



farnet

MAGAZINE

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 - ▶ The challenge of generational renewal
 - ▶ FLAGs, local innovation and risk taking
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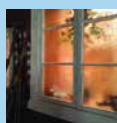
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Since 2009, the Mariña-Ortegal FLAG has been helping to launch and support small fishing businesses on Galicia's northern coast, and always with the same cross-cutting approach – fostering and maintaining synergies between local and European-level projects through cooperation and active involvement in FARNET.



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Editorial

“We have gone faster than in last period and the first signs from the ground shows we will also do better”

Maturity and experience are two words that come to mind while reading the accounts of the three FLAGs featured in this issue of the FARNET Magazine. The amazing diversity and richness of the projects supported in the different territories is a testament to the learning curve that fishing and aquaculture areas have gone through over these past years. Who would have imagined only a few years ago finding a coral farm in Galicia or carp farming becoming trendy again?

This is thanks to the experience gained over the past years within fishing and aquaculture areas, and the attitude and commitment of FLAG managers have been key to this success. Learning directly from some of them about how to foster even more innovation from the ground is therefore crucial.

These reportages also demonstrate FLAGs to be versatile tools which can help tailor EU support to the needs and assets of each local area. They take us on a journey from the shores of one of the most important fisheries regions in the EU (Galicia) to Northern Sweden where the integrated Mittland Plus LAG/FLAG has brought its coastal and inland communities together with a common vision for local development. The journey ends in the heart of Europe in an inland area which is home to a centuries-old tradition of fish farming (Tirschenreuth, in north-east Bavaria).

This issue of the FARNET Magazine not only highlights the ability of FLAGs to adapt to a wide variety of territories but also to reach those parts of society that others cannot reach while tackling head on some of the important challenges faced by EU fisheries and aquaculture sectors. Indeed, the survey on FLAG support to small-scale coastal fishing confirms the crucial role played by FLAGs in support of this specific segment of the fleet. In addition, FLAGs are also actively working on supporting generational renewal in the sector with many different initiatives springing up in different corners of the EU.

Last but not least we can also see that women play an integral part in the life of many FLAGs as exemplified by the artisanal canning project developed by three unemployed women in Spain or the women-only workshop on water management from Sweden. It is also a woman who is behind the use of innovative carp art to rebrand the Bavarian Tirschenreuth FLAG area in Germany, a FLAG which will be hosting the next FARNET seminar on aquaculture.

The emergence of the first cooperation projects presented in this Magazine also reminds us that even though local action is vital to responding to local needs, it cannot happen in isolation from the innovation at play in different parts of the EU. Local action has to be reinforced by transfer of knowledge and practical cooperation at the regional, national or transnational level.

The end of 2017 marks the end of the FLAG selection process and also corresponds to the mid-point of the implementation period. This means we have gone faster than in last period and the first signs from the ground shows we will also do better. Still, now is the time to keep up the momentum and continue improving fisheries CLLD to ensure thriving fisheries and aquaculture communities by 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V. Veits'.

Veronika Veits,
 Director, Unit D/3 –
 CFP and Structural Support, Policy
 Development and Coordination

A year in the life of a FLAG

MARIÑA-ORTEGAL [GALICIA, SPAIN]

An experienced FLAG shares knowledge

Since 2009, the Mariña-Ortegal FLAG has been helping to launch and support small fishing businesses on Galicia's northern coast, and always with the same cross-cutting approach – fostering and maintaining synergies between local and European-level projects through cooperation and active involvement in FARNET.

"Believe me when I tell you that being president of a FLAG is hard work," says Basilio Otero, president of the Mariña-Ortegal Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG). "Especially when you have to run a lot of other things, too!" Basilio also happens to be president of the Burela cofradía,¹ of the Lugo province fishermen's federation and of the confederation of Spanish cofradías. The walls of his office are adorned with posters depicting the many facets of the local fisheries sector, including various projects that the FLAG has supported since the launch of Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) in 2009.

"I'm a firm believer in communication. You have to pass on your knowledge. We've produced a lot of promotional materials, especially for schools. Educating people is our number one priority. We have to raise awareness across the board. For example, there are copies of this brochure in restaurants all around the local area. It tells cus-

tomers about the work that goes into getting products from the net to their plate. Our hard work is starting to pay off. Everyone involved in the FLAG understands that working together and supporting each other is key to local development. We work as a team. It's a source of great pleasure."

The Mariña-Ortegal FLAG has 50 members, including fishermen and shellfish gatherers, the 13 local councils, several cultural, environmental, social economy and other charities and foundations, and other representatives of the private sector and professional organisations.

