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Fisheries communities at the heart of local development

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Journalists:
Jean-Luc Janot, Eamon O'Hara.

Other contributors:
Urszula Budzich-Szukala, Monica Burch, Carlos de la Paz, Serge Gomes da Silva, John Grieve, Jeremy Phillipson, Paul Soto, Gilles van de Walle.

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

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Editorial

"FLAGs must position themselves for the future, so that they can play an even stronger role and make a real difference in fishing communities across Europe"

This issue of the *FARNET Magazine* arrives in the middle of negotiations on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, and on its main funding instrument, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which will take effect in 2014. Among other objectives, the Commission in its proposals is calling for a strengthening of support for community-led local development, so that fishing communities can access funds and invest in actions to deliver growth and jobs on the ground, in line with their specific needs and challenges.

Negotiations are also taking place on the "Common Provisions Regulation", which will lead to a common set of rules for all major EU Funds, including aspects relating to community-led local development, for the next programming period (2014-2020). If approved, this would allow local development strategies to receive coordinated support from the regional, social, rural development and fisheries funds.

To prepare for the next generation of EU funds, fishing communities need to start preparing for the challenges and opportunities ahead. This also involves building on what has been developed over the last years and looking towards new opportunities in the years ahead, which can help to contribute towards a sustainable future for fishing and coastal communities around the European Union.

This issue of the *FARNET Magazine* opens with an article that presents some of the main lessons from a series of 15 in-depth case studies, which were carried out by FARNET in different fisheries areas across the EU. The article examines how FLAGs can help to address major fisheries related challenges at local level, and the specific contribution they can make to involving fishing communities in wider territorial development.

The case studies also looked at how the delivery system for local development support in fisheries areas can be made to work more effectively, as well as to encourage initiative and innovation at local level. These findings are presented in the last article of the magazine.

Good progress is being made in fisheries areas across the EU, and this edition of the magazine focuses on some of the latest developments in Cornwall (UK) and in the Abruzzo region (Italy).

The last report looks at the structure and functioning of the Lesvos FLAG (Greece), which is capitalising on the experience of the Lesvos Leader group.

FARNET also spoke to Mr Struan Stevenson, Senior Vice President of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee, who highlights the importance of community-led local development in supporting fishermen, entrepreneurs and other local stakeholders to work together to improve the situation in local fishing communities.

As we approach the next programming period we need to learn the lessons of the "Axis 4 experience", so that we can move forward and ensure that community-led local development in fisheries areas reaches its full potential.

Smart, sustainable and inclusive local communities are the building blocks of a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe, so let us all; local stakeholders, FLAG managers, managing authorities and DG MARE, work together to make this a reality in our fisheries areas!

Elisa Roller,
Head of Unit, Structural Policy and Economic Analysis, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

TAKING yOUR PLACE:

FLAGs added value in the local development process

The year 2013 is going to be a crucial one for the 300 partnerships that are now working for the sustainable development of fisheries areas across twenty-one European countries. As the Axis 4 programme moves into its final phase, FLAGs have to show that their activities are making a significant impact on local people's lives. At the same time, they must also lay the foundations to ensure they can play an even stronger role in the future.

The European Commission´s legislative proposals for the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and for Community-Led Local Development open up a number of important opportunities for FLAGs. However, in order to seize them, FLAGs need to understand and demonstrate where and how they can really add value to what other organisations do. They need to show how they can reach the places, businesses and people that other organisations are unable to reach, and they need to find ways to work with these other organisations, to maximise synergies and impacts to the benefit of the local communities concerned.

In order to help FLAGs position themselves in this way, the FSU has carried out 15 in-depth fisheries area case studies, which examine how FLAGs are working with other organisations in different national and local contexts. In this article we highlight some of the main lessons.

A flexible tool in the hands of fishing communities

The new proposals for local partnerships in the EMFF offer fishing communities an extremely flexible tool. These partnerships can support local strategies, *"ranging from those which focus on fisheries to broader strategies directed at the diversification of fisheries areas"*.

Aquaculture in the Stockholm archipelago (Sweden). ▶

For communities more concerned with improving the viability of the fisheries sector itself – FLAGs will be able to support projects for *"adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries and aquaculture supply chains"*[1]. This will enable FLAGs to work with local fisheries organisations and communities in developing and implementing integrated packages of actions, specifically adapted to meet their needs. Where justified, this could also include sectoral measures covered by other parts of the EMFF.

FLAGs will also have the possibility – although no obligation – to implement much broader local development strategies. These wider ranging strategies could support diversification and job creation in other sectors, enhance local environmental assets, mitigate climate change, and promote social well being and local cultural heritage. They could

▲ *The 2012 Newlyn Fish Festival in Cornwall (UK).*

also help to strengthen the involvement of the fisheries sector in local development and marine governance, including in the development of Maritime Spatial Planning[2].

The synergy between these narrower and broader strategies should, in principle, be further strengthened by the Commission's proposals for Community-Led Local Development, which involve all the major European funds covered by the Common Strategic Framework[3] (CSF). Under these proposals, support *"to local development shall be consistent and coordinated between the CSF Funds"* for the first time. Various coordination mechanisms have been proposed, which could allow for the multi-funding of strategies: where a single partnership could fund different parts of a single strategy from different funds. Thus, a FLAG could concentrate each fund on the actions best suited to the objectives of the fund – whilst also ensuring that these funds and the actions supported complement and reinforce each other.

However, change inevitably entails an element of risk, and the three hundred partnerships in FARNET work in very different types of areas, their fishing communities face quite different challenges, and they operate in the context of very diverse institutional cultures. Of course, none of the partnerships work in isolation from other local organisations in the area. Where organisations pull in different directions, compete with or duplicate each other´s activities, the chances of making a significant impact will be much reduced. Conversely, artificially forcing initiatives with different goals into the same container can increase complexity and diminish the potential impact. FLAGs and the other actors therefore need to work together, build a sh ared sense of trust and legitimacy, and an agreed method of cooperation, based on their respective strengths.

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[1] Proposal for a R egulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Article 65.1a.

[2] As above – Article 65.1b, c, d and e.

[3] The funds covered by the CSF are: ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, EMFF and the Cohesion Fund. All CSF funds except the Cohesion Fund can support community-led local development from 2014.

Fishing for the future

Six of the FSU's case studies took place in "strong fishing areas[4]", with the aim of better understanding how FLAGS can help address the main fisheries related challenges at local level. An important early finding is that the need for, and uptake of, Axis 4 type approaches by the fishing sector is not necessarily dependent on the size of the sector or the extent of its representation on the FLAG decision making structures. A strong fisheries sector presence did not mean that strategies were exclusively focused on fishing: there are numerous examples of FLAGs in areas with relatively important fisheries sectors (reflected in a majority representation on the FLAG board), which nonetheless have focussed their strategies and support on projects outside the sector itself.

▲ *Fisherman in Galicia (Spain).*

If FLAGs really want to address the main fisheries related challenges, a more sophisticated analysis of the types of fishing, the degree to which its problems can be dealt with at local level, existing levels of organisation, and the efficiency of existing support channels is required. For example, FLAGs can act as a very efficient conveyor belt for ensuring that smaller scale activities, often with closer links to the coast, such as shellfish gathering, aquaculture or small scale coastal fishing, can access and adapt support measures that were previously only available to larger scale enterprises. The very large, off-shore operators often based in big ports are less likely to be interested – particularly if their business is healthy.

In some countries, the fishing sector is already quite organised at local level, and existing organisations may already be addressing local needs using other axes of the EFF. Nevertheless, the FLAG may be able to fill important gaps. For example, it may be able to improve communication or reach out to new segments of the fleet (e.g. small scale fishing businesses, women working in areas related to fishing, etc.). Establishing trust, credibility and legitimacy with the relevant organisations is a priority if this is to be achieved.

These scenarios lead to a preliminary typology of the roles that FLAGs can play in relation to the local fishing sector:

> *Integration between fishing and other sectors*. FLAGs can make their most valuable contribution by supporting projects that benefit the fisheries sector and, tangibly, connecting these to other local economic sectors or aspects of local life. This connectivity can be particularly important in ensuring that fishing remains integral to the territory where the sector is under pressure from other activities e.g. residential development, due to population growth. Possible options include connecting local fishermen to tourist and residential markets, capitalising on the image of environmental and cultural assets in the area´s marketing strategies, bringing various sectors together to reduce energy consumption or improve water quality, and so on.

> *Organisation and capacity building*. Where no local fisheries organisation exists or better channels of communication are needed, either among local fishermen or between fishermen and provincial, regional or national organisations, the FLAG can also play a role. In particular, it can carry out important support functions, such as communications, animation, training and capacity building. This can help to enthuse and activate people, change attitudes and mind-sets from passive acceptance and defence of the status quo, to one of 'can do' and taking responsibility for effecting change through entrepreneurship and proactive project development for the future.

> *Local "engineering" for larger scale investments*. Regardless of the extent or efficiency of fisheries organisations, the FLAG can carry out a series of "soft" activities supporting or priming the pump for larger scale actions. These may be supported by the other axes of the EFF, or through other EU or private funds, and can include technical, viability and market studies, pilot projects, local training, support for quality marks, marketing initiatives, promotional campaigns and so on. For example, FLAGs in France and Finland have used these methods extensively and, in some cases, have levered in important investments from outside.

> *Demand-driven direct investment*. In some countries, the economic and institutional context has meant that Axis 4 has itself been used to carry out important collective and individual actions that could, conceivably, have been carried out by other axes of the

[4] Pays de Cornouaille and Pays d'Auray in France, Finisterre and Cadiz Estrecho in Spain, Lake Peipsi in Estonia, North Jutland in Denmark.

