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# farnet

M A G A Z I N E

## *Linking fisheries to the tourism economy*





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## Photographs (pages):

iStockphoto (1), European Commission (2), Pomario Delta Association (4, 25), Jean-Luc Janot (5, 8, 14, 15, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, 30), Estació Nàutica Sant Carles de la Ràpita (6, 12, 13), Apollo Media (7), Vänern-Kinnkulle FLAG (9, 25), Monica Burch (10, 11), Belgian Coastal FLAG (17, 18, 19), North & Eastern Lapland FLAG (21, 22, 23), Haliotika-La Cité de la Pêche (25), Michał Stupczewski (25), GAC Oeste (27, 29), PescaTour (30), René Kusier (30).

**Cover:** A young tourist on a fishing boat in the Algarve (Portugal).

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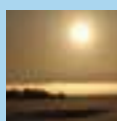
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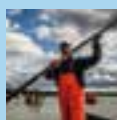
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## Editorial

*"In the 2014-2020 funding period, Community-Led Local Development will have to respond to the major challenge of creating and saving local jobs – especially for young people. In fisheries areas, one way of doing this is to 'capture' part of the huge demand for goods and services created by tourism."*

Our recent study on "Blue Growth" clearly shows that tourism is one of the most promising sectors in terms of future growth potential. It already employs around 2.6 million people in our coastal areas alone. Fishing and aquaculture, in comparison, account for only a fraction of coastal jobs, even though their contribution to the wider economy and to the attractiveness of many areas is substantial.

As the lead article in this issue of the *FARNET Magazine* points out, the coast is already the preferred main holiday destination for more than 60% of Europeans. The challenge for many fisheries areas, therefore, at least during the summer season, is not to get *more* tourism but *better* tourism. By this I mean tourism that brings tangible benefits for local people *and* the fisheries sector. We need to promote sustainability, not "massification". This will be reflected in a Communication on maritime and coastal tourism that we are currently preparing.

Of course, many inland fisheries areas and certain remote coastal areas still have to establish a reputation as attractive tourist destinations. In many coastal areas, fishing communities can also be more like islands, with strong currents of tourism washing around them – but leaving little or no benefit, or even harming the local environment and disturbing ecosystems and activities.

The first article in this magazine identifies some of the key risks of tourism for fishing communities and shows how FLAGs can help to minimise these and turn them into opportunities. It suggests three main ways by which fishing communities can benefit directly from tourism: by providing various types of services to tourists, thus increasing their income and creating new job opportunities; by capturing more value through the direct sale of local fish; and by promoting their area's fishing heritage as an important component of a genuine, living tourist destination. The article then outlines the steps that FLAGs can take to turn this potential into a reality.

The subsequent articles present practical examples of how FLAGs in different parts of Europe are doing just this. On the sunny shores of Sardinia and Catalonia in the Mediterranean, for instance, projects range from pesca-tourism, to fish restaurants run by local fishing cooperatives, mussel and oyster tours, networks of restaurants buying local fish, and local fish farms providing specialist tourist activities.

In another corner of Europe, north of the Arctic Circle, the main tourist season usually starts when the snow settles. Here, a Finnish FLAG has offered training for fishermen to provide tourist packages based around ice and winter fishing, using traditional fishing methods.

The "Trade winds" section provides further examples, such as an interactive fishing museum in Brittany, a fishing trail in Poland, eco-tourism in a biosphere reserve in Sweden, and training to help professional fishermen benefit from the growing interest in ornithology and recreational fisheries in Lithuania.

The magazine concludes with a thorough look at the legal situation of pesca-tourism in the EU. It highlights issues such as safety-on-board, tax and economic viability. It also examines how FLAGs in several countries have started to tackle these issues. Finally, the Belgian Coastal FLAG manager Stephanie Maes tells us about the importance of having committed people on the ground who encourage and support the fishing sector to embark on these new ventures: *"People do appreciate it if you just come down from your desk and really try to understand their world and maybe explore together the challenges facing the sector and the possible responses,"* she says.

I invite you all to take inspiration from the many examples in this magazine, which show how local fishermen and their communities can successfully link fisheries to the tourist economy.



**Monique Pariat,**  
Director for the Mediterranean and  
Black Sea, Directorate-General for  
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries



# Linking fisheries to the tourism economy

**Although FLAGs across Europe operate in very different environments and adopt very different strategies, an overwhelming majority have identified tourism as an essential element of their strategic approach.**

**A prime concern is to ensure the fisheries sector can benefit from tourism in FLAG areas.**

There are many reasons why tourism development is such an important component of FLAG strategies.

On the demand side, the tourism industry is growing and is one of very few industries that have continued to grow worldwide during the crisis. According to research carried out by the World Travel and Tourism Council, over 10% of all new jobs created in 2012 were generated in the tourism industry. Even in the EU, where the impact of the crisis on tourism is most visible, the industry is expected to account (directly or indirectly) for over 20.4 million jobs (or 9% of total employment) by 2022, which means an average increase in employment of 1% per year over the next decade.

In addition to its strong growth dynamic, the tourism sector is also diversifying. More and more tourists are interested in something more than just the sun and the beach – they are looking for new activities, and new experiences that extend beyond the traditional tourism offering (indeed, tourism can benefit from the new concept of “experience economy”).



▲ The Pamario Delta association in Lithuania is implementing a tourism project involving fishermen.

On the supply side, fisheries areas have many assets that are attractive to tourists. In addition to water, beaches and recreational activities, they can offer unspoilt environment, an abundance of fresh fish, and a rich cultural heritage linked to fishing.

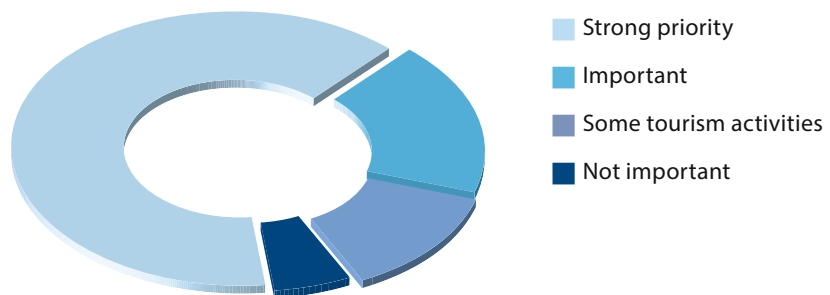
As local actors learn to cooperate and work together, helped by the FLAG, the tourism offer of a fisheries area can evolve to include a whole package of activities, and thus can remain attractive even in a highly competitive tourism market. In this way, tourism can become an important source of additional income to the fisheries community.



▲ Fishing boats moored beside restaurants in Mytilene, Lesvos (Greece).

In a recent publication on the *Challenges and Opportunities Concerning Coastal and Maritime Tourism in the EU*<sup>1</sup>, the European Commission stresses the importance of coastal areas as tourist destinations – around 51% of bed capacity in hotels is concentrated in coastal regions, which are the preferred location of more than 60% of Europeans for their main holidays. Tourism is also the largest single maritime economic activity in the EU, providing direct employment for some 2.6 million people. The Communication highlights certain barriers that need to be overcome for this industry to reach its full potential, which include: a lack of financial resources for local start-ups, a lack of coherent marketing strategies, and the inability to diversify from sun-and-beach tourism and overcome seasonality, which limits the sector's capacity to create durable and qualified jobs. FLAGs that would like to promote Blue Growth in their areas can play an important role in addressing these barriers.

#### FLAGs' interest in tourism



It is, therefore, not surprising that so many FLAGs mention tourism among their priority objectives. A review of the key challenges and objectives mentioned by FLAGs in the short descriptions they provided for the FARNET FLAG fact sheets (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/tools/flags>) suggests that approximately 83% of FLAGs consider tourism to be one of their strategic priorities, and for over 60%, it is a "strong priority"<sup>2</sup>. Of the 17% of FLAGs that do not mention tourism as a strategic objective, most (12% of the total sample) still propose some kind of

tourism-related activities or projects. Only 5% of factsheets do not mention tourism at all.



<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned\\_ia/docs/2013\\_mare\\_005\\_coastal\\_tourism\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/2013_mare_005_coastal_tourism_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Based on the analysis of 120 FLAG factsheets from 14 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden), July-August 2013.



▲ Sea kayaking in the mussel parks of the Ebro Delta (Spain).

## Encouraging fisheries-related tourism

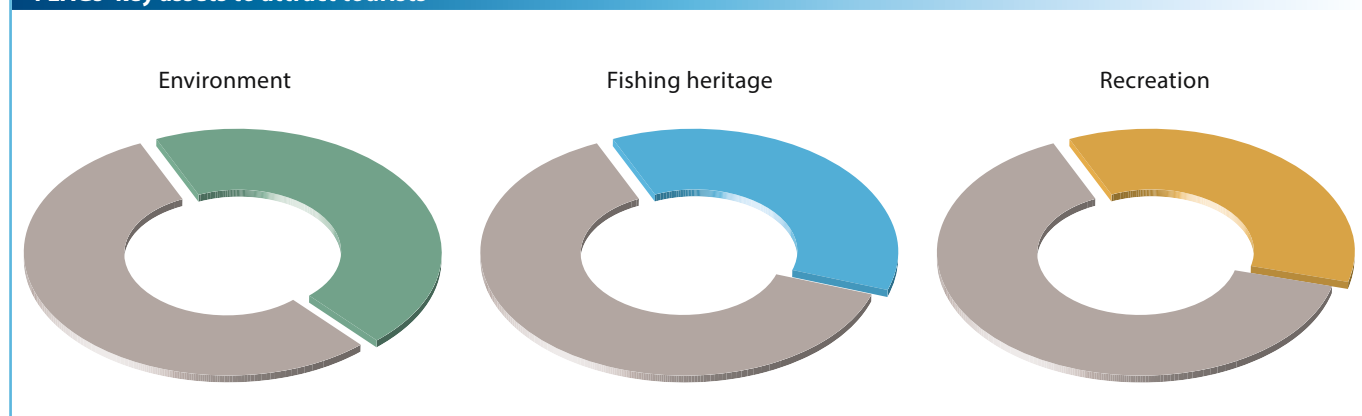
In order to attract tourists, FLAG areas must firstly meet the basic conditions that are necessary for the development of tourism i.e. they must be able to offer tourists a place to stay (hotels, bed and breakfast, camp sites, etc.), a place to eat (restaurants, fish bars etc.) and they must ensure ease of accessibility (roads, parking lots, public transport, bicycles and bicycle paths, etc.). However, these conditions alone may not be sufficient to win the competition with many other similar destinations. For this, FLAGs have to offer something additional, and ideally, something unique.

Most FLAGs in the process of preparing their strategies have tried to identify the assets that make – or at least could make – their area particularly attractive to visitors. These include:

- > natural assets, such as unique plant or animal species and their habitats, landscapes and waterways;
- > recreational activities, especially those linked to water and fishing, such as angling, swimming, diving, boating;
- > the specific fishing character of the area, including its fishing traditions and heritage (old fishing cottages, boats, harbours) as well as the present-day fishing activities (for instance watching fishermen at work, as in the case of pesca-tourism trips), which offer an experience that can be highly attractive to tourists.