"With our 2014-2020 strategy, we want to get as many people involved as possible," explains the FLAG manager, Mar López-Leitón Ramos. "When we launched the fisheries CLLD programme, we held six public meetings and met with lots of individual stakeholders – especially local government employment officers. The knock-on effect was huge. And since then, word of mouth has done the trick. The FLAG is now seen as an important player throughout the area."

"EFF Axis 4 and the fisheries CLLD programme are the only funding sources avail-



▲ Shellfish gatherers sorting their catch.

able to small businesses," adds Alberto Santos, whose shipbuilding company received €140 000 from the EFF Axis 4 to install a new workshop and create six new jobs at Burela port.

In the period 2007-2013, the FLAG had a budget of €3.7 million. This has more than doubled to €7.62 million for 2014-2020, making it the second-highest fisheries CLLD programme budget in Galicia. The FLAG supported 60 projects in 2007-2013 and has already launched two calls for projects in the current period. Under the first, in July 2016, it selected 18 projects and 17 of these have already been implemented.

¹ In Spain, *cofradías* (fishermen's guilds) are public law organisations that operate in an exclusive geographical area and represent the interests of the fisheries sector as a whole.



▲ Vanesa Rodríguez produces around 100 different species of coral.



▲ ASPROMOR employees repairing plastic containers used by auction houses.

For the second call, issued in March 2017, it chose 31 projects from 38 submissions. "These projects can generally be put into one of two categories," says Mar. "Some are individual production projects that focus on creating jobs for women and young people. Others are joint projects that mostly benefit charitable organisations."

On the social enterprise front, the Mariña-Ortegal FLAG is supporting an innovative project led by ASPROMOR, a local charity that provides employment opportunities for disabled people and long-term job-seekers. The project involves the repair of plastic containers used by auction houses,

delivering cost savings (the auction houses no longer have to buy new containers, cutting costs by 65%) and reducing the volume of waste generated. ASPROMOR provided plastic product repair training for 12 people who were long-term unemployed, and subsequently hired eight of these trainees. The company is now planning to run a container and bin collection service to broaden its service offering. The fisheries CLLD programme provided 75% of the total funding for the project (€26 785).

More women are running businesses

Vanesa Rodríguez has installed 19 aquariums, housing around 100 different species of coral, in a prefabricated building behind her stunning *Indiano*² style home. She set up her business, known as Reef Water Coral Farm, in 2013 with €60 000 from the EFF Axis 4 (out of a total cost of €200 000). It is the only farm of its kind in Europe. "There are four or five coral importers, but I'm the only person who actually farms it," explains Vanessa, who has turned a hobby into a business. "I've always enjoyed collecting coral, but I struggled to find some varieties, so I decided to start growing it myself. And I'm about to hit a major milestone – I'm quitting my sales job in two weeks' time and I'll be making a living off my coral farm business."



² The term *Indiano* refers to Spaniards who emigrated to South America to seek their fortune. Upon their return, many *Indianos* built sumptuous colonial-style houses in their home towns. So-called *rutas de las casas de Indianos* (Indiano house streets) have become tourist attractions in many parts of Spain.



▲ Nuria Carreño Crispín, one of the founders of Conservas Artesanas Curricán S.L.



▲ The FARNET logo appears on Curricán products.

Cooperation at every level

The Mariña-Ortegal FLAG stands out for its commitment to cooperation at all levels:

- > At the local level: the FLAG has funded a programme of school activities (Mares de Cultura), bringing together around 15 projects that have received EFF Axis 4 or fisheries CLLD programme funding. The programme encompasses around 20 different activities, including visits to auctions, fishmongers' and shellfish farms, and fun sporting activities connected with the sea and fisheries. The FLAG also organises beach clean-up days.
- > At the regional level: Mariña-Ortegal is one of six FLAGs in Galicia working together on the Mar Galaica project, which aims to promote marine tourism and heritage. Members visited the Golfo Ártabro Norte FLAG in May 2017.
- > At the national level: the FLAG is involved with the Spanish FLAG network.
- > At the transnational level: the group works with the Costa da Morte FLAG (Galicia, Spain), the Levante Almeriense, Noroeste de Cádiz and Cádiz Estrecho FLAGs (Andalusia, Spain), and the Brest FLAG (Brittany, France) on FLAG working methods, administration and project selection.
- > At the European level: the Mariña-Ortegal FLAG has attended all FARNET events (seminars and conferences) but one. Two projects supported by the FLAG have been presented to the network (Conservas Artesanas Curricán, which won the project competition at the FARNET "Sailing Towards 2020" conference in Brussels in March 2015; and social enterprise ASPROMOR featured as a case study in the FARNET seminar on social inclusion for vibrant fishing communities, held in Jūrmala, Latvia, in March 2017).

