

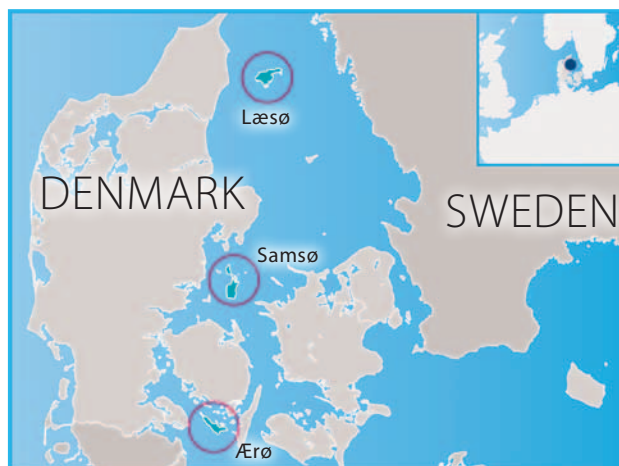
Smoked weever fish

FLAG: FLAG Læsø, Samsø, Ærø

Læsø island, Kattegat strait, Denmark

Project overview

On the island of Læsø, a local fisherman used Axis 4 to invest in developing a new range of products based on an undervalued species, the weever fish. By adding value to this local resource and creating an “iconic” product, he is encouraging more people to discover the fish itself but also the island.



Weever fish are a group of species commonly found in the shallow waters of the North Sea and Eastern Atlantic. Despite an increase in an already vast population and despite being suitable for human consumption, this species is known more for the venomous spine of its dorsal fin than for its tasty flesh. Its poor reputation can therefore drive away many seafood enthusiasts. On the island of Laeso, Bent Rulle, a local fisherman, decided to turn this situation around and, with some help from the FLAG, has developed new products, turning this fish into a local delicacy.

The idea was to create a new form of preparation, promote it and provide the best conditions for customers to discover the product. Bent therefore thought of ways to condition the fish, fresh or smoked locally, and sell it in an attractive way. Axis 4 support helped him adapt an existing building into a fish shop and restaurant, but also to invest in sales, cooking, packaging and delivery equipment. All of this enabled him to raise the visibility and attractiveness of this lesser used fish, now at the top of the menu of his newly opened fish restaurant.



Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** Adding value to local fisheries products
- › **Results:** The development of 'smoked weever fish' has added a new product to the range of local delicacies on offer to residents and visitors at the fishing port of Østerby. As the fish is smoked at the nearby smoke house, owned by local fish monger, the full added value of the product is retained on the island. As for the restaurant itself, it has been a strong success: its income doubled from the first business year to the second, followed by a 20% increase the following year; customers have reacted positively and many return several times each summer (the number of visitors to the restaurant has doubled since it opened in 2009); and, a comparative analysis of the dishes sold per day shows that weever fish, with 50 servings per day, is now amongst the restaurant's most popular dishes (alongside its fish patties and ahead of Norwegian Lobster with approximately 30 servings per day).
- › **Transferability:** This sort of project can be applied to other fisheries areas where certain species remain unknown to the public and yet have the potential to become commercially productive resources.
- › **Final Comment:** This project illustrates how small scale businesses can use Axis 4 to adapt their offer to local resources. It is also an example of well targeted investment in the production process which, with relatively low financial support, can transform the image of a product to generate demand, achieving a rapid return on investment.

Total cost and EFF contribution

Total Cost: €145 526

Axis 4 contribution: €18 150

National /Regional co-financing: €18 150

Private match-funding (personal investment): €109 226

Project information

Title: Smoked weever fish from Læsø

Duration: 2009 – present

Case study date: January 2012

Project promoter

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[FLAG factsheet](#)

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