▲ *Fisherman's house near lake Peipsi (Estonia).*

EFF. In Estonian for example, over 60% of FLAG budgets are being spent on ports and basic infrastructure required for the survival of the fisheries sector. This is a response to the fact that most coastal land and many existing facilities are privately owned and have therefore seen no public investment for decades. Many southern European countries are also supporting quite large scale private investments at different points in the fisheries supply chain. The key advantage of FLAG involvement here is that it can encourage fast, strategic investments that are closely in tune with local needs. They can also play a crucial role in supporting the essential joint working, innovation and experimentation that would otherwise be difficult to fund.

> *Cooperation on the strategic challenges facing the fisheries sector.* Cooperation can be a particularly powerful tool, given the small and dispersed nature of the fishing industry and the communities that depend on it. For example, cooperation can lead to common or shared solutions to the problems facing particular species or types of fishing. Alternatively, it can address opportunities, such as finding more direct and more profitable ways of reaching the consumer.

A bridge between land and sea

As soon as FLAGs start to deal with the interface between fishing and other local activities, questions arise about the legitimacy of their role vis à vis other local development organisations in the area. In a few cases, the FLAG may be the first or only development body working at local level and can, therefore, play a fundamental role in bringing people together, building organisational capacity and strengthening the local identity. More commonly, however, the FLAG will face a complex array of local and supra-local bodies (Leader groups, local development agencies, municipal departments, professional chambers and associations, environmental agencies, etc.), which may be protective of their own field of influence.

Negotiating an effective method of cooperation and joint working with these organisations can be time consuming and may even require conflict management. The five case studies carried out by FARNET of FLAGs contributing to a wider territorial strategy[5], showed that there are many ways of achieving good results. In all cases, however, this depends on a clear definition of core FLAG goals and organisational strengths, and a good understanding of how these fit with those of other organisations and, ultimately, with the needs of the area. Broadly speaking, alliances and joint working can be built along a number of principles:

> *Coasts as meeting places for diversification.* The case studies suggest that FLAGs´ strength lies in focusing on the coast – whether maritime or inland – as the vital link between land and water based activities. FLAGs can be at the heart of a process of creative partnership building between the fisheries sector and other sectors of activity along the coast, even in the presence of other local development organisations (Leader or other). FLAGs can make a very distinctive contribution by working with emerging clusters of coastal activities and supporting initiatives developed within the Integrated Maritime Policy like Integrated Coastal Zone Management or Maritime Spatial Planning. This can establish a basis for building a joint approach towards the use of common environmental resources.

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[5] Lesvos in Greece, Oeste in Portugal, Osterbotten in Finland, Cadiz Estrecho in Spain, Cornwall in the UK.

▲ *The Obra-Warta FLAG participates in a local festival in western Poland.*

The FLAGs main role here is to ensure that fishing communities, and local people in general, derive tangible benefits e.g. in the form of jobs and quality of life. If there is no other local development agency operating in the same coastal area, then FLAGs can extend their support to cover an even wider range of shared coastal development activities.

> *"Strategic animation" – fo cusing on what FLAGs do well.* Under the new proposals, some local communities may opt for a one area-one strategy approach (using single or multiple funds), managed by a single overarching partnership. Others may prefer a series of interlinked strategies for "nested" territories run by coordinated organisations. In both cases it is important to have real agreement on a m ethod of cooperation and the division of work, based on each organisations' strengths. The FARNET case studies suggest that one of the key contributions that FLAGs can make is *"strategic animation"*, to overcome the isolated and closed nature of many fishing communities, and foster their involvement in targeted development actions.

> *Agreeing clear and coherent areas of intervention.* FLAG areas may overlap wholly or partially with those of other organizations and they may, therefore, operate over all or part of the territory of these organisations. They may act as a sort of federating structure for dispersed fishing communities or there may be complete territorial demarcation. Whatever the formula, it must be appropriate for the task in hand, it must be clear and transparent, and it must establish a basis for genuine cooperation.

Getting the top to work for the bottom

The main advantage of bottom up community-led initiatives, like Axis 4, lies in their ability to mobilise additional ideas, energy and resources from local private, public and civil society actors, and to provide accessible and locally determined support. If FLAGs fail to do this, and simply become yet another step in an already complicated delivery system, there is simply no point to their existence. This is why the FSU carried out a third set of case studies[6], to understand how delivery systems can be designed in a way that encourages and supports initiative and innovation at local level, rather than stifle them. The main lessons can be found in the article on delivery systems on page 28 of this edition of the magazine. They include the need to evaluate delivery systems, to avoid duplication of tasks, to ensure that Member State co-financing is provided upfront, to provide advance payments to beneficiaries and groups, and to ensure that controls are proportionate to the financial support in question and that there is no duplication.

All this requires a p rocess of continuous learning and capacity building to adapt procedures to practical realities at every stage, from the EU to the local level. This necessarily requires FLAGs and their staff to work together with managing authorities to develop a s tronger, shared and common understanding of each other´s role, and thus improve the whole governance and implementation structure of Axis 4. ■

[6] Denmark, Andalusia in Spain, Poland.

ZOOm

Coordinating local development in Abruzzo (Italy)

From vineyards to fish bars: bringing local fishermen into the process of developing the Trabocchi Coast

In the current financial circumstances, maximising the impacts of public funds is paramount.

Discussions in Brussels around Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) point to the possibility of development organisations, such as Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and Leader LAGs, being able to tap into different EU funds to support different parts of their local development strategies. Certain Member States are expected to welcome this option, while others question the complexity of a multi-fund approach to local development. Whatever the reality post-2013, one thing is certain: in the current financial circumstances more than ever, maximising the impact of public funds is paramount. Communication, cooperation and the coordination of different funds being spent in a given geographical area is essential to ensuring the area gets the best value for money.

The province of Chieti, in Abruzzo, is an area where, despite a strict demarcation between fisheries and rural development funds, different territorial initiatives are working hand in hand to overcome artificial boundaries arising from different funding rules, and develop the area as an integrated whole.

The FLAG area covers the coastal section of the province of Chieti, a National Park named after the centuries-old "*trabocchi*"[7] dotted along its 45km coastline. A short distance from the Maiella Mountain, this area has seen little urbanisation: its two largest towns, Vasto and Ortona – both fishing ports – have approximately 40 000 and 25 000 inhabitants respectively, and agriculture and fisheries still account for 32% of jobs. Fishing in the area is mainly small-scale, practiced by a fleet of 183 boats, mostly 7-10 metres. An important source of employment for the area´s inhabitants is the automotive sector, with Honda and Fiat both having bases in the neighbouring Maiella Verde Leader area.

[7] "Trabocchi" are large fishing contraptions perched on wooden stilts from which nets would be lowered into the waters below. With the decline of fish stocks and more effective ways of fishing today, the trabocchi had been largely abandoned but many have been conserved for cultural and touristic purposes.

Forging a common development path

Operating just inland from the FLAG, the Maiella Verde Leader LAG is into its fourth programming period, having expanded its territory from 16 municipalities during Leader I, to 81 in 2012. The LAG has become expert in supporting small and micro sized enterprises engaged in activities linked to the identity of the area – especially food, tourism, crafts and services – and in helping them to become successful and sustainable businesses, capable of expanding into new areas, and reaching new markets.

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Operating across both the FLAG and the LAG areas, in the central part of Chieti, is the Sangro Aventino Territorial Pact, a largely public-led development agency. This is one of the many "Territorial Pacts" that were established in Italy in the late 90s, with ERDF and national funds, and adds yet another dimension to the local development picture. The Pact manages a series of larger scale development initiatives, such as a €90 million automotive cluster, and a € 7 million project to develop tourism along the Trabocchi Coast. To the South, another Territorial Pact, the "*Patto Trigno Sinello*", also covers both the inland rural municipalities and those along the coast.

So, how is the FLAG, a newcomer to this local development landscape, positioning itself in order to play a meaningful role for the communities it serves – and with a total public budget of just €1.2 million?

Importantly, the FLAG has been proactive in studying the relevant development initiatives already underway in and around its area, and has started building links with those involved. Indeed, prior to the preparation of the FLAG strategy, its President, Franco Ricci, was involved in the Leader LAG´s strategy development process. This has had two key benefits, he explained: firstly, it provided the opportunity to learn about how an experienced LAG plans development in its territory; and secondly, it ensured that there was an integrated approach to developing the area as a whole, which goes beyond administrative boundaries. The Leader LAG, for its part, points out that it has always considered the coastal strip as a functional part of its territory, even though it cannot actually fund projects there. And, the fishing community has much to gain by being included in the strategic thinking of development initiatives inland. Communication and coordination has meant that a clear division of roles and objectives has been agreed, and that both the FLAG and LAG strategies are forging a common development path.

This cooperation is also formalised in the structures of the different development agencies, in so far as their boards and partnerships reflect this overlap of territories and objectives. For example, as a member of the boards of the LAG, the FLAG and the Territorial Pact, the Province of Chieti is closely involved in the work of all three agencies. The same goes for the local Chamber of Commerce. This cross-representation is effective in ensuring that information flows smoothly from one agency to the other, and in avoiding duplication of work.

A more competitive and attractive territory

Such coordination has resulted in a FLAG strategy geared towards mobilising the fisheries sector to "make the *territory* more competitive". It is designed to build on and complement existing initiatives, be they industry-based, or aimed at supporting local agricultural products or tourism, while benefiting in particular those most closely linked to the fisheries sector. Indeed, while the Leader LAG´s strength is its ability to reach the more remote parts

▲ *View of the Trabocchi Coast, with the maiella mountain in the background.*

of the area and the very small, artisanal producers – and the *Patto* tends to focus on bigger producers and industry – the FLAG aims to ensure the fisheries community is represented in the broader territorial development process. More specifically, it aims to promote better organisation of small-scale fisheries and to help them to diversify into complementary activities, such as pesca-tourism (for which demand currently goes unmet), to exploit opportunities for the small-scale processing of local fisheries products, and to improve their marketing activities and engage in direct sales.

