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Local strategies for global challenges

*Planning for sustainable development
in Europe's fisheries areas*



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EN



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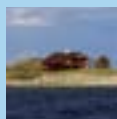
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Editorial

"Smart fishing communities"

Welcome to this second edition of the *FARNET Magazine*. I am delighted to have the opportunity to address you directly at this early stage in my term as Commissioner for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. I feel a great sense of responsibility in this new position and I am aware that there are some considerable challenges ahead. But I can assure you that I am committed to the task and I will dedicate all of my energy, experience and enthusiasm to working with you to find the best solutions.

The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy is the opportunity for all of us, together, to chart a new course. I do not wish to preempt the eventual outcome of this process, but clearly there are certain core issues that we have to address. There is no question that we need to tackle the huge overcapacity in the fleet and to ensure a more sustainable management of our maritime resources. Equally, we need to avoid concentrating the fisheries sector in a limited number of areas and we need to give small-scale coastal fleets a chance to be competitive, recognising their important social contribution to many of our coastal regions.

Through smarter fishing, and by carefully designing innovation measures, for example, to help reduce by-catch and discards, and to bring fishermen closer to the market, I believe we can secure a viable and a sustainable fisheries sector, one that will provide high quality jobs in fisheries communities across the EU.

However, it is also important that we do not look at the fisheries sector in isolation. The Integrated Maritime Policy is an important step forward in terms of recognising the interrelationships between different sectors and initiatives in coastal areas. We know there are opportunities to exploit synergies between sectors such as fisheries, tourism and renewable energy, and it is also in the interest of all these sectors to work together to address common challenges, such as climate change.

Fostering such cooperation, however, requires the appropriate structures, which bring together and build trust between stakeholders from the different sectors concerned. Understanding and taking account of local specificities is also of paramount impor-

tance. In an interview for this edition of the magazine, Professor Danuta Hübner highlights the recognition now given to territorial cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty, and I fully agree that our interventions must seek to exploit the great territorial diversity that exists in the EU, allowing areas to develop strategies that take account of local circumstances and conditions.

Fishing communities – with their unique lifestyle, culture, tradition and skills – are an important element of this territorial diversity. This is why Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund for the sustainable development of fisheries areas provides us with an important first opportunity to test this integrated, territorial approach to the development in fisheries areas. This is an exciting initiative but also one which carries a great weight of expectation. This is why it is so important that we take this opportunity to test and experiment but also to ensure we use the lessons of previous programmes and initiatives, some of which are outlined on page 26.

This edition of the *FARNET Magazine* focuses special attention on local development strategies, an essential element in territorial development and an important tool in building consensus between local partners and in translating higher-level policies and objectives into local action. As demonstrated by the reports on Ostrobothnia in Finland and Galicia in Spain, the collective development and implementation of these strategies is the opportunity to unleash the enterprise and ingenuity that we know exists in fisheries areas across the EU. It will provide the ideas and impetus we now need to move forward in addressing key challenges in Europe.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Damanaki'.

Maria Damanaki,
Member of the European
Commission, responsible for
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES IN EUROPE'S FISHERIES AREAS

Looking beyond the



The strategic planning process provides a unique opportunity for all stakeholders in fisheries areas to set aside short-term and sectoral interests and to come together, pooling their local knowledge and experience, to agree on a long term vision.

One of the key features of the territorial approach is the emphasis on “bottom-up” decision making, which gives local stakeholders the opportunity to have a real say in shaping the future development of their area. No two areas are confronted with exactly the same set of challenges or have access to exactly the same development opportunities. Local knowledge and good cooperation between local stakeholders is, therefore, essential to ensuring that the local development strategy is tailored to the unique set of circumstances that exist in each area.

A good local development strategy will help to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and that Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) remain focused on a shared vision. The nature of this vision, and its level of ambition, will of course be influenced by a number of factors. The size and profile of the area, the diversity of sectors and interests represented within the FLAG, the size of the FLAG budget, and the framework established by other, higher-level strategies at regional, national and EU level all contribute to shaping the overall strategic approach.

At the time of writing many groups were still developing their strategies so the final picture may well change. Nevertheless experience so far in the implementation of Axis 4 for the sustainable development of fisheries areas suggests that four main approaches or priority themes are emerging. These are by no means mutually exclusive and some FLAGs may work on several at the same time.

horizon



▲ A view of Kihnu island (Estonia).



▲ Construction of a fish restaurant in Hune (Denmark).

Adding value in the fisheries sector

The first includes strategies that focus primarily on adding value in the fisheries sector, focusing in particular on measures to improve vertical linkages and integration along the production chain. A very high proportion of FLAGs devote an important part of their budget to these kinds of measures.

A good example is the strategy developed by the Kainuu and Koillismaa inland FLAG, which covers eight large municipal areas in the North-East of Finland. Here, the FLAG strategy focuses almost exclusively on fisheries development, guided by the vision that by 2013, "Fisheries in Kainuu and Koillismaa is a nationally well-known exam-

ple of how to succeed within a traditional rural industry through cooperation, effective logistics, market-based product design and the introduction of new technology."

The strategy focuses on two main goals. The first is to improve market accessibility through measures such as improving logistics, developing and introducing new technologies, designing new market-based products, promoting fish as locally produced slow food and increasing links with tourism, and increasing know-how in exportation.

The second goal is to renew and strengthen the fishing industry by improving working conditions and safety, improving business skills, safeguarding the continuity of the industry and generally improving its public image.

This strategic approach is very much in line with the profile and potential of the area, which is heavily dependant on primary production and suffers from high unemployment (14% of labour force) and a low and falling population.

The strategy was designed and is being implemented on the basis of a consortium contract between three Leader¹ groups, one of which hosts a fisheries committee that coordinates the implementation process. The consortium aims to create a local fisheries cluster in which training and research institutions are also involved.



¹ L.E.A.D.E.R. (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale / Links between actions for the development of the rural economy) is a «Community Initiative programme» launched by the European Commission in 1990.



▲ Fishing and tourism go hand in hand in Savona (Italy).

Supporting diversification in fishing communities

Diversification is a dominant theme in a second category of FLAG strategies. These strategies, which are often, but not exclusively, associated with FLAGs with larger budgets, extend their scope beyond adding value in the fisheries sector to also improving horizontal linkages and integration between fisheries and other sectors of the economy.

The Ría de Vigo-A Guarda FLAG (Galicia, Spain), for example, has identified economic diversification as one of its four main priorities, allocating over 15% of its budget to support initiatives in this area. Restructuring in the fisheries and other industrial sectors has resulted in high levels of unemployment in the FLAG area. However, inward migration and the area's natural assets present important opportunities for economic diversification, particularly in the tourism sector.

Diversification is also emerging as an important priority in many other areas, including Estonia, where FLAGs have

allocated up to 50% of their budgets for tourism (25%) and other types of diversification (up to 25%), and Denmark, where FLAGs are already supporting a wide range of diversification projects, such as the conversion of a lifeguard station into a museum, a renewable energy project

using ocean heat pumps, and the development of an underwater discovery park. Diversification towards other economic activities also figures as a top priority in the Portuguese FLAG strategies.



▲ Information session on Axis 4 organised by the Ría de Pontevedra FLAG (Spain).



▲ Restoration of alvar-habitats on Stora Karlsö island (Sweden).

Improving links with other pillars of sustainable development

A third category of strategies put an important emphasis on the environment and on measures which help to improve the conditions for sustainable fishing. In France, for example, all 11 FLAG areas include sites with a special protection status (9 of which are marine Natura 2000 sites). A high priority for the Axis 4 programme in France is to ensure the safeguarding of these areas, while also mobilising their environmental and cultural resources for broader territorial development.

Environmental management, therefore, features strongly in the French FLAG strategies, as do management mechanisms for bringing together multiple actors and their competing interests, and research activities dealing with, for example, accessibility to and management of fisheries resources.

Some examples of other activities being supported by FLAGs in this area include: the application of environmental standards; reducing waste and pollution; renewable energy; and education and awareness raising initiatives.

Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in governance

The fourth broad theme emerging within FLAG strategies is that of strengthening the role of fisheries communities in governance. The emphasis here is mostly on measures which improve links within the fisheries sector, and also with other sectors and interest groups.

A good example is the FLAG strategy for the Côte Basque-Sud Landes area, which highlights the problem of “weak links between the small, rather closed, local community of fishermen and the rest of the population”, a problem that is compounded by “the lack of integration of the ports into local socio-economic life.”

This lack of integration is particularly evident in the tourism sector, where there has been limited effort to exploit the area’s rich maritime heritage. However, it also extends to other fields, notably environmental management.

