



FARNET TRANSNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FLAGS VIGO (GALICIA), SPAIN 13-15 MARCH 2018

FLAGS and local resource management

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

CONTEXT

Focusing on marine resources, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been designed to manage EU waters and fishing grounds and, in this respect, is the main piece of legislation affecting fisheries and aquaculture areas. Other EU policies will nonetheless have a direct or indirect impact on fisheries or aquaculture activities. This is very much the case of the marine and environment policies through their Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Birds & Habitats Directives notably.

Over the years, there have been strong calls to move away from a centralised top-down approach to fisheries policy in order to reinforce stakeholder ownership, understanding and ultimately effectiveness of the policy process.

FLAGS, as local development bodies active in fisheries and aquaculture communities, are uniquely placed to support and encourage the development of more inclusive local resource management processes. Indeed, as bodies linking different local actors, FLAGS can be catalysts of initiatives aimed at improving the management of resources at local level. They can also play a role in engaging local actors in the processes of Maritime Spatial Planning.

It should be noted, however, that FLAGS themselves do not possess a mandate for the management of local resources but can be instrumental in supporting the emergence/development of such processes. In this respect, they should pay thorough attention to ensuring the involvement of the key actors responsible for the management of local resources, (e.g. fishing associations, Producer Organisations, local government bodies, NGO's, national parks...) in this process. Ultimately, FLAG support to local resource management initiatives will also contribute to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) of European waters and to the Aichi target 11 of 10 % coverage of seas by protected areas by 2020 (in particular, by facilitating the setting up of more marine protected areas).

SEMINAR OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the seminar (and the FARNET guide which will follow) is to improve FLAG support to better local resource management.

This objective is based on two general questions:

1. How can FLAGS actively contribute to a bottom-up approach to local resource management and what role can they play in this process?
2. How can FLAGS best support improved sustainability of local activities and contribute to environmental conservation?

SEMINAR THEMES

This seminar is organised around 3 overarching themes, selected for:

- their likely importance at the local level and, in particular, their possible impact on fishing and aquaculture communities
- their contribution to the drive towards sustainability supported by EU policy priorities (such as MSP, Good Environment Status, protected sea coverage, CFP objectives (landing obligation and sustainable fisheries))

Developing & setting up co-management at a local level

The establishment of fisheries co-management systems is one of the key priorities linked with the increased regionalisation of the Common Fishery Policy. But how does it work in practice? What are the different institutional levels involved in setting up co-management processes in fisheries? How widespread is fisheries co-management in the EU currently?

Co-management will be defined, followed by the introduction of key concepts such as management plans or systems, fishing opportunities, local ecological knowledge, the different types of stakeholders and their level of involvement. Key lessons or tips for successful co-management initiatives will be reflected upon while the added value of co-management systems compared to conventional fisheries management approaches will also be discussed.

Promoting sustainable fishing and aquaculture activities

Promotion of sustainable fishing and aquaculture activities is at the heart of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and its financial instrument the EMFF. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) is calling for the achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of EU marine waters by 2020, placing fishing activities in the context of wider sustainability issues. Still, the drive towards more sustainable activities requires a change in existing practices at the different levels of the supply chain (from the catching to the marketing of the products). In this respect, the socio-economic impacts of these changes within local communities have to be considered. More selective and sustainable fishing practices, the implementation of the landing obligation and environmental certification are some of the key aspects of the drive towards sustainable fisheries and aquaculture activities which will be explored under this theme.

Encouraging local actions for ecosystem restoration

The European Union is committed to achieving the Aichi Target 11 requiring 10 % coverage of its seas by protected areas by 2020. MPAs are increasingly recognised as useful tools for fisheries management and are a concrete measure defined within the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD). The designation of such protected areas is also a key component of the EU "Birds & Habitats" Directives. Hence the drive to the establishment of MPAs and Natura 2000 areas is likely to continue in the years to come. However, while these protected areas benefit ecosystems, they also impact fishing and aquaculture activities. How can fisheries and aquaculture activities be best integrated within these areas? How can FLAGs improve social acceptance and community involvement in their development? How can these areas become an asset for their territories?