These activities complement the regional level project, coordinated by the Territorial Pact, to develop tourism along the coast, as well as ambitious plans to convert the old coastal railway tracks to a 25 km cycle path. LAG, FLAG and Territorial Pact – as well as the Trigno-Sinello Territorial Pact to the South – are all in contact with a view to coordinating activities to get the most out of this investment. Wine routes, the promotion of local agricultural products, visits to the trabocchi, trips on fishing boats, accommodation in traditional fishermen´s homes, and fish bars along the beaches are all being discussed. Each structure will focus on different parts of the overall project: the Patto taking the overall lead and managing the bigger infrastructure projects; the LAG concentrating on the rural municipalities and the development of gastronomy products, as well as carrying out various feasibility studies and improving the web presence of local companies; and the FLAG fostering participation by the fisheries sector. As such, a series of individual projects are being conceived as part of an overall tourism development initiative, which ensures all the projects are coordinated and reinforce each other.

The next step for the recently approved FLAG will be to ensure that this cooperation is built into the day-to-day work of its staff, which, at the time of writing, still have to be recruited. However, the new team will become part of a local development landscape in which a culture of cooperation has already been established by the Leader LAG and the Territorial Pact, the two of which meet on a regular basis, attend each others´ meetings and are intimately aware of what the other is working on.

With this in mind, and with the groundwork already laid during the strategy development phase and FLAG set up, the ingredients are in place for the Costa dei Trabocchi FLAG to work closely with other development actors in its area in order to maximize the participation of, and benefits for, its fishing community.

More information: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/flagsheet/flag-factsheet-italy-trabocchi-coast

Contact: ricci.f@confcooperative.it

Report

ENGLAND'S WESTERN EXTREMITY IS TEEMING WITH PROJECTS THAT LINK FISHING AND THE LAND

[UNITED KINGDOM]

Fishing, at the heart of the community

The arrival of Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly has made it possible to convert ideas into action, for the benefit of fishermen but also for the wider coastal community.

"We had never received any subsidies before and we had never asked for any either," declares a proud Bill Frisken, a former senior officer in the Royal Navy and currently the harbour master in the tiny port of Coverack (population 500). Tucked away in a cove on the Lizard Peninsular, on Cornwall's south coast, there are 35 vessels registered at the port, 12 of which are fishing boats. The catch here consists mainly of crab, lobster, pollack, wrasse, bass and mackerel."*We are fiercely independent,"* continues Mr Frisken. *"After all, we marched to London twice in our history – first against Henry VIII, to maintain the Latin mass, and again in 1545, to protest against a tax to fund the war with Scotland! In 1920, the entire community chipped in to buy the port from a private company. It is still a private port officially, but now it belongs to the community, in the form of 1 500 shares, all held by the inhabitants. It is true to say that the port is part of the community in every sense of the word."*

This spirit of independence has its limits, however, and as he shows us around the harbour, Bill Frisken points to all the infrastructure that has had its day: the winch to pull the boats up the beach dates back to the 1930s; the still manually operated davit; and the old iceboxes. *"Axis 4 could make it possible to improve the mooring facilities and to acquire more modern equipment – an electric winch and davit, a cold room, and an ice machine, so we can store fish and obtain better prices. It's not just the fishermen who would benefit from all of this: modernising the port would have an impact on the community as a whole, as it would attract more leisure craft and tourists to Coverack. That means more customers for the shops and restaurants. The season is quite long here due to the protected coast, good access from London and the events we organise in the winter, such as our famous Christmas swim. Everything that benefits the port benefits the villagers. That is why we applied to the FLAG… We estimate our needs at around €126 000[8], including a private contribution of €25 000 that we could make ourselves."*

Fresh on the day

This same connection between the port and the community is also found in other coastal towns and villages in Cornwall. At Sennen Cove (pop.180), less than 2 km from Land's End, at the very tip of England, harbour master Terry George and the four locally-based professional fishermen have sent an expression of interest to the FLAG for an Axis 4 project to develop direct sales: "*Everything is sustainable here: the boats are small, our carbon footprint is low, and the fish and lobsters are fresh on the day. That is the way we are, and we have no choice because Sennen Cove is a very small port. The downside is that our fishing is very vulnerable to weather and ecological conditions – in the autumn, we have squid that eat the stock, and in winter there are two months when we cannot go out at all. We also face competition from bigger vessels and ports. That is why we want to develop direct sales. There is great potential for this, building on local tourism, the Internet, and also the potential to supply restaurants in London with fresh fish every day. To do this, we need a room where we can pre-*

▲ *The port of mevagissey at low tide.*

pare the fish for transport, which would cost between €90 000 and €100 000. This would be the trigger for other projects, however, which would benefit the entire community, such as the creation of a local market and the setting up of a genuine marketing approach based on short circuits."

With its 72 registered vessels, 65 professional fishermen and a landed catch worth about €2.8 million annually, the port of Mevagissey (pop. 2 500) on the Channel coast is in a very different situation, but it too is counting on Axis 4 to finance small port infrastructure that will benefit the population as a whole. Here, the port is managed by an association of trustees, including the Cornwall Council, fishermen and local canneries. *"Between 2000 and 2006, Objective 1 funding[9] and the Leader programme enabled us to completely modernise our installations,"* explains Hugh Bowles, harbour master and FLAG member. *"With Axis 4, we want to increase safety for the fishermen, the port and the whole area around it by installing a closed circuit TV system on land, and a webcam providing information on weather conditions at sea. What is good about the Axis 4 or Leader participative approach is that it encourages dialogue between all the actors and that leads to common projects. In this respect, it is very different to Objective 1, which had a sectoral focus. But I have to admit that I found this participative approach difficult at first!"*

▲ *Ben George sorts his day's catch in Sennen Cove.*

The harbour master then turns to another subject: *"More and more young people, four or five a year I would say, are embracing a life of fishing. They try it once and they are hooked. That is why I think the idea by Seafood Cornwall to provide safety training for 14 to 16 year-olds is a very good one. The youngsters will be able to ask all the questions they want. It will be an excellent introduction to fishing that I'm sure will inspire some of them to embrace this vocation."*

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[8] Initially given in pounds sterling (GBP), all the amounts were converted to round figures in euros (EUR) at the rate of 1 GBP = 1.26 EUR.

[9] In 2007-2013, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly fell within the EU's Convergence Objective (dedicated to regions whose GDP per capita is below 75% of the EU average). Between 2000 and 2006, the region was eligible for Objective 1 of the EU's cohesion policy ('to promote the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind'). All EU Structural Funds contributed to financing Objective 1.

▲ *Participants in a fishing course organised by Seafood Cornwall.*

▲ *Training for budding fishmongers.*

Attracting young people

Hugh Bowles is referring to the first FLAG project approved by the MMO (*Marine Management Organisation*), the managing authority of Axis 4 of the EFF in England *(see box)*: launched in 2004 to promote local fishing, and self-financing for a number of years now, the Seafood Cornwall association has been training fishermen and other sector actors since 2009. "*Our 10 instructors are usually fishermen and we try to use local competences as much as possible,"* stresses coordinator, Sarah Crosbie. "*We provide all the compulsory training for professional fishermen and certain skippers: survival at sea, first aid, procedure in case of fire on board vessels, and basic mechanics. Before, you had to travel to Devon for this kind of training. We also organise training for those who work on land; as processors, fishmongers or in restaurants. We teach health and food safety standards, fish filleting, and how to implement a s eafood quality assessment approach, for example. It is this kind of training that we are also going to be able to promote more with the aid of Axis 4."*

Thanks to the "Seafood Cornwall Training Hub" project, supported by the FLAG to the tune of €31 336, the association will soon be able to move into new premises, following the renovation of a f ormer warehouse on the quayside in Newlyn. *"The new premises and equipment will make it easier to organise the safety training for the 14- to 16-year-olds so that they can go out with the fishermen and get an idea of what the job is really like. This is an innovation,"* Sarah insists. *"We also want to do more to increase awareness about fishing in schools, so that young people know more about sea products and the associated job opportunities."*

"Attracting young people to the sector is one of our main aims," adds Nathan de Rozarieux, a fisherman, consultant, FLAG member and one of the founders of Seafood Cornwall."We believe that more people are attracted to the profession when they feel there is support available."

"This project could also result in some very interesting opportunities for experienced fishermen," adds Chris Ranford, FLAG animator. "Providing training could be an alternative activity for fishermen, such as those at Sennen Cove, who are unable to work during certain periods in the winter. They could also benefit by perfecting certain skills."

▲ *Renovating the roof of the Porthmeor Studios and Cellars.*

▲ *Chris Hibbert showing the work done in one of the studios.*

Art and fishing

On Cornwall's north coast, St Ives (pop. 10 000) is a major fishing port, a popular holiday resort and a town that is famous for its art colony. Its internationally significant artists have included Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Naum Gabo and Peter Lanyon, as well as the potter Bernard Leach. The town also boasts Tate St Ives, opened in 1993 and one of three Tate museums in the UK.

Not far from the Tate are the Porthmeor Studios and Cellars. This is a vast building, built in stages during the 19th century, initially to process and press Pilchards to obtain oil for heating or lighting. The pressing took place in the cellars, which have direct access to the sea. The building's upper floors served principally for the storage of the huge nets that were used. The pressing activity ceased in the 1880s, when petrol replaced oil, and the cellars were subsequently used as storage areas by fishermen, while the upper floors remained empty. The arrival of a Swedish painter heralded some new developments, however. Julius Olsson set up a marine painting school on the upper floors, which attracted the first painters to St Ives, several of whom converted the building's empty lofts into artists' studios. The Porthmeor Studios thus became one of Great Britain's oldest and largest artistic complex, as well as being a place where fishermen and artists have always lived side by side. A few years ago, the Borlase Smart-John Wells Trust, owners of the site since 1949, set about renovating Porthmeor from top to bottom, with the aim of maintaining this link between fishing and art. The Trust managed to raise around €5 million, €800 000 from the ERDF (Convergence Objective) and €315 000 from the EFF. Work began in September 2010 and is due to be completed in October 2012. The cellars are in the process of being restored to their former glory, while continuing to serve as workshops for local fishermen (supporting 12 boats), while the painters' studios are being renovated to create additional studio spaces.