As with many businesses, it takes five years to pass the break-even point. It's even harder in my case because it takes 18 months to start growing coral. As my biologist advisor from Madrid always says, 'if farming coral were easy, everyone would be doing it.' Coral fetches between €15 and €400 per piece. Vanessa sells most of her produce online and she has recently launched a new product – a coral-based soap that is claimed to help treat skin conditions. "It's also a way to put the pruning off-cuts to good use. We released our first soap product three weeks ago. We've signed an agreement with a soap factory and we hope to be able to produce 600 bars a month." Mar explains why the FLAG supported the project: "It's a highly innovative family-run business and it has already created two new jobs for women." Vanessa's business also serves an educational purpose, with four school groups visiting the farm each month.

Many Galician families preserve fish and seafood in jars. In 2012, three unemployed women decided to harness this tradition and start their own business. "We decided to press ahead when we found out we could get funding and technical support from the FLAG," recalls Nuria Carreño Crispín, one of the three business owners. They secured €36 000 to fit out premises and buy equipment to process and jar tuna, octopus, squid and other local fisheries produce. Five years later, their company, Conservas Artesanas Curricán S.L., processes ten tonnes of fish each year, creating a dozen



▲ Carmela López, fishmonger.



▲ María José Ríos makes chocolates with algae.



▲ María Begoña Fraguela makes use of the tides to grow shellfish beneath her premises.

or so different products that are sold at delicatessens across Galicia, as well as in Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao and as far away as Andalusia. The project even won an award at the FARNET conference in Brussels in March 2015. The three partners are extremely grateful for the network's support and the FARNET logo appears on the packaging of all their products.

Carmela López, who opened a stylish-looking fishmonger's at Burela port in 2013, has a similar story. "I was unemployed after losing my job at a big fish trading firm. I was horrified that local catches were being sold at rock-bottom prices, with no genuine concern for quality. I read about the FLAG in the press and went to see Mar. She gave me a lot of help to set up my business." Carmela obtained €38 000 of the €91 000 she needed from the EFF Axis 4, which she used to buy equipment for her second business line – providing fisheries products to schools and retirement homes. "The shop brings in about 60% of my revenue and the catering business makes up the remaining 40%," explains Carmela, who is about to meet representatives from three schools in Asturias that are interested in her service. The company has created four jobs.

In Ribadeo, near the border with Asturias, María José Ríos has turned her chocolate-making expertise into a business. She recently opened a shop selling artisanal chocolates, including two products filled

with algae. This innovative project secured €59 000 from the fisheries CLLD programme, which was used to fit out a new workshop. "I'd been toying with the idea for a long time and the product was ready. I decided to make the leap after attending a FLAG meeting, where I learned about the strategy and project eligibility criteria." The project has created two jobs for women.

Young entrepreneurs

Some 40.3% of young people in Galicia are unemployed³, and for this reason the FLAG has made youth employment a top priority.

In 2013, jobseeker María Begoña Fraguela launched a shellfish farming business after completely overhauling the former breeding tank at Cariño port, which was built in 1931 but unused since 1985 and in a state of disrepair. The infrastructure is truly unique – the sea rises and falls with the tides around the stilts beneath the building, allowing shellfish to grow in an entirely natural setting. EFF Axis 4 provided 60% of the €62 000 investment needed to restore the structure. María Begoña now farms lobster, giant crab, velvet crab and crayfish. "We buy some of the shellfish at auction, but we also farm a lot from birth. We keep them here as prices and demand change. We sell to local individuals and restaurants, and we also have customers in big cities. Our revenue is increasing all the time."

"The local area is our industry," says Alberto González, mayor of Valdoviño (population: 6 500). The local council is working on a new surfing museum, which will open in August 2017. "I want to take this opportunity to say what a great job the FLAG is doing – and to pay tribute to its tireless coordinator in particular. This is the first time we've submitted a project for CLLD programme funding. The FLAG quickly got involved and really helped us out."

Valdoviño boasts "one of Spain's top three surfing beaches (Pantín)", according to Jacobo Suárez, who set up the Sinaliza project in 2016. His company, which designs environmentally friendly information boards, received €20 000 from the fisheries CLLD programme. "Around here, there are seven beaches where people surf all year round. It's a major boost to the local economy and it creates employment opportunities for young people. Surfing directly accounts for 40 local jobs."



³ Eurostat: Unemployment in the EU regions in 2016, 27 April 2017.

The FLAG is supporting a number of surfing-related projects. Agustín González wanted to stay living in Valdoviño, so he decided to set up his own business, opening a Surf & Breakfast in 2015. "If you want to live around here, you need to work for yourself. Otherwise, you have no option but to leave. I realised that there was no hostel-style accommodation for surfers locally, so I submitted a project proposal to the FLAG." EFF Axis 4 covered three quarters of the €100 000 that Agustín needed to renovate and fit out the large villa he rents for his business. Further east along the coast, in Foz, is another, similar project, this time working with schools. The business offers surfing, residential language courses and sports and cultural activities around fishing and the marine environment. EFF Axis 4 provided €150 000 of the total €287 000 investment.

