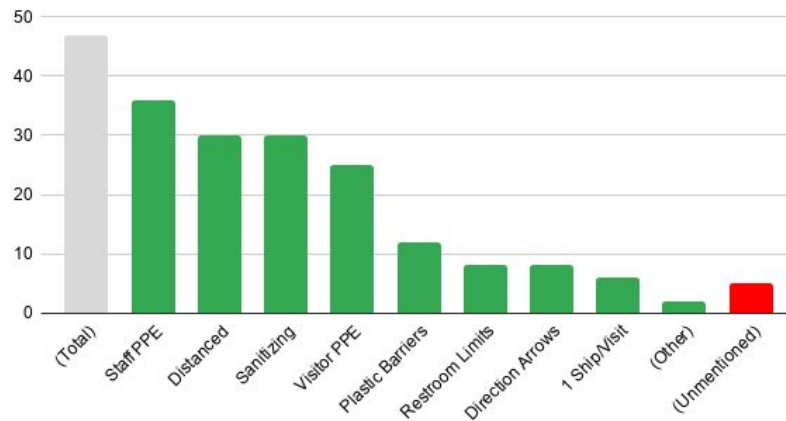


Centre Services



- **Most centres** were **open**, but more than **1/3** of them had yet to be visited by a seafarer.
- **2/3 of open centres** were visited by seafarers **less than once a week**.
- Centres were **quite diverse** in the **services** they offered: **wifi** and **food** were offered in about **1/2**, while **many other vital services** were offered in **significant minorities**.
- **WiFi** is particularly significant, given that in more **2/3 of ports wifi was difficult or impossible to access** without the help of seafarers' ministries (see section 1).
- **"Other"** services mentioned included **lodging** seafarers for the night, **renting** them **bicycles**, **receiving and holding shipped purchases** for them (e.g., from Amazon) - these services were not asked about and may be done in more centres besides.

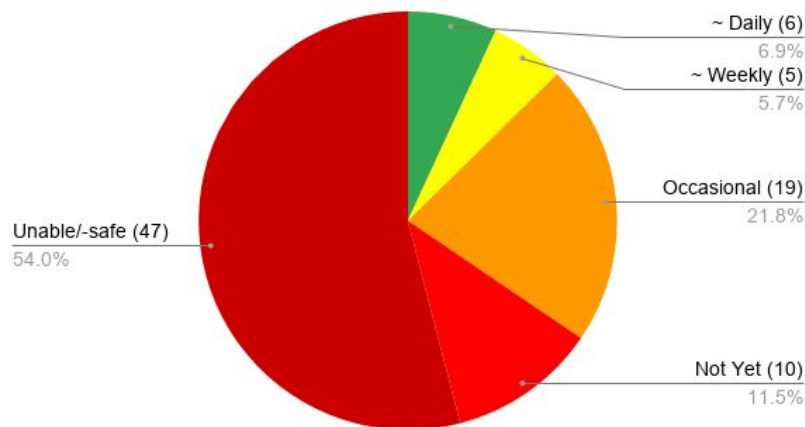
Centre Health Precautions



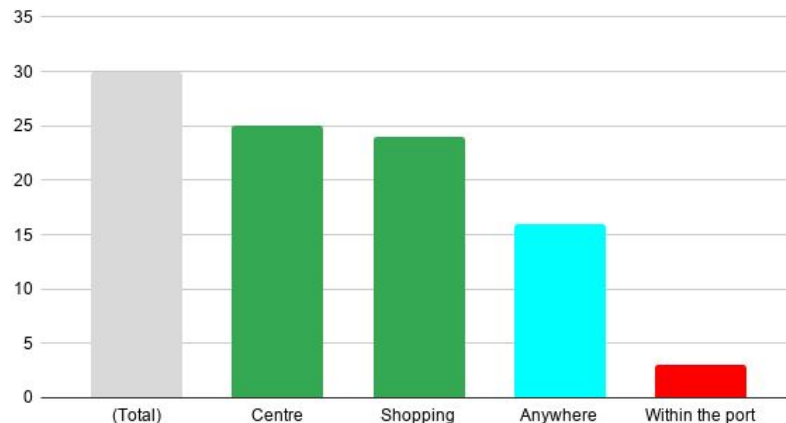
- **9/10** centres named some kind of health precaution they were taking
- **PPE for staff and visitors, distanced seating, and sanitizing between visits** were required in **most centres**.
- **“Other”** health precautions included **taking visitors’ temperature and contact information** and **limiting visits** - more centres may do these things.