▲ *A typical fishing boat used in Sennen Cove.*

This renovated complex could now also benefit from two Axis 4 projects. The first, already approved by the FLAG, is soon to be presented to the managing authority. This project is being promoted by the St Ives Archives, which possess a large collection of documents on fishing in Cornwall that the public rarely see due to a lack of space and cataloguing. Janet Axten, the volunteer manager of the archives, explains: "*The idea is to create a permanent documentary resource centre on fishing, which would benefit not only St Ives, but all the communities seeking to highlight their fishing heritage. The project would enable us to create the post of an archivist to document the collection, to promote awareness of the initiative and facilitate exhibitions and related events in all the interested Cornish localities. The project also has an intergenerational aspect, as there are plans to organise presentations in schools, highlighting in particular the stories of old fishermen, who have seen first hand how fishing has changed over the years. Finally, the archivist and volunteers will help set up an exhibition that we would like to present in the cellars of the Porthmeor complex.*"

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Experience and animation for a timely delivery

Covering an area extending along the entire Cornish and Isles of Scilly coast, and stretching approximately one mile inland, the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Fisheries Local Action Group is a 'not for profit' partnership, with a membership comprising of nine representatives of the fisheries sector, nine representatives of the community and public sector, and three independent members (including the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, the latter also being the Chairman of the East Cornwall Local Action Group).

Its strategy and delivery plan were agreed early in 2012, although the board had been operating for at least a year prior to this, in a shadow capacity. During this time it was mostly engaged in preparing its FLAG submission to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the executive non-departmental public body responsible for marine planning and fisheries management in England.

The FLAG board delivers and manages the programme under the authority of the MMO, and with the support of the Cornwall Development Company (an arm's length economic development company of Cornwall County Council), which acts as the local accountable body for the Programme, and Cornwall's Rural Community Council (CRCC), a charitable organisation supporting rural communities.

Meeting every two months, the FLAG board oversees the selection of project applications, with the help of a full-time 'Animateur', employed through a FLAG funded project led by CRCC. The FLAG has also been assisted in its activities by a Rural Economy Officer, who has direct fisheries project experience and is also employed by CRCC.

The FLAG strategy and some of the key partners benefit from previous collaborations and relationships developed in the context of Objective 1 funding, and the Leader programme. The FLAG partners had, effectively, been ready to operationalise the FLAG some two years ago and were, therefore, able to act quickly.

One of the most pressing problems now facing the FLAG is to identify appropriate projects that help to deliver the strategy and ensure that the funds available are spent within an 18 month window. This was the reason why the FLAG prioritised the 'on the ground' Animateur project, in order to facilitate the process. The Animateur will play an important intermediary role, helping applicants to convert good ideas into concrete applications. Part of the job involves understanding the different capabilities and the levels of support needed by applicants.

The application process is as follows: 1) Potential applicants present an idea for a project; 2) Applicants complete a very brief Project Idea form; 3) After an eligibility check and informal feedback, applicants are asked to fill in a short Expression of Interest (EOI) form; 4) The EOI is discussed by the FLAG (for smaller projects, under €18 000, the FLAG Chair can make a judgement), and the applicant is then given feedback and encouraged to prepare a Full Project Application; 5) Cornwall Development Company provides eligibility and technical checks on full applications and at the same time, seeks the views of local MMO officers, and then raises any queries with the applicant; 6) The full application is then put before the FLAG board by the Animateur, with a CDC score and recommendation to reject, approve or defer, for a vote and decision; 7) The FLAG decision and accompanying comments of the board are then communicated to the MMO for ratification, on the understanding that an offer letter will be issued within 10 days; 8) The MMO embarks on a second round of detailed technical checks and assessments.

At the time of writing this article (August 2012), five projects had been proposed to the MMO and two had been approved (the FLAG Animateur and Cornwall Seafood Training Hub), but there are also many potential projects in the pipeline. Of about 65 preliminary ideas identified so far, 36 have progressed to a short Project Idea form, 20 have been encouraged to prepare Expressions of Interests, and 10 have had EOI assessments completed and have prepared full applications.

▲ *Stephen Bassett (left) shows the FLAG's 'animateur', Chris Ranford (right), one of three fishermen's lodges that could be developed.*

This exhibition is the second Axis 4 project that could be implemented at the complex, where one of the renovated cellars will be used as a venue for events aimed at promoting awareness of fishing."*We have a considerable quantity of fishing gear and we discovered a lot of items during the renovation works,"* explains Chris Hibbert, the Borlase Smart-John Wells Trust manager. *"The idea is to entrust the exhibition layout to an artist, preferably one of international renown, so as to give the event the highest possible profile. The aim is also to involve schools from elsewhere in Cornwall in the project. The artist would hold workshops and other events with the pupils. We have requested aid of €25 000 and submitted the names of possible artists to the FLAG. They are currently assessing our application."*

Fishing heritage

Still in St Ives, Axis 4 could also make it possible to highlight another element of the area's fishing heritage: the fishermen's lodges. *"Today there are about 80 fishermen and 60 vessels registered at what is probably the UK's leading port for mackerel hand line fishing,"* explains Stephen Bassett, the harbour master at St Ives, as he drives us to one of the three timber buildings located between the wharf road and the beach. *"In the mid-19th century, there were 400 vessels here and 730 working fishermen. It was in these fishermen's lodges that they gathered in the evening. It was a chance to get together for a chat and to catch up on the latest gossip. These historic buildings are now used mainly by older fishermen or for meetings or special events."*

As he opens the lodge door we discover a huge room with benches running around the wall. In the middle of the room is an old stove, which is also used to make tea, but most striking of all are the walls, which are covered with black and white photographs, some of them very old, showing the fishermen and all aspect of fishing. *"This is simply priceless!" declares Stephen Bassett. "It is the very soul of St Ives, the indelible footprint of fishing on our community! When somebody was getting married, for example, he bought a bag of coal for the lodge and raised all the flags on the roof. Similarly, when a fisherman, a rescuer or a known inhabitant died, a flag was set at half-mast as a mark of respect. All this deserves to be told and it is easy to imagine guided tours in the summer months, with the prospect of a number of seasonal jobs."*

A question of governance, motivation and knowledge

"The opportunity, but also the challenge, for Axis 4 is to bring fishing and the community closer together," stresses Anthony Vage of the Cornwall Development Company, which is the local accountable body for the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly FLAG. His colleague, Catherine Roberts, continues: "The fact that we are a kind of one-stop shop for local development facilitates this process, especially as we always try to find synergies with the other programmes we manage. Leader and Axis 4 are clearly partners that are easy to bring together."

▶ ▶ ▶

"Of course, we have learned lessons from Leader and we draw on these in implementing Axis 4," confirms Rob Poole, the FLAG manager. "We always take local demand as our starting point, for example. The best example of this is the Cornwall Fisheries Resource Centre, which was directly inspired by the West Cornwall Farm Business Resource Centre, set up in cooperation with Leader. More generally, the strength of Axis 4 lies in cooperation between the actors, which can lead not just to economic success but social success too. So we can truly speak of sustainability."

This view is shared by Nathan de Rozarieux, even though he has some reservations: *"The FLAG is something of a test. The formula is encouraging and exciting, and we have a lot of good ideas, but the big challenge is to get the fishermen to work together when they are not at sea, on activities that are not directly part of their job, such as marketing, or promotion or other such activities. In this respect, motivation is an essential element. The Objective 1 programme, for example, worked better here than the Convergence programme*[10] *because with the latter there was no motivator. But the participative approach also includes the risk of being overly ambitious and trying to get everybody to participate: some of the FLAG members have to learn everything about this approach, from local development to fishing, and the time required to explain certain things is time lost for discussing projects, innovations, etc. They really need to read the FARNET publications and attend their seminars. FARNET can greatly facilitate things at this level."* ■

▲ *Safety training for fishermen.*

CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLy (UK)

Area:
3 520 km²

Population:
532 300 inhabitants

Density:
149.5 inhabitants/km²

Axis 4 Budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	1 000 703	333 568	518 948	1 853 219

CONTACT

Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Fisheries Local Action Group
c/o Chris Ranford
Seafood Cornwall Training
Unit 1, 78 The Strand
Newlyn, Cornwall TR18 5HW (UK)
+44 17 36 36 43 24
chris.ranford@cornwallrcc.org.uk

CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY FISHERIES LOCAL ACTION GROUP

[10] See previous footnote.

Interview

Struan Stevenson MEP:

"Axis 4 and Community-led local development are essential in order to help support fishermen, entrepreneurs and other local stakeholders to work together to improve the situation in local fishing communities."

Struan Stevenson has been a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for Scotland (UK) since 1999. he is the Senior Vice President of the Parliament's Fisheries Committee and President of the Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Intergroup.

FARNET Magazine: There is, sometimes, a perception that strategies and policies emanating from Brussels are not sufficiently tailored to the different local contexts in fisheries areas. Community-led local development (CLLD) provides an opportunity to overcome this. How can fisheries communities and the fisheries sector use this opportunity to good effect?

