



No 11

| Autumn-Winter 2014

ISSN 2363-3131

farnet

M A G A Z I N E

Designing the future





Contents

Photographs (pages):

GAC Alto Minho (1, 9, 15, 16), European Commission (3), Jean-Luc Janot (5, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 23, 33), FARNET Support Unit (5, 19, 27, 29, 32), KAG i Österbotten (6), Giuseppe Scordella (8), Partnerstwo dla Doliny Baryczy (10), Kook Proof (11), Câmara Municipal de Viana do Castelo (14), Vianapesca (15), Tonis Aljas (22), Hiiumaa Mudeliklubi (23), MTÜ Hiiukala (24, 25), Tarmo Rajang (24), Tuuli Tammla (26), Fiskefrämjandet Stockholms Skärgård (28), GAL Litoral Costa de l'Ebre (34).

Cover: A fisherman mending a net (the Litoral Norte FLAG area, Portugal).

Journalists:

Jean-Luc Janot, Eamon O'Hara.

Other contributors:

Urszula Budzich-Tabor, Monica Burch, Yves Champetier, Serge Gomes da Silva, John Grieve, Sabine Kariger, Paul Soto, Lorena van de Kolk, Gilles van de Walle.

Production:

DevNet geie (AEIDL/Grupo Alba) / Kaligram.

Contact:

FARNET Magazine, FARNET Support Unit
Rue de la Loi 38, boîte 2
B-1040 Brussels
+32 2 613 26 50
info@farnet.eu
www.farnet.eu

FARNET Magazine is published by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission. It is distributed free on request.

FARNET Magazine is published twice a year in English, French, German and Spanish.

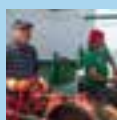
Editor: European Commission, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Director-General.

Disclaimer: Whilst the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries is responsible for the overall production of this magazine, it is not responsible for the accuracy, content or views expressed within particular articles. The European Commission has not, save where otherwise stated, adopted or in any way approved any view appearing in this publication and statements should not be relied upon as statements of the Commission's or the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries' views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this publication, nor does the European Commission or any person acting on its behalf accept responsibility for any use made thereof.

© European Union, 2014.

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium on recycled paper.



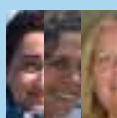
Designing the future 4

As we shift our focus to the next programming period, it is increasingly clear that new solutions and new thinking are required to address evolving challenges. Even where FLAGs have been successful in achieving their goals in the 2007-2013 period, they will still have to reassess their situation and prepare new strategies that respond to the changing external environment, the new legislative framework, and take account of their own evolving capacity and maturity as agents of local development.



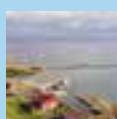
Report: Small streams make great rivers 11

Integrated local development in coastal Alto Minho (Portugal).



People 18

Three-way interview with Frédérique Deschamps, Gala Martinez and Manuela Sampaio, FLAG managers.



Report: A good catch 22

Fishermen on the island of Hiiumaa, in the Estonian archipelago, have made the most of the opportunities offered by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF).



Trade winds 27

Two innovative examples of boosting the effectiveness of FLAG work.



Spotlight: Improving communication and participation 28

Tools for FLAGs to ensure the involvement of the local community in the strategy development process.

FARNETwork 35



Editorial

“Ensuring a genuine local dynamic that at the same time is open to the world”

In 2015, the new programming period for the European Structural and Investment Funds (including the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund – EMFF) will be starting on the ground, whilst the implementation of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) will be in its inception stage. This will bring new challenges to coastal communities, especially those that are dependent on fishing as they will need to adapt to the new conditions laid out by the reform of the CFP. It will also bring new opportunities for these communities who will be able to use “Community-Led Local Development” (CLLD), the successor of “Axis 4”, under the 2007 – 2013 European Fisheries Fund, for the development of their territories.

The economic crisis requires a strong focus of the Funds on economic development and job creation. The opening up of CLLD to other sources of funding should allow a better integration of coastal communities in the development of their territories, in partnership with other actors and in synergy with other funding opportunities. This will allow local groups to tap in new opportunities in relation to the rest of the maritime economy in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable forms of coastal tourism or research and innovation at the local level.

Taking into account their experience with Axis 4 and the broader opportunities opened up by the new regulatory framework, local actors are now preparing actively their new local development strategies to be presented for funding until 2020. It is therefore a good moment to focus on the preparatory activities which will enable those strategies to emerge. Managing authorities and local communities can capitalize on the wealth of local, regional and national level experience gained in the first implementation period to ensure even more successful local development strategies in the coming years. In addition to this, the possibility of mobilising preparatory support early on in this process offers a clear advantage to Managing Authorities and Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) compared to the last period. The first article in this Magazine provides some of the keys to using this powerful tool.

Throughout the Magazine we draw on the bottom-up experience of people who live the approach on a daily basis. In an innovative “cross interview” of three FLAG managers, Frédérique’s, Gala’s

and Manuela’s different experiences and backgrounds make their insights and vision for the future all the more relevant and interesting. Patience, curiosity and a keen interest for the sector are amongst the important personal skills they recommend for working with local fishing communities. They identify communication as being particularly challenging, a point discussed in more detail in the “Spotlight” article which provides tips on improving communication and participation at local level.

The two reportages give insights into the life of two fishing communities and beyond, highlighting the diversity of situations faced by Europe’s coastal communities and the need for a local development approach. And yet, despite their different realities, there are also clear similarities. Both communities are successfully linking to the tourism industry, one of the most dynamic industries around European coasts and one of the five high potential sectors of the EU’s Blue Growth Strategy.

Experience shows that tourism is often difficult for the fishing sector to tap into. Tuuli Tammla from the Hiiumaa FLAG in Estonia tells us that to succeed you need “a genuine local dynamic that at the same time is open to the world.” Through its work, the Portuguese FLAG Litoral Norte has succeeded in bringing together two very different worlds: kitesurfing and fishing, encouraging collaboration between ancient and modern uses of the coastline.

Those reportages also highlight the importance of getting the right pieces in place. FLAGs which possess the right partnership to implement a strategy responding to local needs will create jobs and improve quality of life in their communities. Of course, the average size of Axis 4 projects is relatively small and they can only hope to create a few jobs each, but those created are very often accessible to local people and sustainable. As the Portuguese reportage points out, “small streams make great rivers” and many small grants will create many jobs.

Simona Lupu,
Head of Unit (E3) – Baltic Sea, North
Sea and landlocked Member States
Directorate-General for Maritime
Affairs and Fisheries

Perspective

Designing the future

As the focus shifts to the next programming period, it is increasingly clear that new solutions and new thinking are required to address evolving challenges. Even where FLAGs have been successful in achieving their goals in the 2007-2013 period, they will still have to reassess their situation and prepare new strategies that respond to the changing external environment, the new legislative and funding framework, and take account of their own evolving capacity and maturity as agents of local development.

The activities of FLAGs within the 2007-2013 funding period are drawing to a close (in some Member States they have already come to an end), and managing authorities are working intensively on the implementation framework for the new period. Most FLAGs have started working on their new strategies, while also finalising their activities for the previous period. What can be done now to help them in this task?

The need for new strategies

Regardless of how successful FLAGs might have been in achieving their goals in the 2007-2013 period, they must still reassess all aspects of their strategy. There are several reasons for this, including:

- > **a changing local development context.** The financial crisis, a re-orientation of public policies (including a new Common Fisheries Policy), changes in the economies of fisheries areas, growing concerns with regard to the environment and climate change- all of these issues impact on local communities and require new responses from FLAGs, and not simply a continuation of past approaches;

- > **a new legislative framework,** with a more precise definition of "Community-Led Local Development" (CLLD), a strong focus on growth and jobs, and the opportunity for multi-funded strategies, drawing on the EMFF and other EU funds. This implies that many FLAGs may have to re-think their strategic objectives, the composition of their partnerships, and even the shape of their areas;
- > **changes in the FLAGs themselves.** In the course of implementing Axis 4, FLAGs have developed and matured and are now capable of developing more focused strategies and better quality projects.

Below we present some ideas and techniques to help FLAGs prepare strategies adapted to this new context. Practical examples of preparatory activities from the current and the previous programming period illustrate these suggestions.

Drawing lessons from the past

Before taking decisions concerning their future strategy, FLAGs should reflect on what has worked well and not so well. Is the overall strategic direction still appropriate? Are the criteria and procedures for project selection still relevant? Is the partnership working well? And is the approach to working with project promoters and the broader community delivering the desired results? These are some examples of questions FLAGs need to consider in order to ensure they continue to achieve results and improve their performance.

Many FLAGs across the EU have already started this kind of reflection, mainly using various self-evaluation tools and techniques, including peer-to-peer methods¹. Such internal evaluations are sometimes combined with analyses by external experts. Some managing authorities are supporting FLAGs in this process, as is shown in the examples below from Sweden, Estonia and Spain.





▲ Fishermen on a shrimp boat off Ostend (Belgian FLAG area).



▲ Managing authorities meeting in Brussels.

Managing authorities support FLAGs in their evaluation activities

Swedish FLAGs identified evaluation as one of their main needs in preparing for the next period, but most of them had only very limited funding to contract external evaluators, so the Swedish Board of Agriculture (managing authority for both Leader and Axis 4) decided to intervene. A long-term evaluation process was launched in February 2014, when two representatives per FLAG were invited to a workshop on evaluation needs analysis and skills acquisition. This workshop also helped to assess what worked and what did not, and how all the links in the delivery chain can build on this experience in the new period.

Approximately €19 000 from the Technical Assistance budget for the period 2007-2013 was allocated to this evaluation exercise by the Swedish Board of Agriculture. An additional €3 800 was also used to support an evaluation of the FLAG network, which was set up by the FLAGs in 2012 in preparation for a more formal networking process in the next period.

In **Estonia**, the managing authority contracted an external company to carry out an evaluation of FLAG strategies in early 2014. In March, the national FLAG network organised an intensive workshop on the evaluation results and training on how to prepare the new local strategy. Since the autumn of 2014 FLAGs also have the option of requesting assistance from the evaluation company in preparing their strategy. The total cost of the project was around €15 000 as indicated by the network.

In the **Spanish** region of **Galicia**, the regional government also commissioned an evaluation of all the Galician FLAGs. This evaluation took six months and involved a participative process of interviews and working group discussions in each FLAG area. Each FLAG received a report of the evaluation of their area, and the final overall report. The total cost of the evaluation process amounted to around EUR 50 000².

¹ See the example from Sweden in *FARNET Magazine 10*.

² Information collected from "Cidadania Rede de aplicacões sociais", the company in charge of the evaluation.

Better strategic focus of FLAGs

In the 2014-2020 period, according to Article 63.1 of the EMFF Regulation, CLLD in fisheries areas can be used for the following broad objectives:

- A. Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovation at all stages of the supply chain of fisheries and aquaculture products.
- B. Supporting diversification inside and outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning, and jobs creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas.
- C. Enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of fisheries and aquaculture areas, including operations to mitigate climate change.
- D. Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime heritage.
- E. Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and in the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities.

FLAGs are not obliged to address all of these objectives in their strategies.



▲ A meeting of the Österbotten FLAG, Finland.

Depending on the character of the area, the skills available, the size of the budget, and other factors, they may decide to focus on only two or three of these broad objectives. The table below shows how the strategic objectives of a real FLAG from the period 2007-2013 could be linked to the five objectives of the EMFF Regulation.

Such choices will have to be made individually by each FLAG, in accordance with local needs and opportunities. Guidance and support can be provided by the managing authority or national network, for instance by building capacity and facilitating the exchange of ideas between different FLAGs from the same Member State or region. National meetings of FLAGs can be a good setting for this.