The Basque-Landes coast and the Adour estuary contain a great diversity of natural environments, which are home to some important flora and fauna. These fragile ecosystems are subject to significant demographic, developmental and tourism pressures and, because of this, are the focus of many studies and programmes. However, the FLAG strategy highlights the fact that, in general, users of these resources, in particular professional fishermen, are rarely included, and sometimes not even informed of these initiatives.





▲ A view of the Ria Formosa natural park in the Algarve (Portugal).

The strategy therefore emphasises the need to establish “new forms of governance which are currently lacking in the territory” and which should enable:

- > the establishment of collective, coordinated approaches between actors in the fishing sector, which will allow for the development of more structured and coherent projects (with Axis 4 also acting as a lever to enable greater mobilisation of the sector with regard to the financial opportunities available within other axes of the EFF, in particular Axes 2 and 3);
- > the development of synergies and partnerships with local authorities and other actors “on the ground” to lead the sector out of its isolation and make it part of wider local development approaches; and
- > opening up to and exchange with other fisheries areas (national or international).

In this way, the FLAG aims to achieve greater inclusion of fisheries related issues in territorial policies, while also enabling integration of the sector into the dynamics of territorial development, especially in projects that contribute to its tourist attractiveness and that enable better use to be made of the sectors products and skills.

A living strategy

All the evidence to date suggests that FLAG strategies are responding to the diverse conditions and challenges that exist in fisheries areas across the EU. However, even within individual fisheries areas, conditions and challenges are also constantly evolving and a certain fluidity between these four broad axes might also be expected over time. This is why it is important that strategic planning is not just a one-off exercise, but becomes an ongoing part of the FLAG’s activities, with ongoing evaluation, review and adjustment according to the evolving needs of the area.

Indeed, this was one of the key lessons of the Leader Community Initiative for rural development, with the evaluators of the Leader I programme noting a “significant reorientation of actions and sectors” taking place during the implementation phase. While this was viewed positively by the evaluators as “proof of flexibility” it was also seen as highlighting a weakness in the initial programming.

This issue was partly solved in Leader II by the introduction of an initial capacity building and planning phase for all new groups. However, the flexibility to adapt actions during implementation was also retained as an important element of the group’s development. This was continued during Leader+, especially for new Local Action Groups (LAGs), and into the current programming period (2007-2013), which has seen a significant increase in the number of LAGs and an expansion of LAG activities into areas falling under Axis 1 and 2 of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). ■

To find out more about FLAGs strategies: www.farnet.eu

Report

FISHING AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN OSTROBOTHNIA [FINLAND]

The strategy of synergy



▲ The unique ecosystem of the Kvarken Archipelago is a real asset for the Österbotten fisheries area.

According to the Local Action Group for Ostrobothnia, fishing still has a future. Through strengthening its ties with the region and by modernising and broadening its product range and its market opportunities, fishing can contribute to keeping young people in the area, and to keeping coastal villages alive.

This is the area where the land is rising. At a time when everyone is scared about rising sea levels caused by global warming, this part of the Baltic Sea, where Finland and Sweden come closest (80 km), is seeing the seabed rise by nearly a metre per century, creating new land in the Gulf of Bothnia at the rate of one km² each year. *"This is one of the areas of the world where the effect of isostasy, or rising of the Earth's crust caused by the disappearance of the ice cap, is the most perceptible. In 2 500 years, the Finnish and Swedish coasts will be connected by a strip of land, and the Gulf of Bothnia will be the largest lake in Europe,"* predicts Kenth Nedergård.

As Project Manager at the Regional Tourism Agency, Kenth is responsible for promoting the Kvarken archipelago, the first Finnish natural site to be listed, in 2006, as a UNESCO world heritage site. The 5 600 islands and islets which form the archipelago are distinctive because of their unique environment, which consists in particular of strange washboard moraines, formed by the ice melt that occurred between 10 000 and 24 000 years ago.



A unique umbrella structure in Finland



The various development programmes covering the rural areas of Ostrobothnia are overseen by Aktion Österbotten, an umbrella organisation established in

1997 to implement the Leader II Community Initiative.

"Aktion Österbotten has two missions," explains its Director, Mathias Högbäck: "encouraging innovative and sustainable rural development at regional and local level; and fostering cooperation between organisations and businesses in Swedish-speaking Ostrobothnia, from Kristinestad to Kokkola. Currently, in the same region, we are running three programmes that are closely connected: Leader, for which we are the Local Action Group; the BYAR regional programme, which supports Swedish-speaking villages; and since 2008, Priority Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund."



Each programme has its own coordinator and its own organisational structure, which invites and selects project proposals. In order to be approved, these projects have to be validated by Aktion Österbotten, which is the regional arm of the "ELY Centre", the Centre for economic development, transport and the environment. The ELY Centre does not interfere in the selection of projects, but acts as a regional delegation of the managing authority, which verifies the legal clauses, makes payments and performs audits, and has the final say in financial matters.

The Board of Directors of Aktion Österbotten consists of 12 members elected for a period of four years. Its

membership includes representatives of the three geographical areas that form Ostrobothnia and strikes a balance between municipalities, associations, businesses and citizens, as well as taking account of gender equality.

As far as Axis 4 is concerned, the "Coastal Action Group" (KAG), as the Fisheries Local Action Group is called, is administered by a committee of 6 members, representing municipalities (2 members), sectoral organisations (2) and businesses (2).

Aktion Österbotten, which covers 15 municipalities and a population of about 100 000, employs the equivalent of 8 full-time personnel and has a budget for 2007-2013 of EUR 6.8 million.

To find out more: www.aktion.fi/

UNESCO

"Being part of the world natural heritage is not a barrier to socio-economic development. Quite the opposite, UNESCO is a label and a multiplier. More than ever before, we want the archipelago to be a place for living, working and leisure activities, and fishing has a role to play here," Kenth emphasises. He lists all the activities and services that have developed on the islands since the archipelago was designated by UNESCO: accommodation and restaurants, a nature centre and discovery trail, various leisure activities, cruises and fishing trips. "In the last two years, we have trained 25 nature guides and several of them are career fishermen. Introducing visitors to the richness of this environment enhances their know-how and broadens the range of their part-time employment options," Kenth says, adding: "Mikael and I will have to meet again soon, because I am also working on business development on the archipelago, and we can find other joint projects connected with fishing."

Mikael is Mikael Nygård, "Mister Axis 4" in the "Aktion Österbotten" (Action Ostrobothnia) group, which manages rural development programmes for the whole region (see text box on this page). His favourite word is "synergy," and he is endeavouring to put it into practice. *"There are obvious synergies between fishing and the environment, as well as with culture, tourism, crafts and, of course, fine food. We are trying to optimise all these links via Aktion Österbotten, which is itself based on all the synergies possible between Axis 4, Leader and other programmes."*

Ecomuseum

A concrete example of this integrated approach is the eco-museum on the Kilen Estate, which is not far from Kristinestad, at the southern tip of the area. The museum was created at the end of the sixties by a professor with a passion for rural heritage. It is now managed by a foundation, and consists of around thirty buildings (houses, a mill, post office, etc.) from the 18th to 20th century on a site covering several hectares. The port of Sideby is only a stone's throw away.



▲ The Kilen Estate eco-museum in winter.



▲ The fish market in Vaasa is a good outlet for the local catch.

Looking at the modest marina and the few small boats moored there today, there is nothing to suggest that until the end of the 19th century, this port was home to extensive boatyards, which built around 70 large sailing ships. But that was before the advent of ships built of steel. Steel, combined with the rising land, sealed the fate of the port.

However, in the last few months, mechanical diggers have been at work, and dredging of the port basin has started. With a helping hand from several public bodies, the port of Sideby is starting to come back to life. *"We are at the intersection between the rural culture and the fishing culture. The former has already been highlighted in the museum and the many events that we are organising; the latter is developing nicely with assistance from Leader and the fisheries group,"* explains Nina Ingves, the director of the site. *"We receive a lot of visitors between April and December. In the spring and fall most visitors are from schools but in the summertime it's mainly tourists and people with connections to the area. We have every opportunity now to really build on this."*

The Leader Community Initiative for rural development financed a study ("Kilen 2020"), which recommends exploiting the port's tourism potential and developing gourmet food and dining based on local fish, all in concert with the activities of the museum. An Axis 4 grant of EUR 25 000 was granted to the foundation, which was able to recruit a part-time worker and launch the campaign "Fish, a Tasty Experience". *"Fish used to be the food of the*

poor," explains Nina. *"To a certain extent, it still suffers from that image. The aim of the project is to overcome that prejudice. This summer, we are going to organise workshops, as well as five fish markets to increase awareness among people and promote the product. For several months now, our restaurant has offered a choice of eight fish on the menu, cooked in various ways. We also try to promote fish that are not eaten much, or hardly at all, such as bream, roach, pike or smelt. But it's the bones that are the problem..."*

"Optifish"

Promoting less popular kinds of fish is a keen concern of the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) and no fewer than five of the fourteen Axis 4 projects already in operation are devoted to this topic.