4: Transportation

Transporting Seafarers



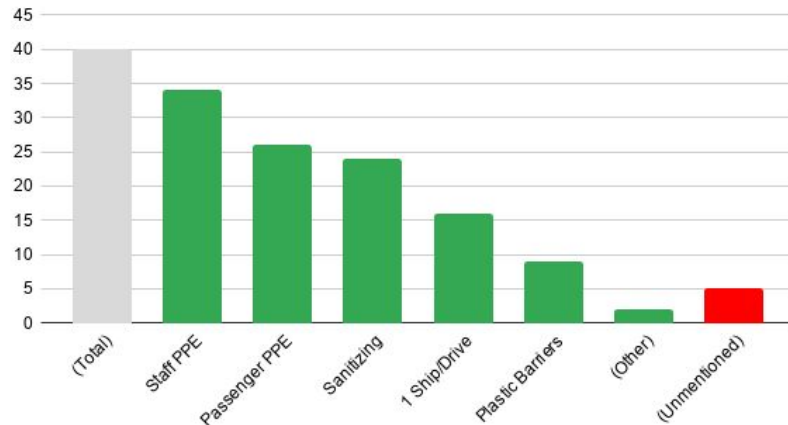
Destinations



- **1/3 of ministries** were **transporting seafarers**, and of those, only **2/3** were doing so **on a less-than-weekly basis**.
- **Slightly more than 1/2²** of ministries transporting seafarers were transporting them to **wherever they wanted to go**.
- **Transportation to shopping** was provided by **about 1/3** of transporting ministries - a significant figure, given that **3/4 ports** afforded seafarers **little or no access to supplies** (see section 1).

² This question was restricted to ministries that had reported *actually having transported* seafarers, i.e., it does not include those that were willing to transport but had answered “not yet” for the frequency of seafarer transportations.

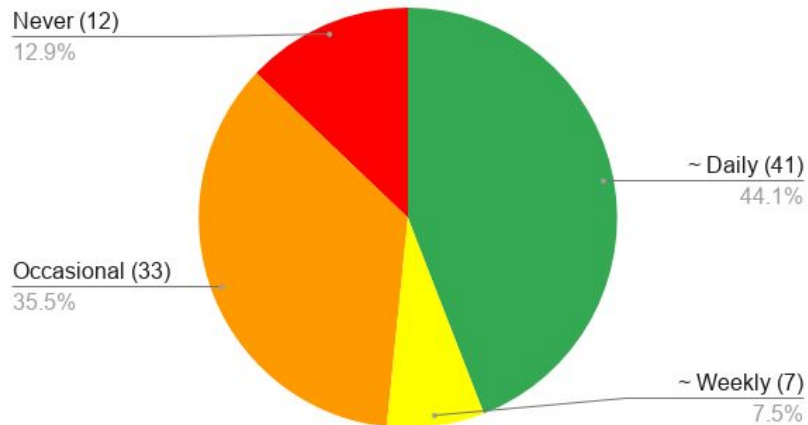
Transportation Health Precautions



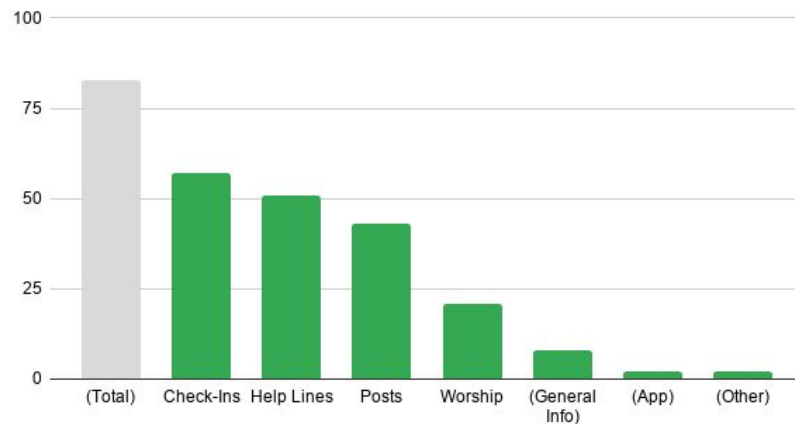
- **PPE for staff and passengers** and **sanitizing the vehicle** were all required by the majority of ministries transporting seafarers.
- **“Other”** transportation safety measures included **taking temperatures** and **opening windows**; more ministries may do these.
- Of those **5 ministries** that reported **no health precautions**, **3** were ministries that **had yet to transport seafarers**.