CÔTE BASQUE-SUD LANDES ³ (F)	OBJECTIVES PROPOSED IN ARTICLE 63.1 OF THE EMFF REGULATION				
Objectives of the FLAG strategy (2007-2013)	A. Fisheries supply chain	B. Diversification	C. Environment and Climate change	D. Social well-being and Heritage	E. Governance
Support entry into the fisheries profession, fishing business creation and succession	●				
Improve the marketing of fresh fish	●				
Develop the market for local fish products	●				
Develop local fisheries and maritime heritage, and related tourism activities	●	●		●	
Promote responsible fishing	●		●		●
Involve stakeholders in the joint management of the marine environment			●		●
Improve governance					●

³ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/flagsheet/flag-factsheet-france-côte-basque-sud-landes>

Facilitating FLAG positioning in Finland

The Finnish managing authority (MA) has been talking to FLAGs about its plans for the future since 2012, when a meeting was organised by the MA and national network to discuss the overall shape of the future Axis 4, areas it should cover, and issues FLAGs would like to address in their strategies. During this meeting, three working groups were set-up, focusing on: (1) FLAG area definition and the selection procedure; (2) FLAG administration, strategy content and eligibility criteria; and (3) FLAGs' value added to local development. One of the conclusions of this meeting was that FLAG strategies in the future should also focus clearly on the economic development of fisheries.

The MA organised another preparatory meeting, to which it invited all eight Finnish FLAGs, as well as two potential FLAGs from fisheries areas not previously covered by Axis 4. The existing FLAGs covered their own cost of participating in this meeting, while the potential FLAG's costs were covered with funding they received from the MA towards preparing their strategies. The MA has also supported the process of strategy preparation by providing FLAGs with feedback and suggestions for improvement on their draft strategies submitted in May 2014. The formal call for strategies is planned for November 2014.

Information and capacity building

Most managing authorities or national networks are planning to organise awareness and information sessions on the EU and national regulations for CLLD in fisheries areas, for both existing and potential FLAGs. This is a very important means of presenting Union Priority 4 of the EMFF to

local actors and answering any questions that might arise. However, awareness raising and information alone are not sufficient. It is important to ensure that fisheries communities also have the capacity to develop and deliver their strategies.

There are no ready-made training packages to address the various needs of local partnerships. Training and other forms of

support have to be custom-made. Five key areas where capacity building is likely to be needed were identified in *Magazine no. 10*: developing more focused strategies, bringing learning into implementation, stronger animation (to mobilize all key stakeholders) and capacity building, developing higher quality projects and communicating the work of the FLAG.

In addition to training, some managing authorities develop tools to help FLAGs prepare their strategies. For instance, for the period 2014-2020, the Swedish MA has developed a template with instructions to guide the FLAGs through the process of developing their local strategy, ensuring that all the key components have been addressed. The Polish MA has developed a guide explaining what should be addressed in all the mandatory sections of the local strategy. In line with the participatory approach, the MA invited representatives of local partnerships to co-author different chapters of the guide (see *"Zoom" for more information about preparing CLLD in Poland*).



FLAG training in Estonia and Poland under the EFF

When preparing for the 2007-2013 period, the **Estonian** managing authority launched a long-term training programme for the future FLAGs. It consisted of 11 training days for regular FLAG members and 26 days for management board members. The training included 15 modules, focusing on three key themes: the establishment of the local action group, the development of the local strategy, and cooperation within and outside the partnership.

The training was supported by a detailed handbook, explaining the principles of Axis 4 as a tool for the sustainable development of fisheries areas. After the training, each FLAG got an EFF grant of approximately €70 000 to develop their strategy. This covered the salaries of staff and the contracting of external experts where necessary over a period of 10-12 months. In parallel, the MA put in place the national FLAG network to provide on-going support and capacity building for the FLAGs.

In **Poland**, training to prepare for the implementation of Axis 4 was offered to 60 potential FLAGs, including several representatives per FLAG. Of these, 48 FLAGs were eventually selected. The training consisted of three modules: general information about Axis 4 (5 hours), building the local partnership (8 hours) and developing local strategies (16 hours).



▲ A fisherman ties up in the port of Castro (the Adriatico Salentino FLAG area, Italy).

National networks: a key tool for effective implementation

Experience shows that national FLAG networks are an important tool for capacity building. Such networks have been set up by several Member States, and have proved very effective in bringing together all the stakeholders involved in Axis 4 delivery, stimulating exchange, encouraging innovation, helping to identify barriers and improve implementation. The capacity building function of these networks not only provides FLAGs with useful information and training, but also – perhaps most importantly – creates an opportunity for FLAG members and staff to meet face to face to exchange ideas and experience. This was an important role of the French PACTE, for example (*see box*).

In the period 2014-2020 managing authorities could ensure that adequate resources are available for the setting up of national networks by allocating funding for this purpose in the Technical Assistance budget at the stage of designing the Operational Programme.

FLAG networks in France, Latvia and Denmark

PACTE, the national FLAG network in **France**, is coordinated and animated by the *Agence de Services et Paiements* (National Paying Agency) and run by a team of 1.5 FTEs. Among its key activities, the network organises regular technical meetings for FLAG managers, as well as representatives of the national managing authority and paying agency, and regional officers dealing with Axis 4, including people in charge of verifying eligibility. These meetings, which are organised 2-3 times per year, focus on discussing implementation progress and finding administrative/legal solutions to any issues that arise. The network covers the travel expenses of the FLAGs to these meetings, recognising the importance of such exchanges in building the capacity of FLAGs.

PACTE also organises “National Days”, an annual two-day event which is attended by about 130 people. The aim is to facilitate networking and the exchange of experience and project ideas between FLAGs, as well as to improve the visibility of Axis 4. This event includes a variety of activities such as plenary sessions, workshops, project exhibitions and field visits. The total cost of the “National Days” comes to around €30 000 per year.

In **Latvia** the national network is run by the Rural Advisory and Training Service and it includes not only FLAGs, but also other fisheries sector actors. This opens up the possibility of strengthening the links between FLAGs, fishermen and aquaculture producers, as well as governmental and non-governmental bodies interested in fisheries. Some of the activities in the network’s annual plan are directed specifically at FLAGs, including local and international seminars, exchanges and study visits within Latvia and abroad. The network, which was set up in 2010, tries to introduce some new elements each year. Last year it worked with young people to motivate them to stay and start businesses in coastal areas.

The **Danish** national network is run by the Ministry of Housing, Urban and Rural Affairs and it acts as the national contact point for both FLAGs and LAGs. It develops tools (website, publications, training...) to increase knowledge and information sharing between LAGs, FLAGs and other stakeholders. It plays a key role in ensuring a good flow of information between all actors involved in the delivery of Axis 4 and Leader.



▲ Fishing boats in Viano do Castelo (the Litoral Norte FLAG area, Portugal).

A new opportunity: preparatory support

According to Article 35.1 (a) of the Common Provisions Regulation⁴, support for CLLD should also cover the cost of preparatory support. This was introduced in order to support FLAGs in developing high quality strategies, and also to ensure a level playing field between already existing groups and new partnerships. It can be used to finance both collective activities (awareness raising, training and networking) organised at the national or regional level, and individual grants to potential FLAGs to prepare their strategy and apply for EMFF funding.

Preparatory support is eligible from 1 January 2014 and may even be allocated to already existing FLAGs in order to apply for funding under the new period. It is an opportunity for FLAGs and MAs to strengthen the bottom-up approach, facilitate the process of developing local strategies, and make sure the programme delivers the best possible results.

The FARNET Support Unit has prepared a number of tools⁵ that could help MAs, national networks and FLAGs in the process of designing fisheries CLLD in the new period. In addition to general guidance, there are also a number of real-life examples from the period 2007-2013 (including: selection criteria for FLAGs and strategies, requirements concerning applications, sample strategies, evaluation material, etc.). Recently, a new section⁶ has been developed on the FARNET website to address some of the questions MAs might have in relation to the programming of fisheries CLLD. ■

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=4803

⁵ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/tools/local-development-2014-2020>

⁶ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/new-questions-answers-programming-clld-emff-2014-2020>

Zoom

Integrating different funds in CLLD: intensive dialogue underway in Poland

Poland is one of the Member States where an integrated approach to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) using all four EU Funds (EAFRD, EMFF, ERDF and ESF) will be promoted. In this context, a significant role is envisaged for the 16 Polish regional authorities, the managing authorities for the ERDF and ESF, and intermediate bodies for the EAFRD and EMFF.



▲ Harvesting carp in the Barycz Valley, Poland.

The work on designing CLLD in Poland involves close cooperation between the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry for Infrastructure and Regional Development. A special law is currently under discussion to define the general principles of CLLD (e.g. the role of partnerships, the contents of the local strategy, etc.), which will be common for all the Funds. Poland intends to use different means to simplify the implementation of CLLD, including:

- > **joint calls** for all CLLD partnerships;
- > at the OP level, a range of **broad objectives** – from which local action groups (LAGs) will be able to choose the most suitable for their area –, instead of predefined measures;
- > **umbrella projects**, where the LAG will be the formal beneficiary and will provide flexible micro-grants to local actors;
- > the use of different Funds for **preparatory support, coordinated** at regional level (each group will get support from only one Fund), and a **Lead Fund** for running costs;

- > preparatory support and running costs to be provided as **lump sums** as far as possible (each LAG will get a standard amount, a special study has been commissioned to establish methods of calculation);
- > in addition to the 50% **advances** for running costs envisaged in EU legislation, work is under way to put in place additional advances from the national budget;
- > **on-going call** for cooperation projects.

Many of these proposals, as well as specific provisions for fisheries areas (including criteria for selecting areas eligible for EMFF support), are still in draft format and intensive discussions with LAGs and FLAGs are ongoing.

The objectives of applying CLLD may **differ between regions**. For instance, one of the regions that is planning to enable local groups to benefit from all funds is Kujawsko-Pomorskie, where the dialogue between the regional authorities and local LAGs, FLAGs and NGOs has been particularly intensive. Here, the intention is to have a **significantly larger allocation for CLLD** than in the last period

(over €120 million from the four funds, compared to about €65 million from the EAFRD and EMFF in 2007-2013). Strategies can be multi-funded and can cover both rural and urban areas. EAFRD and EMFF will target rural and fisheries communities. The ERDF will be used to finance village renewal, support to small and micro-enterprises, incubators, etc. The ESF will support the social economy, inter-generational solidarity and model solutions to social issues (e.g. Family Support Centres).

The Polish Ministry for Agriculture has already started **capacity building** for LAGs and FLAGs (including training on how to prepare a local strategy and how to improve project quality). Guidelines on the contents of the local strategy, including the action plan and communication plan, are under preparation. A **bottom-up approach to these guidelines** has been adopted, with the Ministry inviting LAG representatives (nominated on a regional basis to the Leader working group of the National Rural Network) to share the task of developing drafts of the various chapters of the Guidelines.

Report

INTEGRATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN COASTAL ALTO MINHO [PORTUGAL]

Small streams make great rivers

The Litoral Norte FLAG chose to focus its resources on supporting and assisting small-scale projects promoted by fishing associations and local, private-sector businesses, be they distributors, restaurant owners or tourism operators. Projects are selected in line with highly-localised integrated strategies to ensure consistency, while also helping to mobilise local resources.



▲ Axis 4-funded boat for transporting kitesurfers in Esposende.

The room is full of customers – workers on their lunch break, retired people, families and some tourists. A delicious smell is wafting out from the kitchens, where a fish soup is being prepared and seafood is marinating. The waiting staff move quickly from one side of the room to the other, vigilant but discreet. In spite of how busy they are, they make time to stop and chat with the guests at the tables. This is Portuguese hospitality at its finest. In Viana de Castelo, the “La Casa Primavera” restaurant is a real institution, specialising

in local fish for over 80 years. There are a dozen different types of fish on the menu, all of them purchased the very same morning at the market. But until recently, because of a lack of space, the restaurant could only serve 16 people at a time. “Axis 4 of the EFF enabled us to expand the restaurant by renovating and fitting out this back room which wasn’t previously in use. The FLAG gave us €67 000 of the €112 000 we needed,” said the restaurant owner, José Luís Casanova Soares.