The "Optifish" project, which is run by an inter-municipal training centre ("Optima"), relies on cooperation between fishermen, processors, catering colleges and communal catering organisations to devise and promote new recipes using types of fish that are often, unjustifiably, neglected. *"It is not easy,"* says Caroline Holm, who teaches courses as part of this project, *"because for the communal catering, for example, the dishes tested need to contain as few ingredients as possible, and suit the strictest diets, in order to satisfy as many people as possible. The product also has to have a 'texture' which does not require any prior treatment. For example, we worked a lot on bream. It is a fish which has a very characteristic taste. To overcome this, a group of stu-*

dents tested various flavours and ended up devising a fishburger with a taste of pepper. For commercial restaurants, we tested various pâtés, aspics and small sandwiches. This spring, other dishes based on little-known fish will be trialled. We also use old recipes a lot. Enhancing the local culinary heritage is another important mission of the project."

Seals

While bones may be a problem for the fishmonger and the restaurant owner, seals are undeniably public enemy no.1 as far as Baltic Sea fishermen are concerned. *"It has been a major problem for around ten years,"* says Guy Svanbäck, Director of the Ostrobothnian Fisheries association, which has over 2 000 members, almost 200 of them full-time fishermen. *"There is less pollution and seal populations are rising very fast."*



▲ Fishing on ice.

Territorial diversity : from coast to country

Finland was one of the first Member States to start the implementation of Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF).

"During the work on the strategy for the programming period 2007-2013 we identified, with the sector, the main bottlenecks for the development of fisheries. One of the challenges identified was the lack of internal and external co-operation," explains Timo Halonen, from the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Axis 4 managing authority. "We saw that the Axis 4 approach would be an excellent solution to address this challenge. There were also lots of good experiences from the Leader method in Finland and that's why we wanted to push forward quite hard in this matter."

The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry published a single, nationwide call for proposals for Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and their strategies in June 2007, with no delimitation of areas. *"The reason for this approach was the fact that our fisheries sector is fairly evenly distributed throughout the whole country,"* adds Timo Halonen. *"On the other hand we also wanted to respect the bottom-up approach so that the operators had the possibility to form areas which are coherent from their point of view."* Within four months the Ministry had received 11 applications. By October 2008, eight FLAGs had been selected and approved for an initial period from 2008 to 2011.



Share of EFF budget for Axis 4	9.2 %
EFF budget for Axis 4	EUR 3 300 000
National funding	EUR 4 500 000
Total budget	EUR 7 800 000
Average budget per group	EUR 1 114 286
Number of groups	7

The selected groups are well dispersed throughout Finland; four groups are coastal, located in areas stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the northern end of the Gulf of Bothnia, and four groups are found inland, in the south-east of the country and as far north as Lapland. The northern and eastern FLAGs cover large areas of land and water. *"I think it is good that we'll get experiences on Axis 4 implementation in different kinds of areas. Based on this experience we may adapt our model, if needed, after the mid-term evaluation in 2011,"* Mr Halonen explains.

Follow the Leader

The Fisheries Local Action Groups were established as non-profit organisations. They have all been formed under the umbrella of Leader Local Action Groups, with which they share their administrative support structures. However, the FLAGs have separate partnerships to their Leader counterparts, a separate project selection process, and clearly differentiated strategies and accounting. *"According to our experience, the synergy between Leader and Axis 4 is very clear,"* insists Mr Halonen.

The Finnish FLAGs have established an informal network through which they communicate and share experiences. Each group has one or more thematic areas for which it is responsible and for which it collects and transmits information, but there is no official body coordinating this interaction. According to Mr Halonen, *"the idea was to establish a cost-efficient network for the fisheries groups, because we had to bear in mind that the budget of the Finnish fisheries programme is limited. That's why we wanted to use as much as possible the existing structures, such as the Leader network unit."*

"Implementation of Axis 4 has started smoothly in our country and at this stage, our experiences and the feedback that we have received on this approach are very encouraging. FLAGs have found their role in our fisheries sector and they really bring added value to the implementation of the EFF programme," Mr Halonen concludes.

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They follow the boats, especially those that have nets. In a survey, we asked professional fishermen whether the ban on grey seal hunting had had an effect on their catches. Many replied that they had lost two-thirds of their income over the last ten years. If a solution is not found within five to ten years, coastal fishing will simply disappear..." So it is hardly surprising that several projects supported by the FLAG are aimed directly or indirectly at protecting against seals. They range from trialling electro-acoustic devices designed to ward off these unwelcome visitors, to using a new type of net that withstands their assaults, and organising a seminar on the theme of "seal-free zones". In the meantime, the diversity of catches needs to be broadened to include species that are less popular and the fishing season must be extended to winter. Two projects under Axis 4 are devoted to the latter.

"Over recent decades, winter fishing, especially fishing on ice, has not progressed as much as we would have liked," says Lena Talvitie, Vice-President of the Finnish Fishermen's Association and member of the Board of Directors of Aktion Österbotten. "Even though it will always be a small scale activity, fishing on ice has a lot of advantages. It can improve the income of fishermen, enabling them to spread their costs over the year, and meet consumer demand for fresh fish throughout the six winter months. This is the thrust of the projects that we are supporting in this field, with young people in the crosshairs."

Young people

Attracting young people, retaining them, bringing them back... All those running the project refer to this aspect. Young people are another priority in the Aktion Österbotten strategy, whether through Leader or under Axis 4. While Leader supports the quality of life in the villages (construction or renovation of multi-purpose halls, saunas, etc.), Axis 4 is aimed at raising standards in the profession and the industry. "The two go hand in hand," points out Marianne Sjöström, Coordinator of International Affairs for Aktion Österbotten. "Without fishing, these villages would not exist and only young people can ensure the long-term survival of both the region and the sector. However, young



▲ Multi-purpose hall in the coastal village of Molpe renovated with support from Leader.

people will only stay if they can make a good living and have decent working conditions."

Early awareness-raising will be required. To achieve this, the FLAG turned to the many 4-H clubs (*) active in the region. The "Like a fish in the water" project aims to improve young people's knowledge of fishing and its environment, as well as setting up operational networks between professional fishing organisations, fishermen's associations, schools and 4-H clubs. "We would like to create a new 4-H product focused on fisheries, by organising school fishing trips in the wild, in cooperation with professional fishermen," explains Johan

Vanberg, coordinator of the project. The nature and fishing project is a training course designed to raise interest in fishing in the context of sustainable development among children and young people.

"Because fishing is a sustainable activity here," says Guy Svanbäck, "we use what are called 'passive' methods, with increasingly selective basket traps, for example. It is low-energy fishing and conserves stocks. But our fishing also remains a very important source of income. Our little region has about one-third of the full-time coastal fishermen in Finland, but their numbers have declined dramatically in recent years and their average age is high. So any measures that can be taken to improve this situation are welcome. Axis 4 must continue!" ■

(*) Founded in the USA in the early 20th century and present in 80 countries, the 4-H clubs movement (H for Head, Heart, Hands and Health) aims to develop young people's interest in the environment and rural life in general through educational activities and leisure (source: 4-H Clubs of Quebec).

ÖSTERBOTTEN (Finland)

Area:
6 750 km²

Population:
159 470 inhabitants (2008)

Density:
24 inhabitants/km²

Axis 4 Budget	EUR		
	EU	National	Total
Total (2008-2011)	344 000	456 000	800 000
Average per year	86 000	114 000	200 000

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Interview

“Territorial approach key to achieving EU objectives”

Professor Danuta Hübner, Chair of the Committee of Regional Development in the European Parliament and former European Commissioner for Regional Policy (2004-2009), tells the FARNET Magazine why she thinks the territorial approach to development gives the best results and why she believes the impetus now needed to move forward in Europe will come from the local and regional levels, including coastal areas.

FARNET Magazine: The concept of territorial cohesion is now enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. In concrete terms, how would you explain its relevance to those in coastal regions and especially fisheries areas?