5: E-Ministry and Innovations

Ministry to Seafarers on the Internet



Kinds of E-Ministry



- About **9/10** of ministries had some sort of online ministry.
- For those, **about 1/2** ministered to seafarers online more or less **daily**, and about **1/2** ministered to seafarers **weekly or less often**.
- **More than 1/2** of the ministries included **checking in** with seafarers privately, serving on **help lines** like chat-to-a-chaplain, and/or **posting** content publicly. About **1/4 streamed worship services**.
- **“Other”** ministries included **sharing information** about the port and updates on COVID-19, **specialized apps** for connecting seafarers in need of prayer with churches, **online Bible Studies**, and **facebook groups for seafarers** - more ministries besides may do these.

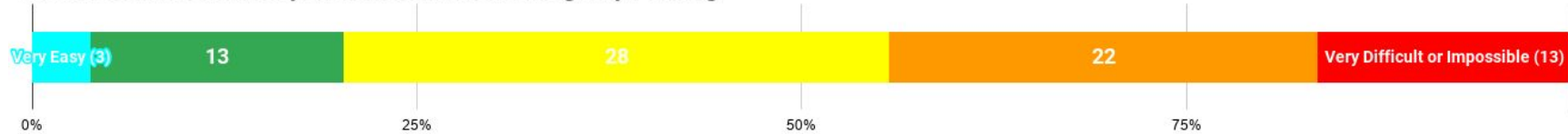
Regularity of Seafarer Engagement in E-Ministry Generally by Frequency of Ministry and Kinds of Ministry Included



- **Daily** e-ministries had more regular engagement than weekly and occasional ones.
- Of all kinds of ministry, **check-ins** were the most predictive of regular general participation.
- Doing **check-ins among other kinds of ministry** was better than check-ins alone.

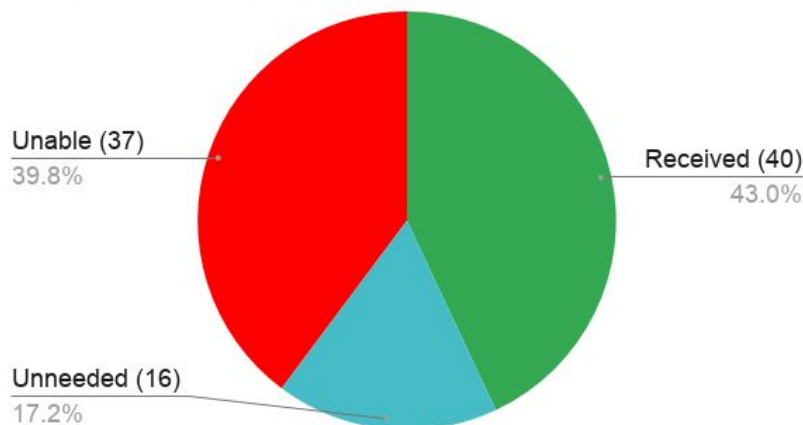
6: Emergency Funding Need & Reception

Ease of Continued Ministry without Continued Emergency Funding



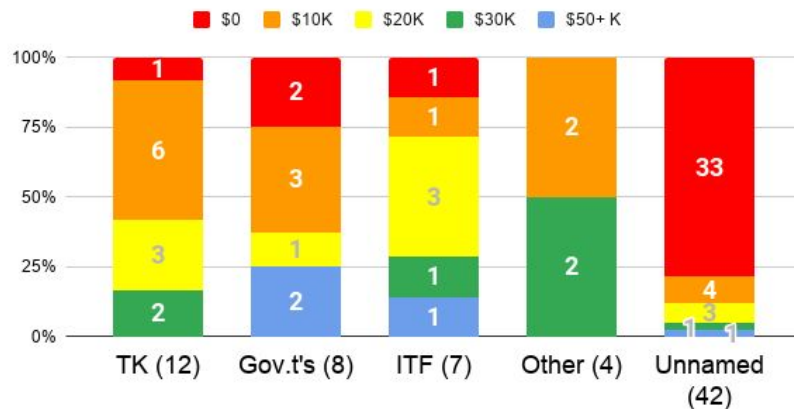
- Financial pressure was **generally** but **not universally** felt: **less than 1/4** reported **relatively less to no need** for emergency funding in order to continue their ministry, while around **1/3** reported **moderate** and **more to great need** each.