Since the work has been completed (summer 2014) the restaurant has almost tripled its capacity and can now seat around 40 diners at a time. Two additional jobs have been created.





▲ The extension of the 'Casa Primavera' restaurant.



▲ Joana Pinheiral is a mobile fishmonger.

The nearby "O Pescador" restaurant has a similar ambiance and setting: *"In February 2013, I received an e-mail from the council informing me that a meeting would be held about Axis 4,"* said owner Antonio Franco de Matos. *"I attended the meeting and realised it was a good opportunity for me to improve my restaurant. I received a little over €20 000 to modernise the kitchen, market my business and purchase these large fish tanks. I have been able to significantly improve the service I can offer and to increase my clientele. I am now able to offer more types of local fish and create new dishes that combine traditional and innovative recipes, such as this sea bream served with seaweed, for example. I have also been able to hire an additional member of staff and will more than likely hire another soon."*

Small-scale private investments

"In Axis 4 we saw an opportunity to support small-scale private investments, which is a first here on the coast," said Julio Pedro Pereira, the director of the Minho-Lima Inter-municipal Community (CIM Alto Minho) and leader of the FLAG Litoral Norte (the FLAG has 29 members with an almost equal split between fishing associations, local authorities, the private sector, the voluntary sector and academia). *"Forty-three projects have been supported*

and 80% of the funding has been allocated to private or social entrepreneurs".

Cecilia Marques, the coordinator of the FLAG, said: *"During the first two years, we capped the funding at €100 000 in order to limit the number of large scale project. The idea behind this gradual approach was also to better target the funding, as Axis 4 was new. We launched the 'Villages of the Sea' project to improve and optimise our operational strategy (Editor's note: see page 14). Previously, we were only aware of the ERDF and the ESF here, under which the CIM had managed projects. For Axis 4, we based our approach on the experience of inland areas with Leader."*

All 24 calls for proposals launched by the FLAG were followed by a meeting in each local council area, with an average of around 20 people attending each meeting.

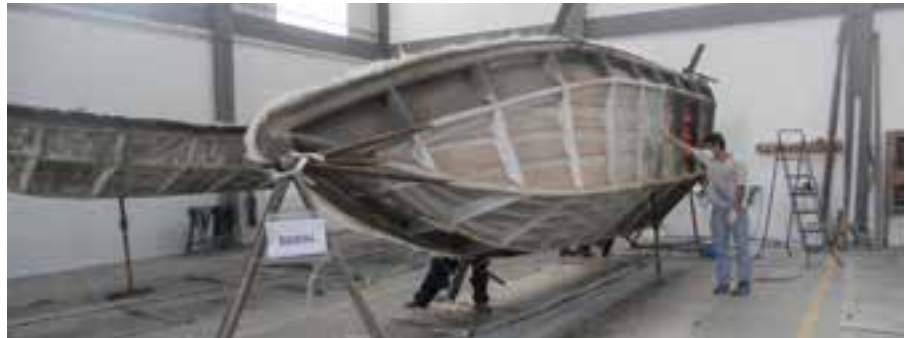
"Word of mouth works well. It's all a question of confidence. We can win people over by demonstrating that we are approachable," said Sandra Fernandes, a development officer for Axis 4. *"In order to do so, our staff needs to be highly motivated. We also need to clearly explain the objectives. Promoting successful projects, as we do on our website, is also very useful."*

Mobile fishmonger, butcher-fishmonger

Joana Pinheiral is in her thirties and previously worked at a car parts manufacturer, but she became unemployed when the business relocated in June 2009. *"That was a difficult time for me but it gave me an opportunity to reflect on my career. I decided to try a completely different field. As my father was a fisherman, it was very natural for me to consider this sector. It was my father who drew my attention to the first Axis 4 meeting in Viana. I went along and saw that I could maybe put my idea into practice by becoming a home delivery fishmonger. As an employee and a consumer who was always strapped for time, I noticed that there was a need for this type of service in the local area, which was not being met. The idea is very simple: 'If you don't have time to go to the fishmonger yourself, the fishmonger will come to you'."* Joana launched the business, even though it meant losing her unemployment benefits for several months. In 2011, she received Axis 4 aid of almost €18 000 to purchase and fit out a small refrigerated truck and to build her client base. Her business model is an intelligent combination of direct sales and modern technology. Each client in the network, which she has built up for herself – from around a dozen in 2012 to more than 100 today – receives an SMS letting them know what's available in the market



▲ José Luis Mancio da Costa has diversified into producing smoked sole (top right).



▲ Navelethes: Axis 4 helped finance the modernisation of the workshop.

that day. Those clients who are interested can then place an order with Joana, who will deliver their fish a little later in the day. *"I deliver within a 25 km radius. Among my regular clients are four restaurants. I also sell to factory and office workers, who can buy from the truck during their break."*

José Luis Mancio da Costa is a butcher in Lanhelas, a village known for its annual 'sole smoking' festival in September. However the fish is smoked at home and is not sold itself as a product. *"Three years ago I realised that producing smoked sole for sale would be a good way for me to diversify my business, especially as I already had the required know-how and the facilities to make smoked sausages. Axis 4, which I had just heard about, seemed to be a good way to make the idea a reality. In 2012 I received €62 000 from the FLAG to purchase the equipment I needed."*

In 2013-2014 José Luis produced and sold 1 000 kg of smoked sole. *"Although this activity now accounts for 10% of my turnover, it's not profitable yet. But I really enjoy it, especially as it appears I am the only butcher in the world working with sole! In addition I have also hired an extra member of staff, which is quite an achievement given the crisis".* José Luis is now hoping to expand his business and is keeping his eyes open for a suitable location for a new premises. He is keen to move into exporting and is con-

sidering targeting the French market. He recently exported a case of smoked sole to... Monaco – a promising start!

Shipbuilding

Another example of private investment in a totally different sector is shipbuilding, a traditional industry in this region.

Navelethes is a company that manufactures high-end rigid and semi-rigid boats measuring 16 to 37 m, which are sold under the "Searib's" brand and used for rescue operations at sea, for leisure, and also for fishing.

The company was conscious of changes in the market and of the opportunity to offer leisure boaters a "dry dock" to store their boats in winter. It therefore decided to expand its activity to include the construction and repair of hulls made of fibreglass, reinforced polyester and other materials.

Axis 4 covered 60% of the €91 000 required to modernise and insulate the workshop, as work on these materials (whether by classic stratification or a vacuum method) is especially sensitive to temperature fluctuations. This investment created two new jobs and could, in the future, lead to up to ten more being created.

"Our investments mostly target the private sector, but an increasing amount has gone to the public sector towards the end of the programme, with our ongoing objective of helping fishermen," said José Maria da Cunha Costa, the mayor of Viana do Castelo, president of the CIM, president of the FLAG and, incidentally, also a member of the Commission on Environment, Climate Change and Energy of the Committee of the Regions. *"We have had an important relationship with the sea for centuries. In the past there was trade with England and Brazil and cod fishing. This has now disappeared, but small-scale fishing remains a fundamental economic pillar. We say here that behind every fisherman there are an estimated seven workers. Small-scale fishing is essential for tourism and the hospitality industry. Our strategy is based on improving the production processes and modernising the infrastructure in order to be able to increase prices and reduce costs. Axis 4 of the EFF helped us, initially, to bring together all of the small-scale fishing stakeholders and, ultimately, to help fishermen and small businesses working in this field. In a highly centralised country like Portugal, Axis 4 has enabled us to respond to needs on a local basis in a quicker and more efficient way".*



An intra-local approach: “Villages of the Sea”

Within the framework of the project, “Aldeias do Mar” (Villages of the Sea), the FLAG Litoral Norte’s territorial strategy is further sub-divided into localised strategies, each covering five coastal communities with good development and entrepreneurship potential. The 2014-2020 FLAG strategy intends to capitalise on these “communities of projects”.

Antonio Luis Ferreira shows us his “field book”, an album in which he has collected photos of the most significant natural and cultural features of each of the five communities concerned – Esposende, Castelo de Neiva, Ribeira de Viana do Castelo, Vila Praia de Âncora and Vila Nova Cerveira. “It’s important to be visual” he said. “When the residents see the book they realise how outstanding the architecture and nature they see every day really is”.

Antonio Luis’ consulting firm carried out the study that led to the Villages of the Sea project, which aims to promote local potential in a sustainable and consistent manner by supporting new businesses. The approach is two-fold: a territorial diagnosis and an entrepreneurship process.

The diagnostic process was carried out in two phases. The first entailed the organisation of ten public meetings (two per community). The second involved the holding of thematic focus groups, including with non-residents, and around 30 interviews with key local stakeholders – city councillors, fishermen, entrepreneurs and town planners – in order to further explore the diagnosis.



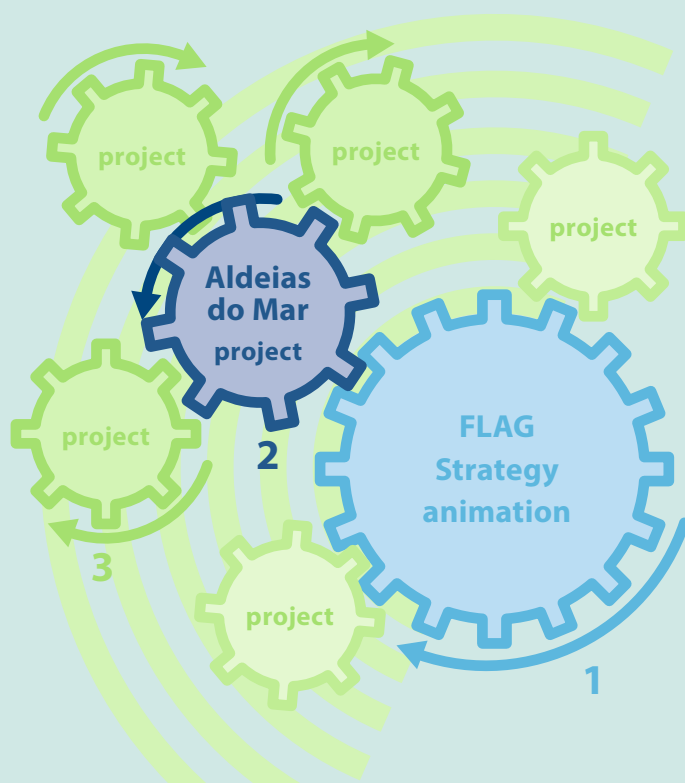
▲ The renovation of the fishing port in Viana do Castelo followed the ‘Villages of the Sea’ approach.

“We used a holistic approach. We wanted to involve everyone and to make sure they were all able to express themselves. For this diagnostic activity, which is both territorial and architectural in nature, we constantly kept in mind the different sectors. This resulted in a ‘map of territorial value’ and a development plan for each of the five communities involved,” said Miguel Matos, one of the FLAG’s founders.

IN.CUBO, a non profit business incubator, was in charge of the entrepreneurship process, which followed the diagnostic activity. It also involved two stages.

The first stage took the form of a business ideas competition (“E+PROMAR”), which was completed in January 2014 and resulted in the identification of nine innovative business projects (the promotion of seaweed, a spa industry, etc.) that complied with the development plan of the relevant Village of the Sea. “The second phase involves helping these projects to get started and assisting them until such a time as they become operational,” said Jorge Miranda, project coordinator for IN.CUBO.

In the meantime, the FLAG has drawn inspiration from the Villages of the Sea approach in the selection process of its current projects, several of which feature in this report, such as the “O Pescador” and “Casa Primavera” restaurants, and the regeneration of the fishermen’s district in Viana do Castelo (see photograph).