The analysis of FLAG factsheets indicates that approximately 45% of those FLAGs that consider their area as (potentially) attractive to tourists<sup>3</sup> believe that the environment is their primary asset. About 37% planned to draw on the fisheries character and fishing heritage of their area to attract tourists (approximately 12% mention pesca-tourism or fishing tourism), while 36% focus on recreation<sup>4</sup>. Some FLAGs recognise that to improve the attractiveness of their area they first have to address certain basic requirements. This is probably why many FLAGs from the newer Member States (such as Latvia and Poland) consider it necessary to support projects related to infrastructural investments.

### FLAGs' key assets to attract tourists

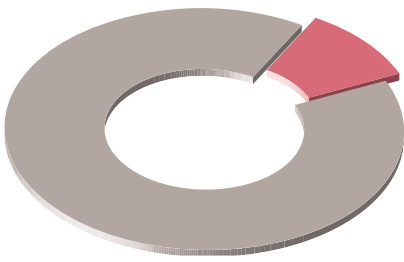






▲ Tourists buying fish directly from the boat in Denmark.

#### FLAGs recognising mass tourism as a problem



The strategy that a FLAG adopts in terms of attracting tourists will depend largely on whether or not the FLAG area is already a well-known tourist destination. If its natural and cultural assets are not widely known to potential visitors, then a wide range of information and promotional activities are needed. The proximity of other important tourist destinations can also create problems and is often perceived more as a risk than an asset (although this issue is explicitly mentioned in the factsheets by less than 10% of FLAGs).

## Tourism and fisheries

The FLAG can play an important role in developing the tourism potential of the area and ensuring that it has a positive impact on the local economy. But it is important that tourism brings benefits not only to the area as a whole, but to the fisheries sector in particular. Otherwise, there is a danger that fishermen will be “left out” and, consequently, adopt a negative attitude to tourism. Some – especially large scale – tourism initiatives can constitute a risk for the area and the fisheries sector (even when they benefit from the fishing character as one of the tourist attractions), because:

- > mass tourism enterprises tend to prioritise cost over quality when sourcing supplies and labour, and therefore often look beyond the local area;
- > they sometimes compete for scarce resources such as space, housing, fish stocks (e.g. uncontrolled angling) or labour, thus limiting the options for more endogenous development;
- > their scale is often beyond the reach of local investors, and as a result, only a very small proportion of the value added goes to the area and its community, while a much larger part is “exported” outside the fisheries area.

On the other hand, with the declining profitability and diminishing employment opportunities in the fisheries sector, tourism – together with initiatives for adding value to fish products (*discussed in FARNET Magazine no. 8*) – can be one of the ways to provide additional or alternative sources of income for fishermen and their families. There are many ways in which tourism development can bring benefit to the fisheries sector:

- > Firstly, it can bring **extra revenue to fishermen** and their families. By using their specific skills and equipment, fishermen can provide certain services for tourists (e.g. act as guides along the coast or take people on their boats to watch wildlife). The fishing activity itself may also be a source of extra income, as tourist may be willing to pay for the opportunity to watch fishermen at work, as in the case of pesca-tourism<sup>5</sup>. Some fishermen may even be able to offer accommodation in traditional fishing cottages as an additional activity.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. 91 out of the 120 FLAGs in the analysis

<sup>4</sup> This may not add up to 100% since some FLAGs mention more than one type of assets

<sup>5</sup> While “fishing tourism” is a generic term that may concern any tourist service related to fishing, the term “pesca-tourism” refers to accompanying the fisherman during his work, primarily to observe how he does his work.



▲ Direct sales at a fish festival organised by the Peipsi FLAG in Estonia.

- > Secondly, tourists can consume **locally produced fish**, if there are restaurants, bars or fish shops where it is available, thus creating additional opportunities for fishermen to market their catch.
- > Thirdly, there can be some less “tangible”, but nevertheless important benefits. For instance, tourism attractions based on the fishing character or traditions of the area can contribute to the fishermen’s sense of identity and pride in their profession or give them a stronger position in discussions on tourism development. The joint work of various partners in a tourism initiative can improve the integration of fisheries representatives with the wider community.

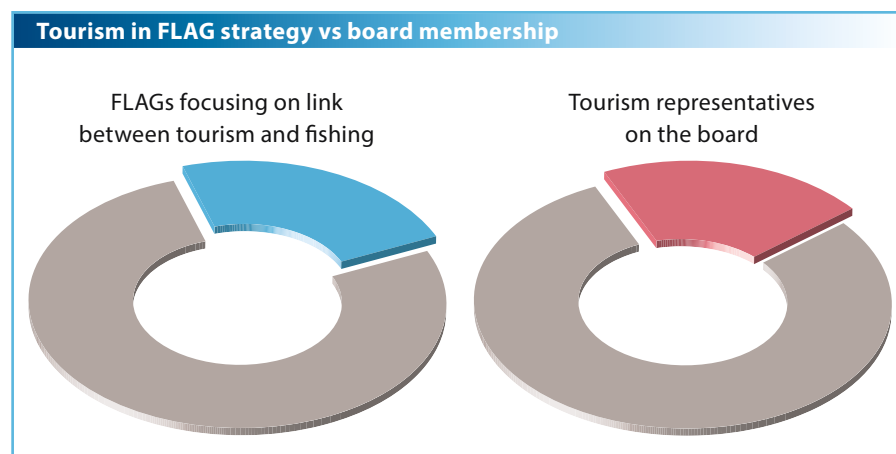
## The role of the FLAG

To realise these positive impacts, the FLAG, with its knowledge of the fisheries sector, and usually with a significant representation of fishermen on the board, must be careful to ensure that tourism development takes into account the expectations and concerns of the fishing community. For instance, some FLAGs have been successful at:

- > **involving the fisheries sector at all stages of planning tourism development.** Very often, strong community involvement is encouraged during the strategy development phase, but once the strategy is in place, the development of projects is often left to specialists. Moreover, fishermen are usually too busy or not willing to par-

ticipate in meetings and discussions that might not benefit them directly, so the FLAG may have to make a special effort to encourage them to participate. However, this involvement at the product planning stage may be essential to ensure that tourism products make the best of the fisheries character of the area and bring maximum benefit to the fisheries community;

- > assessing whether fishermen (and other local actors) have **sufficient skills to ensure the quality of the services** offered to tourists – and if they do not, at developing capacity building programmes which would provide the necessary skills (including customer service, marketing, health and safety, quality manage-







▲ Catering students in the Vänern-Kinneulle FLAG area (Sweden) prepare local fish dishes and tell the area's story to visitors.

ment, language etc.). This capacity building should also include raising the awareness of the fisheries representatives about the real tourist potential of the area – to avoid, on the one hand, certain assets being underestimated, and, on the other, excessive expectations that could lead to disappointment;

- > ensuring that all tourism products in the area (and especially those supported by the FLAG) **form a coherent package**, rather than a series of disconnected, and sometimes contradictory, initiatives. FLAGs can encourage cooperation between different actors to create a more comprehensive tourism offer, and by careful screening of projects to be supported, they can avoid unnecessary competition within the area or the displacement of existing initiatives;
- > ensuring that tourism development really **benefits the local community**, e.g. that hotels employ local people, that restaurants offer locally sourced products, especially fish, or that information about fishing-related tourism attractions is found in the tourist information centres or hotels.

Although, as has been said above, over 60% of FLAGs mention tourism as an important priority, only around 23% explicitly plan to strengthen the links

between tourism and fisheries. It is also interesting to note that while nearly all FLAGs have representatives of the fisheries sector on their decision-making bodies, a significantly lower proportion (21%) have representatives of the tourism sector on these bodies. Whether or not tourism actors sit on the FLAG board, a common understanding between the fisheries and tourism sectors is essential to ensuring that products are both successful on the tourism market and beneficial to the fisheries community.

This does not necessarily mean that fishermen must themselves be promoters of tourism-related projects; such projects can be carried out by local businesses (e.g. hotel or restaurant owners), NGOs or tourism organisations (e.g. projects aimed at promoting the area and its assets), or public authorities (e.g. infrastructural investments or cultural undertakings). The important thing is that the FLAG can assess these projects from several perspectives:

1. The suitability of the **tourism product** – it is not enough just to have “assets”, tourists also need products (in this sense, services are also products). The FLAGs should ask such questions as: What product do we offer? How viable is it? Is there a market? Who is the target group? How does it compare to competitors' products? Has the demand been estimated realistically?

2. The link between this product and **other activities in the area**: how will the product be connected with other elements of the area's tourism offer? Is it – or can it be – part of a larger “package”? What impact will it have on other businesses in the area (taking into account both positive and negative impacts, such as competition or displacement)? Where would it source its staff, materials, services?
3. The specific **link with the fisheries sector**: in what way does the product take into account the fisheries-related assets of the area? Will it benefit fishermen directly or indirectly? What conditions must be met for fishermen to benefit?

FLAGs should in particular encourage and support projects that manage to address these and other similar questions. In the following articles of this Magazine some examples of such projects will be presented. ■

## ZOOM

# Pesca-tourism in Sardinia: fishing and local products for a unique tourist experience (Italy)

**Sardinia is among the leading regions in Europe when it comes to pesca-tourism and related activities.**

The island's fishing is mainly small-scale, coastal fishing – and the Mediterranean weather lends itself nicely to tourism and outdoor activities. The region is also home to the operational seat of the national pesca-tourism association, PescaTour, set up in 2004 to promote pesca-tourism activities throughout Italy. PescaTour was closely involved in the preparations for Axis 4 in Sardinia and is a founding member of the “Costa Orientale” FLAG, which covers the east coast of the island. The FLAG's president, Fabrizio Selenu, has long been involved in diversifying his cooperative's activities to tap into the tourism market – as well as strengthening links with the local community as an all year round customer base for local fisheries products.

With the arrival of Axis 4 on the island, it is an exciting time in Sardinia and hopes are high for building on the work already done. In the meantime, however, the region offers a number of fisheries-related activities and services which stand out as examples of what fishing organisations around Europe can do to ensure that tourism works for them. FLAGs can support these types of activities in their areas but can also help build the necessary networks to strengthen individual initiatives and ensure that the territory as a whole gains.



▲ Pesca-tourism with the fishing cooperative, Sampey Mare Blu.

### “Ittiturismo”

The fishermen's cooperative of Tortolì, for example, brings together 40 fishermen who fish in the Tortolì lagoon, as well as in the Mediterranean Sea with 15 boats of 7-8 metres moored at Arbatax. Their president, Fabrizio Selenu, was at the forefront of an initiative in 1998 to move beyond fishing and into offering tourists the opportunity to taste freshly caught fish, barbecued on site by the local fishermen. This came at a time when legislation did not yet facilitate such novel activities by fishermen. The cooperative's aquaculture products from the lagoon (sea bream, red mullet, mussels, oysters, cockles...) were soon to be covered by newly established agri-tourism legislation, but only later did fisheries legislation catch up with

the entrepreneurial spirit on the ground and offer a framework to regulate “fishing tourism”, or “ittiturismo” as it is known in Italy. This legislation<sup>6</sup> now regulates a series of land-based tourist activities offered by professional fishermen, ranging from gastronomy to leisure activities and accommodation.

What started in Tortolì with 11 fishermen barbecuing fish for tourists, was formalised in 2003 with the establishment of a full-blown restaurant run by the cooperative, for which it received a grant of €77 000 (43% of the total cost) from the FIFG. This restaurant, La Peschiera, now serves 20 000 visitors a year – from Easter until November. Another 10 000 people

<sup>6</sup> See article, p. 26 on “pesca-tourism around Europe”



are attracted each year by other activities, which have since been initiated: leisure fishing on the lagoon, for example, as well as guided tours and interactive didactic demonstrations of the cooperative's fishing methods. "When people come to Arbatax, the fishing cooperative and its lagoon are among the key attractions", insists Fabrizio Selenu, "along with the Bue Marino caves or the megalithic Nuraghe ruins".