For decades we have talked of diversity as one of Europe's great strengths. Now, by including territorial cohesion in the Treaty, we are finally recognising this diversity as an asset. This means we now have an obligation to better understand what this means and, importantly, to invest more in collecting information on territorial diversity in Europe. The Commission's "Urban Audit"¹ is a first step, but in general we don't have enough information on territories to take account of territorial diversity in our policies.

Using territorial diversity as an asset means supporting development that takes account of this diversity. Europe is a small continent, with only 7% of the global population, so it is essential that we exploit the potential of all regions. This is why coastal regions, which have such potential for growth, are so important.

The European Commission's recent Communication on Europe 2020 suggests that future EU policy should be concentrated around a small number of EU level priorities (smart growth, inclusive growth and green growth). Do you think there is a risk that this could lead to a reduction in the importance of territorial approaches?

I am very critical of this 2020 document and I think this is a real risk. We all agree on the need for concentration and on the merits of focusing on these key priorities, but the question is how to do it, and how to do it in each different region. This takes us back to the issue of diversity. You cannot build a state-of-the-art research centre in a place where there are no scientists or no SMEs, and where the only potential that exists is in tourism. But tourism can also be innovative and sustainable, so it is still possible to pursue European objectives in such areas.



Danuta Hübner,
Chair of the Committee of Regional Development in the European Parliament and former European Commissioner for Regional Policy (2004-2009)

There is no contradiction in doing things differently in different areas as long as we are all pursuing common European objectives. But the 2020 document excludes sub-national Europe from engaging in this process and this, in my view, is a mistake. However, the reaction of regions and communes clearly shows that they want to be part of this European strategy and I believe this will have to happen.

Do you see a role for local partnerships in helping to realise this territorial approach?

The local level wants to contribute to achieving the EU's objectives and if you think of areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, innovation, etc. these are areas that can best be advanced at the local level, where you have the proximity of partners that need to be involved. This means that we must put in place the programmes and approaches that encourage and support these local partners to work together.

From my experience as a former Regional Policy Commissioner, when I visited nearly all EU regions, I am convinced that the integrated approach to development with this territorial specificity really does give the best results in terms of growth and job creation. This is why I believe that the impetus we now need so much to move forward in Europe will in future come from the local and regional levels.


Given the current pressure on public funds, there is much talk about the need for better vertical and horizontal coordination between all EU programmes. How do you think the EU could encourage a greater involvement of sub-regional or local stakeholders?

The Lisbon Treaty refers to four levels of EU governance and the participation of all four levels is necessary if the EU is to realise its objectives. The time for top down policy making is gone. We have to look at the value added of bottom-up initiatives, and this is not just about mobilising partnerships of local stakeholders, it also means vertical cooperation between all levels of governance. Subsidiarity should not be about splitting competences or

¹ Initiated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy, the European Urban Audit consists of a collection of data on more than 300 variables describing the quality of life in 321 European cities in the 27 countries of the European Union, along with 36 additional cities in Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. www.urbanaudit.org


protection from interference by other levels. It must be about cooperation between all the levels, where every level is doing what it does best.

In many regions, including coastal regions, we see quite substantial intra-regional disparities and we need to think of how best to cope with this. In my view, we have to go back to the Community Initiatives, with possibly a bigger role for the European Commission. However, there is also a need for investment in the quality of administration and of the institutional framework at local level. We have recently set up a fund in the Parliament to support this.

 ***In the future, how do you think programmes supported by different European funds (such as those for regional development, social affairs, agriculture and fisheries) could be better coordinated to the benefit, for example, of people living in fisheries areas ?***

Most of the development challenges we now face require an integrated response. For example, in tackling climate change it is clear that we have to combine actions across very different areas. Avoiding overlaps is obviously a minimum requirement, but good cooperation between different interventions could also help to make better use of synergies and to reduce the costs of having separate policies with separate financial instruments and separate management structures.

In my view we should have one single strategic framework at EU level for all related programmes, such as those mentioned in your question. At regional level, there could then be one regional operational programme, which all the funds would contribute to, including national funds, and other public and private funds. These regional plans could have priorities which should be tackled at a local level, in an integrated way, for which funding could be ring-fenced.

 ***There is sometimes a risk that sectoral and territorial policies pull in different directions ? In the future how can the EU ensure that these policies really complement each other ?***

The territorial approach allows us to combine sectoral policies and to mitigate negative impacts. But this means that we need structures at the local and regional level that can coordinate the implementation of these policies. This approach will allow us to react better to difficult challenges. For example, when we had the problem with General Motors reducing its production capacity in the UK, we had to react quickly, to involve different departments and different interests in order to find solutions. The fisheries sector is also facing difficult times and this approach could have advantages.

 ***In your opinion, what are the major challenges and opportunities for coastal development in the next 20 years ?***

A study undertaken for the European Commission three years ago identified coastal regions among those that would suffer most from climate change. So we know there will be significant environmental challenges. But I tend to see more opportunities than challenges. Historically, those who have had access to the sea have tended to have more opportunities for economic development and these opportunities will not abandon these areas in the future.


The challenge is to strike the right balance between environmental protection and economic development and this is something we must prepare for. That's why I think the entire EU should be

concerned about sustainability, but this applies even more so to coastal areas.

 ***What role do you see for the EU's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in helping to achieve this balance and in promoting sustainable development in coastal regions ?***


When considering the future it is important to have a vision, and the strategy to realise it. The IMP, which was really born at regional and local level, where people were demanding the need for such a European policy, can provide this strategic framework for coastal areas. Europe is a small continent and we need policies that allow us to protect our resources, while also taking advantage of the opportunities that exist.

People on the ground are aware of the need for policies to address shared problems. But they are also aware that such policies must take account of the differences that exist in different coastal regions. This is why I think the IMP has been properly designed because it takes into account our common interests, including the protection of resources, but it also takes into account the specific problems of different coastal areas. It also allows us to link coastal areas to the rest of the economy, ensuring better coordination on sectoral issues and better integration of maritime issues into the wider territory.

 ***In the future, how could cohesion policy better respond to the effects of the economic crisis, which strongly affects maritime sectors and coastal zones ?***

Firstly, I think it was the right decision to link cohesion policy to the economic crisis. By frontloading investment on the ground, cohesion policy provides an immediate response to the crisis, while also ensuring the link, which is absolutely crucial for Europe, to the long-term strategic goals of the EU.

However, cohesion policy will not solve all our problems and it is important, especially for local authorities, to try to use the cohesion and structural funds as catalysts to attract other sources of funding, whether from private sources, or from instruments such as JEREMIE² or the European Investment Bank. European banks are still not providing sufficient credit and cohesion policy, when used with other instrument, can help to fill the gap.

 ***In conclusion, how do you see the policy landscape evolving in the coming years and how might this impact on the local and regional levels ?***

I am concerned about Europe right now. I think we are sleeping; the sense of urgency is not there to tackle the important challenges Europe is now facing, particularly in the context of globalisation. We have this 2020 document, which does not recognise the important role of the local and regional levels and we need to re-look at this. Fortunately, with regard to territorial development we are not starting from scratch. The level of mobilisation at sub-national level is already very high and I take hope from this; from the fact that local and regional Europe is open and willing to play its role. ■

***Interview conducted (in English)
on 26 February 2010***

² JEREMIE, the Joint European Resources for Micro to medium Enterprises, is an initiative of the European Commission together with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund (EIF) to promote increased access to finance for the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the regions of the EU.

Report

AXIS 4 STRENGTHENING DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE GALICIAN COAST [SPAIN]

Building on success

In Europe's leading fisheries region, seven "coastal action groups" financed by Axis 4 of the EFF have been set up to support projects that should reinforce the regional development strategy and supplement the measures taken locally, which are already well under way.



▲ Shellfish gatherers showing their day's harvest.

"Galicia is the India of fishing," says Enrique Diego Fernández, of the regional government, to emphasise the importance and diversity of the fishing industry in the waters off the North-Western coast of the Iberian Peninsula. "Galicia is home to some 25 000 fishermen, belonging to 62 'cofradías', almost half of the approximately 11 000 fishing boats registered in Spain, and the largest fishing port in the European Union – Vigo. Furthermore, the region counts over 46 000 jobs directly or indirectly dependent on fishing, and an infinite variety of species caught, be they fish, crustaceans or shellfish."