1. SELECTION

FLAG Litoral Norte developed a project with a consultancy firm and the SME incubator <http://incubo.eu>

2. INCUBATION

This project “Aldeias do Mar” applies the FLAG strategy in specific localities with dedicated SME incubation tools & strategy.

3. DEMULTIPLICATION

This produced a selection of 9 projects in January 2014, these entered a 2nd phase of coaching with incubo.eu. This provides the FLAG with better designed project, for ex. with more mature business plans.



▲ A display cabinet at the Causses gourmet store in Paris.



▲ The same traps can be used for octopus, crab and lobster.

Vianapesca

Promoting local fish involves restaurants, direct selling, professionalising traditions and, of course, processing.

The Vianapesca fishing organisation has 567 members and the same number of vessels, making it the largest – mostly small-scale – fishing fleet in Portugal.

"We really needed to boost the value of our catches and the idea of using a proportion of them to produce canned products seemed like a good way to do so," explained Francisco Portela Rosa, the founder of a cooperative and a member of the FLAG. *"A study in 2012 revealed that the Portuguese canning industry is experiencing significant growth."* The fishermen therefore decided to target this market and hired a specialised company in Porto to can their fish.

Two years on, Vianapesca now offers 17 products including mackerel and tuna fillets, sardine caviar and swordfish. The product range is recognisable through its sophisticated packaging. Some 30 000 cans are produced each year and 60% are sold to tourists. *"There have been cases of tourists on holiday spending over €100 on canned fish in one purchase to bring back home with them,"* said Francisco. *"We are currently focusing on researching new markets. We went to the Boston Seafood Show in 2013. We are also working with the Viana do Castelo Catering School, which develops recipes for hot dishes using canned fish. We have developed very attractive display*

cabinets and have begun to place them in a number of high-end delicatessens such as Causses in Paris recently⁷."

Operation Octopus

"Vianapesca is a good example of the projects that involve fishermen directly," explains Cecilia Marques. *"The fishermen themselves do not have the time or capacity to present projects. None of the individual fishermen are project promoters. The initiatives directly linked to fishing are managed by their professional organisations".*

This is the case for another project initiated at the request of the same fishing association. It relates to octopus pots or traps and brings together fishermen and scientists. The objective is to minimise or eliminate encrusted seaweed and shells (especially goose barnacles) and the corrosion of the traps currently in use: *"This costs time and money,"* explains João Abrantes, professor of material sciences at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo (IPVC). *"In addition, the traps have to be cleaned regularly with a product that is highly polluting. The other objective is to minimise the space taken up when traps are transported and stored."*

The IPVC therefore came up with a new design for the traps and tested a prototype at sea with the fishermen. The results were impressive: the underwater images show that the new traps still look just as clean after three months. Eduarda Lima, another researcher involved in the pro-



▲ João Abrantes and Eduarda Lima with their prototype traps.

ject, presented a mock-up and a prototype in her laboratory: *"The traps can be slotted together during transportation and storage, considerably reducing the space they take up, which is an advantage both at sea and on land. The problem is the high cost of the product, at least in small volumes (€60 rather than €30 for the current traps, which the fishermen often build themselves). But we are working with the plastics industry to produce them on a larger scale".*

Axis 4 provided a large share of the financing for this research and development project (2013-2015), almost €50 000. All local fishermen are concerned as they all fish for octopus and the same traps can be used for crabs and lobsters.



⁷ The launch event at Causses took place on 27 September 2014. https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/files/documents/FARNET_Newsletter_2014_11_EN_0.pdf



▲ Angling on the Minho River.

A quality label for Minho fish

CertPiscis is another project that brings together fishermen and scientists, as well as a range of other parties.

The fish of the Minho River (lamprey, eel, shad and salmon) are known in both Portugal and Spain for their quality. CertPiscis, which is coordinated by the Minho River Aqua Museum (*Aquamuseu do Rio Minho*), a member of the FLAG, was a project which aimed to create a support platform to prepare for the launch of a fish quality label. Axis 4 provided half of the €18 000 required for the project.

As Carlos Antunes, the director of the Aqua Museum, explains: *"this project was about both promoting and protecting this resource, based on the famous principles of 'fish less but fish better' and 'do more with less'. The challenge was to mobilise and bring together all of the stakeholders interested in fishing in the Minho, on both the Spanish and Portuguese sides of the border: professional and amateur fishermen, retailers, restaurant owners, tourism operators, environmentalists and local authorities. We organised 10 meetings, two in each of the five municipalities concerned, in 2011-2012. The project covers the last 70 km of the course of the Minho and within this area there were two different situations to deal with, as there is more cooperation in the estuary region than upstream. The most difficult thing was to create confidence but we were not starting from scratch. Since 2005,*

the Aqua Museum has organised annual meetings with fishermen and scientists. Restaurant owners have also responded very positively to the project. The difficulty is not in mobilising people but in transmitting to them the desire to work together on the same objective, to follow the same rules, and to help them understand and accept that they belong to the same network."

Water sports

Another pillar of the Litoral Norte FLAG strategy is water sports. President José Maria da Cunha Costa said that *"the diagnostic work carried out by our FLAG clearly indicated that our economy is based on the sea and two main activities: fishing and water sports. The Viana do Castelo secondary school now offers water sports courses. In 2013, 300 students enrolled on these courses. In 2014 this rose to over 1 000. We should promote our water sports more in Northern Europe and improve what we can offer. Kitesurfing is a flagship sport in this sense."*

Pedro Bessa, Anders Modin and Tiago Rocha work for a company called "Kook Proof"⁸, which has new offices in the port of Esposende, in a renovated building adjacent to the market. These young entrepreneurs clearly have a good relationship with the local fishermen.

According to Pedro Bessa: *"We started off as a kitesurfing school but, after two years, we became a complete tourism operator, providing courses and renting out equip-*

ment for a wide range of sports (kitesurfing, windsurfing, stand up paddle boarding and mountain biking), as well as offering transport, accommodation, catering, etc. Thanks to our website, word of mouth and the contacts we have with tour operators in Scandinavian countries, we went from 50 clients in 2011 to 250 in 2014."

The company is in an exceptional location for water sports and for kitesurfing in particular: in Esposende, just before it flows into the sea, the Cávado river has a 90° meander, which creates a peninsular beach, which cannot be accessed by road, known as the *Praia de Ofir-Restinga*. Surfers can reach the beach by boat... driven by a fisherman.

"Kitesurfing is the best local activity after fishing, and the two are linked," said Alberto Paquete, the vice-president of the local fishing association. *"The clientele is interested in our fishing culture: they like to come to the market to watch the fish being sold, to watch the boats coming back to the port, and to take part in the barbecues we regularly organise with fishermen on the beach."*

This is in contrast to other regions of Portugal, where there is a sort of "cold war" between fishermen and surfers. In Esposende, kite surfers are actually well liked. They are consumers and, when there is no wind, they practice other activities (sea kayaking, mountain biking, cultural visits, etc.), which support the local economy.



▲ The Kook Proof team.

"Our clients actually have many desirable qualities," Pedro went on to say. "Kitesurfing is quite an expensive sport, the equipment costs several thousand euros. Practitioners are, therefore, often well-off – 'dinks' as we say in marketing jargon. They travel in groups and spend a lot. When 15 of these people turn up at a restaurant I can guarantee you that the owner is rubbing his hands together in glee!"

In May 2011 the company received Axis 4 aid of €52 000, which was mostly used to purchase equipment, including two boats to transport customers. The investment enabled the company to create two jobs. "Now we would like to streamline our activity by creating a 'surf hostel', to bring together all of our clients who are currently spread between three different accommodation facilities. We don't want to get any bigger, we just want to become the best water sports venue north of Porto. We are now focusing our efforts on quality and on ensuring the region benefits from the tourist industry. We are proud to be an engine for intelligent local tourism."

Rui Pereira, the city councillor responsible for tourism, sports and youth, concurs: "We are lucky enough to have both a river and the sea on our doorstep. Maritime tourism is strategic and the industry has become more professional thanks to private companies like Kook Proof. In the past, the Council organised everything itself. We now delegate the work

to specialised companies. This is more professional and more effective and means that we can focus on coordination. In Esposende, there were previously only two companies active in this field and now there are twelve".

Elsewhere in the Litoral Norte area, 12 other projects combining fishing, sports and water-based leisure activities have also been supported by the FLAG.

José Maria da Cunha Costa, the FLAG president, summed it up as follows: "Axis 4 of the EFF is the perfect tool for participative integrated development. Each village has its own particular characteristics, whether they are economic, social or cultural in nature. The objective is to promote these characteristics through existing businesses, as well as through those being set up under the 'Villages of the Sea' project". ■

LITORAL NORTE (Portugal)



Area:
659 km²

Population:
60 889 inhabitants

Density:
92.4 inhabitants/km²

Axis 4 Budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	2 230 306	533 210	714 348	3 477 864

CONTACT

GAC Alto Minho

c/o Cecilia Marques

Comunidade Intermunicipal do Minho-Lima (CIM)

Rua Bernardo Abrunhosa, 105

4900-304 Viana do Castelo (Portugal)

Tel. +351 258 800 200

gac@cim-altominho.pt

www.cim-altominho.pt



gac alto minho
grupo de acção costeira do litoral norte

8 In kitesurfing jargon a "kook" is a clumsy beginner.

9 DINKS: Double Income No Kids.

People

“Fishermen are pragmatic; they need hard evidence that this will make a difference for them.”

Three-way interview with Frédérique Deschamps, Gala Martinez and Manuela Sampaio, FLAG managers from France, Spain and Portugal.

On the occasion of the “SouthWest FLAG.Lab”, a FARNET-supported workshop in Barcelona, 22-23 September, we interviewed three FLAG managers, all from different geographical, personal and professional contexts. Frédérique Deschamps, Gala Martinez and Manuela Sampaio spoke about their backgrounds, experiences and the emotional aspects of their work over the past years. But even more interestingly, they also shared their passion, enthusiasm and vision for the future of the programme.

FARNET Magazine: *Gala, Manuela, Frédérique, hello and welcome to Barcelona and the FARNET Magazine. A couple of months ago, one of the respondents to our online survey of publication suggested the idea of having discussion interviews with the people who “make” FARNET. So here we are, and to start with, could you please give us a short intro about yourselves and your experience?*

Manuela: I work as the manager of the Além-Tejo FLAG, in Portugal. My educational background is in business management, so, when I started working in local development in the Agencia ADREPES in 2000, in the context of Leader+, my role was “business oriented”. Working in the same area but with fisheries communities and professionals is, of course, very different: the fisheries industry is a tough environment, with strong minded individuals and corporatism which, if you approach it the wrong way, can lock you out. I could rely on my 14 years’ experience in rural development but had to adapt to new codes, attitudes and relationships. But in the end, when I compare my previous Leader work with my role in the FLAG, there are many similarities. With fishermen, as with farmers, you must have patience, and good negotiation and communication skills to help professionals understand what’s in it for them.

Gala: I am the manager of the Delta del Ebro FLAG, in Catalonia, Spain. It was a completely new world for me! My background is in forestry engineering, so, when I started as FLAG manager in 2012 I knew a lot about trees, but fish was a different story. And, even worse, the fishermen didn’t know me... I was a tree in the middle of the ocean. The toughest part has been to change my image, from being a stranger to becoming an accepted member of the community, and this was done by taking “*passos de hormigas*”... ants’ steps.



Frédérique: Unlike Gala, when I started as the manager of the Three Estuaries FLAG (*Pas de Calais, France*) in 2010, I arrived as a fish in the water! I had spent the previous seven years as project manager for the Deep Sea Fisheries Committee on advanced fleet hubs in Scotland, and in St Pierre and Miquelon, a French fisheries *avant-poste* in the North Atlantic. So when I decided to return to the mainland, this experience helped me to apply successfully for the position of FLAG manager with the Local Fisheries Committee. My previous experience quickly opened a lot of doors within the sector.