South of Tortolì, in Villasimius, a family fishing cooperative, Sampey Mare Blu, offers pesca-tourism trips to tourists who pay €70-90 per adult and up to €50 for under-10s to spend a day on a fishing boat. Ignazina and her husband Gemiliano, both active fishers, take the opportunity in the summer months to reduce their professional fishing activities and earn a little more by demonstrating local fishing techniques. They adapt their normal fishing day to one that is more attractive to holidaymakers and that allows them to pass on their knowledge of the sea, their profession and the types of fish caught in Sardinia. Setting sail at a leisurely 9 am, the Sampey Simone – named after Ignazina and Gemiliano's son – can take up to 12 tourists aboard and makes her way to where the nets have been set the night before. Nets of 1 km instead 5-6 km are set nearer to the coast than usual for the benefit of the tourists, who witness the pulling in of the nets and the untangling of the catch of red mullet, squid, scorpion fish, sea bream... They can also learn how to clean and gut the fish – part of which is used to prepare a hearty meal on board. Interestingly, the experience here shows that children who regularly object to eating fish at home can usually be tempted to taste the fruits of their labour. Strong

tourist demand for the opportunity to enjoy the Mediterranean sun and sea has also been integrated into the 6-8 hour trip, which leaves time for swimming and mooring in coves or points accessible only by boat.

The Sampey Mare Blu cooperative owns two of the nine boats that practise pesca-tourism in the FLAG area and is also a member of the FLAG. With Axis 4, the cooperative hopes to invest in better marketing of their pesca-tourism activity, as boats often go out with just 2-4 of the 12 spaces filled and, therefore, have to stick to a more typical fishing day in order to stay viable. Gianna Saba, President of PescaTour, says that more boats are needed if the territory is going to be able to satisfy the demand that can easily be generated by improved marketing. "The problem", she says, "is that with just two boats authorised for pesca-tourism, a fishing cooperative does not have the capacity to satisfy the large groups that hotels and schools could send them. Ideally, there would be five boats in a given port available for pesca-tourism when bigger bookings come in, and what we really hope for with Axis 4 is to have 15 boats in total in the FLAG area. At the moment, for example, there is 60 km of the coastline with no pesca-tourism."

Essentially, the FLAG's strategy lays down two key objectives in its tourism section: the development of more fisheries related tourism products (more boats adapted for pesca-tourism, fisheries-related eco-tourism activities and other services such as dining and accommodation offered by fishermen) – and the packaging and marketing of these products as a coordinated tourist offer of the territory. The first

objective implies the identification and mobilisation of more entrepreneurial fishermen willing to invest in new activities. For the second, the FLAG aims to establish a network of fishing-related tourism products and an agency that can coordinate the network, oversee quality and actively promote this offer.

The aim is to promote an environmentally sustainable type of tourism in the area, which maintains a healthy balance between fishing, tourism and the environment. Ignazina explains: "if more fishermen practised pesca-tourism in the summer, there would be more fish in the sea to catch during the winter". Moreover, the tourism objectives link in with the FLAG's parallel objectives of strengthening the fisheries supply chain by creating a network of local fisheries producers. If the FLAG is successful, the territory will become increasingly recognised for its sustainable fisheries activities and products.



## Report

### SYNERGY BETWEEN FISHERIES AND TOURISM IN THE EBRO DELTA [SPAIN]

# Fishing, an ally of low-impact tourism

**The low intensity tourism that predominates in the delta of the Ebro River draws increasingly on aspects of the fisheries sector. In addition to local gourmet products, a range of new tourism services is now also attracting visitors. These include sea fishing, sea trips, mussel and oyster tours and pesca-tourism. Despite the economic crisis, there is now a sustainable economy that is thriving locally, with a helping hand from Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund.**



The location is surreal. From a distance, it looks like an iceberg. You reach it by driving across a narrow four-kilometre strip of sand, a sort of mini Sahara between the sea and the lagoon, encountering a number of big, dust-covered trucks along the way. You finally reach an oasis, and pass through the doors of a kind of *hacienda* lying between the vast expanses of pink waters and a huge, immaculately white mountain of salt. Welcome to the Trinitat salt works, situated in the extreme south of the Ebro Delta.

*"The pinkness of the water is due to the *dunaliella salina* algae, the staple diet of the *artemia*, whose larvae the flamingos feed on, hence the familiar pink colour of these birds,"* explains Mateo Lleixa, the technician who guides us between the cages. The Trinitat salt works cover 1 000 ha of salt marshes and produce 25 000 tonnes of salt a year, 90% of which goes to industry and 10% of which is used in food. The company, which employs around 30 people, has benefited from three Axis 4 projects in recent years, most notably to build

an ecological dyke to improve salt productivity while also protecting a natural zone. *"Salt marshes are good for the environment because they prevent erosion and the silting up of the delta. They also attract many species of birds,"* adds Mateo.

*"As you can see, our site and our activity are very spectacular,"* points out Juan Sucar-rats, the company CEO. *"We would like to give them a tourism dimension by showing visitors around our facilities, like the Salines du Midi salt works do in France, for example. We submitted a project for this but failed to receive the necessary environmental permits."*

La Punta de la Banya, where the company operates, is in fact a nature reserve with limited access, which stretches out from the edges of the town of Sant Carles de la Ràpita. The area as a whole forms a maritime area known as Alfacs Bay, Europe's largest natural port. It is also one of the most important aquatic habitats in the Western Mediterranean and is particularly rich in bird life, with 95 nesting species and

330 migratory species using it as a resting place. *"Bird watching attracts a lot of visitors,"* points out Gala Martinez, coordinator of the Litoral Costa de l'Ebre FLAG. *"Axis 4 of the EFF has allocated €68 000 to provide equipment related to this leisure activity."*

Designated a Natural Park in 1986, the Ebro Delta (350 km<sup>2</sup>) is an area of vast and virtually wild sandy beaches, lagoons, rice fields, gardens and orchards – a cultural landscape with a strong identity. Rice is grown over a large part of the area, while fishing and aquaculture are two other important local activities. The mass of nutrients brought to the delta by the waters of the Ebro River, and the coming together of the river and sea waters, facilitates the reproduction of freshwater fish such as eel, carp, barbell, catfish and perch, while saltwater fish such as sea bass, sea bream and various species of mullet and flatfish also help to sustain a very active coastal fishing industry.



▲ Flamingos at the Punta de la Banya.

## Low intensity

*"The Ebro Delta has remained rural and practices low intensity tourism, due to the Natural Park, but also because we are a long way from Barcelona and Valencia. Nevertheless, tourism is the first resource for the local economy,"* explains Lluís Joaquim Granero, director of the Tourist Office at Sant Carles de La Ràpita (pop. 15 000 and a leading fishing port in Catalonia).

The town welcomes more than 400 000 visitors a year, especially from Spain, France, the UK and, in recent years, also from Russia. *"Two local operators brought more than a thousand Russian tourists to the area in 2012,"* says Jordi Lopez, coordinator of the local office of the *Station nautique*<sup>7</sup> association. He continues: *"With the help of the municipality, we have succeeded over the past four or five years in bringing together all the tourism operators, and together we have managed to agree on a genuine tourism policy in which fisheries have a major role to play, even if it has not yet realised its full potential. There are three strands to our policy: Alfacs Bay, with the 'Station nautique' label; gastronomy with the 'Sabores de España' label; leisure boating and other water-based activities such as kite surfing. Artisanal fishing is perfectly in keeping with these three strands and Axis 4 is helping to strengthen our network, which includes four fishing companies, about 20 restaurants, 20 hotels, and around 30 tourism operators, shopkeepers and travel agents."*



▲ Tourists experiencing 'paupa' fishing.

## Paupa

Sant Carles de La Ràpita benefits from three Axis 4 projects with the common aim of promoting sustainable tourism: signposting to facilitate town visits on foot; the creation of a website ([www.enlarapita.com](http://www.enlarapita.com)); and the production of a brochure in Catalan, Spanish, French, English, German and Russian to present the many local tourist and gastronomic attractions linked to fishing.

*"For the Russians, who always come in groups, we have developed an 'Artisan fishing tour',"* explains Jordi Lopez. *"Tourists take a day trip by boat all around the bay. Several stopping off places are scheduled along the way, where they can sample fish*

*and seafood. With the fishermen, we also arrange romantic trips to watch the magnificent sunrises and sunsets in the Ebro Delta, and nocturnal excursions to observe the stars, always with local produce on board. Another very successful activity is traditional 'paupa' fishing, which consists of fishing by hand for sea bass and sea bream trapped in a large net that the fishermen lay out a few hours beforehand in the shallow waters just off the coast."*



<sup>7</sup> A territorial quality label originating in France, *Station nautique* is also a network that now extends to Spain. [http://www.nautical-tourism.eu/?lg\\_id=1](http://www.nautical-tourism.eu/?lg_id=1)

**OFFERING A NEW AND UNIQUE TOURISM EXPERIENCE  
LINKED WITH THE EMBLEMATIC BLUE FIN TUNA**

## The ranchers of the sea

**A pioneer in blue fin tuna fishing and farming, the Balfegó company recently launched a unique form of pesca-tourism, unlike anything else in the world – swimming with tuna!**

With a fleet of six boats, all based in L'Ametlla de Mar, in the north of the Ebro Delta, the Balfegó family-run business has specialised in tuna fishing for three generations, and is the only one in Europe to use purse seining. With 120 employees, it is the Spanish leader in the blue fin tuna market and the first Spanish fishing company to have full control over the marketing of its catch, "from the seine to the fork", i.e. from the catch to the end consumer. About 75% of its production is for export, mainly to Asia.

In 2006, the company embarked on tuna farming, installing a dozen "pools" 2.5 miles from the port of L'Ametlla de Mar, where they tried to recreate natural living conditions of these fish as closely as possible.

The tuna are caught alive in the spring to the east of the Balearic Islands using a fishing method that eliminates catches of young fish or other species, while also having zero impact on the seabed. From the net, the live are transferred to a special transporting net that is towed (very slowly, at a maximum of one knot so as not to cause stress to the fish) to the "farm", just off the coast of L'Ametlla de Mar. They remain there for between 4 and 12 months while they recover the fat they lost during the reproductive cycle that brought them from the mid-Atlantic to the Mediterranean. "This way of farming tuna makes us the 'ranchers of the sea'," says Nuria Cherto, who runs the Tuna Tour.



The Tuna Tour is the tourist attraction that Balfegó launched in May 2012. "It's not an attraction, but an experience," corrects Nuria Cherto. "We sensed a great interest as soon as we started with the tuna farming a few years ago. It was already possible then for

the clients we took out to visit the "pools" to swim with the tuna and the message soon spread by word of mouth. People phoned us: 'We heard you can swim with the tuna at your place?'"

With the help of € 165 790 from Axis 4, the company purchased a passenger catamaran (costing €875 000), which is authorised to carry up to 70 people. The aim is to organise fun but educational visits to the fish farm.

The excursions last two hours. During the outbound trip, passengers can watch a video on the ecology of the tuna and the various ways of catching them. But the highlight comes when they arrive at their destination, don their swimsuits and plunge into one of the pools to swim with no fewer than 500 tuna. "As you can see, it is lots of fun for all the family," points out Nuria Cherto, "for anyone



▲ Whirlpools made by tuna catching sardines thrown to them from the boat.

between 5 and 89 years old. We are now seeking to develop a second product: underwater observation of the tuna, but this will be contracted out to a specialised company as diving is another profession and targets a different public."