Reception of Emergency Funding

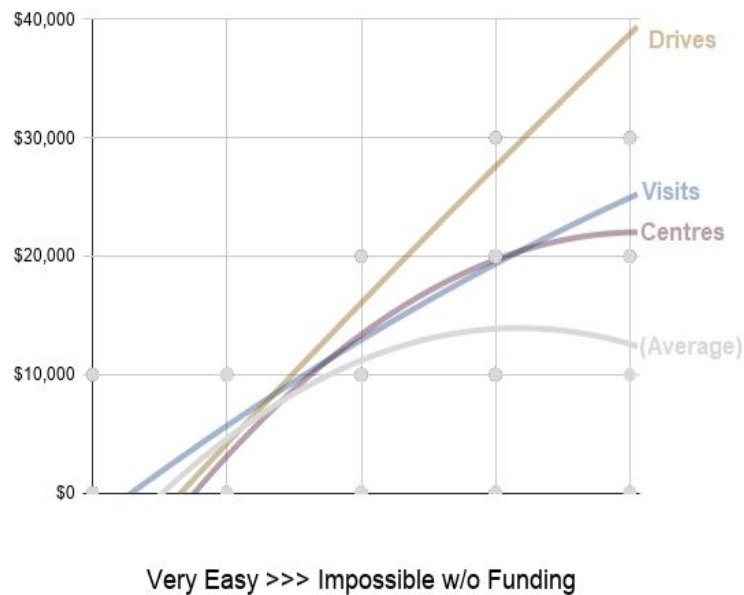


- **Less than 1/2** ministries had actually received emergency funding.
- **Almost 1/2** of those ministries that reported needing emergency funding were **unable** to get it. Indeed, some ambiguity in the answers suggests that number should be higher: some ministries that responded “**unneeded**” still reported having sought funding and not received it.

Sources of Emergency Funding (in USD) (Rounded to nearest 10K)



Funding by Need: Different Ministries



- Note that the quantities of money listed here are in many cases **best guesses based on limited information** (e.g., donations were sometimes listed without the kind of currency).

- There was **considerable diversity** in sources of funding: the **TK Foundation** was the most commonly reported source of funding, while the **ITF and local governments** also gave much.

- The funding sources included under “other” were in most cases other labour organizations and professional associations associated with maritime business.

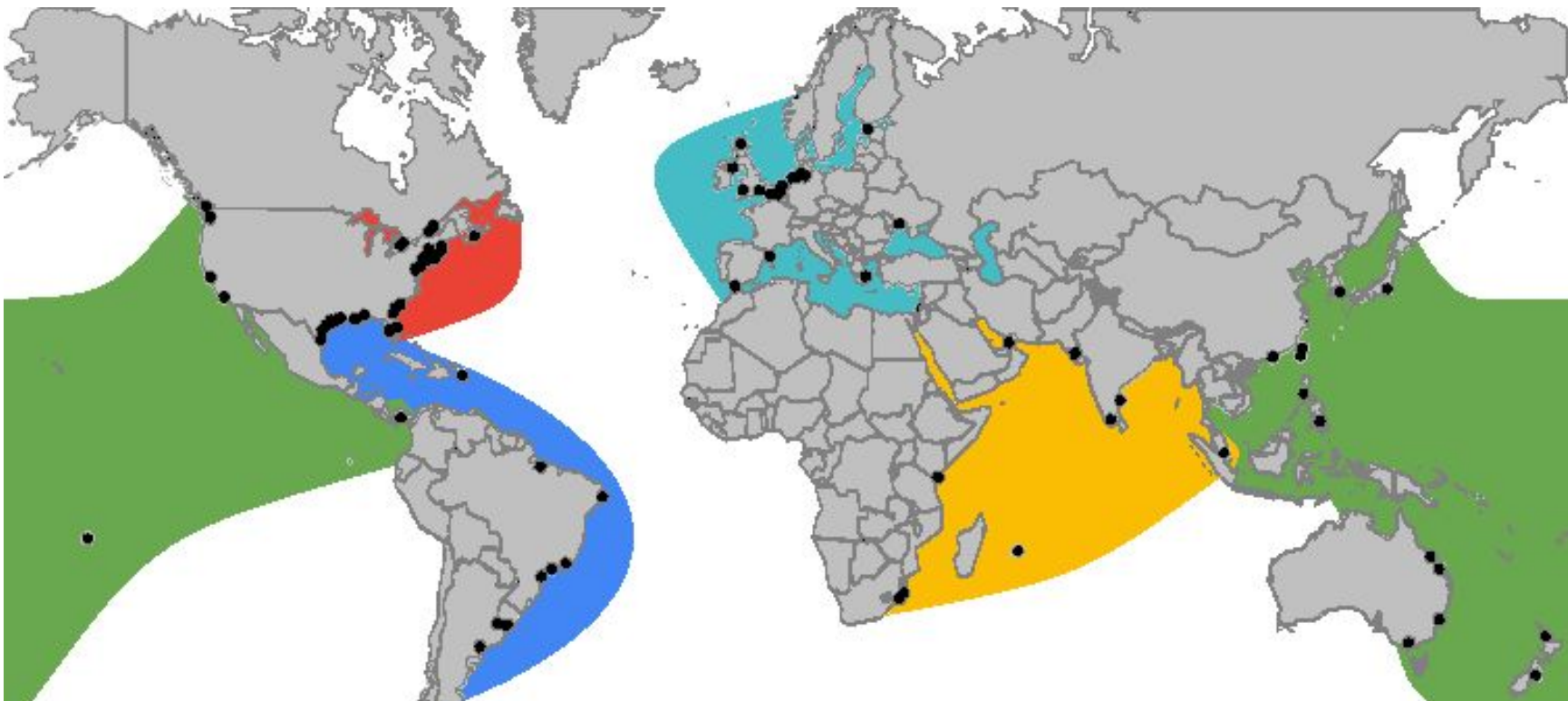
- Those ministries **most likely to have funding matching their need** were ministries that **that were transporting seafarers**, while ministries that **were visiting ships and/or receiving seafarers in their centres** also **generally got funding more reflecting their need**.