Gala: Yes that’s very different indeed, but in my case, I felt that being considered as an “outsider” was also an advantage sometimes. I could then be seen as a neutral actor, with no vested interest or preference for one sector or another.

Frédérique, has this “sectorial image” been a problem for you?

Frédérique: Not really, no, maybe because I made sure to secure contacts very early on, and to proactively engage with non-fisheries actors in the area, and beyond. With the neighbouring Leader groups for instance: I went to them and asked if I could use their work and working methodology as examples to bring to my fisheries partners and potential beneficiaries. This is a key piece of advice I would give to anyone starting in this kind of job with no background in the fisheries sector: be practical with fishermen, bring them tangible evidence of how this works, even from other contexts such as rural development. Fishermen are pragmatic, they need hard evidence that this will make a difference to them.

**Frédérique Deschamps****Gala Martinez****Manuela Sampaio**

 **A difficult question now for all three of you: what would be the project supported by your FLAG that means the most to you?**

Manuela: We've had some very different projects, of different ambitions and complexity. I have a particular preference for one project that started with a very simple idea of a short chain. Because in Portugal all the catch needs to be sold through the auction, it is difficult for fishermen to develop direct sales. One entrepreneur, therefore, chose to work with a couple of fishermen from Sesimbra, working on under-12 metre boats. Basically, they take orders online up until Thursdays, then they buy their own catch from the auction on Fridays and deliver it to customers 24 hours after being landed. The scheme also applied for third-party certification, to verify the sustainability and accountability of the operations, and they developed some innovative packaging. They now employ three full-time equivalents (FTEs) and have tripled sales since 2012. They have even secured partnership deals with organic food stores in Lisbon. Simple but effective!

Gala: It is impossible to choose! Everyone, every project has had an impact. We've been able to create approximately 60 jobs in the area, directly and indirectly linked with aquaculture and fisheries! But, if I really have to choose one, that might be the Mirador Badia project, which saw aquaculture professionals and restaurant owners develop a platform on stilts that attracts attention from so many visitors and is now an iconic part of its environment¹⁰. I also want to stress that this project is a direct result of the work done with the regional administration, to make pesca-tourism possible in Catalonia.


Frédérique: I am very aware of the impact projects can have on the quality of life of our fisheries communities. One of my favourites is a project that enabled fishermen from Le Crotoy to refurbish their fish sales points on the harbour. This project has made a huge difference to them, improving their working conditions and their image among customers, and bridging a gap between them and the municipality, which was in favour of the project but unable to invest the necessary funds due to financial constraints. The financial support of Axis 4 thus also helped public bodies and fishermen to come together around a common objective.

 **This is all very positive, but maybe these projects would have occurred without the FLAG? Gala, what do you think?**

Gala: Well, I doubt it... first of all, because of the importance of the changes in the regional regulation, which were secured thanks to the work of the FLAG, and inspirational models observed in other EU FLAG areas. But also because these actors would have had more difficulties in coming together around a common objective without the structured trans-sectoral and financial support of the FLAG.

Manuela: In our case, the project started without the FLAG's support. The entrepreneur was very proactive, had a clear vision and wanted to achieve it with or without support. But the FLAG was instrumental in helping him to grow his enterprise, enabling him to expand geographically and technically.

Frédérique: In our case, it is clear: without the FLAG, it was a no go.

 **Let's talk about skills. In a few hours, you will join a working group with other FLAGs to design the "FLAG Dream Team and the Perfect Partnership". Can you let me know what has been your most useful skill and which one you missed in your work as FLAG manager?**


Manuela: In all modesty? Patience and negotiation skills! This is what helped me to get fishermen to speak to each other, to become part of the sector, to the extent that we now receive invitations from fishermen's associations to be part of their board as facilitators, so maybe ubiquity would also be a useful in the years to come? (laughs) More seriously, I think, as Gala said, it is important that we have a neutral image, which can help bring internal discussions beyond sometimes tense, or fixed "positions" inherited from old habits. I'm not sure what skills I missed, I think FLAG managers really have to reach deep into all the skills and resources they have. In the next period I hope we will be backed 100% by our national administrations, literally. In Portugal for instance, only 90% of animation costs were paid by the FLAG budget, so we've had to find the remaining 10% somewhere else. This should be done differently next time.




¹⁰ See FARNET Magazine n°9, page 15.

Gala: I think curiosity has been my main attribute: becoming genuinely interested in a lot of different things. Regarding the lack of skills, there's just too many, I couldn't possibly list them here (laughs).

Frédérique: Regarding skills, as explained, having been part of the sector for quite some time was crucial in speeding up the recognition process, and my experience as a fisheries project manager gave me a good basis in dealing with administrative processes. But what was lacking for me has been on the communication side. There has been a lack of resources to properly achieve in this part of the job and also a lack of support. I think it would have helped if we had received a "communication kit" or "project management kit" from our national institutions, to help us design proper communication and dissemination campaigns at local level.

 **Gala, while "new" on the job, your management of the FLAG has resulted in the selection of 68 projects, which is not bad at all! How did you achieve this?**

Gala: Once the ice was broken and mutual confidence established, it all went much faster. But being in touch everyday with the community, persevering, and having the curiosity and capacity to learn and understand the universe of fisheries was crucial. You really need to get "personal" with the subject. Also, the board has been key to getting the FLAG working: we met every two months with the full partnership and made every possible effort to create a sense of ownership, and we kept the fishermen informed on a regular basis by communicating with *cofradías*¹¹ on the evolution of the Local Development Strategy, the projects received and any other information of relevance to the community.

 **Getting the FLAG message out there is obviously very important to the success of Axis 4: what are your secret weapons in this area? What did you all do to communicate the opportunities being presented, to capture the attention of your community?**

Gala: In the Delta del Ebro FLAG, when we publish a call for projects, we always organise an "early birds" meeting. We invite sector representatives, we explain the type of actions outlined in our strategy and the type of projects we would like to see emerge.

Frédérique: We kept it very simple. To generate maximum interest we preferred person to person contacts. We avoided overloading stakeholders with too many formal meetings and we published a quarterly newsletter. But we lacked resources. We could have done much more visits on the ground, going to local meetings and events, showcasing results and publishing a lot more content online...

Manuela: On a personal level, trust must be established and fishermen must be sure they can rely on us. For communication, it is the same, it is important to use trusted communication channels and "echoers". Getting the message out through the local fisheries insurance company, producer organization or the municipality helps a lot to get the attention of potential beneficiaries. Then, we also involve fishermen, particularly in projects presented by the FLAG itself – they must be at the heart of it or we risk losing their trust. We also try not to overload them with information and meetings. And, importantly for a FLAG, we go out! We are present and visible at a maximum of local events, celebrations, inaugurations, dinners... it's easy to party with our fisheries community!

 **Do you use social media? How, or why not?**

Gala: No, we mostly concentrate our efforts on physical meetings, local press... and "grapevine" communication. Don't underestimate the power of old school discussions around the dominos game in the harbour! But with more time and human resources in the FLAG, we would definitely have used online communication tools. I'm alone on the job and, despite my best intentions, I could not have done it differently.

Frédérique: I'm exactly in the same situation as Gala. We don't even have a website. Something I would really have appreciated to showcase our work and the opportunities of Axis 4 for the area.


Manuela: In our case, we are very lucky because one of our colleagues at the Local Development Agency hosting the FLAG deals "transversally" with online communications and social community management of our different actions. For example, we've been active on Facebook and it has made a difference in terms of audience. A newsletter is useful, of course, but social media pushes the message out to a much wider audience in the area, reaching circles you wouldn't have thought of or been able to target with a "heavier" communication tool. So, definitely, yes, use social media.

 **Let's talk about the present and the near future.**

Frédérique, can you tell me what the local fisheries sector is expecting from the next EMFF, what is the state of mind?

Frédérique: Well, continuity and progress. The approach is now in place, fishermen want more means to achieve more ambitious projects, and to forge partnerships with other stakeholders through the future FLAG. Especially with research partners, such as IFREMER, and the aquaculture sector – mussel producers to be precise. We didn't have sufficient resource for that in the previous period, but we hope that will change in the next period. Fishermen also want to better structure the small-scale sector, which would enable them to develop quality labels, for example.

¹¹ Cofradías are the fishermen organisations in Spain.

 **Gala, Manuela, you come from areas with a lot of tourism activity. Is the tourism sector becoming more “maritime-friendly”? What about the evolution of the local aquaculture economy?**

Gala: In our case, the tourism economy is growing every day and, with the FLAG, we think we’ve managed to make a difference in the size of the “piece of the cake” fishermen and aquaculture producers are getting. We’ve helped fishermen to become more involved, more entrepreneurial in developing businesses such as pesca-tourism. So, yes, I imagine this is all leading towards a more inclusive form of coastal tourism, with a better representation of all local interests.

Manuela: We would like to see better cooperation in the next period between aquaculture and the fisheries sector. For example, in the Península de Setúbal, we see a lack of organisation amongst aquaculture professionals. There are a lot of individual but disorganized professionals. We might look deeper into supporting this in the next period.

 **What is going to change for you under the new Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach, and how are your respective areas preparing for that?**

Manuela: Many things could change, in a good way I hope. For example, in Portugal we will be able to use a multi-fund approach between the EMFF, ESF and ERDF. At our level, we think we have done everything possible to do so, by submitting our vision and position during the design of the partnership agreement, and by participating in managing authorities meeting in Lisbon, to which we were invited, or sometimes invited ourselves (laughs). As a result, locally, this made us move forward and enabled us to have the first draft of our LDS, which will be presented to the territory on December 4th. At the managing authority level, we feel that some of our recommendations have been heard and, hopefully, will be turned into concrete measures through the Operational Programme (OP).

 **Manuela, how would this multi-fund approach help your future FLAG?**

Manuela: Well, our area, the Alentejo, is mostly rural and sparsely populated, but we have a very different Northern neighbour: Lisbon, a large urban and densely populated region. In our case, we see strong potential linkages between programmes specifically targeting urban and heavily developed areas and the ones targeting rural and fisheries communities. The development of new food chains, as demonstrated in the project I mentioned previously, is an obvious opportunity for closer coordination.

Gala: We are preparing and are in a similar situation, although less advanced in our LDS drafting. But strategic meetings are taking place with fishermen and, basically, all we are waiting for now are two things: the OP and the budget. They want to know, and hope, that there will be more resources available for CLLD.

Frédérique: We’re at the same stage as Gala’s FLAG. In our case fishermen are adamant that the territory should be enlarged and encompass more communities.


 **What would you like to do differently with CLLD?**

Frédérique and Manuela (simultaneously): more cooperation!

 **Apparently this is a shared opinion! Can you be more precise?**

Frédérique: We would like a better and easier framework to develop cooperation, with Leader LAGs, for example. We felt our national regulations were lacking clarity on this, which, I think, prevented many local groups from cooperating, although ideas were there and partners were ready.

Manuela: Indeed, we really felt that the cooperation initiatives we took, even if these have mostly been study visits, enabled our fishermen to think outside the box, to see operational examples of other LDS objectives, which are sometimes abstract or very general on paper.

 **I have really enjoyed this discussion and hope the SouthWest FLAG.Lab, and the future, will live up to your expectations. Any last words or statements?**

Manuela: I would say, “let’s K.I.S.S.”, or “keep it short and simple”. More seriously, we need more Axis 4 in the future, but please, keep it simple!

Gala, Frédérique: We would direct these last words to the sector and send them a message: believe in yourselves! You can make a difference while keeping your traditions alive and well. Axis 4, or CLLD, is a fantastic tool for your communities, and will be as good and effective as you make it. ■

**Interview conducted
(in English, French and Portuguese)
on 22 September 2014.**

Report

AXIS 4 OF THE EFF OPTIMISED IN HIIUMAA [ESTONIA]

A good catch

Fishermen on the island of Hiiumaa, in the Estonian archipelago, have made the most of the opportunities offered by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF): modernising ports to add value to local fishing, developing tourism and pesca-tourism, diversifying into new areas, and organising festivals and gastronomic events to boost awareness of the importance of fishing are just some of the activities that have been co-financed.