On their return, the tourists are treated to a second video to watch where they learn about the details of tuna farming and get a chance to taste a slice of the final product. "It is true to say that we are the only ones anywhere in the world to organise an excursion of this kind. Those that exist elsewhere – only in Australia – adopt a different approach, one focused solely on having fun. We are above all an agri-food company seeking to make consumers more aware of the history and culture of tuna fishing in all its aspects, and to show that sustainable tuna fishing is possible under transparent conditions."

Six thousand people took the Tuna Tour between May and October 2012. In the high season (June to September) there are three excursions daily. The price is €47 per adult, €21 for children and €10 for school groups.

The tours have created eight jobs and Nuria Cherto adds: "We are also well integrated in the area. For example, we offer an all-in price that covers the Tuna Tour and a visit to the fishermen's quarter. We also work closely with other local attractions, such as the fish auction and the restaurants. We organise regular seminars for cooks to teach them how to prepare blue fin tuna. There are now 13 restaurants in the delta serving tuna, cooked Asian style as well as Mediterranean style."

This project, while of a fairly large scale nature, has helped develop the tourism potential of the area in an innovative way, created linkages between the local tourist and fishing industry and generated new job opportunities locally.

<http://www.tuna-tour.com/?p=home&sp=&lan=en>



## Shellfish Tour

The delta is also an important production zone for mussels, oysters and clams. "Galicia and the Ebro Delta are two complementary markets, especially for mussels. When one region ends, the other starts. The season in Galicia runs from February to May and here it is from April to September." Xavier Cabrera is one of the 60 mollusc growers who are members of the Federation of Mollusc Producers of the Ebro Delta (FEPROMODEL). Every year they produce 3 000 tonnes of mussels and 1 000 tonnes of oysters from around 100 platforms installed at sea.

Seeking to better promote the delta's shellfish production, in 2011, FEPROMODEL set up a working group that identified the considerable potential of tourism, especially as in 2012 the Government of Catalonia passed a law authorising pesca-tourism under certain conditions. "We therefore mapped out a 'Mussels and Oysters Tour', leaving from the port of L'Ampolla. The pilot phase went well, with 500 customers in 2011 and over a thousand in 2012, comprising Spaniards, but above all Russians and French. Now, thanks to the installation of a platform financed by Axis 4, the product is at the point where we can say that 2013 is our first genuine year of activity." A grant of around €100 000 from Axis 4 made it possible to set up the platform, which is now a knowledge centre on shellfish farming. This is the principal stopping off point on the tourist route, where participants (40 a day on average) learn about the principles of mussel and oyster farming.

The excursion begins in the port of L'Ampolla, where a large flat-bottomed boat with a capacity of 50 people welcomes the tourists on board at 10 in the morning. The trip around the shellfish beds lasts until four in the afternoon. Along the way, they stop off to taste the produce of various producers, to witness mollusc cleaning demonstrations etc. and there is also an instructive stop at the purpose-built platform. The price is €40 per person, which includes 1 kg of mussels, 4 oysters and a bottle of sparkling wine. "It is less expensive than in the Dominican Republic, the leaders when it comes to this kind of activity," declares Xavier Cabrera. "I went there to experience it for myself. They are much more advanced than we are here and



▲ Above and left: The Axis 4 funded 'Mirador de la Badia', a knowledge centre on shellfish farming. Below right: Pascual Chacon holding the 'Peix de llotja' logo.



they receive a lot of State aid. But the Government of Catalonia is now doing the same thing. It understands the advantages of this formula." The project has already created nine jobs (three of them seasonal), which include a skipper, a sailor, two waiters and two guides/interpreters who speak English, French and Russian.

Another Axis 4 project also served to create jobs, more modestly but on an equally solid basis. In July 2012, thanks to a €29 200 grant, the *cofradía* (association) of the fishermen of Les Cases d'Alcanar (35 members) opened a shop, making use of spare space at their headquarters, which now sells local products. The aim was to promote the artisan produce of the delta, while also creating new jobs. "We sell about 50 different products but few of them are fisheries related, apart from the terrines and dried fish, as fresh or perishable products require equipment that is too expensive for us," explains Esteban Fornós, a former fisherman who now works in the shop, having had to stop fishing and retrain following a serious leg injury. "The turnover is gradually increasing. We are open all year round but the summer is the peak season, with tourists making up 50% of our clientele."

## Fresh fish from the auction

"The delta is reputed for the quality of its produce, whether from agriculture (the excellent 'bomba' rice, fruit, etc.) or aquaculture (mussels, oysters and other molluscs)," says Pascual Chacon, secretary of the *Deltebre cofradía*. "This is one of the reasons tourists come here, but we realised that they were having difficulty finding fresh fish. There were only nine restaurants in the delta serving fresh fish. This was all the more regrettable as the quality of the local gastronomy has improved greatly over the last 15 years." To improve the promotion of locally caught fish, Pascual Chacon and his colleagues from the various fishing ports set up the Association of *cofradías* of the fishermen-sailors of the Ebro Delta, a grouping of four *cofradías* with a combined turnover of €44 million in 2012. The principle is to encourage the restaurants to purchase their supplies at local auctions – four of which are participating – so as to be able to serve fresh fish to their customers. "From an economic point of view, we are pursuing a dual objective: promote local fish and increase the price paid at the auctions. With regard to the latter, we have already achieved our goal: prices increased 20% last summer, rather than the usual 15% in our summertime prices."

Technical specifications have been drawn up and the participating restaurants display a plaque indicating "Peix de llotja" (auction fish) at the entrance, with one or more stars depending on the quantity of fish they buy at the auction: one star for purchases of between €3 000 and €6 000 per year; two stars for between €6 000 and €12 000; three stars for amounts above that. There are at present three restaurants with one star, four restaurants with two stars and five restaurants with three stars. "We decided to limit the number of participating restaurants to 12, both in the interests of quality control and to simulate the interest of other restaurants. Fifteen restaurants are currently on the waiting list."

The project received €16 000 from Axis 4 to cover the network launch, the drawing up of technical specifications and the quality control mechanism, the production of promotional material (logo, plaques, etc.) and the creation of a multilingual website (<http://peixdelotja.com/> currently under development).

"We are not a beach tourist destination but a gastronomic and open air tourist destination, says Pascual Chacon, but too much of this is based around day trips. We receive 1 500 visitors a day, but they arrive in the morning and leave again in the evening. This

is why, coupled with the approach adopted in the field of gastronomy, the new services linked to fishing launched in the delta over the past two or three years – I am thinking here of the mollusc tours, the Balfegó 'Tuna Tour' (see box), and fishing excursions – are

a good way of encouraging the tourists to stay longer. Another reason I am optimistic is that this area has been saved from the kind of urban planning and environmental disasters you see in other parts of Spain." ■

### LITORAL COSTA DE L'EBRE (Spain)




**Area:**  
928 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:**  
74 263 inhabitants

**Density:**  
80 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>

Axis 4 Budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	999 900	2 000 100	n.a.	3 000 000

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## Pesca-tourism, yes but...

**Unlike the more traditional ichthyotourism and fishing tourism, pesca-tourism still raises issues for the fishermen of the Ebro Delta.**

In talking to the many people we interviewed for the purposes of this report we sought to find out what they thought of pesca-tourism. Here are some of their comments:

"I believe that in promoting fishing produce, activities that allow tourists to actually participate, to experience something for themselves, are excellent," is the view of Esteban Fornos, a former fisherman who now runs a shop selling local products at Les Cases d'Alcanar (see main article). "In this respect, pesca-tourism is a very good idea. It is a way of communicating our way of living and working, today and in the past, including to the local people, who do not always know a lot about fishing and fishermen."

An opinion shared somewhat by Joan Llambrich and Josep Margalef, president and secretary respectively of the *cofradía* of L'Ametlla de Mar (280 fishermen, 55 boats). "Here there are three companies interested in pesca-tourism. It is a solution that can be

very advantageous to the fisherman because whatever the tourist pays on board adds to the value generated by fishing. But the formula needs to be adapted, as it is not always the case that tourists want to spend eight to ten hours at sea watching the fishermen at work. On a larger vessel, this is a bit like spending all day in a factory. Pesca-tourism is more suited to small-scale, coastal fishing, which can offer relatively short trips."

Pascual Chacon, secretary of the Deltebre *cofradía*, has another argument: "There are between 30 and 40 fishermen in the Delta who would like to get involved in pesca-tourism as a complementary activity, but they are going to have to wait another year or two as a lot of administrations are involved and these are not necessarily well coordinated. Fishing is a matter for regional government, and at that level it is sorted out, as the Government of Catalonia recently passed a law authorising pesca-tourism. But aspects relating to safety are dependent on central government in Madrid and there they are still working on it."

In short, pesca-tourism seems to be an attractive idea for professionals in the area but opinions are divided and the legislation still needs to evolve.

# People

## Stephanie Maes:

“Changing mentalities is a slow process, not least in the fisheries sector.

The most effective means is by showing the first results of projects already approved.”

**Interview with Stephanie Maes, manager of the Belgian Coastal FLAG (Belgium).**

**FARNET Magazine: Tell us more about yourself. What is your background and your connection with the fisheries sector?**

I studied geography and have always worked with geographic information systems (GIS). One of the projects I was previously involved in was a European project called EFRO, which involved collecting economic data from different sources. That was my first experience of managing a European project. It was a fascinating job but I missed the direct link with real people. This was why the vacancy of FLAG manager caught my attention.

The fisheries sector itself was completely new for me. I had to learn everything from scratch and get to know everybody concerned. This task was less daunting than I originally thought, however. The fisheries sector may seem like a close-knit community but I was amazed at how open and accepting people were.

**What is the current situation of fisheries in Belgium?**

The Belgian fisheries sector is in trouble. Exploitation costs are very high, since we have relatively large scale vessels. Fishing grounds are very dispersed and there are lots of regulations to be respected, which makes it hard to run a business.

Small-scale fisheries are only a small segment of the fleet. Most small-scale boats are used for sports fishing, which is not regulated. Rules (safety and skill requirements) are not adapted to small-scale fisheries, which represents a barrier to entry.

There is also a lack of processing facilities in the region and products are often exported, which means that the added value accrues elsewhere.

**What was the fishermen's reaction to Axis 4 at first? How did you manage to get them interested in the concept of the programme and, more generally, in local development?**

The sector had its objections to the programme, as it was seen as taking money from the other EFF Axes. In the beginning, sustainable development was interpreted in its narrowest sense, i.e.



### Stephanie Maes

A geographer, Stephanie Maes has been the manager of the Belgian Coastal FLAG since April 2011. In this role, she has promoted the FLAG and its strategy to a variety of stakeholders (fishermen, entrepreneurs and related organisations), which has resulted in 22 approved projects. The next call (and probably the last one) is open until the end of November 2013.

the ecological part. Making clear that sustainable development means formulating actions that consider the ecological, economic and social effects, and seeks to guarantee a future for the sector, helped to open up the dialogue.

But changing mentalities is a slow process, not least in the fisheries sector. The most effective means is by showing the first results of projects already approved. At first, I looked to the projects of other FLAGs, using those examples that corresponded to our situation. Now, however, I can draw on our own results.