This is confirmed by Montserrat Castro, head of the department within the Regional Government of Galicia that provides organisational support to the fisheries sector: *"Fishing is of vital socio-economic importance along the coast. In some places, half of the jobs depend on it. However, with the current recession, the sector has to contend with two major challenges: falling prices – accentuated by growing imports from outside the EU – and the influx of would-be fishermen leaving the building industry, which has completely collapsed."*

When asked about Galicia's ambitions for Axis 4, Susana Rodriguez, Fisheries Development Director, highlighted certain

measures already taken by the Galician government over the last few years to promote the sector at a local level: *"Our work has been directed towards organising and professionalising small-scale fishing, with special attention to women, in particular the 4 000 women who gather shellfish or "mariscadoras". They are grouped into territorial associations, which co-manage the 200 operating plans adopted annually. This*

¹ The "cofradías de pescadores" represent the interests of the fisheries sector and act as a body for consultation and cooperation with the regional administration. Their members are largely local fishermen and small boat owners as well as other actors from the sector.



▲ There are 200 professional mariscadoras in Cambados.

organising and structuring into specialist supply chains protects their activities from uncontrolled fishing, and allows them to manage catches and increase incomes. One shellfish gatherer who declared an average income of 600 euros per year before the organisation was set up now declares 700 euros per month!" More support to facilitate local organisation of fisheries and related activities is at the heart of Galicia's strategy for Axis 4.

Coastal guides

The Agrupación de Mariscadoras de Cambados has 200 shellfish gatherers as members. Ever since the Regional Government encouraged them to form an association, the shellfish gatherers of Cambados have worked together to manage their resource collectively. Thirty of them are working here this morning. Today, the sunrise and low tide times mean they can only work from 8 to 10 a.m. Bent over and carrying a trowel and a small rake to detach cockles and clams, they comb the beach, like the many birds with which, from a distance, they might be confused. "It's a very tough job," says Victoria Oubiña. "After some years, it is very hard on your back but, here, many women

have always done it, because it pays well and leaves lots of free time..." Victoria is one of the spokeswomen of the Agrupación, but also devotes some of her time to volunteering as a "coastal guide," as do 18 other women in the village, all *mariscadoras* or working in the fisheries sector.

After receiving a EUR 6 000 prize as part of an EQUAL training course² for women entrepreneurs, several members of the Agrupación decided to found the association "Guimatur" in 2004. "The aim," Victoria emphasises, "is to make consumers aware of how important our job is, of the quality of our products, and to show them that our work is part of our natural and cultural heritage and is worth paying for." Guimatur has created paths skirting the seashore and the shellfish beds of Cambados. They enable visitors – about 4 000 of them each year – to observe the work of the *mariscadoras*, from harvesting the shells to sea-food weighing and cleaning.

The association, which has a building equipped to accommodate groups, organises awareness workshops for children and cookery courses in schools. "At present, we would like to restore an old house to make it a food tasting centre, but that would cost about 120 000 euros, and we don't have the



▲ Three of the Guimatur founders.

money we need," explains the president of Guimatur, Maria José Cacabelos. "At a more general level, we are thinking about other ways of being legally constituted, so that we could undertake commercial initiatives. Who knows, Axis 4 could make things easier..."



² Financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), the EQUAL Community Initiative programme (1994-2006) aimed to fight all forms of discrimination and inequality in the field of employment.

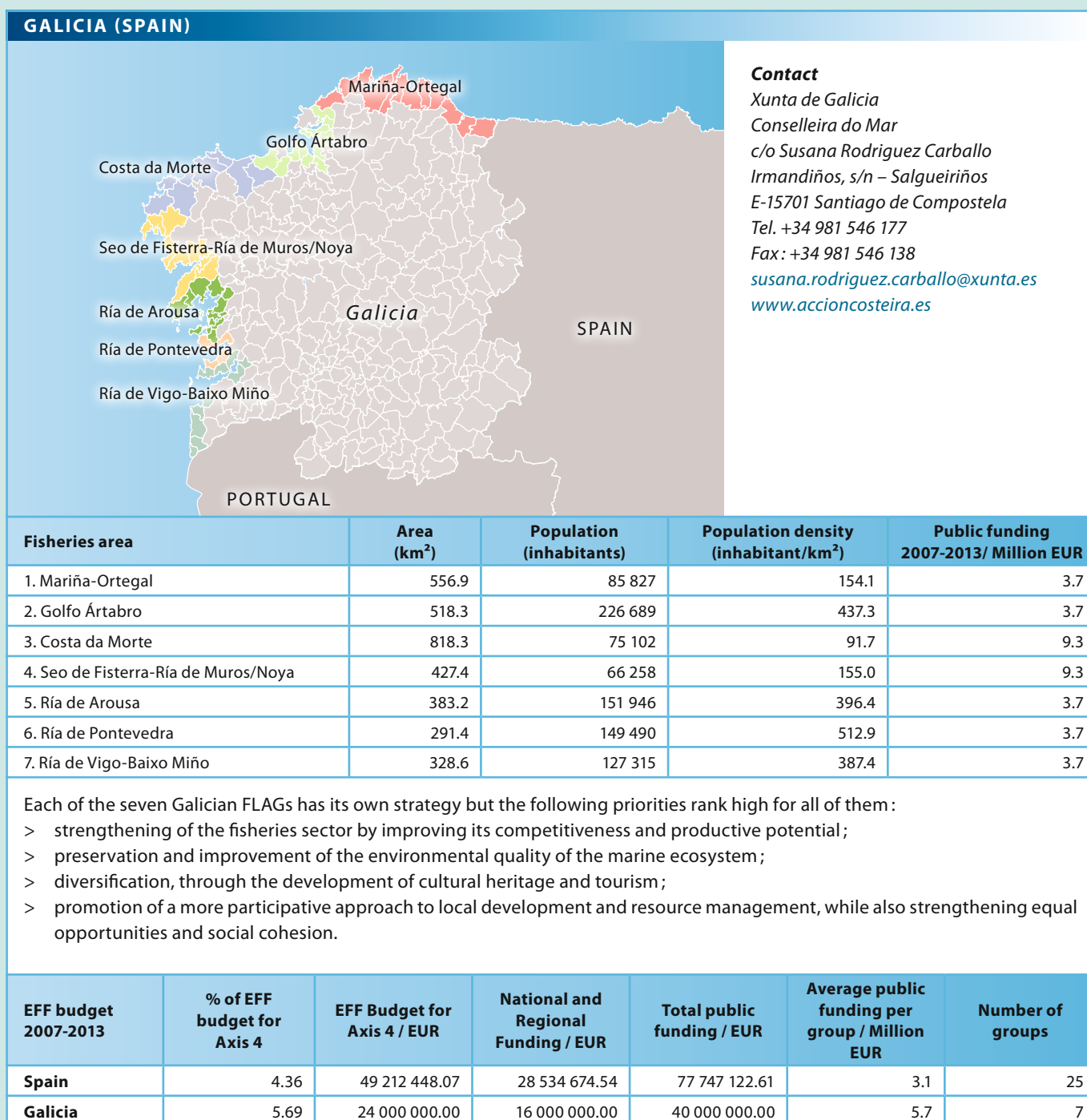
Seven “Coastal Action Groups” for Europe’s leading fishing region

Galicia is Spain’s and Europe’s most important fishing region. A large proportion of the fish from the North Atlantic and other fishing regions is landed and processed in Galicia. The port of Vigo, for example, handles and trades more fish for human consumption than almost any other port in the world. Galicia also accounts for 47% of Spain’s fishing fleet in terms of power.

Given Spain’s political structure, the creation of local development groups falls under the jurisdiction of the regional governments. In Galicia, one of the five Spanish regions that have decided to implement Axis 4, the Regional Government selected seven fish-

eries areas and “Coastal Action Groups”: Mariña–Ortegal, Golfo Ártabro, the Costa da Morte, Seo de Fisterra–Ría de Muros/Noya, Ría de Arousa, Ría de Pontevedra, and Ría de Vigo–Baixo Miño.

In Galicia, the high population density within less than 50 km of the coast (from 70 to 75%, compared with the European average of 50%) made the application of a criterion on low population density difficult, so it was essentially the growth coefficient criterion in the fisheries sector that was taken as a reference for the selection of the areas and groups.



Goose barnacles

Around Baiona, in Southern Galicia, they engage in a particularly dangerous type of activity – harvesting goose barnacles (*Pollicipes pollicipes*), a crustacean that lives attached to rocks that are battered by the waves. Its slow growth, combined with the very strict ecological requirements of the species, and the overfishing to which it has been subjected, makes the goose barnacle a scarce but highly sought after resource. In Galicia, since the goose barnacle disappeared from the most easily accessible areas, the harvesting technique, though simple, has become very hazardous: at low tide, the fishers (*percebeiros*) prise the barnacles off the rocks with a scraper, often in very perilous conditions because of the strong waves and the risk of falling.