- This is of course **good news and bad news**: it is surely good that **existing helps to seafarers**

are generally being supported; it is also quite probable that ministries not currently offering these services **may be unable to due to their situation and need more help recovering to serve seafarers.**

7: Regional Comparisons

The survey got responses from ICMA members all over the world. But the situation for seafarers is not the same all over the world - for more precision about the state of seafarers' welfare worldwide, responses have been divided into 5 regions roughly reflecting the areas within which a seafarer might be expected to pass: **Northwest Atlantic**, **West Atlantic**, **European Atlantic**, **Pacific**, and **Indian**.

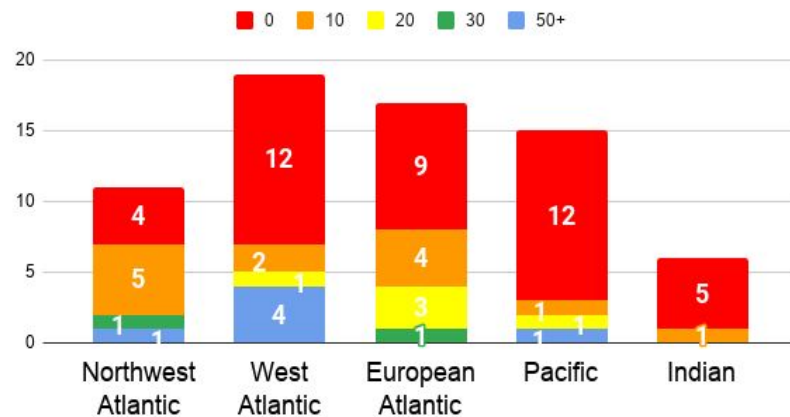


“Regions” here are meant to reflect connectivity across bodies of water, not within geopolitical borders. Therefore, the **Northwest Atlantic** includes the American Eastern Seaboard and Eastern Canada, including the Great Lakes; the **West Atlantic** includes the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Atlantic South America; the **European Atlantic** includes the Mediterranean, North, Baltic, and Black Seas; the **Pacific** includes the South China, East China, Philippine, and Japan/East Seas, Australia and New Zealand, and the North American West Coast, including Panama; and the **Indian** includes Coastal East Africa, the Arabian and Laccadive Seas, the Bay of Bengal, and Singapore.

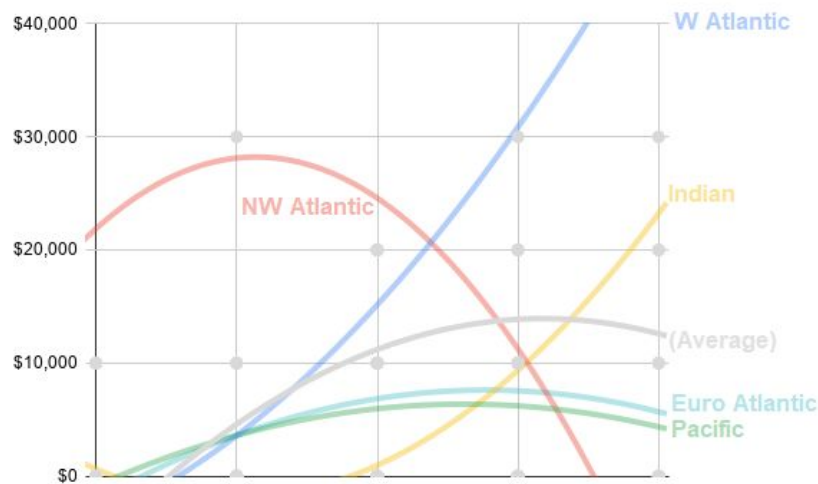
There are a few gaps and disparities to consider:

- **No** responses were received from **Western South America** or from **East** or **North Africa**.
- The number of responses from **Atlantic North America** and **Northern Europe** was **disproportionately high**.
- the **Pacific** and **Indian** Oceans, despite each being sprawling oceans in their own right with heavily populated coasts, together are represented by **few more** responses than any of the **Atlantic** regions taken singly.