## The Belgian Coastal FLAG: linking fisheries, gastronomy and tourism



The Belgian FLAG covers the complete coastline of Belgium (66 km). The FLAG area has about 220 000 inhabitants, of which approximately 300 are employed in fisheries, aquaculture or fish processing. Seventy-three fishing businesses are registered in the area.

Led by the Province of West Flanders, the FLAG partnership includes representatives of the fisheries sector, fish auctions, local communities and other stakeholders.

The FLAG strategy was approved at the beginning of May 2011.

The budget for the 2007-2013 period amounts to €4 428 410, 37% of which (€ 1 900 000) comes from Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund.

By October 2013, 22 projects had been approved. These include:

- *Valduvis*: the development of a scoring system to rate the different characteristics (social, economic and environmental) of local fisheries products, in order to enter an MSC type of labelling scheme.
- *Fish2know*: promoting the consumption of local species through an initiative that brings together catering students, fishermen and local enterprises to raise awareness of and promote local and sustainable sourcing.
- *Cool! Ik voel!*: an interactive aquarium located in a national fisheries museum, where fishermen will be trained to take part in workshops to share their knowledge with children.
- *North Sea chefs and fishermen*: creating a market for undervalued fish through collaboration between local chefs and fishermen.
- *Taskforce towards sustainable fisheries*: a cooperation initiative between the government, producer organisations and environmental organisations to foster the transition to sustainable fisheries.
- *Langoustine project*: re-introducing the traditional langoustine fisheries and investigating potential markets.
- *100%FISH*: a workshop on how to use every part of the fish, aimed at promoting consumption of the whole fish.


[www.west-vlaanderen.be/EVF](http://www.west-vlaanderen.be/EVF)

 **Given Belgium's relatively short coastline, touristic pressure is among the highest in Europe. What can the FLAG do to help the fishing sector in these circumstances? Do you see the heavy touristic pressure as a threat or as an opportunity?**

The touristic inflow is an opportunity. Legislation and the scale of vessels do not leave much opportunity for pesca-tourism. Nevertheless the high number of tourists visiting our region must be embraced and exploited. Visitors are potential consumers for our fishery products.

Tourists come to the seaside to enjoy not only beaches, sun and sea but also local gastronomy. Unfortunately, knowledge of local fishery products is limited and the volume of imported fish can blind consumers to the existence of local products.

Telling the story behind the products and bringing consumers into contact with the producers can help to overcome this.

 **Can you give us an idea of the types of projects you have supported? Which ones are particularly exemplary of your strategy of linking up the fisheries and the tourist sectors?**

One of our key objectives is to promote the local catch and different projects have been approved for different target groups. The message is always the same, however: to inform, to show, and to encourage the tasting of locally caught products.

The FLAG sees a role for chefs as ambassadors of our products, showing the public the great variety and versatility of our products. They are seen as the trendsetters. At the end of June 2013, for example, we launched the "A l'Ostendaise" project, which links 20 restaurants with local fishermen. Every month, the participating restaurants use a new fish species and promote this to their consumers. The idea is to immerse chefs into the world of fishermen so that they can also serve stories with their dishes.

To complement this project, the FLAG has also approved the Foodpairing "Fish" project. Foodpairing is a method of identifying which foods go well together. It is a source of inspiration that allows chefs to create new combinations of ingredients in their dishes. Foodpairing is not based on intuition or existing recipes, but on science, providing an objective overview of possible pairings.

Chefs indicated a lack of fish species in this database, so the scientists came to the FLAG to ask for support to investigate 18 species and three different ways to cook them. The results are foodpairing trees, which provide an overview of all the possible combinations.



▲ 'Fish2Know' project – a student learns how to cook lesser-known fish species.



▲ Fishing boat leaving Ostend.

**Some of these projects, like "Fish2Know" for example, are of interest to FLAGs elsewhere in Europe. Have you received proposals for cooperation? In what way could you help other FLAGs?**

In fact the idea of the "Fish2Know" project was inspired by the Sydney Seafood School in Australia, which shows the public how to cook lesser-known species. The managing director of the Flemish Auction was there on a holiday trip and had the opportunity to visit the school. She came back with the idea and proposed it to the FLAG. By that time, the Swedish FLAG, "FLAG Lake Vänern", had also developed a project for catering students.

At this stage the project is fully up-and-running. Half of the programme is complete and the other half is booked and will start running again from September 2013. We are now looking for solutions that will guarantee the continuity of the project beyond Axis 4.

An educational package has also been developed. The FLAG Hoogeland in the Netherlands has ordered the package to spread within their network. So far, however, we haven't had any proposals for cooperation.

**How do you see your role as a FLAG manager? What should a FLAG manager be or not be?**

First of all, I think the role and profile of a FLAG manager depends a lot on the fisheries area and the stakeholders involved. In general, however, you must be a trusted partner. It is important to go and talk to the different stakeholders. When I first started the job I visited some people who really knew the sector. This helped me a lot in terms of positioning the different stakeholders. But ultimately you have to go out on your own and meet fishermen, entrepreneurs, etc. I literally left for the quayside where

I just introduced myself and people started to talk, just appreciating that you are interested. A good first impression is always important. For that, a good "opening pitch" adapted to the audience, is essential. Do not start with explaining all about Axis 4 at once. Just make sure you have a clear short message which you can later expand on. People do appreciate it if you just come down from your desk and really try to understand their world and maybe explore together the challenges facing the sector and the possible responses.

As a FLAG manager, I see an important role for myself in bringing people together and in passing on information. However, some ideas are really innovative and new and people don't want you to spread the word. On the other hand, cooperation is important, so finding the balance, the right moment to bring people together, to suggest, to re-suggest... is important.

Also, you have to be flexible. Today, for example, I could only start my planned schedule at 16.00. Sometimes you just have to prioritise in order to gain later. Every day is different, you have to think together with the project promoters, and try to imagine their world of responsibilities, investment risks and needs.

**What are your expectations for the FLAG in the next period?**

I hope we can grow towards supporting entrepreneurship and new ideas related to fisheries. There is growing trust in the FLAG. At the last meeting we decided not to spend money on promotion anymore but instead try to stimulate new ideas. For instance, scientists and fishermen should be able to work more closely together and within timeframes that are better adapted to commercial realities. What data or investigations do we need in order to make businesses grow? ■

## Report

### TRAINING, THE LINK BETWEEN FISHING AND TOURISM IN FINNISH LAPLAND [FINLAND]

# The missing link

**In the far north of Finland, fishermen have turned to tourism to diversify and increase their income. The process began with a training programme supported by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund.**



▲ Fish is a star of the show at the Midnight Sun Film Festival.

*"In North Finnish dialect, the expression 'go fishing' translates as, 'go and ask if you can have fish'." This remark by the manager of the Northern & Eastern Lapland FLAG, Markku Ahonen, is as deep as the lakes and forests of this part of Europe, located more than 150 km north of the Arctic Circle. It reflects a mentality, and perfectly captures the essence of all that Lapland is and can offer, provided that one respects its unique environment and its abundant resources. It can also be a great way to welcome holidaymakers "from the south", who are coming in ever-increasing numbers to try their hand at fishing tourism, with all the thrills it entails, like catching a 60 cm-long pike almost as soon as you cast your line into the river, or sledging on a frozen lake, to accompany a fisherman as he gathers in his nets spread beneath the ice.*

The FLAG area is the second largest of the 303 areas covered by Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF)<sup>8</sup>. At 33 500 km<sup>2</sup>, it covers an area larger than Belgium! *"The distance between settlements is a constant challenge in our work," says Markku Ahonen, "but it is also a tremendous opportunity, because where else can you find such expanses of wilderness in Europe?"*

And he could have added: and such large stretches of fresh water in the EU, apart from Lakes Vänern and Vättern in Sweden, Lake Saimaa in Finland, and Lake Peipsi in Estonia<sup>9</sup>? The Northern and Eastern Lapland fisheries area has over 3 000 km<sup>2</sup> of inland waters, including 1 040 km<sup>2</sup> for Lake Inari alone. These waters are full of fish, of which six species are commercially exploited: whitefish, trout, perch, vendace, burbot and pike. But in recent years, the sector has experienced some setbacks, which have forced fishermen to find additional sources of income.

#### Alternative sources of income

In the early 2000s, the municipality of Sodankylä (population 9 000, spread across 12 445 km<sup>2</sup>!), one of the three municipalities in the Axis 4 zone, had 40 professional fishermen who caught mostly whitefish, but the mandatory switch from the pound net to the gill net led to more selective fishing, which caused overpopulation of whitefish, and then an infection of this species by a parasite, *Triaenophorus crassus*. Between 70% and 90% of stocks were affected in 2009. To compensate, the fishermen turned to perch and pike, but demand for these species was lower at that time, so their incomes collapsed and half the fishermen left the industry.

The remaining 20 fishermen began to look at alternative sources of income, and tourism emerged as the most promising option. *"It was an obvious choice," says Hanna-Leena Talvensaari, manager of the Leader Local Action Group (LAG) for Northern Lapland, the supporting structure for the FLAG. "We get close to a million visitors a year, just over half of them in winter. Tourism is growing and this is the sector that holds the greatest potential for local development.*

<sup>8</sup> The Eastern Finland fisheries area (FI05) is larger.

<sup>9</sup> See FARNET Magazine No. 5.





▲ Lake Lokka.

*It is also the main thrust of our Leader programme, with many projects carried out by village associations (hiking and mountain bike trails...), and support for many small tourism businesses and the organisation of festive events. The project that the fishermen proposed to the FLAG complemented the process started with Leader particularly well."*

The fishermen turned to the FLAG, which had just been set up at that time. "We immediately felt that they were listening, says one of the fishermen we met, *there was excellent collaboration between the FLAG and the municipality and, thanks to that collaboration, we were able to get the backing of a lot of the fishermen, who were closely involved from the outset*".

Preliminary discussions started with the municipality in July 2009. As a first step, a needs assessment questionnaire was developed jointly and sent to all the full-time fishermen. A month later, the outline of the project was defined with the assistance of the FLAG: the fishermen wanted to sign up for a training programme focused on two main objectives – acquiring the skills and statutory authorisations required to cater for and carry fee-paying passengers; devising and developing structured tourism products based on fishing.



▲ First aid was an important part of the training.

A grant application was prepared by Marjo Harjula, the tourism adviser at the municipality, with the assistance of the FLAG. In October, the application was validated by the FLAG and submitted to the managing authority, which approved it in November, for an initial amount of € 78 000.

*"The basic idea is to ensure that the tourist experiences what the full-time fisherman experiences, by fishing themselves or by watching the fisherman at work. In the latter case, we can really talk about pesca-tourism", says Kaisa Annala, the person in charge of the first phase of the project (see box). "But whatever form it takes, what was required first and foremost was for the fishermen to learn the basic skills and take the various exams to obtain the necessary authorisations."*

The training initially consisted of courses on safety (first aid, a licence to sail with tourists on board, knowledge of relevant legislation...) before focusing on customer service and product development (see details in text box). Each course was taught by an instructor specialising in the subject concerned. A total of 20 fishermen participated in both phases of the training and 10 are now qualified to take tourists on excursions.