The goose-barnacle fishers of Baiona set up their Agrupación in 2003, six months after the *Prestige* disaster³. *“Previously, this activity was totally disorganised,”* says their President, Susana Gonzalez, *“anyone could set themselves up as a percebeiro. All the rules were flouted, whether they concerned the quantities harvested, the fishing grounds or the breeding season. The situation was untenable, and it was the Prestige disaster and everything that followed that triggered moves to organise the activity. The fishers for whom harvesting goose barnacles was an important activity decided to organise themselves formally. They defined standing regulations and an operating plan. Currently, we have 135 members, almost the same number of men as women, which is much better than before.”*



▲ Tinned barnacles to hit the market.



▲ Harvesting goose barnacles near Baiona.

A quota of 6 kg per fisherman per day was set but the first measure taken by the Agrupación was to recruit private coastguards to eradicate poaching. Very soon, prices and incomes started rising appreciably. *“A percebeiro can earn around 15 000 euros per year,”* says Susana. *“The goose barnacle is like the Rolls Royce of seafood, since it can sell for up to 150 euros per kilo for top quality. In reality, there are several qualities, with prices that can range from 3 euros to 100 euros. This explains the idea behind the company that we are setting up...”*

To maximise their value-added, 13 members of the Agrupación formed a cooperative to trial the canning of second-grade goose barnacles, and convert the third-grade catches into pâté. *“In 2008-2009, the Regional Government financed market research, which concluded: there was enough of the resource, there was a demand for this type of product and such a project could be profitable. So we are setting up a limited company and we plan to position these products at the top-end of the market, and sell them in specialised shops, the ‘gourmet’ sections of supermarkets, airports, etc. Axis 4 could help us to create the brand, and with the packaging and promotion...”*

Octopus

At Bueu, on the ría de Pontevedra, the flagship product is octopus (*octopus vulgaris*). *“We are in a very special area,”* says José Manuel Rosa, president of the local cofradía, which has 300 members. *“In Bueu, octopus accounts for 70% of the value of the catches that we land, and accounts for 10% of the value of all Galician octopus.”* Since 2006, the cofradía has been running several projects that combine small-scale fishing and sustainable development: the marketing of octopus (quality label, total traceability, improved storage life), increased professionalism of fishermen (management training), a crustacean sales centre, the promotion of the goose barnacle (in cooperation with the cofradía of Baiona), the ENERPESCA energy-saving project, as well as a marine tourism project (“MARUSIA”), which uses a converted fishing boat.



▲ Bueu harbour.

³ The shipwreck of the oil tanker *Prestige* off the Galician coast in November 2002 caused a huge oil slick which seriously polluted the Atlantic coast of Europe, from Portugal to Brittany.



▲ Lira's visitor centre is the starting point for six theme-based discovery trails.

"We would like to offer boat trips at sea, stopping off at some outstanding locations from a cultural and local economic viewpoint. The project aims to strengthen the ties between fishing and the rest of the community. We submitted it under Axis 3, but some of the intangible aspects – information, promotion, etc. – could be financed under Axis 4." The president of the *cofradía* goes on to say: "Speaking more generally, Axis 4 could help us to complete the processes that we have already started of enhancing the value-added of our fishing and increasing the professionalism of those working in the sector, as well as encouraging better integration and cooperation with other players and sectors in the area. That is what came out of the information day which was held the other day with the CAG."

The CAG is the "coastal action group", as the Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) are known in Galicia. Laura Nieto coordinates the CAG at Ría de Pontevedra, which covers four municipalities, including Bueu: "The main problem facing the fishermen here is marketing. The chains are too long, and most of the value is pocketed by the intermediaries. Many boats are leaving Bueu for Vigo, for example, because the prices that they get there are higher. So the fish auction here is suffering. That is why the approaches that we intend to foster with Axis 4 are the development of a marketing platform that would enable local fishermen

to present their catches with complete transparency, wherever they want and in real time, as well as developing ties between fishing and tourism, and the creation of a water quality observatory, because pollution is a constant threat.

The Coast of Death... and Solidarity

The strategy set out by Laura Nieto for the Ría de Pontevedra is rather similar to the one started a few years ago at Lira, a small port with a population of 1 000 (154 of them fishermen), located at the beginning of the "Coast of Death" (*Costa da Morte*), nicknamed for its wild character and many shipwrecks, the *Prestige* being the latest casualty. At Lira too, the oil slick caused the community to take stock.

The *cofradía* of fishermen at Lira launched several operations under the name "Mardelira"⁴, combining fishing and local development and based on three main themes, as explained by Emilio Louro, secretary of the *cofradía* and member of the Board of Directors of the CAG Seo de Fisterra-Ría de Muros-Noia: "Mardelira incorporates an environmental aspect, with the 2 020-hectare marine reserve that we set up in 2007, an economic aspect via our seafood cooperative founded in 2006, and a

socio-cultural aspect, based on our 'ISCAR' awareness raising programme for schools, the visitor centre at the top of the village, and six theme-based discovery trails starting from Lira."

And, where does Axis 4 fit in? "Axis 4 will help us to increase the professionalism of the activities that are already ongoing, and to add others, like diving, kite surfing or kayaking," says Emilio. "On Monday, I have a meeting in La Coruña with a tourism company, a fishing and pleasure boat operator and the Galician Confederation of People with Disabilities, to discuss a project: setting up a private company to organise excursions at sea and tourist trips accessible to handicapped people."

With the experience of Mardelira and a budget of EUR 10 million (one of the two highest in Galicia), the CAG Seo de Fisterra-Ría de Muros-Noia has, according to Lino Lema and Jose Manuel Gabeiras, heads of department in the Galician Regional Government, "everything it needs to make Axis 4 a success."

In the meantime, we leave Lira by a small road that overlooked the shipwrecks of the *Ariete* in 1966 and the *Prestige* in 2002. Not long ago, this road was named: "Camino solidario", or Solidarity Way. ■

⁴ www.mardelira.net/mardelira/queemardelira/

Polish capacity building programme draws on Leader experience

The Polish authorities drew heavily on the experience of the Leader Community Initiative for rural development in designing a capacity building programme for local fisheries areas. Over 1 500 people from 64 potential Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) participated in the programme, which brought local stakeholders together and guided them through the process of preparing a local development strategy.



The Polish Operational Programme of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) envisages a high proportion of funds for Axis 4; total public funding of approximately EUR 300 million (including EUR 235 million from the EFF) has been allocated for the Polish fisheries areas. It is expected that at least 30 (but probably between 40 and 50) FLAGs will be created, including groups located along the whole of Poland's Baltic coast, as well as in the country's lake region and inland areas with an active aquaculture sector.

The operational programme was approved in October 2008 and soon afterwards the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (the Managing Authority for the EFF) launched a capacity building programme for potential FLAGs. In designing the programme, the Ministry drew on the experience of a project called "Preparing rural communities for Leader-type actions", which was implemented by the Polish Rural Forum and the Cooperation Fund during 2003-2004, and aimed to build the capacity of potential Leader Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Experience from other projects focusing on local partnerships and from the pilot Leader+ activities implemented in Poland since 2006 was also taken into account. The training was delivered by the Agrolina Association (*Stowarzyszenie Agrolinia*), a small NGO set up by experts formerly involved in the training of Leader groups.



Three stage capacity building programme

The capacity building programme involved three stages: firstly, the selection and training of trainers and the development of the detailed training programme; secondly, the training and provision of information to local communities (based on three thematic modules); and finally, post-training advice and support. The programme was implemented between July and December 2009.

A group of 20 trainers was selected to carry out the capacity building programme. The selection was based on the following criteria:

- > experience of Leader or other territorial development initiatives (preferably with hands-on experience in a local partnership);
- > knowledge of the specific problems of fisheries areas; and
- > good geographical distribution (groups were expected to emerge throughout the country, so it was necessary to have trainers in all regions).

Most of the trainers had previously trained Leader groups, and some had already established contacts with potential FLAGs, which were emerging by mid-2009 in many parts of the country, especially in the coastal areas.

As in the case of previous training initiatives for rural partnerships in Poland, the detailed training programme was developed by the training team in the course of two workshops. In this way, all the trainers had the chance to contribute to the discussion on the contents and methodology. The workshops, held over a five-day period, also contributed to increasing the trainers' commitment to and understanding of the programme. Of the 20 trainers selected, 19 actually carried out the training.

In addition to delivering the training, it was also the task of the trainers to provide follow-up support and advice (by telephone or e-mail) to the groups they trained. This allowed the leaders of local partnerships to ask questions or request advice on specific issues that arose during the process of preparing their strategies.