It is difficult for policymakers in Brussels to tailor strategies to local communities when they have to be applied on an EU-wide basis, which is why Axis 4 and CLLD are essential in order to help support fishermen, entrepreneurs and other local stakeholders to work together to improve the situation in local fishing communities. The fisheries sector can use this opportunity to invest in local schemes and projects that will bring added value to existing schemes or help to create new ones. Funding to help market local fisheries products will not only boost the local economy but it can also help the community to compete on a larger scale. Eco-labels, traceability, online marketing and sales can transform the situation in fisheries communities and create much needed employment. Certain projects created through this strategy have already been hugely successful, including schemes to deliver fresh fish to customers' doors and surveys to better understand consumers' needs.

Struan Stevenson,
Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for Scotland (UK)

The Commission´s proposal for CLLD in fisheries areas offers fishing communities a flexible tool for "adding value, creating jobs and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries and aquaculture supply chain". To date, fishermen have been slow to take advantage of such opportunities. What do you think can be done to increase awareness and uptake among fishermen?

We need to raise awareness among the local fishing communities that may not know about such opportunities and how they can take advantage to compete on a wider scale. Many local fishing communities have negative perceptions of the EU, yet, through regionalisation, which I hope will be part of a newly reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), we have a real chance of closing the gap between the lawmakers in Brussels and local fishermen.

The active participation of the fisheries sector in a community-led approach will not only help the sector itself, and fishing communities in general, but it will also be of great benefit to the EU economy as a whole. As we have seen with existing projects, such opportunities can transform small, coastal communities through tourism, leisure, food and renewable energy businesses, all exploiting local resources. Many coastal communities are, sadly, in decline but with this kind of initiative they are able to rebuild the area through innovation and development. However, this approach must continue to be a bottom-up approach, led by the community, and be sustainable enough to allow actors to commit on a long term basis.

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What are the main challenges for fisheries communities in Scotland?

The fishing industry in Scotland makes up a huge proportion of the UK fishing industry. Scotland has around 8.6% of the UK population but lands at its ports over 60% of the UK's total catch. Most of these ports are in remote areas and fishing represents the main employment for the majority of the local inhabitants. The Scottish demersal fleet has been facing a difficult time due to the decline in cod and haddock in the North Sea, with the result that many whitefish vessels have been decommissioned. This has led to increased unemployment, with many skippers forced to leave the industry altogether.

Nephrops are the single most economically important species caught by the Scottish fishing industry, with landings worth, on average, well over £30 million per annum. However, stock assessments of these species are extremely hard to carry out resulting in poor stock data and total allowable catches.

Under ideal circumstances, what do you think a local partnership of fishermen and other local actors should do (using the opportunity of Axis 4 or its successor) to help meet these challenges?

Funding from Axis 4, or its successor, can help to overcome most of the problems faced by small coastal communities. Fish processing in Scotland accounts for 49% of the turnover of the UK fish processing industry. The pelagic and shellfish fisheries are expanding their operations in processing but the whitefish sector is experiencing difficulties. The problems facing this sector can be alleviated through community-led approaches. For example, adding value to fisheries products through projects to improve eco-labelling can help small scale vessels to better compete in the market, by providing more details on how and when their fish were caught. Schemes that invest in data collection could also be created, to provide more data on stock assessments. Similarly, any projects that help to protect the environment, regenerate small villages, promote cooperation between local, neighbouring regions should also be encouraged.

Some fishing communities live in remote places but many are located in fast growing areas that are facing severe pressure from other activities. What do you think can be done to ensure that fishing remains an integral part of the economy, society and identity of these areas?

There is growing pressure from development and recreational activities, which threatens to destroy local fishing communities and force labour out into the bigger cities. Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) have an essential role to play in addressing this, in particular by facilitating discussion between the fisheries sector and other local development actors. This would allow the industry to articulate its aims and objectives and explain how it can benefit, or continue to benefit the area. A more active participation in local decision-making would certainly benefit the fisheries sector and help to ensure that the needs of the sector are taken into consideration before new developments are planned or sanctioned.

Many projects have also been developed that bring together the fisheries sector and the tourism industry. Pesca-tourism raises awareness of the fishing profession and the role it plays in the community. This collaboration is also important as it increases fishermen's revenue without increasing catch sizes.

What more can be done locally to help coastal fisheries and aquaculture, and what role, if any, do you think FLAGs could play in this?

Aquaculture is the fastest-growing animal food producing sector in the world, and currently accounts for nearly half of the world's food fish consumption. Global production of fish from aquaculture has increased by almost 7% per year in the last decade, yet Europe has fallen behind the rest of the world, only experiencing a 0.5% increase in the same period. It is essential that we catch up with the rest of the world. We need the help of local communities to encourage investment in this fledgling sector, which is not an easy task due to limited space and compliance with an array of EU rules and red tape. The EU is also competing against the rest of the world, whose production is much higher and whose costs are lower. The FLAGs must use this opportunity to raise awareness of the economic benefits of investing in this fast growing sector. The EU needs to help this industry to flourish financially, but at the same time, allow fisheries areas the space to adapt strategies that best meet their needs, and not focus on a one-size-fits-all approach.

The fishing sector has recently had a bad press, and fishermen are often at loggerheads with scientists, the administration and other sectors. What do you think can be done to overcome this divide – particularly at local level?

We are currently in the throes of the Common Fisheries Policy reform and the issue of data collection is hugely important when deciding on fishing opportunities. The science needs to match the fishing allocations. When there is a lack of sufficient data, the precautionary principle is implemented, which, in some cases might be more severe than is necessary. We need, therefore, to ensure that not only are the Member States obliged to submit scientific data on their stocks, but local communities should also be encouraged to start up their own research, data collection and stock assessments. We need to involve more fishermen in projects that will benefit the sector through improved data and innovative ideas. Such projects can supplement current data assessments and investigate the areas where the fishermen disagree with scientific advice. This would help to support the work of the Regional Advisory Councils.

Europe's coastal areas contain some of our most precious and fragile environmental assets and at the same time offer the potential for creating jobs in many blue growth[11] sectors such as renewable energy. What do you see as the main blue growth opportunities, in particular for Scotland?

In Scotland, the seas and the coast are fundamental to the Scottish economy so we must be careful when exploiting such opportunities as this area is so fragile. Scottish waters are home to over 20% of all sea grass meadows in North-Western Europe. Together with salt marshes and kelp forests, we must take care when exploiting the opportunities these areas can offer. However, there is vast potential for investing in the marine environment, especially in areas such as recreational boating, sailing and recreational sea angling.

With regard to some bigger development opportunities, such as renewables, I don't see how these will benefit Scotland. Offshore wind power is expensive and can impact negatively on the livelihoods of fishermen and coastal communities, as well as causing damage to our fragile marine environments and wildlife. Our coastlines do have the potential for wave power, but harnessing it is neither easy nor cheap. Like wind, tidal power is intermittent. Tidal installations must also survive in an aggressive environment with strong currents in two directions. Consequently, they tend to be heavy and inherently expensive.

What do you think FLAGs can do to ensure that local people and fishing communities benefit from developments in this blue economy?

It is essential that local communities are aware of what Axis 4 can offer. Not only is raising awareness necessary but reducing the red tape and bureaucracy that comes with applying for such funding is also essential to avoiding missed opportunities. It is important to provide the tools to help the local communities to develop their own projects. This must be a bottom up approach and as such, the local community must decide which areas need to be addressed and where funding is invested. ■

Interview conducted (in English) on 24 September 2012.

[11] See article on page 31.

Report

AxIS 4 OF THE EFF BOOSTS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE

From the land to

On the islands of Lesvos, Lemnos and Agios Efstratios, the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) will adapt to the coast concepts that Leader[12] has already used inland.

"All the projects that we support must address a local or territorial need," says Anastasios Perimenis, director of ETAL, the Lesvos local development company. *"With Axis 4 of the EFF, we find the same ethos that made Leader so unique, effective and well recognised. Indeed, with Axis 4, we want to recreate on the coast what we achieved inland with Leader."*

Established to implement Leader I in 1992, ETAL coordinates the two Lesvos local action groups: the Leader LAG and the FLAG. Christina Moschoudi, coordinator of the FLAG for the islands of Lemnos and Agios Efstratios, explains further: *"With Axis 4 of the EFF, we would like to develop pesca-tourism, cafés and restaurants that serve fish, tourist accommodation – particularly by converting an old mill -, small shops and water leisure activities."*

Axis 4 of the EFF will, therefore, extend the process initiated in Lesvos some years ago: *"Our ambition,"* resumes the director of ETAL, *"is to improve the attractiveness of, and the quality of life and economic activities on the islands, by improving the competitiveness of local products and services. To do this, we are relying on our greatest asset: a high-quality, unspoiled, and diverse natural and cultural heritage."*

Peripheral location

Thanks to its peripheral location in relation to continental Greece, Lesvos does not have overdeveloped, mass tourism and, therefore, does not have a built-up coastline. On the contrary, it retains a high-quality environment and attracts a more discerning visitor. *"Educated and relatively well-off people who love nature, adventure travel, and discovering new cultures and countries,"* explains Dimitris Tekes, secretary of the Hotel Union of Lesvos. *"They are also loyal customers: a quarter of our visitors are repeat customers,"* adds Anastasios

[12] L.e.a.d.e.r. *(Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale* / Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy*)* was a Community initiative programme to support local development projects in order to revitalise rural areas in the European Union. The programme went through three phases – Leader I (1990-1993), Leader II (1994-1999) and Leader+ (2000-2006) – before being incorporated into the measures of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) from 2007 to 2013.