▲ Indrek Kaaramees and his band of fishermen.

Fisherman, entrepreneur, mechanic, musician and founding member of the Hiikula Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) on the island of Hiiumaa, Indrek Kaaramees is the quintessential jack of all trades. He is also a very happy man: *"The fish are back! Here in Orjaku, between January and June 2014 we landed 35 tonnes of sprat, garfish, pike and, most importantly, sea perch, our flagship product. In recent years the stocks were low and we had not been catching much at all. Now everybody is reassured: the fishermen, as well as the municipality, which initially needed quite a bit of persuading to agree to co-financing port developments. This too has been an excellent investment."* During the Soviet era, when the island was largely inaccessible, except to the army and the local population, there was a fish-

ing port in Orjaku. When Estonia gained independence in 1990 this was sold to a private individual who didn't want any more fishermen there. A new fishing port was later built on an empty space owned by the municipality. Now, thanks to the cooperation within the FLAG, the municipal authorities have been persuaded by local fishermen to completely renovate the port facilities and add a marina. *"It was the combination of tourism and fishing that won over the municipal officials,"* stresses Indrek.

With co-financing from Axis 4 (€355 536), the project was implemented in three phases between 2010 and 2013. The quays and landing stages separating the fishing port from the marina were developed,

essential services (water, electricity...) were installed, and then the infrastructure was built, including a building for professional fishermen, with an area for workshops, cold rooms and other catch storage facilities, along with an office/meeting room. Next to it stands a very attractive centre renovated by the municipality, which houses a restaurant, a banqueting hall, a shop selling local products, and a tourist information kiosk. Part of the project was financed by other EU funds, including Leader. *"Our working conditions and competitiveness have improved remarkably as a result of the project, to the point where two young people have now joined the profession, something that does not happen very often here."*



▲ The fishing port of Orjaku has been completely renovated.

Today, around 15 fishermen benefit from the port's new facilities. They get a good price for virtually all of their catch of perch from a fish processing company in Pärnu, which exports much of it as fillets to Switzerland. *"The new facilities allow us to preserve all of the catch that is not perch until the tourist season (from June to August), as well as permitting direct sales, which go well in the spring. Local customers and holidaymakers know the landing times and the entire catch is sometimes sold in half an hour. If this continues, we will soon be able to set up our own processing company. That is our next ambition. I am optimistic, because with the reconstituted stocks and the facilities now available, the difficult days are behind us."*

Another sign of better days ahead is the annual garfish festival, held since 2010 in Orjaku, in the last week of May. Co-financed by Axis 4 (€9 030 for the 2014 edition of the festival), it attracts around a thousand visitors and 250 amateur fishermen, who take part in the angling competition.

Coordinating the fishing and tourist seasons

Lying 22 km from the mainland, Hiiumaa (1 000 km², the second largest island in the Estonian archipelago) is home to around 160 professional fishermen. The brackish waters of the Baltic and the numerous bays and creeks formed by the archipelago make it a highly diverse marine environment. *"But, like tourism, fishing is a seasonal activity that mainly takes place in spring and autumn,"* explains Tuuli Tammla, the FLAG coordinator. *"What's more, the local population are not wealthy and only treat themselves to fish once a week. Hence the importance of the equipment – freezers, iceboxes, drying units, etc. – acquired by the ports with support from Axis 4, which make it possible to store the fish and thereby benefit from the influx of tourists in summer. This process of better coordinating the fishing and tourist seasons is a key component of our strategy."*

The FLAG was founded in 2008 by 20 fishermen, the island's four municipalities and a number of companies and associations (port, marine, aquaculture and village). Today, it has 89 members: *"80% of them are directly or indirectly involved in fishing,"* explains Tuuli.



▲ Local fishermen disembarking at the new port in Orjaku.

A series of meetings held at the start of the programme resulted in the formulation of a strategy that revolves around five priorities: port modernisation, adding value to local fishing (processing and direct sales), fishing-related tourism (including pesca-tourism, which is authorised in Estonia), diversification of the fisheries sector, and training/awareness raising. A number of actions have been organised with regard to the latter, such as training courses on eco-construction for fishermen, the preparation of seafood dishes (160 hours of training and demonstrations for restaurant-owners and fishermen), and information sessions on fishing at the island's schools.



▲ Several old fishing houses have been converted to guesthouses.

The secret to success: voluntary work

The Hiiukala FLAG and its accompanying projects are fortunate in being able to count on the assistance of many voluntary workers.

A former art teacher, Kaja Hiis helps out on a voluntarily basis with all of the activities initiated or organised by the Hiiukala FLAG, despite not being a member. *"I do it because I like it and my family has lived on the island for generations. Fishing is part of my life. I used to go fishing with my uncle. It's part of who I am. But above all, I saw in the Axis 4 approach a real opportunity to play a part in my community's development."*

Kaja, who underwent training in adding value to small-scale fishing, assists the Local Action Group and also acts as a sort of consultant. *"In a way, she is our external eye,"* explains Tuuli Tammla, the FLAG coordinator.

A particularly proud moment for Kaja was when she represented the FLAG at the 'Grüne Woche', the major agri-foodstuffs fair in Berlin, in January 2014. *"I was there with a fisherman and we both felt that what we were doing here in Hiiumaa could have an impact internationally."*

Kaja has strong opinions on the challenges facing the island's fishing communities: *"Fishermen, restaurant owners, hoteliers, tourist operators and consumers must all work together more closely, in greater synergy. Young people also need to be more aware*



of the importance of local fishing. Fishing needs a more modern and sexy image. In this respect, I was greatly impressed by the 'Fisch Vom Kutter'¹² project, which was presented to the Agriculture Ministry in Tallinn not long ago: integrating new technologies and fishing makes it kind of 'trendy' and something that could be attractive to young people."

Tuuli Tammla says that the Hiiumaa FLAG can count on several dozen voluntary workers: *"often the wives of our fishermen or other family members, but also a lot of ordinary citizens like Kaja who simply want to help the community and the sector. I don't know what the other FLAGs think of voluntary work but I see it as irreplaceable, and not just when organising festivals and other events. It is the very essence of the life of the area. It sustains it as much as it reflects it."*

¹² <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/fish-cutter-flag-aktivregion-ostseek%C3%BCste-de>

Adjusting

Seven of the 12 ports on the island submitted a project proposal that was approved. As in the case of Orjaku, the focus was mainly on equipping the ports with preservation and storage facilities, which open up the possibility of direct sales and the supply of fish to restaurants during the tourist season. However, ambitions to increase fish processing activities had to be revised downwards. Tuuli explains: *"Under the Soviet system, the island had a major processing plant, but this went out of business in 2005, with hundreds of job losses. All that remains now is four small-scale processors. Due to the low level of fish stocks at the time when the calls for projects were issued, we only received modest proposals in this field and therefore transferred funds initially earmarked for processing to diversification and tourism."*

Among the tourism projects selected, which must be linked to fishing, three restaurants, a number of guesthouses, pescaturism at the ports of Orjaku, Sõru and Kõrgessaare, and small fishing boat rental businesses received financing. Two fish festivals – the Garfish Festival in May (in Orjaku) and the Flatfish Festival in August (in the village of Kõrgessaare, on the north coast) – were also supported. These projects all serve to stimulate direct sales and increase awareness, among residents and tourists alike, of fish and the life and work of fishermen.

In Sõru, opposite the quayside where the ferries leave for Saaremaa, the largest of the Estonian islands, Marko Pruul, a fisherman like generations of his family before him, has done a magnificent job of renovating a former warehouse and converting it into a guesthouse. *"There was an acute shortage of accommodation here and demand for a sauna. I started the work myself with my own money because the banks had stopped lending due to the crisis. Then I heard about the FLAG activities and I applied for support from Axis 4. That gave me a big boost. I obtained almost €24 000, which was 75% of the investment required."* Marko successfully lets the house (€120 per night) and/or the rooms (between €50 and €80 per night) from early spring onwards. He also regularly rents out boats and takes holidaymakers out on boat trips to see professional fishermen at work.



▲ Linking fishing and tourism: the 'Lest & Lammas' (Plaice & Lamb) restaurant.

Now into his second season, he is generally pleased with the results: *"Starting in April-May, we have sports fishermen, and then from June we have families on holiday. For the past five or six years there has also been a jazz festival¹³ here. Although it has spread to other parts of the island, most of the concerts take place in and around a large building (also a former boathouse) just opposite. This attracts hundreds of visitors and it is another high point in the season for local fish products. We sell a lot of fish and seafood at the festival stands."* As elsewhere, Axis 4 has co-financed various port facilities at Sõru but the most innovative project – the local community's own work and not subsidised – is certainly the creation of a floating sauna in the form of a raft with a sauna cabin. The delights of a spa on the open sea!

Another very successful tourism project is the restaurant and small hotel complex of 'Lest & Lammas' (Plaice & Lamb), the brainchild of Sander Kopli, a fisherman and entrepreneur. Located on the road to Kassari, south-east of Hiiumaa, just after the impressive statue of Leiger (the local 'Hercules'), its modern architecture immediately catches the eye. Just two years after it opened its doors it is regarded as one of the best restaurants on the island, attracting business clients as well as holidaymakers. *"All the products we serve are local,"* confirms Sander. *"Starting with the*

fish, which, in season, goes directly from the net to the plate." Axis 4 financed 60% of the total investment (€71 000), contributing to the purchase of various pieces of equipment (a dryer, refrigerators, etc.), an outdoor barbecue and garden furniture, promotional tools, and, last but not least, a small craft brewery. The restaurant serves 3 000 meals a year and employs around 10 people. *"The links between fishing and tourism will become closer in the future because our visitors expect increasingly sophisticated services combined with authenticity,"* explains Sander. *"Our success is a testimony to this fact. Hiiumaa needs other establishments of the same standard."*



¹³ <http://www.culture.ee/event/soru-jazz-2014/>

Fishing gear

The diversification projects supported by the FLAG are varied and include adding value to forestry resources (furniture making and log production), engineering workshops (the construction of boat trailers in particular), boat restoration, the production of new fibreglass boats, and the commercial production of apple juice.

One of the most emblematic diversification projects is the StoneFish company, launched in 2011 by Imre Kivi, also a fisherman. Imre no longer wanted to work for the big trawler company where he had worked since 2000 as a fishing gear manager, so, in 2011, he decided to set up his own business making nets. He received €87 000 from Axis 4 to renovate and equip his premises and acquire a vehicle suited to transporting his products, which include gillnets, traps, seines and creels for fishermen and fish farmers in Estonia and Finland. *"Our comparative advantage is quality,"* says Imre. *"Fishing is often technically difficult in Estonia, so the customers are looking for the very best equipment."* StoneFish now has an annual turnover of €200 000 and employs five people, four of them women. *"For the nets, the women are more dexterous and faster,"* says the young entrepreneur. And what about future challenges? *"To find new markets, especially in Finland. I am currently taking Finnish lessons, but the biggest challenge is always finding the financing. Banks are wary of dealing with small businesses like ours. A big advantage of Axis 4 in Estonia was that it provided a payment as soon as work was completed and our own co-financing was necessary for only a third of the total amount, so we didn't have to draw so much on our own funds."*

In all, the Hiiukala FLAG financed 126 projects between 2010 and 2014. *"Over and above the individual projects, the whole area has found reasons to be hopeful. Our efforts to get the fishermen on board have been successful and they are now active, cooperating,"* declares Tuuli Tammla. *"It really warms my heart to see all these people working or having fun at the Garfish and Flatfish Festivals. I sense a genuine local dynamic, which at the same time is also open to the world."* ■



▲ StoneFish focus on making quality fishing gear.