## A comprehensive training programme

The tourism training programme for the fishermen of Sodankylä was held in two phases, each complemented by five study trips (visits to businesses and tourism exhibitions). The courses included were as follows:

### 1<sup>st</sup> phase (2010-2011)

- > Licence to carry passengers: 1 day
- > First aid: 2 days
- > Safety at work and certification: 1 day
- > Training in safety procedures: 1 day
- > Product development (collective and individualised training): 2 days
- > 5 study visits

### 2<sup>nd</sup> phase (2012-2013)

- > Consumer safety (legislation): 1 day
- > Development of fishing tourism as a product: 1 day
- > Training in English terminology specific to fishing tourism: 1 day
- > Public grants available for the promotion of tourism: 1 day
- > Introduction to social media: 2 days
- > First Aid: 1 day
- > Rescue activities on and around water: 1 day
- > Greeting and guiding customers: 1 day
- > Specifications and quality charter: 1 day
- > Running the excursion ("story telling"): 3 days
- > Russian culture and language: 2 days
- > 5 study trips to fairs
- > Product development (individualised training: 1 day



### Budget

Costs (EUR)	Axis 4 of the EFF	National	Municipality of Sodankylä	Total
Phase I	30 186	40 014	7 800	78 000
Phase II	33 058	43 820	8 542	85 420
<b>Total</b>	<b>63 244</b>	<b>83 834</b>	<b>16 342</b>	<b>163 420</b>

## Second generation

Ninety kilometres east of the town of Sodankylä, but still in the same municipality, is the village of Lokka, with a population of less than 100 people, mostly reindeer herders or fishermen. Of the fishermen, 15 are registered as full-time professionals. *"It is only the second generation of fishermen,"* says Markku Ahonen, *"because commercial fishing only started here after the creation of the reservoir lake in 1967."* Lokka is located beside the dam that turned part of the upper Luiro river into a huge lake of 244 km<sup>3</sup>, containing rich fish stocks. *"After the land was flooded, their parents turned to fishing, but mainly as a subsistence activity. Then the second generation of fishermen turned fishing into a real business activity, with a keen focus on quality. Fish from Lokka has an excellent reputation in the food industry in Finland."*

In 1997, the local fishermen set up the "Natural Resources Cooperative of Lokka", which now runs a municipally-owned processing unit for filleting, freezing and packing of fish. Most of the production is transported by truck to the south of Finland. *"It takes 32 hours from the time the fish is caught until it goes on sale in Helsinki, 1 000 km from Lokka,"* says Risto Pyhäjärvi, a member of the cooperative and vice-chairman of the FLAG. *"About 10% of our fish is sold directly to hotels and restaurants in Lapland and central Finland. The rest is bought by wholesalers, but we are currently developing our own distribution system to cut out the middlemen and get better prices."*

As its name suggests, the cooperative is not limited to fishing, although that is its main activity. *"Fishing generates 85% of the turnover of the cooperative, the rest is divided equally for the moment between the catering service that we provide to the village school, reindeer meat marketing and tourism. For a variety of reasons, including the problems we encountered with whitefish in 2009-2010, we decided to develop the latter activity."*

Having organised themselves in this way, nine fishermen from Lokka participated in the fishing tourism training programme. *"We were already familiar with a form of tourism, through chance encounters and holidaymakers who come to Lokka, but we wanted to do it professionally and also develop pesca-tourism."*

## Winter-time nature tourism

Risto and two colleagues from the cooperative, who are also certified, now offer six of the 11 tourism products developed during the training course (see text box). *"Together, we are able to cater for groups of up to a busload of people."* Some services are provided under the banner of the cooperative as a whole, but the majority are provided by individuals. In 2012, the first year of operation, Risto took around sixty tourists on a fishing or pesca-tourism trip, which gave him twenty days' work.

Most trips take place in the winter, which is convenient, as the fishing in Lokka is quieter between January and March.

This opinion is shared by Hanna-Leena Talvensaari, coordinator of the Leader group: *"The best opportunities are most clearly to be found in winter-time nature tourism. For the visitor, it is winter that offers the most thrilling and authentic experiences with skiing, snowmobiling, dog sledding and now pesca-tourism. For the territory, this is when tourism has the biggest economic impact: the winter holidaymakers tend to be affluent and on the lookout for new experiences. In summer, there are events like the Midnight Sun Film Festival<sup>10</sup>, but our visitors are mostly people in motor-homes, who are more self-reliant and who spend less. In both cases, however, the tourists know what they want and you can't fool them."*



<sup>10</sup> Festival organised since 1986 by film directors Mika and Aki Kaurismäki in Sodankylä, attended by the cream of world cinema.



▲ Ice fishing on Lake Lokka.



▲ River fishing on the Luiro.

## Eleven fishing tourism products

Tour	Where	Duration	When	Group size	Price
Ice fishing	Lake Lokka	3 hours	Jan-Apr	3 persons mini.	€85/pers.
Wintertime net fishing	Lake Lokka	3 hours	Jan-Apr	3 persons mini.	€65/pers.
Winter fishing	Lake Lokka	7 hours	Xmas-May	1-4 persons	€200* + €30/pers.
Wintertime seine fishing	Lake Unari	3 hours 8 hours	Dec-Apr	1-20 persons	€150-190* €220-280*
Winter outing – Net fishing	Lake Lokka	3 hours	Nov-Apr	2-4 persons	€70/pers.
River fishing	River Luiro	6 hours	Jun-Sep	4 persons	€240* + €15/pers.
River fishing	River Sattasjoki	7 hours	Open water season	1-2 persons	€480* + €25/pers.
Summer fishing	Lake Lokka	6 hours	Jun-Oct		€180* + €70/pers.
Open water fishing	Lake Unari	1 hour	Open water season	1-20 persons	€20/pers.
Canoe trip	River Postojoki	2 days 1 night	Jun-Oct	1-3 persons	€410* + €70/pers.
Cloudberry tour	Pomokaira Sodankylä	6 hours	End of summer	1-4 persons	€170* + €25/pers.

\*Fixed fee for equipment.





▲ Risto Pyhäjärvi and his river fishing boat.

## Marketing

*"Demand is growing, slowly but surely," says the tourism official, Marjo Harjula. "Today, we have something structured to offer visitors. There are now seven fishermen who have all the necessary authorisations, qualifications and skills to provide quality services. Previously, in terms of fishing, we had to offer 'basic' products with no real value-added, just pitches on lakes and rivers for individual anglers..."*

*"What we need to work on now is marketing. But that takes time," says Risto Pyhäjärvi. The 11 packages developed during the training programme have been presented twice in Helsinki: at Riihimäen Erämessut, the largest hunting and fishing fair in Finland, in June 2012; and at MATKA-messut, the largest travel show in Northern Europe in January 2013.*

Fishing tourism in Sodankylä will be the subject of a national television programme this year. It is also promoted by the major ski resort of Pyhä-Luosto, but primarily the marketing is carried out through the website and brochures of the municipality, on Facebook, by the fishermen themselves, and often by word of mouth, which may explain why all the customers so far have been Finnish.

The project has been replicated in other parts of Finland: the FLAG of Vakka-Suomi has undertaken similar actions, and the Gulf of Bothnia FLAG is planning to do the same. Markku Ahonen has also received requests for information from a Danish group and other FLAGs elsewhere in Europe, especially after the presentation of the project at the FARNET conference in November 2011 in Brussels (see *FARNET Magazine* No. 5).

But now, one year on, what do the people to whom it matters most, the fishermen, think about it? *"Since you ask me, I have three tips to give," says Risto Pyhäjärvi. "First of all, take training courses, this is essential; Secondly, keep an open mind; and lastly, put your individualism aside, and socialise with your customers. But the most important thing is to enjoy it. What I like about tourism is being able to make people happy, espe-*

*cially the children. Being there when someone makes their first catch, sharing the joys and frustrations of my job, this makes me happy too. That's what motivates me."* ■

POHJOIS- JA ITÄ-LAPIN KALATALOUSRYHMÄ (Finland)				
	<b>Area:</b>			
	33 500 km <sup>2</sup>			
	<b>Population:</b>			
	25 000 inhabitants			
	<b>Density:</b>			
	0.75 inhabitants/km <sup>2</sup>			
Axis 4 Budget (2008-2011)	EUR			
	EU	National	Municipal	Total
Total	240 000	319 200	56 800	616 000
<b>CONTACT</b> <b>Northern &amp; Eastern Lapland FLAG</b> c/o <b>Markku Ahonen</b> , Manager Pohjois- ja Itä-Lapin kalatalousryhmä, Sairaalanatie 3b, FIN-99800 Ivalo Tel. +358 40 704 6094 – Fax (358) 16 687 465 <a href="mailto:markku.ahonen@pll.fi">markku.ahonen@pll.fi</a> – <a href="http://www.pll.fi">www.pll.fi</a>				

# Trade winds

## FRANCE

### Haliotika – La Cité de la Pêche

**Total cost:** EUR 270 000 – **EU contribution (EFF Axis 4):** EUR 49 854

"Established in Guilvinec (Brittany) in 2000, Haliotika – La Cité de la Pêche (Fisheries City) is a modern and interactive interpretation centre that takes visitors into the world of sea fishing. An innovative and unique structure on the Atlantic coast, Haliotika receives 47 000 visitors each year. Boasting stunning views from the panoramic terrace overlooking the harbour, visitors flock to see the return of the fishing boats around 17:00. The centre organises tours to visit the fish auction (5:30 or 16:30), and thematic workshops and trips along the coast. As a showcase of sea fishing and fishing skills, Haliotika now also offers visitors a new exhibition – 'De la mer à l'assiette' (From the sea to the plate) – which explains the different stages of fish processing, from the catch to the tasting. The objective of the project is to promote fish and the fisheries sector. Fish is at the centre of this new exhibition, which brings together fishermen, dockers, wholesalers, fishmongers and consumers to share their experiences."

**Anna Latimier**, coordinator

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[www.haliotika.com](http://www.haliotika.com)



## LITHUANIA

### The "Pamario Delta" project

**Total cost:** EUR 62 000 – **EU contribution (Axis 4 EFF):** EUR 46 500

"The association 'Pamario Delta' is implementing the project, 'Fishermen's incentives and adaptation of skills for recreation and tourism', in accordance with the sustainable fisheries development strategy of the Silute and Neriga district municipalities. The aim of the project is to introduce to fishermen and their families the latest fishing and ornithological equipment, and facilities for recreational fishing and water activities. The introductory conference and the training in recreational fishing and water tourism management have already taken place. The association purchased the fishing equipment and also plans to buy bird watching and recording equipment in order to conduct theoretical and practical training on ornithological tourism opportunities."

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**Simona Bokštaitė-Dryžienė**, project manager

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[pamariodelta@gmail.com](mailto:pamariodelta@gmail.com)



## SWEDEN

### Ecotourism in a biosphere reserve

**Total cost:** EUR 38 600 – **EU contribution (Axis 4 EFF):** EUR 10 070

"In the Vänern-Kinneulle FLAG area, ecotourism is more than an option: with an existing ecotourism network of more than 20 local partners, including SMEs, restaurants, campsites, microbreweries, museums and bike rentals, the area has successfully capitalized on an entrepreneurial-wise nature conservation policy. Indeed, in 2004, three local municipalities took the lead in studying how their area could be recognized as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Six years of hard work led to a detailed assessment of the quality of ecosystems and a better understanding of the roles that economic actors in the area could play in helping to manage and value this natural capital. The process led to the official recognition of the area and the creation of a Biosphere Reserve management NGO in 2010. This organisation was selected as a FLAG a few months later, which added a strong fisheries string to its bow. Since its establishment in 2010, the FLAG has launched a dozen projects that derive value from the economic and historic aspect of the local fisheries, further boosting the ecotourism economy sustained by the biosphere reserve."