Total Emergency Funding by Sea (Rounded to nearest \$10K USD)



Funding by Need: Different Seas



Very Easy >>> Impossible w/o Funding

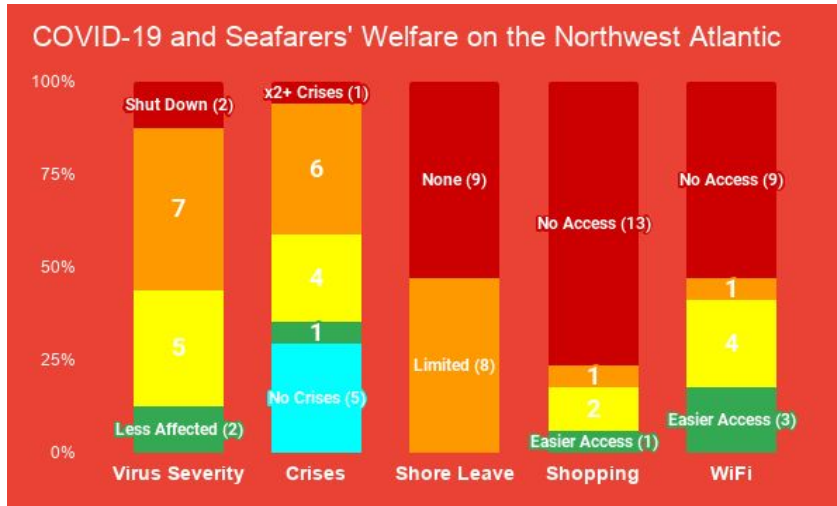
- The **majority** of ministries **in every region** received **less than \$15K USD** of emergency funding.

- Still, ministries on the **Indian** and **Pacific** in general got the **least** emergency funding, and more ministries in the **Northwest** and **West Atlantic** (particularly North America) got the **most**.

- Funding **loosely matched** need for funding in most regions, though the **European Atlantic**, **Indian**, and **Pacific generally undershot** it, the **West** and **Northwest Atlantic generally overshot** it, and **funding matched need particularly poorly** on the **Northwest Atlantic**.

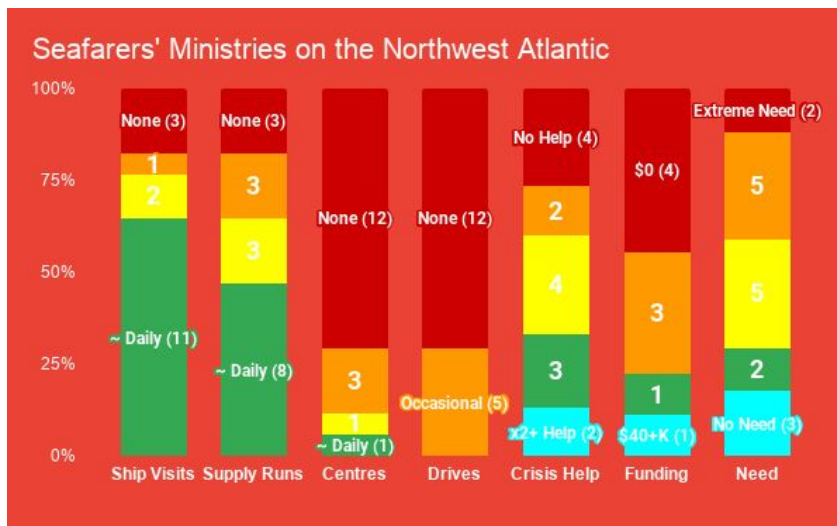
- In the regional comparisons that followed, it was found that **crises and crisis help, WiFi access, centre openness, and drives** were all more or less the same from sea to sea (if generally a bit worse on the Indian Ocean).