HIIUKALA (Estonia)

Area:
1 023 km²

Population:
9 830 inhabitants

Density:
9.6 inhabitants/km²

Axis 4 Budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	2 250 000	750 000	–	3 000 000

CONTACT
MTÜ Hiiukala
c/o **Tuuli Tammla**
Vabrikuväljak 1,
EST-92411 Kärkla, Hiiu maa
Tel. +37 256 941 855
info@hiiukala.org – www.hiiukala.org

Trade winds

GIFS: toolkit and map of inshore fisheries in Europe

The GIFS project, or Geography of Inshore Fishing and Sustainability, is an INTER-REG 2 Seas project initiated in 2012. With a budget of €4.6 million and six partners located across four Member states (UK, FR, BE, NL), GIFS aim was to understand the socio-economic and cultural importance of inshore fishing to the coastal economies of the Channel maritime area (<http://www.gifsproject.eu/wiki/>) and to better inform fisheries policy, coastal regeneration strategies and sustainable community development. The project sought to actively involve local stakeholders, including municipalities, fishermen, and other local organisations, and to associate them with academic partners such as the University of Greenwich in the UK and the University of Brest in France. The goal was to make sure that the grassroots perspectives on inshore fishing were heard, through the 'voice' of its communities. The project concluded in September 2014 and one of its main outputs is the "21st Century Catch", a Toolkit for understanding the importance of inshore fisheries (<http://www.gifsproject.eu/en/toolkit>). The toolkit includes tips and techniques for multiple stakeholders, including local fisheries communities, to properly evaluate, integrate and communicate the broad value of inshore fishing.



**Three questions to Tim Acott,
GIFS Project leader at the Faculty
of Science & Engineering of
the University of Greenwich**



FARNET Magazine: As local stakeholders, several FLAGS got involved in this project. How were they connected to the project and what did they bring to the study?

FLAG partnerships and representatives in the area covered by the study were approached whenever possible. The Belgian FLAG, and the UK FLAGS of North Norfolk, Hastings, North Devon and Cornwall have all been a "ground base" for local case studies and hubs, enabling us to approach and cooperate with local fisheries communities, representatives and organisations.

FM: What did GIFS bring to the FLAGS over the period of the study?

GIFS was all about understanding the broad socio-cultural values of inshore fisheries. This is something that FLAGS have a great deal of interest in. Many people intuitively understand the importance of inshore fishing but GIFS provided multiple methods for translating that intuition into an evidence base that can be used to demonstrate the broad value of inshore fishing to coastal communities.

FM: Do you have any advice to FLAGS for the years to come?

We would encourage them to look at the Toolkit and adapt the methods to their own situation and circumstance. This will help to provide them with the tools to demonstrate the socio-cultural, as well as economic importance of their local inshore fishing operations.

t.g.acott@greenwich.ac.uk – www.gifsproject.eu

Comm Maritime Hub: connecting the blue economy with offshore Wi-Fi

Comm Maritime Hub is a pilot project that started as a result of an IT engineer's response to a question from his former employer. After concluding a mission for the Municipality of Vilanova i la Geltrú in Catalonia in Spain, Ramón Codina was asked, "what would you do to improve the situation of those working at sea?" It didn't take long for Ramón to answer: 'everyone, including the sector, shares the need to collect, exchange and interpret data, and for this, you need connectivity.' And so the Comm Maritime Hub initiative was born. In 2013, after three years of development, including building partnerships with maritime stakeholders, fisheries *cofradías*, marinas, but also companies involved in IT or maritime infrastructure, Ramón and his associate, industrial engineer Luis Felipe Mazo, had a potential user network distributed along 375 km of the Tarragona coastline and a deal secured with the Spanish telecommunications provider, Telefonica, and energy company Repsol. The project would involve the setting up of a wireless transmitter on an offshore Repsol platform, emitting at a dedicated frequency allocated by Telefonica. This transmitter is now operational and enables any boat within a 43 nautical mile range to connect to a free wireless network and communicate over the internet while at sea just as easily as in the harbour master's office.



**Three questions to Ramón Codina,
Comm Maritime Hub Project leader**



FARNET Magazine: What has been the role of fishermen in the process, and your experience in working with them?

Fishermen played an active role as early testers of the system. They were involved from day one, giving feedback and helping to establish the objectives. Locally, this has set a milestone in terms of including them further in the design of a connected and inclusive blue economy.

FM: The project relies heavily on the involvement of private companies, how did you secure this?

Securing the involvement of companies such as Repsol, Telefonica Móviles and Ericsson was a critical step. Their contribution has either been financial, such as Repsol covering the costs of installing the transmitter, an investment of around €200 000, or providing access to communication channels, which was the case for the IT companies. Ultimately, however, they have a lot to gain from this type of project. They get a front row seat in developing an infrastructure and a service which can potentially touch thousands of users.

FM: The project is now running for a three month trial period, how will it evolve after that? Have you received any EU support?

Well, the two answers are linked. First, we are hoping to be able to show a strong interest from users after the trial period. This is happening already with fishermen, many of whom are using this as an alternative to VHF. We hope that this kind of result will help to demonstrate the need to scale up the project and, for instance, develop prototype transmitters that do not depend only on existing offshore structures. This is where EU funding comes in.

ramoncod@gmail.com – www.mobilemaritimehub.com

Spotlight

TOOLS FOR FLAGS TO ENSURE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY IN THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Improving communication and participation

The success of the strategy development process is inextricably linked to the successful involvement of the local community. This means ensuring a dialogue between stakeholders and the effective participation of local community representatives.

All FLAGS wishing to receive support from the EMFF will need to develop and present a new local development strategy for their areas.

The success of the strategy development process is dependent on the successful involvement of the local community. This requires that FLAGS firstly identify clearly the key local stakeholders that should be involved. Once these prospective FLAG members are identified, an initial approach should be made, setting up a two-way communication process and, ultimately, leading to the active participation of the stakeholders concerned. Each of these steps can be supported by a range of tools and techniques, some of which are presented below.

The importance of community animation and participation to Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) approach is reflected in the fact that LAGs and FLAGS will be able to use up to 25% of their budgets for these tasks (this should also include running costs). FLAGS will also have access to preparatory support (see article p.4), which could be used to promote stakeholder participation during the strategy development process.

Identifying and engaging with key stakeholders

Before beginning preparations for the new strategy, FLAGS will need to (re) consider which stakeholders to involve. New stakeholder groups may have to be reached or links re-established with actors who were already contacted in the previous funding period, but were not interested or dropped out in the meantime.

Many FLAGS had difficulties engaging with the **fisheries sector**, either because fishermen were too busy to attend meetings and discussions, were sceptical of new ideas or because they did not see the benefits of getting involved. In this period the task may be easier in some cases, thanks to the many examples of projects that now exist, where fishermen benefited from FLAG support and Axis 4 funding. It may still be difficult in other areas, however, especially where partnerships are planning to integrate EMFF funding with other EU Funds, where the fisheries character of the area may be less visible. FLAGS should pay particular attention to reaching out to the fisheries community, organisations of fishermen, as well as producers and inter-branch organisations, making sure their voice is heard at the strategy development stage.



▲ 'Days of Fish' organised by the Stockholm Archipelago FLAG, Sweden.

In any case, the first step would be to map out the different stakeholders in the territory, and assess their added value and their role in the work of the FLAG. The following box refers to the main principles behind stakeholder mapping techniques.





▲ Spreading the message: Trois Estuaires FLAG manager Frédérique Deschamps speaks to a French TV team.

Stakeholder mapping

There are various techniques for **stakeholder mapping** but, in general, the aim is not only to obtain a complete list of relevant stakeholders, but also to categorise them according to certain characteristics, such as their motivation to participate, and the influence or contribution they can make to the partnership.

Example: stakeholder identification table

Stakeholders by sector (the names of the key stakeholders, grouped by sector)	Characteristics (strengths and weaknesses, territorial coverage)	Motivation, expectations (why participate?)	Potential contribution to the work of the FLAG (skills)
Private sector (fishermen, tourism, promoters, other...)			
Public sector			
NGOs (environmental, social...) and civic sector			

Table 1: Example: stakeholder action plan

Key stakeholder	Why should they be involved?	Barriers to participation	Action to involve them	Who will do it, by when?
...				

Table 2: Contribution of different tools and methods to participatory strategy development

	Identification and analysis	Engagement	Participation	Two-way communication
Stakeholder analysis	● ● ●			
Public meetings	●	● ● ●	● ●	● ●
Public hearings	●	●	● ● ●	● ● ●
Surveys and questionnaires	●	● ●	● ●	
Bilateral meetings	● ●	● ● ●	●	●
Focus groups	● ● ●	● ●	● ●	●
Working groups, task forces	●	● ●	● ● ●	●
Problem and objective tree			● ● ●	
Village appraisals	●	● ● ●	● ●	● ●
Training	● ●	● ●	● ● ●	●
Exhibitions, fairs,...	●	● ●	● ●	
Conventional media	●	● ●	● ●	● ●
Social media	● ●	● ● ●	● ●	● ● ●
● fairly relevant ● ● relevant ● ● ● highly relevant				

Next, an action plan should be developed for contacting and engaging with key stakeholders. It is important here to be aware that the motivation of stakeholders to participate may vary, and some may also face barriers, preventing their effective participation. The engagement process with stakeholders could be shared between different members of the FLAG, in order to ensure that prospective members are contacted by those best placed to understand their different motivations and constraints (*see table 1*).

It is important to mention that not all of the key stakeholders have to be involved in the same way. Not everybody has to be involved in the actual writing of the strategy or become a board member; voluntary work, in-kind contributions can also be a way of contributing to the FLAG. For example, individuals may be interested in participating in discussions and working groups, businesses can provide organisational and logistical support (printing facilities or vehicles), and the public sector can offer space for meetings, and so on.

Ensuring participation and two-way communication

Having identified the different motivations of stakeholders to actually participate in the strategy development process, the next step is to foster their active involvement in the drafting of the strategy. Moving away from a general willingness to be engaged to effective participation requires time and effort.

A common misconception relates to the relationship between participation and communication, with the latter sometimes seen as more of a top down process, pushing information to the different “recipients”. In fact, communication can be much more than that and should actually aim to foster an exchange or dialogue. This ‘two-way’ communication can create a sense of ownership and enhance the contribution of local actors to the strategy implementation at a later stage. Most tools and techniques that can be used to foster effective stakeholder involvement can also be used to facilitate two-way communication.

Tools and techniques to involve the local community

Different tools and techniques to ensure the involvement of the local community can be used at different stages of the strategy development process. Some are best suited to early contacts with the community, while others can be used to move things forward and dig deeper into specific issues or parts of the strategy. Before going into the detail of these different tools, their contribution to the various phases of participatory strategy development is presented in table 2.

Public meetings

This is one the classic ways of engaging with the community. Public meetings can be very effective provided some basic rules are followed:

- > Adequate publicity should be ensured, via different media, word of mouth, etc...
- > Meetings should be organised at times and places to suit the members of the community.
- > The objective of the meeting should be made clear and next steps clearly communicated at the end of the meeting.
- > Formal presentations should be kept to a minimum and as much time as possible provided for discussions, questions and debates (foresee the use of specific group work techniques in advance to encourage discussions – see box on world café, for example).

- > The choice of the chair for the meeting is very important. He/she should be a well respected figure locally, and capable of steering the debate in an objective and professional manner.

At a later stage of the decision-making, public meetings can evolve towards “public hearings”, which are a way to stimulate dialogue and deliberation, provide information and contribute to a transparent decision-making process, for instance, on specific proposals within the local strategy. All interested parties should be invited and it is important to ensure that different views can be expressed. The organisers should provide, in advance, information about the specific issues to be discussed and structure the discussion. It will also be important to explain to stakeholders how the views expressed in the hearing will be taken into account in the final decision-making. Otherwise there is a risk of losing the trust and subsequent engagement of participants.