▲ Training session organised by the Agrolinia Association.

Three stage training programme

The training programme included three different stages or modules. The first stage involved an information meeting on Axis 4 for the sustainable development of fisheries areas and, specifically, how it would be implemented in the Polish context. This was followed by a one-day workshop on how to set up a local partnership (the FLAG) and then a two-day workshop on the preparation of a local strategy.

The initial information meeting served to inform participants about the EFF Regulation and the Polish Operational Programme, and to present draft papers on the specific rules and requirements concerning Axis 4 in Poland. It highlighted the role of Axis 4 in the EFF Operational Programme, introduced the Leader approach, provided examples of projects that could be financed, and explained the application procedure and the preliminary timetable.

The second module – on partnership building – was based to a large extent on the experience of the Leader approach. It helped the local actors to identify key partners and to develop a plan for getting them involved. The main benefits of partnerships and the potential contribution of partners from different sectors were also discussed. This module had a strong focus on interaction, and on motivating the participants to form a strong partnership.

The last module had to be adapted to the specific situation of the group concerned. Some groups had already prepared their local strategies under Leader. In these cases, the training was mainly aimed at helping them to update their strategies and adapt them to the EFF requirements. However, many new groups also expressed interest in Axis 4, and with these groups the main focus was on highlighting the advantages of the strategic approach and explaining the strategic planning process, including, in some cases, the SWOT analysis.

Brainstorming on potential project ideas was also included, and groups were guided through a simulated project selection committee meeting in order to understand the link between the strategy and project funding. This third module concluded with a session where practical tips and suggestions on how to prepare a good application were provided. All the participants who attended the entire training cycle received a certificate.

Local authorities and Leader groups the driving force

In total, over 1 500 people from 64 potential FLAGs completed the training. The highest number of potential FLAGs came from the three coastal regions of Poland: Western Pomerania (nine groups), Pomerania (eight groups) and Warmian-Masuria (six groups). Each group included representatives of local authorities and of the fisheries sector, as well as some representatives of other businesses and NGOs.

Most of the potential FLAGs were initiated by local authorities (37%) or by Leader LAGs (36%). Fisheries communities were responsible for initiating only 9% of the groups, with the remaining groups being initiated by other actors.

Participation in the training was generally high, partly because the Ministry had indicated that it would be viewed positively in the evaluation process if some members of their decision-making body took part in an officially recognised training programme on Axis 4. However, for most of the participants, the territorial approach of Axis 4 was also something new and they were interested in learning how it could be put into practice.

Realising the potential

At the time of writing (March 2010) it is difficult to judge the success of the capacity building programme, until the number and quality of strategies submitted by the groups is known. However, according to the opinions expressed by participants, the programme had a significant impact in terms of raising awareness about the Axis 4 approach and in dispelling the widely held view that the EFF was just for fishermen and not for other local actors.

The training was also one of the first opportunities to discuss the problems of the fisheries sector with a wider group of stakeholders. Some of the issues that came up most often during these discussions included:

- > sea fishing quotas;
- > strong (in some participants' view, too strong) protection of predators, such as cormorants, otters and beavers;
- > the weak position of producers in comparison to wholesalers and the processing sector;
- > lack of joint action and competition between fisheries sector representatives;
- > low fish consumption and weak promotion of fish products.



▲ Kayaking in Augustów, "the town on three lakes", in Podlaskie.

The vast majority of groups that participated in the capacity building programme are expected to submit applications. The call for proposals in Poland was launched in November 2009 (see box) and groups were requested to submit their strategies by the end of March 2010. ■

The selection of FLAGs in Poland

July 2009: start of training for potential FLAGs.

September/October 2009: publication of ordinances containing information on the implementation of Axis 4, eligible measures and costs, selection criteria and the required contents of applications.

November 2009: launch of the call for proposals.

31 March 2010: deadline for submission of applications.

There is only one stage of selection; the applications are evaluated on the basis of the characteristics of the area (i.e. level of dependency on the fisheries sector), the partnership (composition, internal procedures), and the contents of the local development strategy.

The Polish capacity building programme (2009)



- : locations where training was delivered
- : locations where the trainers came from



FARNET experts explore added

The consultation on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) launched an important period of reflection on how EU policy can best respond to the challenges facing Europe's fisheries sector. A recent meeting of the FARNET advisory group brought together experts from across Europe to explore the potential role of the territorial approach.

The challenges confronting Europe's fisheries areas have now been well documented. The Green Paper on the reform of the CFP highlights the serious problems of overfishing and fishing fleets that are simply too large for the available resources. With too many vessels chasing too few fish, many parts of the European fleet are no longer economically viable, a problem which has been exacerbated by oil price volatility and the financial crisis.

Fragmentation undermining sustainability

"This is a challenge that requires new thinking in the EU," suggests Jesper Raakjær, professor of fisheries management at Aalborg University and member of the FARNET advisory group. "Unfortunately, attempts to find a common EU response are being undermined by the fragmented nature of the fishing industry in Europe. This

fragmentation implies fragmented interests, which exists at all levels (between coastal and non-coastal fishing interests, between big and small, between Member States and between the scientific community, management bodies and the fisheries sector) and militates against the development of a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the problems facing the industry."

Mr Raakjær, who is also head of the research centre, Innovative Fisheries Management (IFM), believes that attempts to apply a "one-size-fits-all" policy response will not succeed in this context and that this mismatch between a common policy and a fragmented sector has not only hampered attempts to establish a more sustainable fishing regime across the EU, but has also led to "implementation drift and a lack of enforcement of fisheries management regulations in some Member States."

"Management regulations have been subverted due to a lack of enforcement or lack of

knowledge of the conditions and factors that influence rule compliance among fishermen", he suggests.

Global solutions do not capture local dynamics

Added to the problem of fragmentation, Mr Raakjær also sees a difference between administrators and fishermen in terms of how they view the goals and means of fisheries management. *"What are often considered to be good solutions at the administrative level rarely reflect the practical reality at sea or in fishing communities. Often, regulations are being endorsed that do not reflect the dynamics in fishing and fishing communities."*

Mr Raakjær believes that the differences between individual fisheries areas and fishing communities should be acknowledged and that *"the dynamics of each fishery need to be captured in order to improve management performance."*

This view is shared by Philippe Cury, Senior Scientist at IRD, Director of the Research Centre for Mediterranean and Tropical Halieutics and also a member of the advi-



▲ The Azores islands (Portugal).

value of territorial approach

sory group. Mr Cury highlights the impact of global change on fishing communities and suggests that such impacts need to be better managed at local level. *"There is a gap between the global environmental imperative, such as the over-exploitation of marine resources in the context of climate change, and local socio-economic needs in fisheries areas",* he states. *"Imposing one-size-fits-all solutions does not work. To be effective, and to minimise negative impacts, global strategies need to be translated into local strategies."*

A time for integration and diversification

Mr Raakjær and Mr Cury both share the assessment in the Green Paper, that *"the fisheries sector can no longer be seen in isolation from its broader maritime environment and from other policies dealing with marine activities."*

Fisheries are dependent on access to healthy marine ecosystems and many factors, including pollution, climate change and competition for maritime space are all increasingly impacting on this. Fishing economies are also heavily influenced by a changing context in subsidies, broader

trends in employment and development in coastal communities, including the emergence of new sectors offering opportunities for reconversion or income diversification.

The fisheries sector must, therefore, engage with other sectors and interests in seeking solutions to challenges within the fisheries sector, but also within fishing communities.

The added value of the territorial approach

The advisory group believes that a local, integrated territorial approach could play a role in addressing some of these issues. By bringing together different stakeholders, it could help in designing and testing policies that take account of the diversity and fragmentation within the fisheries sector.

"Bringing all stakeholders together provides a space for dialogue and negotiation, and establishes a mechanism to initiate concerted action," explains Philippe Cury, *"This could help to promote better communication between policy makers, scientists and the fishing industry. At local level it could also help to ensure that policy, where it exists, is actually implemented."*

The emphasis on capacity building and bottom-up decision making could also help to strengthen the human dimension by enhancing communities' capacity for change. *"This could help to bring about a change in culture, from defensive action to a more forward looking vision, based on the discovery of new economic value in local assets and their transformation into new activities,"* explains Yves Champetier, advisory group member and former Director of the Leader European Observatory.