NORTH AEGEAN ISLANDS [GREECE]

the sea

▲ *Observatory of wild fauna and flora on the islet of Saint George Petra, Lesvos.*

Kokas, restaurant owner, water sports entrepreneur and an EFF Axis 4 p roject candidate. *"The fact remains, however, that business has been slow for the past five years; we have lost 40% to 50% of our visitors."*

This is confirmed by Annelies Dhondt, who represents a m ajor European tour operator in Lesvos: "*For the tour operators, Lesvos is a d eclining destination. In 2007, there were 32 charter flights a w eek, which brought in 80 000 tourists that year. In 2012, we had just 20 flights and 50 000 tourists. But the destination will still be in brochures next year. In any case, it is true that Lesvos is not a m ass tourism destination, and the decision to promote alternative tourism is a good one. But the problem that remains is access to the island from the rest of Europe: normal flights are expensive, infrequent and indirect, and yet holidaymakers do not like having to go via A thens."* Dimitris Tekes adds, *"We have tried negotiating direct routes with airlines, but they want us to advance the investment required; they do not want to take any risks. We also turned to the region, but, with the crisis, it cannot invest either."*

▲ *The port of molivos/mithymna.*

▶ ▶ ▶

Serving local development on three islands

▲ *Anastasios Perimenis reviewing project proposals.*

The Lesvos Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) covers three islands in the North Aegean, close to the coast of Turkey: Lesvos (the third largest Greek island), Lemnos and the tiny island community of Agios Efstratios (pop. circa 250). The three islands form a single prefecture, as part of the North Aegean Region. The total population of the FLAG area is around 47 000, around half the total population of the islands. The FLAG area covers two Leader LAG areas: Lesvos and Lemnos, and these LAGs cooperated with each other in the establishment of the FLAG. The FLAG is facilitated and hosted by the Lesvos Local Development Company (ETAL), who led the bidding process for Axis 4 support and is the legally responsible entity.

ETAL is a private sector development agency, which is owned by its community stakeholders. The company is an evolution of the original Leader I LAG and was formed in 1992 in response to this initiative. It still continues to apply these core, bottom-up local development principles in its work. ETAL operates on the basis of an overarching development strategy for the island. The policy is quite clear – it makes no sense to have separate funding oriented strategies within a small and well defined community of this type. The approach, therefore, is to seek out and secure relevant sources of funding to pursue different aspects of a single, overarching strategy. In addition to hosting the FLAG and the Lesvos Leader LAG, ETAL also acts as a regional support unit for the rural development Axis 3 programme (EAFRD), and it delivers a number of other ESF and ERDF funded initiatives. Since its inception, it has channelled approximately €60 million in support to the local community.

In managing Axis 4 and Leader, ETAL employs two separate decision making boards, one for each programme. These boards are answerable to the main board of ETAL, which manages the company on behalf of its members. The FLAG membership is compact and consists of one representative each from of the following: ETAL S.A., ANEL S.A., the Regional Union of Municipalities, the Chamber Of Commerce and the Association of Professional Fishermen of Lesvos. This results in a membership split of 40% public, 40% private/NGO and 20% fisheries.

▲ *Stratis Kabanas organises boat trips from molivos.*

Alternative tourism

This morning, ETAL meets two potential project promoters. *"We had already decided to go for it, but when we found out about Axis 4 of the EFF at a presentation session in May 2012, we felt that the programme was made for us."* Lena Vayanni and yorgos Malakos own a 36-metre sailing boat, with which they offer sea trips in the Aegean. In 2006, they also created a website[13], which provides information on the whole of the North Aegean, and they have contacts with sailing clubs in France, Germany, Norway and Australia. Today, they are submitting two EFF Axis 4 projects. The first concerns a proposal to introduce a cruise concept that combines sailing and nature. *"For one or two weeks, we would take eight to twelve passengers on a tour of Lesvos, stopping at various locations, with a different activity offered at each: diving, mountain biking, a tour of picturesque villages, a shipyard tour and, naturally, meetings with fishermen. To do this, we would need two more boats."*

The couple's second project idea is to create a sailing club for 7 to 14 year olds. *"Among other things, we would like to buy four small sailing dinghies and some inflatable lifeboats." "I have not seen their project application yet,"* says Sofia Malapascha, an accountant at ETAL, *"but these two are*

[13] www.inlesvos.gr/porto

▲ *Lesvos is already a popular destination for divers.*

determined: Yorgos left his public service job in Athens to set up a sea trip business, which must have been a difficult decision to make."

Molivos/Mithymna (pop. 1 500) is the second largest town on Lesvos, but it is the island's leading tourist destination. The Molivos Tourism Association has approximately 200 members, coming from different towns and villages. Within the association, there are four volunteer committees working on different themes: the environment, promotion, organising cultural events, and institutional relations (including the management of European projects).

Over the last few years, in partnership with the association of local restaurant owners, the Molivos Tourism Association has successfully completed two Leader projects: the creation of a network of walking routes, focused on natural and cultural heritage, and the launch of a restaurant network, 'molivosWINEnDINE', which has some sixty restaurant-owner members. *"From a tourism point of view, these networks have completely changed the face of Lesvos,"* says the association's president, Nikos Molvalis. *"For us too, Axis 4 of the EFF will add to or put the finishing touches to what we have achieved with Leader: and so, the restaurant network will be extended to fish restaurants on the coast, while the walking routes and bird-watching will become sea trips and water sports."*

Diving parks and other sanctuaries

A dozen or so kilometres from Mytilene, the capital of Lesvos, is the village of Thermi, a place where fishing still plays a prominent role. Founded in 1997 to oversee several projects, such as the port's modernisation, the Association of Amateur Fishermen of Thermi now has 194 members from across the Mytilene region. Members can fish, without nets and in small quantities, for squid, octopus and even tuna. In 2005, with the aim of cleaning up the shoreline and bringing people together, the association began holding an 'Environment Day' on the 5th of June. This led, in 2008, to an annual programme of events, which includes such highlights as a major 'heritage festival' in August (attracting 2 000 people in 2012) and a fishing competition in September. *"Our first grant was from Leader, I mean Axis 4 of the EAFRD, which awarded us €9 500 for equipment, a stand and an awareness raising campaign,"* says Christos Manolellis, the association's president. *"Now, with Axis 4 of the EFF, we would like to create a zone reserved exclusively for recreational fishing, which means negotiations with professional fishermen."*

Professional fishermen on Lesvos are open to the idea of creating fishing sanctuaries, as they are well aware that this is essential for rebuilding stocks. *"That is also why the FLAG and the three local municipalities' project to create 'diving parks' with Axis 4 of the EFF has every chance of succeeding,"* explains the director of ETAL, Anastasios Perimenis. He adds, *"We have started a feasibility study on the creation of five diving parks: three in Lesvos, one in Lemnos and one in Agios Efstratios. Zones, covering small areas in the beginning, will be reserved for underwater diving. Fishing will be totally prohibited, but fishermen will transport divers to the sites. This concept exists elsewhere, for instance in Spain, in the Medes islands, off the coast of Catalonia. Diving is a huge market, with more than 2 million enthusiasts in Europe, and diving parks can be a real opportunity for fishing communities, as they offer a double advantage: economic and environmental." "That's absolutely right,"* agrees Nikolas Vaksevanis, *"These diving parks will help rebuild stocks, while also offering fishermen an additional line of business."*

▶ ▶ ▶

Pesca-tourism and fish markets

A member of the FLAG, Nikolas Vaksevanis, chairs the professional fisherman's association of the Gulf of Gera, one of ten such associations on Lesvos. It is made up of 250 fishermen, most of whom are full-timers. Sardine, bream, bass and lobster are the main species fished in the gulf, which is so deeply set into the island's mountainous terrain that it resembles an enormous inland lake. All the fish are sold locally, particularly in restaurants, and with the decline in catches, the prospect of creating a diving park in this area is wholly supported. In fact, the association would also like to develop pesca-tourism.

The pesca-tourism concept has been authorised in Greece, with the introduction of a new reform Law in April 2010, but the conditions for implementing it (size of the boat, standards, etc.), and the heavy administrative burden, are an obstacle for small-scale fishermen. Approximately €5 000 to €35 000 is needed to adapt a boat, but there is also another obstacle, a psychological one, that must be overcome: a few years ago, the association wanted to transform a traditional boat into a museum piece, but "*there was so much red tape,*" regrets Nikos, *"that it put us off."*

▲ *In the absence of fish markets, fish is sold from the backs of vans.*

Nikos' cousin, Stratis Vaksevanis, himself a fisherman, also believes that promoting local fish products is another stop-gap for the decline in catches: "*I want to continue fishing, but I know that I have to do something on shore as well, in order to get by, so, while waiting for the diving park and pesca-tourism, I try to maximise the added value of my fish by marketing it directly, without an intermediary.*"

▲ *Young Stavros Vaksevanis wants to be a fisherman like his father.*

"In this respect, another avenue for exploration would be fish markets," says Gabriela Vati, an active member of the Molivos Tourism Association. *"There is no fish market on the island, not even in Mytilene. Creating one in the port of Molivos would be great. For the islanders, it is not a problem; there are fishermen who drive around in vans with loudspeakers, and then we also know who to call when we want fish. But for tourists, it is another thing entirely and they often ask us: 'Where can we buy fish?'"*

Networking activities on land and at sea, heritage development, direct selling, diving parks, pesca-tourism… Lesvos, Lemnos and Agios Efstratios are not lacking in ideas or projects. 'Fisheries Leader' has a lot on its plate. And we will find out more on the 9 October 2012, the closing date for initial proposals. "Some 30 to 45 applications for projects are expected," estimates Nikos Ploukos, a civil engineer and a development officer at ETAL. ■

LESVOS / LEMNOS/ AGIOS EFSTRATIOS (Greece)

Area:
558 km²

Population:
46 893 inhabitants

Density:
84 inhabitants/km²

Axis 4 Budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	4 065 700	734 300	2 037 500	6 837 500

CONTACT
Lesvos Local Development Company (ETAL) S.A.
c/o Anastasios M. Perimenis
4 Ermou
GR-81100 Mytilini, Lesvos
+30 22510 29400 – +30 22510 29577
inquiries@etal-sa.gr
www.etal-sa.gr

E.T.A.A. A.E.
E.T.A.L. S.A.

