

Jobs for Injured Fishermen

FLAG: Marennnes-Oléron
Charente-Maritime, France

Project overview

This project supported the social enterprise, “Atelier des Gens de Mer”, to facilitate the return of injured and disabled fishermen to the work place. Capitalizing on their specific skills, they are employed in fisheries and other marine-related activities.



The sheltered workshop was created in 2009 by the association Navicule Bleue which was already experienced in employing more seriously handicapped people in fisheries and aquaculture-related jobs. To set up the “Atelier des Gens de Mer”, a broad partnership of actors was brought together (local ports, maritime cooperatives, disabled fishermen...) to identify and organise the needs that the enterprise could satisfy. Following a comprehensive assessment of the needs of former fishermen with disabilities in order to be reintegrated into the labour market, Axis 4 supported the investment needed to improve and adapt the physical working conditions to make them accessible to people with disabilities.

As such, employing injured or disabled fishermen, the Atelier de Gens de Mer offers services, such as net-mending, maintenance of fishing boats and other harbour work, to fisheries professionals in the port of Cotinière. Despite specific constraints linked, for example, to more regular absences of employees or increased delivery times, the enterprise aims to offer a quality of service equivalent to any other similar company. That said, the workshop also relies on a “voluntary” approach of customers to use their services, bearing in mind its social mission.

Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** employment; social inclusion.
- › **Results:** The conditions were put in place to allow 6 injured fishermen to work in fisheries and harbour related activities. This has increased the quality of life of those concerned and, by valorising their work and raising their profile, contributes to the general opportunities in the area for both fishermen and other members of the community with disabilities. Furthermore, good communication around this project, and cooperation with a nearby FLAG, has led to the transfer of Navicule Bleue's business model to Arcachon, where 60 jobs for people with disabilities are envisaged.
- › **Transferability:** The principals of this project are transferable to other countries' fisheries areas, especially those with a busy port, active the year round and that counts on regular fish auctions and/or other activities. The business model of this type of project will usually rely, to some extent, on public funds and social security systems will vary from country to country. However, public services in a number of countries are increasingly relying on private input to social objectives. The types of jobs to be created will vary depending on the fisheries sector of the area and the physical or mental disability of the target group in question. They may include: repair and maintenance work to boats, manning oyster beds, work in the fish auctions, as well as supervisory roles.
- › **Final Comment:** An excellent example of integrating social objectives into a viable and sustainable business model which creates employment and generates revenue in a fisheries community.

Total cost and EFF contribution

Total Project Cost: €89 271.43

› EFF Axis 4: €19 994.98

› National public: €10 000.98

› Regional public: €14 941

› Other public: €25 000

› Private contribution: €19 354.47

Project information

Title: Atelier des Gens de Mer

Duration: project promoters should envisage 1-3 years to set up this type of project (depending on the legal specificities of their country regarding employment, disability etc.)

Case study date: January 2012

Project promoter

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