**Ove Ringsby**, project leader

[ove.ringsby@vanerkulle.se](mailto:ove.ringsby@vanerkulle.se)

<http://tinyurl.com/marpfv6>

<http://tinyurl.com/kbmsovx>



## POLAND

### "Fisheries Trail"

**Initial phase – Total cost:** EUR 5 000 – **EU contribution (Axis 4 EFF):** EUR 3 750

**Full cooperation project (pending approval) – Total cost:** EUR 185 000 – **EU contribution (EFF Axis 4):** EUR 138 750

"The Slowinska FLAG is developing a tourist trail based on the local fisheries culture and tradition. The aim is to diversify the fishing activity by facilitating the active participation of the local fisheries community. So far, a detailed inventory of

the relevant local resources (places, buildings, attractions related to fishing and the sea) has been carried out, as well as a first of two workshops for representatives of the fishing community. The workshop resulted in the development of fisheries-related tourist packages for different target groups. For example, a package addressed to families with children consists of accommodation in a fisherman's house, a bicycle trip including a 'live' history lesson of the area, and a visit to a small fishing harbour to observe the daily work of fishermen. The tourist packages and distribution channels, including a website, will be finalised by the end of 2013. The project is part of the 'Northern Fisheries Trail with Promotion of Education Centres', a cooperation project involving six FLAGs from the north of Poland."

**Aleksandra Klimczuk**, Director, Slowinska FLAG

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## Spotlight

# Pesca-tourism around Europe

**Many FLAGs have been keen to capitalise on the potential of pesca-tourism to promote their local fisheries products and attract visitors to discover their area's fishing heritage. However, pesca-tourism often faces strong legal and administrative barriers, and in many countries it is not permitted.**

Leisure fishing often co-exists uneasily alongside professional fishing, be it due to the high levels of fish landed without the same controls that professional fishermen are subject to, or simply because those earning a living from recreational fishing operate in an entirely separate sector to professional fishermen. Pesca-tourism, on the other hand, links the world of the professional fisherman to that of the tourist, including the leisure fisher. By pesca-tourism, we mean the practice of taking paying clients on board a working fishing boat to observe the work of professional fishermen and discover, and enjoy, the marine or freshwater environment.

Pesca-tourism is practised primarily as a complementary activity, which allows professional fishermen to **diversify their revenue source**, but it also contributes to a range of other challenges faced by the fisheries sector and by areas where fishing is an important socio-economic characteristic. It can help to **increase the value added of local fisheries products**, for example, by raising awareness of the work and techniques used by fishermen in the area, and by **improving the image of fishing** in general; it can help attract new people to the sector by **promoting fishing as a career option** for those suited to an outdoors, if sometimes challenging, lifestyle; and it offers a way for fishermen to **reduce their environmental**

**impact** by conducting a series of lighter than normal fishing days, thus contributing to the long-term sustainability of the fishing industry. Pesca-tourism should not be seen as a panacea for the significant structural difficulties that fisheries around Europe are facing. And, it may not be suited to all areas and all types of fishing. It is, however, helping a number of fishing families to earn a better living, while also promoting a better management and understanding of local fisheries resources. There is also potential for this activity to be more effective in the future.

FLAGs in many countries have been keen to capitalise on the potential of pesca-tourism to promote their local fisheries products and attract visitors to discover their area's fishing heritage. However, while pesca-tourism is well established in countries such as Italy, in many others it faces strong legal and administrative barriers, and in some it is simply not permitted.

The table attached to this article presents a short summary of the legal situation in those countries implementing Axis 4. According to this information, only three of these 21 countries (Italy, France and Greece) have national legislation in place that specifically mentions pesca-tourism. Of these, only Italy and France have laid out national implementing rules. Greece is due to develop such terms and con-



▲ A pesca-tourism boat in Castro (Italy).

ditions, but in the meantime, there are no procedures in place for Greek fishermen to obtain a licence to carry out pesca-tourism.

Two more countries have started a process which is likely to lead to a legal framework for pesca-tourism: national legislation has been proposed in Spain, and some of the Spanish regions have taken the initiative to prepare regional regulations laying down the rules and requirements to take tourists on board fishing boats; and Cyprus initiated a pilot project in May 2013 to trial pesca-tourism, just as France did in 2009-2011, before the relevant legislation was amended in 2012.





▲ This shrimp fishing boat based in Ostend (Belgium) is authorised for pesca-tourism, having received a special 'cultural heritage' permit.

At the other end of the scale, eight Axis 4 countries (Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands<sup>11</sup>, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia) do not allow tourists to board commercial fishing vessels. In these countries, FLAGs either have the option of lobbying for a change in the legislation, as is happening in Germany and Portugal, or they can concentrate on promoting similar activities that fall within the legal boundaries. Examples may include activities on decommissioned or converted fishing boats operated by active or retired fishermen, or taking tourists on purpose-built boats to observe professional fishing or aquaculture activities from a distance. However, in the case of the latter, the economic benefits tend to accrue to the tourist operator, not the fishermen. One difficulty that presents itself in countries where there is demand to change existing legislation is that it is rarely the Department of Fisheries, or even the same Ministry, that determines the conditions for taking passengers on fishing boats. Such decisions are often made by the Ministry of Transport or Development – and sometimes the competencies span more than one Ministry. Stakeholders must, therefore, convince not only their contacts in the Department of Fisheries, but also in the other relevant Ministries.

<sup>11</sup> The Netherlands makes an exception, under certain conditions, for fishing boats to conduct tourist activities in inland waters.

Finally, eight countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Sweden and the UK) have not explicitly ruled out pesca-tourism but do not yet have specific legislation in place to regulate the activity. Instead, fishing boats have to comply with the same health and safety requirements that apply to all passenger vessels. These regulations can be extremely strict or imply prohibitively high costs for adapting boats and in some countries this effectively rules out the possibility of fishing boats taking tourists on board. In other countries, however, and depending on the type of fishing, the adaptations required may be minimal and systems are in place to issue licences to those fishing boats that wish to take tourists on board and meet the necessary requirements. In Finland, for example, as well as the requirements boats must meet, fishermen themselves must attend a training course and pass specific exams before receiving a licence. Insurance is another requirement.

Clearly, safety on board is a prime concern for any government department regulating pesca-tourism. Terms and conditions put in place may include: the size and stability of the boat in question; and the space available for tourists and their distance from any fishing machinery or gear present – most countries, for example, explicitly rule out pesca-tourism on













▲ Tourist on a fishing trip near Peniche (Portugal).












active trawlers. Other rules may apply to the number of tourists permitted on a given size of boat and the number of crew members required to look after them, as well as prerequisite first aid and rescue equipment. In those countries where it is possible for fishermen to take tourists on board, a second challenge is taxation. Many countries have a more favourable tax regime for professional fishing but such provisions do not tend to extend to activities that go beyond fishing itself. Setting up a parallel accounting system for pesca-tourism activities is, of course, an additional barrier to fishermen considering diversifying into tourism. This issue has been dealt with in the legal framework that France put in place in 2012 to facilitate pesca-tourism. Here, fishermen can practice the activity with the same tax rate as their fishing activity provided that annual revenue from pesca-tourism does not exceed €32 100 and/or account for over 50% of their income.



## Current state of pesca-tourism legislation in Axis 4 countries

COUNTRY	CURRENT STATE OF LEGISLATION
 <b>Belgium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active fishing boats. If fishing boats are decommissioned they can be converted and used for tourism.</li> </ul>
 <b>Bulgaria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No specific legal texts dealing with pesca-tourism exist in Bulgaria. Tourists can board a fishing boat to observe the activity only if this is consistent with the safety rules governing the "transport of passengers".</li> <li>- If fishing boats comply with the transport of passenger rules, they can also take tourists leisure fishing (to fish with a rod and reel).</li> </ul>
 <b>Cyprus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is currently no specific legislation on pesca-tourism but a first pilot project started in May 2013. This project received a special permit from the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and requires a number of adaptations to the participating fishing boat to comply with Regulatory Administrative Act 278/2012. There are plans to introduce a special permission for pesca-tourism during the reform of the current fisheries law.</li> </ul>
 <b>Germany</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pesca-tourism is not allowed at the moment due to maritime transport regulations. There is currently pressure to change this legislation, mainly to allow fishing boats to service wind farms, which would require the presence of technicians on board.</li> <li>- Through the German National Network, FLAGs are trying to use this opportunity to press for the foreseen change in legislation to also allow fishing boats to host tourists.</li> </ul>
 <b>Denmark</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active fishing boats. If fishing boats are decommissioned they can be converted and used for tourism.</li> </ul>
 <b>Estonia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pesca-tourism is permitted, but for safety reasons, a limit on the number of people per vessel has to be respected. The regulation also depends on the type of licence held by the boat captain. The income of fishermen from this activity is treated in the same way as other income.</li> </ul>
 <b>Spain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is currently only possible to take tourists aboard professional fishing boats with special authorisation from Spain's shipping department.</li> <li>- However, proposed changes to the 2001 fishing law include defining pesca-tourism as a complementary activity to that of fishing itself and one that can include taking tourists on board. If these modifications are approved, national legislation would need to be developed to determine the conditions for taking tourists on board fishing vessels. This falls under the competency of the Ministry of Development's Shipping Department.</li> <li>- Catalonia became the first region in Spain, in 2012, to develop a legal text laying down the conditions under which fishing boats in Catalonia can take tourists on board. This is valid for coastal waters only.</li> <li>- So far, both Catalonia and Galicia have been granted authorisation for certain pesca-tourism activities. Private insurance is among the prerequisites for boats that take tourists on board.</li> </ul>
 <b>Finland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pesca-tourism can be practiced but fishermen must comply with the same safety regulations as other companies taking customers on board vessels (e.g. those laid out by the Finnish Transport Safety Agency; in the Act on Ships' Crew and Safety Management of Ships; and the Act on Consumer Safety).</li> <li>- In practice, for example, there must be a safe and adequate space in the boat for tourists to observe the activity, appropriate rescue equipment, and fishermen must have the necessary insurance and a licence to take tourists aboard (attending training courses and passing the relevant tests are a prerequisite for this licence).</li> </ul>
 <b>France</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- French legislation (sections 226 and 227 of the annexed regulation to the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1987 law concerning security on board vessels) was modified in March 2012 to allow fishing boats, excluding trawlers, to take tourists on board. Chapters 10 and 11 were added to specify the security conditions to respect when practising pesca-tourism.</li> <li>- Fishing boats taking tourists on board must comply with a number of conditions, including the minimum height (1 metre) of the edge of the boat where passengers are seated, toilets on board for trips of more than six hours, and certain safety equipment on board, such as life jackets, high frequency radio etc. Fishing boats practising pesca-tourism must also have a designated area for tourists – separate from the crew's work area.</li> <li>- Provisions have been made for fishermen to practice the activity with the same tax rate as their fishing activity, provided that annual revenue from pesca-tourism does not exceed € 32 100 and/or account for over 50% of their income.</li> </ul>
 <b>Greece</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law 4070/2012 "Arrangements on Electronic Communications, Transport, Public Works and other Provisions" was passed in April 2012. Section E of this Law ("Pesca-tourism" – Articles 174 to 184) aims to allow for the diversification of the fisheries sector, including the possibility of undertaking pesca-tourism activities.</li> <li>- Professional fishing boats wishing to practice pesca-tourism need a special permit, which is issued by the port authority where the fishing boat is registered.</li> <li>- A Presidential Decree must now be passed before the law becomes effective in terms of allowing pesca-tourism activities. This Presidential Decree will lay down the terms and conditions for the issue of the permit and will define the competent authorities for the supervision and control, the procedure, the necessary documents for the issue of the permit, its duration, the permitted fisheries gear, the maximum number of passengers and the maximum distance from the coast.</li> </ul>