Trade winds

BELGIUM / NETHERLANDS / UNITED KINDOM

Coastal Communities 2150

Total cost: EUR 2 900 000 – **EU contribution (INTERREG IV A):** EUR 1 450 000

"'Coastal Communities 2150' (CC2150) is a cross-border cooperation project to engage vulnerable communities that are at long-term risk from coastal climate change. We want to help communities understand the long term risks of future climate change, and what they can do about them. The long term perspective will also raise awareness about consequences of decisions taken in the shorter term. The project should have the following outcomes: 1. New communication and information products, chosen and developed in consultation with local communities, that bring about integrated working on coastal climate change issues at a local, regional and national level; 2. Communication and information products that bring about increased awareness and involvement within targeted coastal communities; 3. A coastal vision for the pilot areas, in a format decided by stakeholders, reflecting their needs and aspirations for their community in terms of managing future climate change risks; 4. A suite of community engagement products that can be used and applied in other European coastal areas, and a 'Community of Practice' that will be adopted and used by local communities to share ideas and learning on coastal climate change. This will include best practice guidance for use by other communities."

***John Gower**, Project Manager*
John.gower@environment-agency.gov.uk – www.cc2150.eu

SPAIN

Female entrepreneurs of fisheries areas

Total cost: EUR 119 000 – **EU contribution (Axis 4 EFF):** EUR 89 250

"'Female Entrepreneurs of Andalusia's Fisheries Areas' is a cooperation project undertaken by the seven Andalusian FLAGs, four of which are also Leader LAGs, with a long experience in rural development. With this project, the Andalusian FLAGs are aiming to foster and promote female entrepreneurship linked to fisheries. This is being done through a series of actions directed, firstly, at identifying existing best practices in Andalusia, and secondly, at providing public support for further entrepreneurial activities. More precisely, the execution of the project consists of: 1) The design and implementation of a study to improve methodology to help identify and better understanding of female entrepreneurship related to fisheries in the region; 2) Animation activities aimed at increasing the visibility of female entrepreneurship, and promoting an exchange of knowledge and experience. This dissemination work will be done by the female entrepreneurs themselves, and monitored and assisted by experts in the field. Of particular interest is the fact that all seven Andalusian FLAGs have adopted the same methodology. The results and conclusions will be shared among them, as well as with other interested regions."

***Juan Valero Martínez**, FLAG Manager, GDP Levante almeriense*
pesca@levantealmeriense.es – www.levantealmeriense.es

Direct sales online: German FLAG project inspires a new Danish website

An innovative direct sales concept developed by a German FLAG, 'Fisch vom Kutter'(http://www.fischvomkutter.de/) is now attracting international interest.

A similar online platform (http://www.havfriskfisk.dk) was recently developed in Denmark by a Danish fisheries information service provider, called Fiskerforum, in collaboration with Bornholm fisherman, Claus Stenmann Hansen. Claus initially set up a website to promote his own activities and to facilitate direct sales by informing his customers about his catches using an on-board camera. However, having heard about the Fisch vom Kutter project, he decided to develop a similar instant messaging system, so he got in touch with Fiskerforum, which had the technical knowledge to bring the project to the next level. The new platform they developed, which is now also open to other fishermen, is similar to the Fisch vom Kutter platform: consumers are informed, in real time, through the HavFrisk Fisk website or via SMS, when and where fresh fish are to be landed by participating boats, which are registered – for free – on the platform. By buying

directly, consumers not only get fresh fish, they also benefit from lower prices (25% to 50% below conventional outlets), while fishermen get 5 to 8 times more for their fish, hence a win-win situation. More than 25 boats are currently registered with the scheme.

Spotlight

KEy ISSUES FOR AxIS 4 DELIVERy:

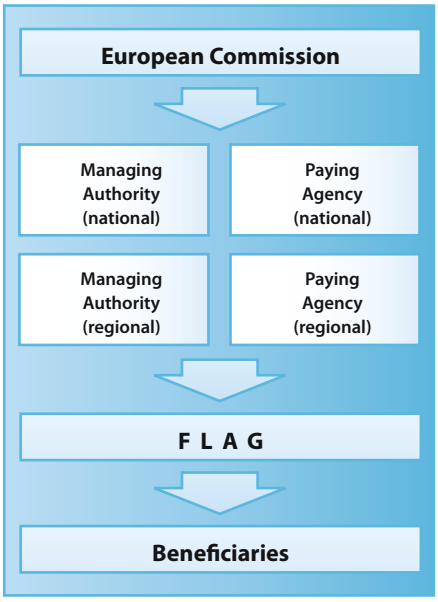
Making the system work for local communities

The ability of FLAGs to play a role in local development, to create effective links with fisheries and other stakeholders, and to mobilise the ideas and energy of local people, depends to a large extent on the way Axis 4 is implemented; in other words, on the "delivery system".

The delivery system is understood here as the set of rules and procedures that determine the relationships between the different actors involved in the implementation process (the European Commission, Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, FLAGs and beneficiaries), as well as what can be financed from Axis 4, what decisions are taken at what level, and what timescales apply.

◄ *Urmas Pirk setting up the Peipsi FLAG stand at a fish festival in Estonia.*

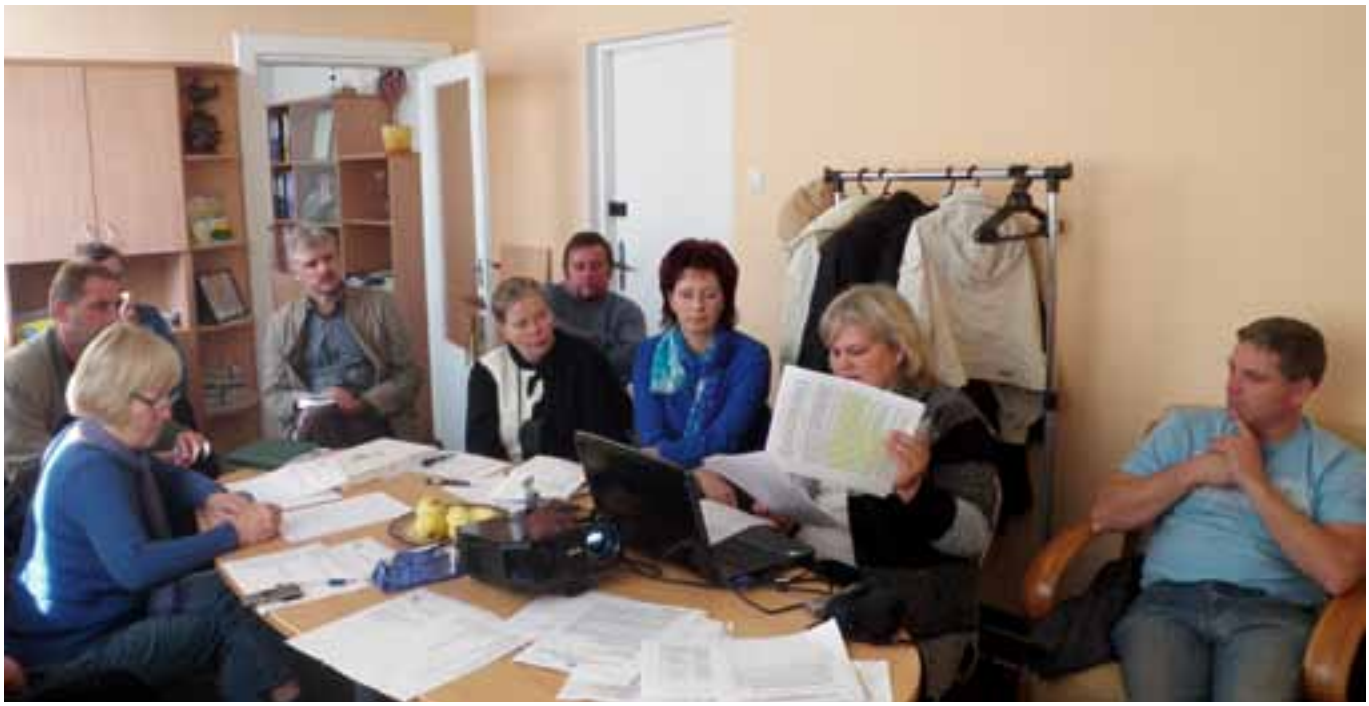
Key elements of the Axis 4 delivery system:



Among the case studies carried out recently by the FARNET Support Unit (as described in the article *"Taking your place: FLAGs added value in the local development process"*, page 4), five focus specifically on delivery systems and the role that FLAGs play in these systems. These case studies were carried out in Denmark, Finland, France, Poland, and in the Spanish region of Andalusia.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the main finding was that there are **enormous differences between delivery systems** in the different countries – and even, in the case of regionalised countries such as Spain, between different regions of the same country. In particular, the level of autonomy and the role played by the FLAG are vastly different.

In some countries, the delivery system hardly takes any account of the specificity of Axis 4, with all the key decisions being taken by the Managing Authority and/or Paying Agency. In such cases, the role of the FLAG is reduced to animating the community and checking that projects are in line with the local strategy. In other cases, the division of roles between the FLAG and the Managing Authority is not clear, and there is duplication of some tasks. However, in some countries, a lot of responsibilities have been effectively delegated to the FLAGs, not only with regard to the checking and approval of projects, but also the making of payments to beneficiaries.



▲ *A meeting of the Liepaja FLAG's advisory board (Latvia).*

The degree of FLAG autonomy depends to a large extent on the overall administrative and legal framework of the Member State concerned. This, in turn, has an important impact on the way FLAGs interact with the local community, and the added value of the Axis 4 a pproach (in comparison to traditional delivery systems). FLAGs should not be seen as an additional layer in the decision-making process; on the contrary, one of the functions of the FLAG is to make sure that **strategically important projects have a good chance to be financed without too much delay**. The delivery systems must be designed in such a way as to facilitate this.