A platform for diversification

The potential benefits of the territorial approach are not limited to the fisheries sector, however. *"One of the great strengths of this approach is that it brings together people from diverse sectors and promotes a more holistic vision of an area's potential,"* adds Mr Champetier. *"This can also open up opportunities for diversification into new areas and give the fisheries sector the opportunity to contribute to the development and local implementation of broader strategies for Integrated Maritime Policy."*



The territorial development approach is of course new to many fisheries areas, and whether it will succeed or not is largely dependant on how it is applied in the local context. Here, the experience of other EU territorial initiatives can provide some useful insights.

Lessons from the previous territorial initiatives

Community Initiatives such as RECHAR, EQUAL, URBAN and Leader provide a valuable pool of experience on the application of the territorial approach in different types of areas and to address different types of problems. Drawing on this experience, the advisory group identified a number of important lessons for applying the territorial approach in fisheries areas.

"Defining the geographical area to be targeted is crucially important," insists Peter Ramsden, advisory group member and expert in urban and regional development. "Areas have to be meaningful and need to be centred on real communities, and not just administrative areas. The size of the area must also find the right balance between achieving this community cohesiveness, whilst also achieving a certain criti-



▲ Raising awareness of marine life in Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France).

cal mass in terms of endogenous resources and potential."

Mr Ramsden also highlights the need to ensure that funding is not spread too thinly but is concentrated on the areas of greatest need or potential, and that the amount and duration of funding is sufficient to establish a development process that is viable and self-sustaining. However, with proper targeting of resources, *"a lot can be done with a small amount,"* he insists.

The experience of previous initiatives also underlines the importance of the strategy, which must be adapted to local circumstances. *"An inland fisheries area with a declining population will have a different set of challenges to a coastal fisheries area with a developed tourism sector and with an expanding population, and their respective strategies must reflect this,"* says Mr Ramsden.

FARNET advisory group on integrated territorial development in fisheries areas

Integrated territorial development is a relatively new concept in many fisheries areas, and the experience of the first FLAGs will not be significant until 2012 or 2013. Therefore, the FARNET Support Unit, with the support of the European Commission, has established an advisory group of six experts in fisheries and territorial development to reflect on the experience of other EU territorial programmes, such as Leader and URBAN, and to provide some perspectives on how territorial approaches could contribute to fisheries and maritime policy, now and in the period beyond 2013. The advisory group will meet regu-

larly and, having considered all the evidence, will make concrete proposals for the design of future territorial initiatives to support the sustainable development of fisheries areas.

The six members of the advisory group are:

Yves Champetier, former Director of the Leader I and II European Observatories. Currently Director of the Department for Enterprise Development at Montpellier Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Philippe Cury, author of *"Une mer sans poissons"* (A sea without fish) and co-author of *"Coping with global change in marine social-ecological systems"*. He is a Senior Scientist at IRD and Director of CRH, the Research Centre for Mediterranean and Tropical Haliéutics.

Indrani Luchtman, a Senior Fellow and Head of the Fisheries Programme at the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IIEP).

Jesper Raakjær, professor in fisheries management at Aalborg University and head of the research centre, Innovative

"This is why it is so important to involve a good cross-section of local interests and stakeholder groups. Mobilising this local knowledge and experience will not only ensure a more targeted strategy but will also create a new local dynamism that will also carry through to the strategy implementation."

The advisory group highlights the experience of Leader and area-based partnerships in Ireland as a good example of balanced local partnerships, involving representatives from the public, private and the community and voluntary sectors. A key aspect of this participatory approach is leadership and capacity building, ensuring not only that the group as a whole has the appropriate knowledge and skills, but that the individual group members also have the knowledge and skills to contribute fully to the work of the group.

"Ultimately, this is about empowerment of local communities," suggests Mr Ramsden, "helping them to acquire the knowledge, tools and instruments that enable them to move from the effect side to the cause side of development. In many ways, this is the essence of the territorial approach." ■

Fisheries Management (IFM). He is also the author of *"A Fisheries Management System in Crisis – the EU Common Fisheries Policy"*, published by Aalborg University Press (2009).

Peter Ramsden, an expert in urban and regional development and entrepreneurship and currently pole manager of 10 urban networks for the URBACT programme.

Elena Saraceno, a rural and territorial development expert and professor and former adviser to European Commission president, Romano Prodi and his Cabinet, as well as to the Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture.

FARNETwork

> FARNET participation in European Maritime Day 2010

On 21 May 2010, the Support Unit will organise a FARNET workshop as part of the 3rd European Maritime Day Stakeholder Conference, which this year takes place in Gijon, Spain. The European Maritime Day (<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeday>) seeks to raise awareness among citizens of the importance of Europe's seas and sea-related activities. The FARNET workshop will highlight the work of FLAGs and their important role in helping to meet some of the key challenges facing maritime areas, thereby contributing to a number of EU policy objectives. Further information is available at: www.farnet.eu

> First European seminar for Fisheries Local Action Groups

On 24-26 March 2010, Gijon (Spain) was the venue for the first European seminar for Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs). The seminar brought together FLAGs and stakeholders from across the EU, providing a first opportunity for networking and the exchange of views on issues of common interest. The event focused in particular on increasing the capacity of FLAGs to implement local strategies. Practical knowledge and skills were shared through four thematic workshops: "Linking strategies to project selection", "Dynamic and balanced partnerships", "Building links with Leader", and "Encouraging viable private investment". The second day of the seminar started with an "open space" session on cooperation between FLAGs, followed by an assessment of needs and support requirements.

> FARNET "geographical" experts appointed

In January, the FARNET Support Unit completed the process of appointing experts in each of the 21 countries participating in Axis 4 for the sustainable development of fisheries areas. "These 'geographical' experts will be the eyes, ears and mouth of the Support Unit in the countries concerned," explained Team Leader, Paul Soto, "using their local knowledge, including their knowledge of language and culture, to extend the reach of the Support Unit." The specific tasks of the experts will vary depending on local needs but, in general, will include organising a focus group in each country, data collection and needs assessment, identifying knowledge and skills gaps, liaising with FLAGs and managing authorities and generally supporting Axis 4 implementation. A two-day workshop was organised in Brussels on 28-29 January to prepare the national experts for their new role.

FARNET Agenda

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
24-26 March 2010	"FLAGs on the move" European seminar	Gijon (E)
April 2010	Training seminar	Calabria (I)
	Training seminar	Poland (PL)
May 2010	Information session	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (D)
	Training seminar	Romania (RO)
21 May 2010	FARNET workshop at European Maritime Day Stakeholders Conference	Gijon (E)

Profile

NAME: Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF)

OBJECTIVE: The EFF may co-finance local projects for sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life in fisheries areas, complementary to other EU financial instruments.

IMPLEMENTATION: Twenty-one Member States implement Axis 4. An important innovation in the implementation of this axis is the emphasis on the territorial approach.

TARGET AREAS: "Fisheries areas" are areas with a sea or lake shore or including ponds or a river estuary and with a significant level of employment in the fisheries sector. The Member States select the eligible areas according to the following criteria: they should be small local territories (less than NUTS 3) that are coherent from a geographical, economic and social point of view. Support should be targeted either to sparsely populated areas or those where the sector is in decline or those with small fisheries communities. Member States can add further criteria for the selection of the areas.

RECIPIENTS: "Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs)", i.e. a combination of public, private and civil society partners jointly devising a strategy and innovative measures for the sustainable development of a fisheries area. FLAGs are selected by the Member States on the basis of criteria defined in their operational programmes. It is expected that at least 200 FLAGs will be created across the EU.

ELIGIBLE MEASURES: Strengthening the competitiveness of the fisheries areas; restructuring, redirecting and diversifying economic activities; adding value to fisheries products; small fisheries and tourism infrastructure and services; protecting the environment; restoring production damaged by disasters; inter-regional and trans-national cooperation of actors; capacity building to prepare local development strategies; and the running costs of FLAGs.

NETWORK: All the stakeholders concerned with Axis 4 are organised around a "European Fisheries Areas Network (FARNET)", permitting wide dissemination (through seminars, meetings and publications) of innovative projects implemented for the benefit of fisheries areas and fostering transnational cooperation. The network is coordinated by the "FARNET Support Unit".

DURATION OF THE PROGRAMME: seven years (2007-2013), but projects can be implemented until the end of 2015.

EUROPEAN UNION ASSISTANCE: Priority Axis 4 has a budget of EUR 567 million of EFF funding for the period 2007-2013, to which must be added national public co-funding and private investment. It represents just over 13% of the overall EFF budget.

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Send us your news

FARNET publications are resources for all those engaged in building a more sustainable future for Europe's fisheries areas. Please send us news and information on your activities which might be of interest to other groups or actors working in this field. In particular, we would like to hear about your successes and achievements, important events and announcements, and also your ideas or proposals for exchanges or cooperation with other fisheries areas.

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