7.1 Northwest Atlantic (17 from the St. Lawrence Seaway, Atlantic Canada, and Eastern Seaboard as far as Florida)



- Access to shopping and supplies was particularly limited for seafarers in the Northwest Atlantic - **$\frac{3}{4}$ ports had no independent access to shopping, none had easy access to shore leave.**

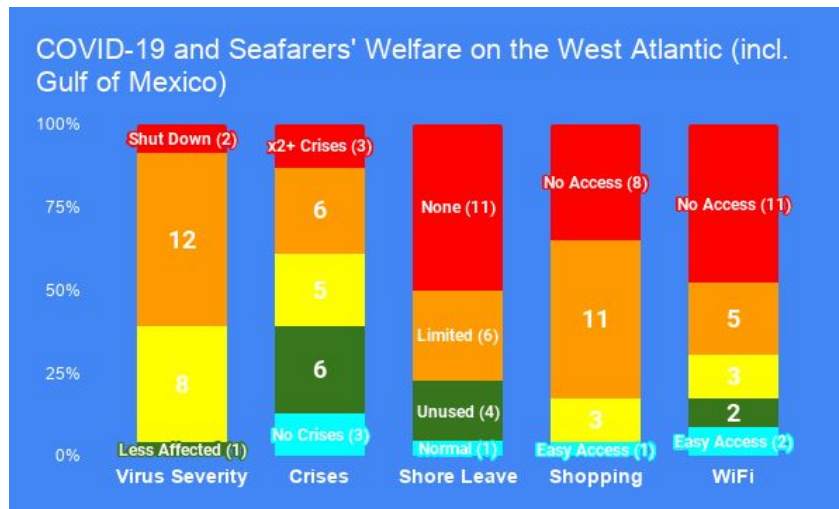
- It is perhaps not surprising, then, that shopping for seafarers was a bit more common there: **almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of ministries were buying supplies on seafarers' behalf daily.**



- Ship visits were also very common at **over $\frac{1}{2}$ visiting daily.**

- The financial situation was hardly perfect, but better than in many places: just **over $\frac{1}{2}$ of ministries were receiving emergency funding, in one case in excess of \$40K US**, while **about $\frac{1}{3}$ reported being in more or extreme financial need.**

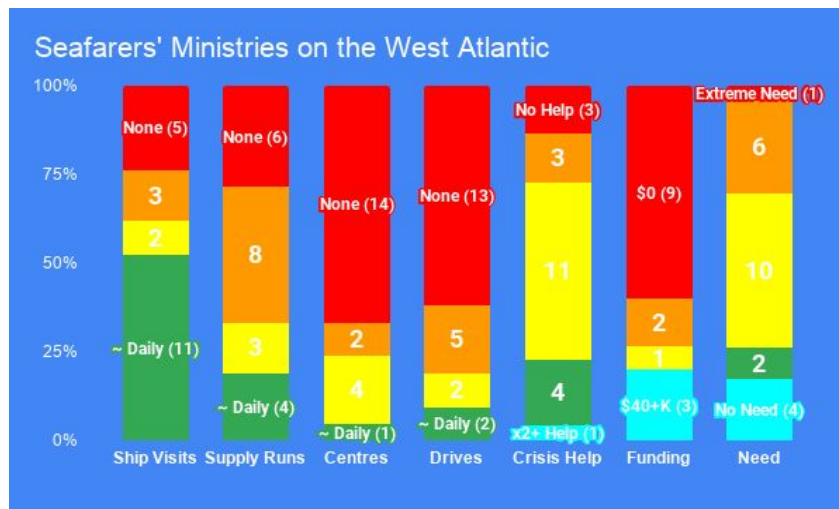
7.2 West Atlantic (23 from Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and Atlantic South America)



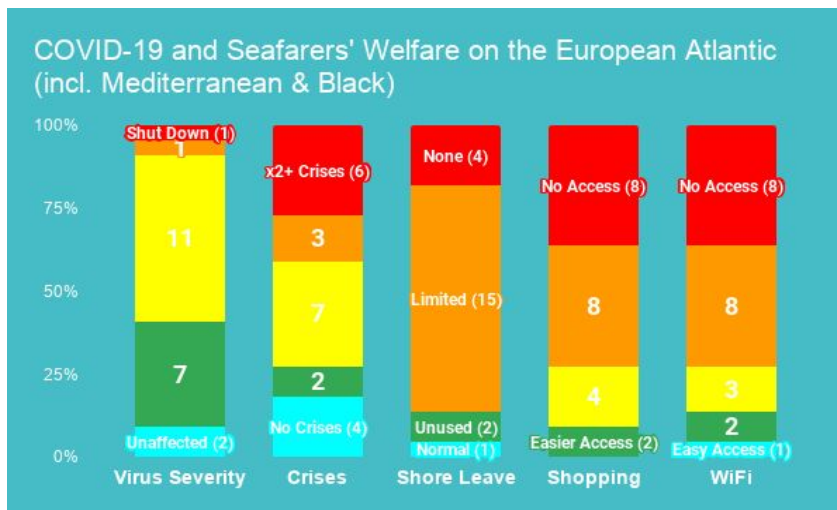
- As in the Northwest Atlantic, the West Atlantic had very little access to shopping and shore leave, but in more cases this was mitigated: **¾ had some access to shopping and supplies**, although **less than ¼** had easy access.