The five case studies helped to identify a number of critical points that must be kept in mind when designing delivery systems for Axis 4 type activities. Some of these are related to the interface between programme authorities (Managing Authority, Paying Agency) and the FLAG. Others are linked to the relationship between the FLAG and project promoters (beneficiaries), and some are relevant to both levels. In all cases, however the main responsibility for the design of the delivery system lies with the programme authorities, although the overall framework is set out in the EU regulations.

Critical points at different implementation levels:

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL	CRITICAL POINTS
Between MA and FLAG	- adequate budgets - clarification and simplification of rules - minimum additional rules
Between FLAG and beneficiary	- ownership and initiative by the FLAG - flexible arrangements, continuous open calls for proposals - sufficient time for project implementation
Both levels	- Member State co-financing - advance payments - speed/delays - administrative burden/paperwork

Points related to the FLAG/MA interface:

> **Ensure adequate budgets**. The overall amount of money available for Axis 4, as well as the budgets for individual FLAGs, plays a major role in determining the role of the FLAG in the wider local development process, its capacity to address key concerns of the fisheries sector, and the way the FLAG operates. The evidence suggests that some budgets are too small to support a viable strategy, while others are possibly too large.

> **Clarify roles and promote simplification**. Delivery systems must ensure a clear division of responsibilities between FLAGs, Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies, and avoid any duplication of roles. The use of simplified cost options and umbrella schemes for small projects can reduce the amount of paperwork and controls and should be encouraged.

▶ ▶ ▶

> **Ensure justification of additional rules**. Some Managing Authorities introduce additional restrictions on what is eligible for funding (on top of the general guidelines provided by the EFF regulation). This can hinder the scope of FLAGs to respond to local needs and act as a barrier to innovative projects. Additional rules need to be justified and should, in general, focus on clarifying what cannot be funded, rather than trying to define everything that can.

Points related to the relationships between FLAGs and (potential) beneficiaries[14]:

> **Facilitate ownership and initiative by the FLAG**. One of the key roles of the FLAG is to mobilise potential beneficiaries, provide them with guidance, and carry out promotional and information activities. The delivery rules must ensure that this function is supported, and that FLAGs are not seen primarily as an extension of the administrative system.

> **Promote flexible solutions such as continuous open calls for proposals**. Introducing flexible application arrangements, such as the possibility to submit project proposals at any time (continuous open calls), helps to encourage beneficiaries and at the same time creates a more even workflow for the FLAG.

> **Allow sufficient time for the implementation of projects**. Some countries and regions introduce restrictive timeframes (e.g. for the submission of proposals or the completion of projects), which make it difficult to focus funds on projects that are more complex and time-consuming, but might have a high value added for the local community.

Issues applicable at both delivery levels

> **Provide national co-financing up front**. In some countries, beneficiaries must apply for the national co-financing (including regional and local public contributions) separately from the EFF contribution. This can be a way of securing greater commitment from these authorities, but following several parallel financial and administrative procedures – where a relatively small amount of co-funding from one agency can sometimes determine what projects are actually selected – can undermine the local strategy and selection procedures.

> **Encourage advance payments**. Many local beneficiaries, especially small-scale businesses and NGOs, find it difficult to fund an entire project and then wait to receive a reimbursement. This can also be the case for FLAGs, especially newly established ones. One of the key success factors of Axis 4 in some countries is the availability of funding (from national or regional budgets) for advance payments.

> **Be realistic and transparent in setting timelines**. Some administrative systems involve complicated procedures of checks and approvals at different levels, which take a long time. As a result, the overall approval process of a project can take many months (sometimes more than a year), and the issuing of payments can take even longer. This can impact on the success of some projects, which are developed to meet specific challenges or opportunities at a certain point in time, and introduce an additional element of uncertainty for the beneficiaries.

> **Balance the administrative burden**. In some administrative systems, the amount of paperwork required from the project promoters (including FLAGs) appears to be excessive, especially in the case of relatively small projects. Mechanisms that envisage simplified procedures for small projects and reduce the administrative burden at the early stages of project approval may help to encourage potential beneficiaries.

The FARNET case studies also identified some ways to overcome problems related to delivery issues. The most important solutions identified include:

> **capacity building** (training, advice, dissemination of good practices) should be available to **all implementation levels** (Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies, FLAGs, beneficiaries) from the very beginning of programme implementation. This should include ways to take account of previous experience and lessons learnt; institutions involved in the delivery should, for example, ensure continuity and transfer of knowledge between different members of staff;

> focus on problem **solving** – this helps all the actors involved to maintain their sights on a common goal, rather than simply making sure that all the rules are followed to the letter;

> developing **trust** between all the actors – experience shows that trust between the different implementation levels helps to simplify the implementation rules and contributes to a shared focus on common objectives. Sometimes physical proximity (e.g. Managing Authorities or Paying Agencies located close to the FLAGs and beneficiaries) and regular meetings are helpful in this respect;

> **evaluation of delivery systems** – the key role that delivery mechanisms play in determining the impact of Axis 4 type activities provides a strong argument for ensuring that these mechanisms are subject to evaluation, in particular in the ex-ante and on-going evaluation phases.

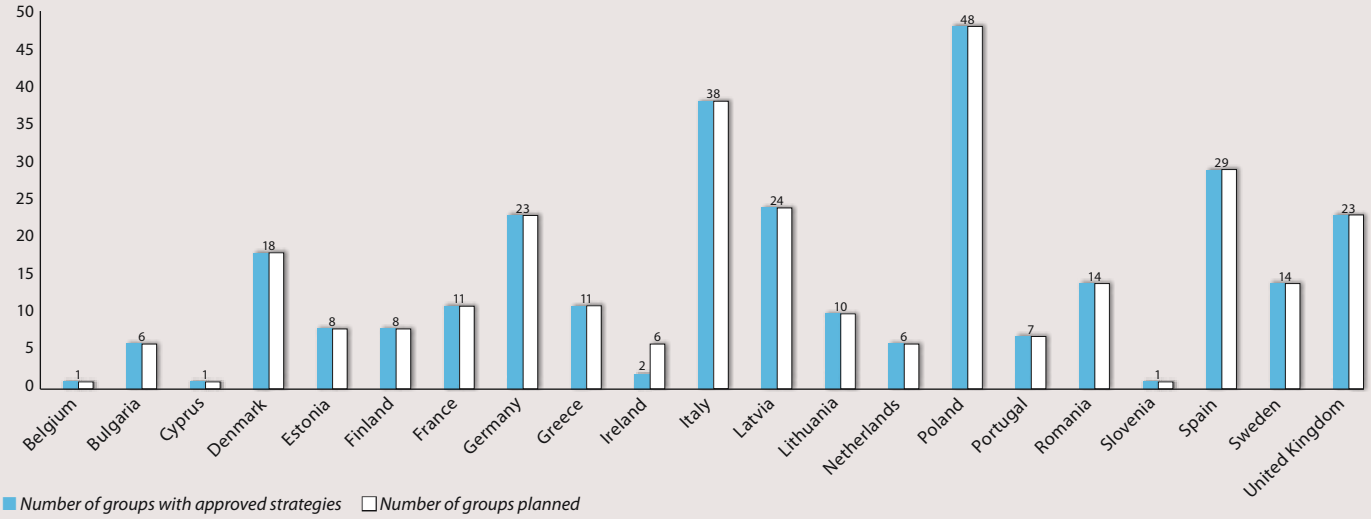
The findings of the delivery case studies may be useful for some stakeholders in improving the present implementation systems, but they will be particularly relevant in preparing the rules and procedures for the next programming period. ■

[14] Keeping in mind that the FLAG can also be a beneficiary in some situations, e.g. with the running costs, cooperation projects or activities implemented directly by the FLAG.

FARNETwork

> *More than three hundred FLAGs!*

By October 2012, a total of 303 FLAGs were active in the 21 Member States participating in EFF Axis 4.



> *Blue Growth: prospects for sustainable growth from marine and maritime sectors*

In a Communication on 'Blue Growth' adopted in September (COM(2012) 494 final), the European Commission has presented promising indications for economic growth and employment prospects in the marine and maritime economy to help Europe's economic recovery. These economic sectors provide jobs for 5.4 million people and contribute a total gross value added of around €500 billion. By 2020, this should increase to 7 million and nearly €600 billion respectively. By promoting marine research and innovation, supporting innovative SMEs, addressing skills needs and by encouraging innovative products and solutions, Europe can unlock the untapped potential for growth in its blue economy, while safeguarding biodiversity and protecting the environment. Sectors such as aquaculture and maritime and coastal tourism will gain in competitiveness. Growing and emerging sectors, such as ocean renewable energy and blue biotechnology, can contribute to creating more jobs, cleaner energy, and more sustainable products and services.

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-955_en.htm

> *Best practice in integrated coastal zone management*

The LIFE programme has been an important source of funding for projects aimed at implementing EU policy in the area of integrated coastal zone management. A new publication explores best practices developed by LIFE projects for dealing with issues such as sustainable tourism, developing technology to tackle oil spills, integrating urban and rural communities with coastal habitats, generating 'blue/green' energy, developing aquaculture, introducing anti-fouling techniques, reducing the impact of port activities, enabling adaptation to climate change and improving the quality of coastal waters.

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/publications/lifepublications/lifefocus/documents/coastal.pdf

FARNET Agenda

Wh EN	Wh AT	Wh ERE
13-15 November 2012	FARNET Seminar: *"Positioning FLAGs for the Future: Fisheries Communities at the Heart of Local Development"*	Quiberon (F)
23-25 April 2013	European Seafood Exposition	Brussels (B)
21-22 May 2013	European Maritime Day 2013	Valetta (M)

KL-AI-12-007-EN-C

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).

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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.

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