

# Coordinating the role of fishermen in designing a Marine Protected Area

**FLAG: Marennes Oléron**  
St Pierre d'Oléron, France

## Project overview

**This project supports the recruitment of a designated fisheries sector coordinator to ensure that fishermen are fully integrated into the process of developing a Marine Natural Park (MNP), both in terms of communication and decision-making.**



The design process of the MNP of the Gironde Estuary and Charentais Straits follows the [area's definition as Natura 2000](#) Site of Community Importance. Between October 2009 and December 2010, thirty working groups involving 150 people representing the various activities, industries and associations active in the area and concerned by the MNP were held to define stakeholder positions and present them to the *Comité de Concertation* (Advisory Committee). This process aimed to define a management strategy for a 6500km<sup>2</sup> marine park which will become the largest marine protected area in metropolitan France. The area is home to some of the most active fisheries ports in France as well as significant recreational and industrial activities. Both environmental and socio-economic constraints must be met, preserving the environmental capital while supporting a series of human activities.

The fisheries stakeholders, represented by the three Regional Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Committees ("CRPMEM") present in the area, were highly involved in the consultation to ensure the inclusion of their views and continuity of their professional activity. However, to reinforce their participation, guarantee a permanent presence at these meetings and ensure fisheries voices were not only heard but *understood* by non-fisheries stakeholders (scientists, NGOs, society representatives), the [CRPMEM of Poitou Charentes](#) introduced an Axis 4



project to recruit a mission coordinator for a one year renewable contract. The coordinator, with both scientific knowledge and field experience in the fisheries sector, represented the local fisheries interests in all Advisory Committee meetings, ensuring representation of fisheries interests when binding decisions were taken. Her mission was also to proactively inform the key stakeholders on an ongoing basis about the process, summarizing the technical information arising from these meetings (scientific analysis and non-fisheries stakeholders' perspectives) and communicating it to the fishing organizations and individuals.

## Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** Environment, Culture and Society, Governance
- › **Effectiveness/efficiency:** The process is now entering its final phase and the number of seats of fishermen on the board of the Management Committee of the MNP is under debate. Thanks to the work of the coordinator, there have been several achievements such as the inclusion of a technical glossary of key fisheries and environmental concepts in the final consultation report of the Advisory Committee. It also led to the revision of the MPA preparatory study following identification of missing data or misinterpretations. Additionally, increased cooperation and comprehension among the different fisheries actors has been observed as a result of this project.
- › **Transferability:** The involvement of fishermen in the design and management of Marine Protected Areas can be applied in many European fisheries areas. This example shows how Axis 4 can provide solutions which facilitate communication both within the fisheries sector and with other sectors. Among the next steps and ideas arising from this project, a possible Axis 4 cooperation project with fishermen of other geographic areas involved in the design or management of MPAs (Arcachon & Brittany) is foreseen. These would involve organised visits of fishermen to their counterparts to replicate the successful experience at national level and facilitate the transfer of experience.
- › **Final Comment:** One of the first examples of linkages between Axis 4 and the management of Marine Protected Areas, increasing the involvement of fisheries communities in local governance mechanisms.

## Total cost and EFF contribution

**Total Project cost:** €37 664 (one year of full time equivalent)

**Axis 4:** €16 956 (65% of the eligible cost of €26 100.49 – calculated pro rata on the number of boats licensed in the FLAG territory as it did not cover the whole MNP area)

### Project information

**Title:** Coordinating the role of fishermen in designing a Marine Protected Area

**Duration:** 1 year, renewable contract

**Case study date:** April 2011

#### Project promoter

Comité Régional des Pêches et des Elevages Maritimes de Poitou Charentes

Coordinator: Laurie Durand

[crpmem.poitoucharentes@gmail.com](mailto:crpmem.poitoucharentes@gmail.com)

#### FLAG details

Pays Marennes Oléron, France

[a.perraudeau@marennes-oleron.com](mailto:a.perraudeau@marennes-oleron.com)

+33 5 46 75 23 89

[FLAG Marennes d'Oléron](#)

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