- Supply runs and ship visits were common but rarer at roughly **¼** and **½** daily, respectively.

- The financial situation in this region was better than anywhere else overall, although maybe a bit more polarized: only **¼ of ministries reported being in more or extreme need**, and **almost ¼ had received more than \$40K US**, but **about 2/3 had received funding no funding at all**.

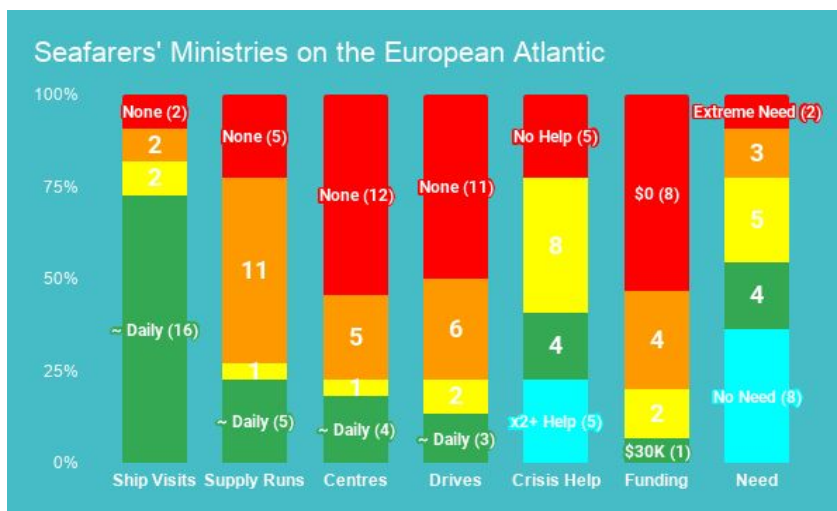


7.3 European Atlantic (22 from the Mediterranean, North, Baltic, and Black)



- The European Atlantic was overall the least affected by COVID-19, with almost $\frac{1}{2}$ reporting being less- or unaffected. Shopping and supply access and shore leave were still difficult in $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ of ports, however.

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of ministries reported not being in financial need, although about $\frac{1}{4}$ were in considerable or extreme need and a bit more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of ministries had received no emergency funding.

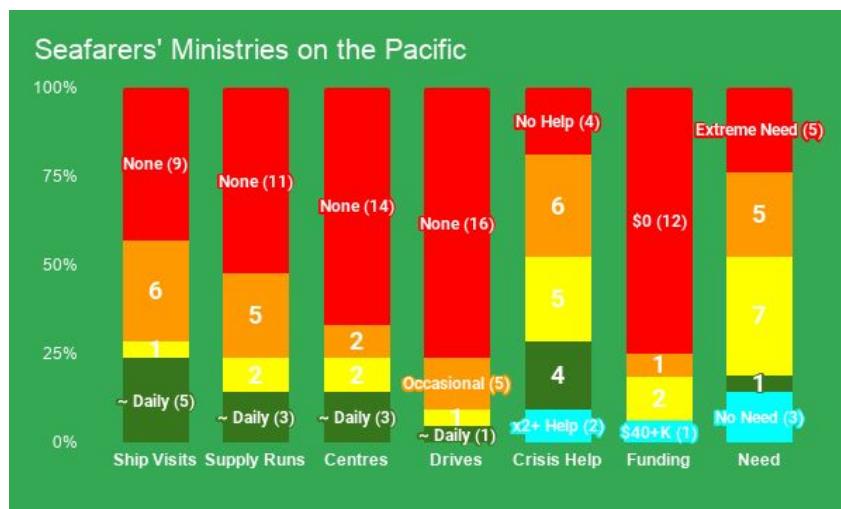


7.4 Pacific (21 from East Asia, Oceania, and Pacific North America)



- While access to shore leave, shopping supplies, were not much poorer than elsewhere and shopping trips not much rarer, ship visits were more seldom, with **only 1/3 of ministries conducting regular ship visits**.

- About **1/3 of ministries** were in **more or extreme need of emergency funding**, and **3/4 had received nothing**.



7.5 Indian (10 from East Africa, the Middle East South Asia, and Singapore)



- Similarly to the Pacific, **only 1/3 of ministries on the Indian were conducting ship visits regularly.**

- **Supply runs and seafarer transports were also quite rare.**

- Only **one ministry on the Indian reported any emergency funding at all**, although just less than 1/2 reported being in less or no need.