COUNTRY	CURRENT STATE OF LEGISLATION
 <b>Ireland</b>	- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active fishing boats.
 <b>Italy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two national laws are in place laying down the conditions for practicing pesca-tourism in Italy: Ministerial Decrees n°293/1999 and n°154/2004 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. These were updated in 2012, with the elimination of the ceiling on the percentage of revenue that fishermen can derive from their pesca-tourism activity.</li> <li>- Individual boat owners or cooperatives with a professional fishing licence are permitted to take tourists on board to observe the fishing activity and can serve a fish meal on the boat or at shore. They can also allow tourists to fish from the boat.</li> <li>- A number of conditions are included in the legislation such as the type of gear fishermen can use when tourists are on board (fishing boats cannot trawl, for example, with tourists on board) and the safety equipment that must be on board: life jackets, fire extinguisher, compass, VHF radio, navigation maps etc. For boats going beyond three miles from the coast (and up to 20), additional equipment, such as a life boat is necessary.</li> <li>- A number of Italian regions (e.g. Abruzzo, Calabria, Campania, Lazio, Liguria, Marche, Tuscany and Veneto) have also developed more specific legislation to regulate pesca-tourism.</li> </ul>
 <b>Lithuania</b>	- No specific legislation covers pesca-tourism. Fishing boats taking tourists on board would need to comply with all EU & National health and safety conditions that apply to the transport of passengers (including requirements on the maximum number of passengers and minimum crew members).
 <b>Latvia</b>	- Tourists can be taken on board a professional fishing vessels, but all regulations concerning health and safety on-board must be respected.
 <b>Netherlands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active seagoing fishing boats. If fishing boats are decommissioned they can be converted into use for tourism, in which case they must comply with the relevant regulations (SOLAS, Shipping Act, Ships Decree...). These boats can carry up to 12 passengers.</li> <li>- Fishing vessels meeting the necessary requirements may be certified as "cruise-day boats" by the Environment and Transport Inspectorate, which allow the carrying out of tourism activities in inland waters, including fishing demonstrations.</li> </ul>
 <b>Poland</b>	- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active fishing boats. Fishermen can take tourists on board when they are not fishing and in such a case only recreational fishing is permitted on condition that the fishing boat is adapted to such activities (e.g. safety card, sport fishing licence). Recreational fishing is permitted at any time of the year but it requires prior notification to the fisheries inspection services and cannot be combined with commercial fishing.
 <b>Portugal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is currently illegal to take tourists on board active fishing boats.</li> <li>- The FLAGs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries are currently trying to press for a legal framework similar to that in the Azores, where more lenient conditions are in place that allow pesca-tourism to be practiced legally.</li> </ul>
 <b>Romania</b>	- No specific legislation regulates pesca-tourism in Romania and no demand for the activity has been received by the relevant authorities. Fishermen can, however, currently apply for a licence to take tourists on board their boats for general tourist trips.
 <b>Sweden</b>	- Strict conditions apply to fishing boats wishing to take tourists aboard and, for boats of over 20 tonnes and carrying more than 12 passengers, the boat and the crew must have a licence, the relevant safety certificates, safety inspection protocols, and the boat must be registered as a passenger vessel. Passenger insurance is needed in all cases.
 <b>Slovenia</b>	- It is not permitted to take tourists on board active fishing boats.
 <b>United Kingdom</b>	- Legislation does not explicitly rule out taking tourists on fishing boats but strict regulations on the transport of passengers means that in practice few if any fishing boats would actually comply with the necessary conditions.

Source: information provided by EFF Managing Authorities and other experts to the best of their knowledge in July 2013.





Italy has recently gone a step further by completely eliminating the ceiling it had in place regarding the percentage of revenue that fishermen can derive from their pesca-tourism activity. This has simplified bureaucracy and made the activity significantly more attractive to entrepreneurial fishermen. Where effective procedures are in place for facilitating pesca-tourism, public authorities have worked closely with the fisheries sector to establish rules that prioritise passenger safety but which are realistic for the types of fishing boats concerned. Strong demand from the fisheries sector, and the political will to facilitate pesca-tourism, are essential to activating this type of work – and work on fiscal conditions. In France, with the support of Axis 4, a broad partnership of actors was mobilised to participate in a series of technical workshops to develop the necessary rules and procedures to regulate pesca-tourism, as well as the type of pesca-tourism to be offered and a specific marketing plan to promote it<sup>12</sup>. In Italy, a publicly funded, user-friendly [handbook](#) lays out the rules and requirements, and provides advice for those wishing to undertake pesca-tourism.

Indeed, beyond the basic regulations and procedures necessary for conducting pesca-tourism, a range of factors determine the impact it can have in a given area, and on the broader image of fishing.

If it is to be more than a series of individuals offering trips to passing tourists, provisions must be made to design a coordinated and sustainable tourist offer of sufficient quality, backed up with a communication plan that reaches the target audience.

This implies the need for considerable work on developing and packaging the pesca-tourism “product” – what will the activity involve exactly? How long will it last? How many people can participate per boat? How many boats are available in a given area? How is pesca-tourism coordinated, and how is it linked to other tourist products at local, regional and national level? Work is also necessary to ensure that the fishermen involved have the skills to provide a quality experience that can fetch attractive prices<sup>13</sup>: familiarity with safety procedures, attention to customer service, language skills... And, the activity should be accompanied by promotional material which is integrated into existing marketing channels but also capable of reaching new audiences.

Much of this can be done at FLAG level, as illustrated in a number of FARNET good practices, such as [Pescaturisme 83](#), the three year project in France to develop and legalise pesca-tourism; the [training package](#) developed for fishermen in northern Finland; or [Margalaica](#), a web-

site that puts fisheries at the heart of a full package of marine and coastal tourism in Galicia. However, support at regional and national level to develop workable rules and procedures is also key to consolidating a successful pesca-tourism offer. Pesca-tourism is just one option among a range of opportunities for linking fisheries to the tourist economy. It does, however, stand out from many typical tourist activities due the unique opportunity it offers to witness – and take part in – the life of local people who earn a living from fishing. If organised correctly, the facilitation of pesca-tourism around Europe could offer an additional opportunity for fishermen to become businessmen that fish and make additional money by promoting their territory, its environment, traditions and local products. ■

*For further information on pesca-tourism, see p. 32 of the FARNET Guide #5, on “**Diversification of fisheries areas**”, and p. 10 of this magazine for information on how pesca-tourism is working in Sardinia.*

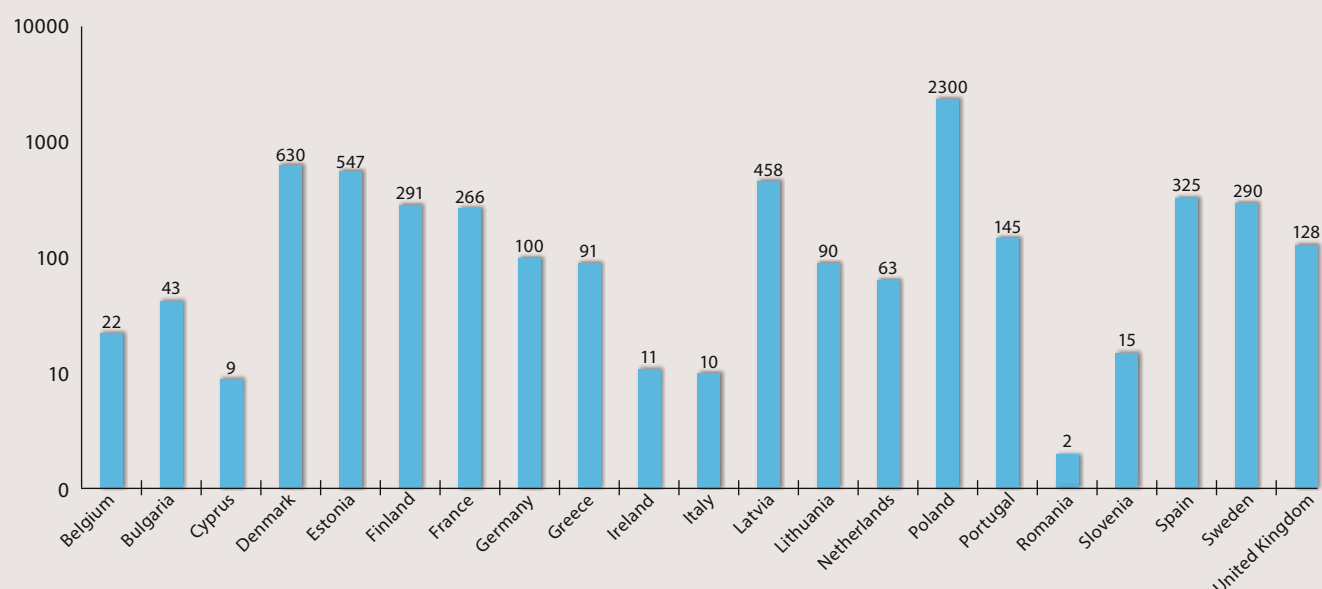
<sup>12</sup> The 3 year project, “Pescaturisme 83”, is described in the Diversification [Good Practice](#) #005 on the FARNET website.

<sup>13</sup> For information on the training package developed for fishermen in Finland, see the Diversification [Good Practice](#) #014 on the FARNET website.

# FARNETwork

## > State of play: 5 836 projects and counting!

By August 2013, the 308 FLAGs now active across 21 Member States had supported an estimated 5 836 projects.



## > New FARNET publication: Axis 4, a tool for fisheries communities

In a relatively short period, Axis 4 has shown that it can contribute to solving some of the key challenges facing fishing communities. In generating several thousand projects, and bringing a much needed dynamism to the local level, it has demonstrated its value as a tool that allows fishermen and fishing communities to take their future into their own hands. The FARNET Support Unit has just produced a new publication that highlights, in practical terms, what this means for fishing communities in different parts of Europe and how they can use this tool to improve their livelihood.

<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/publications/guides>

## > Polish FLAGs join discussion on CLLD

In June 2013, the FARNET Support Unit participated in a conference for Polish FLAGs on “CLLD in the next EU financing perspective”, followed by a discussion on lessons learnt in the current period. In Poland, work on Community-Led Local Development is being coordinated by the Regional Development Ministry, but the decision on whether or not to use CLLD in the ERDF and ESF rests with the regions, which manage a significant part of these Funds under their regional operational programmes. The regions are also likely to be the intermediary bodies in charge of the CLLD aspects of the EMFF and the EAFRD from 2014. The ministry is recommending that up to 10% of the ESF and 5% of the ERDF should be implemented through CLLD. Several regions have already expressed an interest in this, but so far only a few regions have put forward concrete plans. This involves the creation of a special priority axis in the regional programme, integrating all four funds. In Poland, the aim is to have one strategy and one LAG/FLAG per area, although in the case of FLAGs, exceptional overlapping of areas is being considered.

# FARNET Agenda

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE
22-24 October 2013	FARNET Seminar: “Linking fisheries to the tourism economy”	Cagliari (I)
06-08 May 2014	European Seafood Exposition	Brussels (B)
19-20 May 2014	European Maritime Day 2014	Bremen (D)

# 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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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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