World Café

World café is a specific methodology that can be used to stimulate dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and ideas in large groups. Participants are divided into smaller sub-groups, around coffee tables, to discuss specific questions linked to the overall theme of the meeting. At regular intervals, all participants except the table host move to a new table, with the host summarising the previous conversation to new guests to allow cross-fertilisation of ideas. Appropriate space as well as skilled facilitation is needed. World Café has been successfully used in several FARNET transnational seminars.



▲ Field trip during the 'SouthWest FLAG.Lab', a FARNET-supported workshop in Barcelona (22-23 September 2014).

Surveys and questionnaires

These are tools that can contribute to the analysis of the area's needs and potential: they can be used to identify valuable assets as well as the expectations and aspirations of local inhabitants. They can help to reach people who don't usually go to meetings or are too shy to speak in public. Surveys and questionnaires can also be considered as communication tools, as they can also facilitate the sharing of information on the objectives of the survey and the FLAG. The formulation of a good questionnaire and selecting the right sample (if relevant) requires skills and the FLAG may need external assistance with this. Some survey methods have been developed specifically for rural and small communities (see box on village appraisal).

Village appraisal

Village appraisals are surveys carried by and for a community, usually in rural areas. Because of the very local scale of the survey (village) they can be a very effective tool for involving local inhabitants. The results of the survey should form the basis of an action plan for that specific village, but can also be used to inform the development of a wider local development strategy. Village appraisals can also be a good way of involving the more remote parts of a territory, which very often feel left out of the territorial development process, and they are especially suited for less populated areas with small, remote settlements.

Problem and objective tree

This is a method of identifying the problems of a given area and arranging them to show how they are interrelated in the form of a "tree", showing causes, problems and effects. The responses can then be converted into objectives of the strategy. The result is another "tree" showing how the activities of your strategy contribute to objectives and eventually to results. The final stage involves analysis and decisions as to which of the proposed activities, objectives and results are the most desirable and feasible within the limits of the FLAG budget and implementation capacity. An example of a "problem tree" and an "objective tree" can be found at this address¹⁴ (source: European Commission, 2004).

Small group meetings

To allow for a more in-depth reflection on specific topics or issues, small group discussions might be more appropriate than large scale meetings. A variety of different types of meetings can be organised with a smaller number of people and most are suited to digging deeper and going into more detail than is possible in larger groups.

> Bilateral meetings

This is one of the simplest but also one of the most effective methods that the initiators of the strategy development process can use. Face-to-face interaction (particularly in the form of one-to-one or small group meetings) is a powerful tool to develop and/or maintain stakeholder involvement. FLAG members and staff can attend stakeholder meetings and events, or visit the places they work or socialise (cafés, pubs, libraries, youth and community centres,...). Reaching out to stakeholders, rather than expecting them to come to the FLAG all the time, can help to develop relations, especially with those who may be more open and approachable in a familiar setting.

¹⁴ <http://www.sswm.info/category/planning-process-tools/decision-making/decision-making-tools/situation-and-problem-analysis-0>



▲ The Costa da Morte FLAG, Spain, at the November 2011 FARNET conference in Brussels.

> Focus groups

This is a discussion involving a small group of stakeholders (usually 4-12 people) aimed at obtaining information about preferences, values, or barriers related to a specific theme. It can be used for exploring initial concepts and generating ideas for the strategy, or to test and evaluate certain solutions. Focus groups can be a means of involving individuals as well as interest groups. Careful selection of participants and good facilitation skills are essential factors of success.

> Working groups, task forces

This is one of the most commonly used methods in local development, bringing together partners interested in a certain theme or in developing a certain type of projects. Working groups can be set up during the strategy design phase as well as during implementation, but their main objectives is usually to achieve concrete results and present solutions/options/ideas around specific issues back to a larger stakeholder group. It is, therefore, important to clearly define the brief and responsibilities of the group, the expected outputs and how they will be used.

> Consensus conference

This is a method of public enquiry involving a group of 10 to 30 citizens, whose task will be to assess a controversial issue within the local strategy. They can ask questions to a panel of experts and negotiate among themselves to reach a consensus. They produce a written report available to the general public. The goal is to broaden the debate by including the viewpoints of non-experts.

Training

Training can be used to build the capacity of local development actors and to raise their understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented. Training can take place at different stages of the strategy development process and focus on different topics, from broader knowledge of local development possibilities, tools and techniques, to more thematic-oriented training related to possible areas of development. In addition to building capacity in different fields, training can also serve to inform the local community, stimulate social interaction and build trust among local stakeholders who might not be used to working together. However, this is not likely to be achieved with "off-the-shelf" training package, so care must be taken to design training programmes that specifically address the needs of a given community.

Exhibitions, fairs, project showcasing

Participation in different local events, such as cultural and social exhibitions, will help in raising the profile of the FLAG and is a good way to engage with the local community. At a later stage, the FLAG can also envisage showcasing the results and achievements of its first supported projects. Interaction is the keyword here, and the tips provided in the FARNET guide on "Marketing the local catch" can be used to create a lasting experience for the local community. Project showcases could be linked, for example, with local fairs organised around themes related to the local area (heritage, food, crafts,...).





▲ The 'Mirador de la Badia' project, supported by the Litoral Costa de l'Ebre FLAG, is on Facebook.

Media and telecommunication

In addition to the above, the FLAG can use a whole range of communication tools (such as press articles, local TV and radio, internet) in innovative ways to ensure more interaction and participation. These communication channels can also be very useful for sharing information about the FLAG work, ambitions and early successes. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that this information also reaches the less active and potentially marginalised groups in the community.

Social media

Social media is often described as the grapevine of the 21st century. Of course the good old discussion in the pub will always happen, but social media is definitely a new way to reach out to specific parts of the community. Internet can help in reaching the more remote corners of the territory, less mobile members of the community persons and young people, for which social media is often the communication channel of choice. Social media also offer great potential for interactivity and for delivering information in real time. Additional social media information is available on the FARNET website (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/digital-marketplace-comparative-table-few-socialmedia>) ■

Additional resources

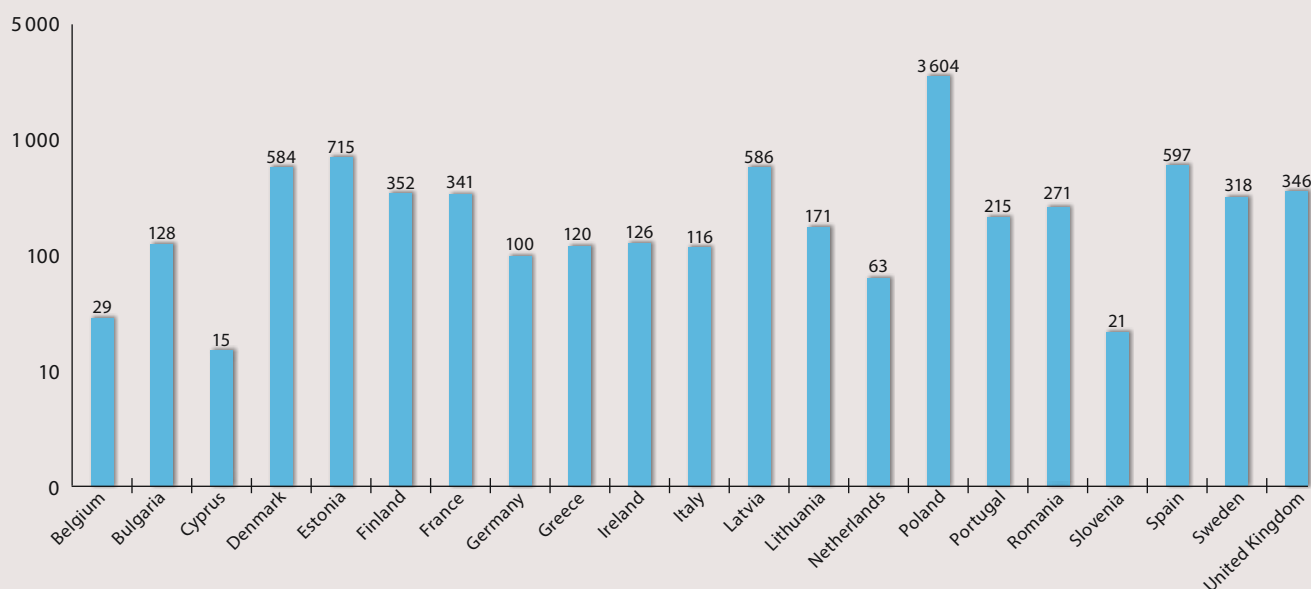
More information and guidance on how to involve local communities in the strategy development process can be found in the following:

- > **"Involving People in Local Development"** – Leader Dossier
<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leader2/rural-en/biblio/metho/part1-00.htm>
- > **"Area-based Development in EU Fisheries Areas, A Start up Guide for Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs)"** – FARNET Guide No 1 (in 11 languages)
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/files/documents/FARNET_Start-up_Guide-1_EN.pdf
- > **"Improving communications in Leader"**
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-static/leader/leader/leader-tool-kit/improving-implementation-of-leader/en/improving-communications-in-leader_en.html
- > **"Steps for Success"** – FARNET Guide No 4
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/sites/default/files/documents/FARNET_Steps-for-Success_Guide-4_EN.pdf

FARNETwork

> **State of play: 8 818 projects and counting!**

By October 2014, the 312 FLAGs now active across 21 Member States had supported an estimated 8 818 projects.*.



(*) This figure is based on information provided voluntarily by Managing Authorities up to November 2014.

> **DG MARE Conference “Sailing towards 2020”**

In March 2015, all roads will lead to Brussels for an important stock-taking FARNET event to mark the transition from the 2007-2013 Axis 4 programme to the new CLLD 2014-2020 programme.

> **LIFE projects restore rivers: migrating fish return**

The first LIFE platform meeting to address riverine species, held recently in Estonia, was attended by representatives from over 15 completed and ongoing LIFE projects concerning the conservation of freshwater species, particularly migratory fish. The projects focus on species reintroductions, monitoring, installing migration barriers and fish passes, and demonstrating the benefits of involving stakeholders and local communities in restoration projects.

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/features/2014/rivers1.htm>

> **AQUAEXCEL: EU research helps fish farmers to become more competitive**

Aquaculture holds the promise of reducing the need to catch wild fish. Global demand for fish is increasing, putting many species at risk from overfishing. Fish farming, or aquaculture, is taking some of the pressure off these stocks – half of the fish consumed globally is now produced at fish farms. However, more could be done to make Europe's aquaculture industry, which employs some 80 000 people, more efficient and sustainable. AQUAEXCEL is providing researchers from the EU and associated countries with access to joint projects and top-flight aquaculture research centres and resources across Europe – including test sites, genomics data banks and imaging systems.

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/news/eu-research-helps-fish-farmers-become-more-competitive>

FARNET Agenda

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
02-03 March 2015	DG MARE conference “Sailing towards 2020”	Brussels (B)
21-23 April 2015	European Seafood Exposition	Brussels (B)
19-21 May 2015	European Maritime Day	Piraeus (GR)
12-15 October 2015	OPEN DAYS – 13th European Week of Regions and Cities	Brussels (B)

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. More than 300 FLAGS have been 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 570 million of EFF funding for the period 2007-2013, to which must be added national public co-funding and private investment. It represents approximately 13% of the overall EFF budget (2010).

Subscribe

To receive the *FARNET Magazine* or the FARNET newsletter, please send your contact details (name, organisation, address, e-mail and phone number) to: info@farnet.eu

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.

info@farnet.eu

Meet us online



ISSN 2363-3131



9 771831 572004



Publications Office