In the same town, a group of sailing club instructors founded Maremasma S.L. in 2014, in an effort to diversify their income and overcome problems of seasonality. The business now also manufactures surf boards and, in winter, organises school tours focusing on the environment, fisheries and the sea. "We decided to support

the project because it comprised two components – manufacturing and education," explains Mar. The FLAG provided €85 000 of the total investment of €187 000. "The business would never have gotten off the ground without this support," says Ana de Lara, a full-time employee at Maremasma. The firm created four jobs in its first year and now employs 12 people.



▲ Iván García runs a sports and leisure company.

Iván García, who founded his sports, leisure and events company in 2007, has a similar tale to tell. "I work with local authorities, hotels and individuals, but I needed to diversify, retain my existing customer base and tap into the potential of the sea." His firm, IG10, secured a €55 000 grant (50% of the total outlay) from the fisheries

CLLD programme to run fun workshops for children, buy 12 electric and hybrid bikes, and invest in a surfing simulator to allow beginners and experienced surfers to train on dry land. The company has maintained two full-time jobs. Iván has also developed a smartphone app, giving users access to five hiking and mountain biking routes around Burela, and also showing various points of interest, including fisheries.


FARNET sharing

The work does not end once projects like those mentioned here – start-ups and small-scale infrastructure – are up and running. The Mariña-Ortegal FLAG funds a programme of 23 school activities involving 15 different project initiators (see box page 6) who, together, form a sort of local network. And the same rule also applies at other levels – the FLAG president or coordinator have, for example, attended every single FARNET seminar and conference since 2009.

"I think there should be more FARNET seminars," explains Basilio. "You learn so much from them – and it's not just technical knowledge. You also get to talk to other FLAGS from across Europe and find out what they're doing and how they work. The FARNET seminars and our local cooperation work fit together nicely. FARNET covers general themes that encompass a lot of smaller subjects. And most of our other cooperation work focuses on a specific challenge or project. It's a bit like the difference between macro- and micro-economics."

Basilio believes that the main challenge for FARNET events is to keep both long-standing and new FLAGS interested: "I think it would be useful to have a seminar looking at how more experienced FLAGS can transfer their knowledge and expertise to newer groups." ■

MARIÑA-ORTEGAL (Spain)



Area:
1 155 km²

Population:
83 838 inhabitants

Density:
72.6 inhabitants/km²

EMFF Budget	EUR		
	EU	Regional	Total
Total	6 476 736	1 142 953	7 619 689

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Report

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN EAST-CENTRAL SWEDEN

Lights in all windows

In a sparsely populated rural and coastal area of Sweden, the Leader Mittland Plus Local Action Group is seeking to include young people, women, the elderly and refugees in the development process.

"See, you're doing the work with me." Tablet in hand, Erik Spade, a biologist with the Örnsköldsvik municipality, inspects and points out a culvert that carries a river – and its fish – beneath a forest road. From his computer, he can access location data and detailed information about every man-made structure in the Moälven river basin – an area covering some 2 300 km². But it has been years since the last inspection and Erik's data is outdated and does not always reflect reality. Conducting a detailed inventory and structural inspections of man-made structures is, therefore, one of the first projects supported by the Leader Mittland Plus group's fisheries CLLD programme. "The project has three components," explains Erik. "First, we're assessing the condition of around 150 man-made structures in the area, which could be blocking migration routes for salmon and trout – species that are now returning after many years. Secondly, we're creating spawning grounds for the fish. And thirdly, we're raising awareness among local people – especially waterside property owners – about the importance of managing water and fish stocks in an area known for intensive logging."

Erik has set up volunteer groups to implement the project. *"As a biologist, it's my job to develop the theoretical tools. Then, local residents carry out the work. We've got six groups of fishermen and waterside property*



▲ "Lights in all Windows", a slogan that captures the challenge of the local strategy.

owners working on the spawning grounds. As for the inventory of potential salmonid migration route obstacles, about thirty young people have volunteered. I met them at an at-sea surveillance training and I told them about the fisheries CLLD project. They said they'd be willing to get involved and a few weeks ago they set up a Facebook group to coordinate their work. They're now getting ready to do the job."

But Erik is also keen to get women on board. *"Fishing is an industry dominated by men – especially men of a certain age.*

We want to change that. Women make up half of the population. Many of them are recreational fishers or own waterside property or forest land. We will soon be holding a seminar exclusively for women under the education component of the project. I won't be there. All of the speakers and attendees will be women. Men still think they have a monopoly on water management expertise, so the idea is to help women take ownership of the project."



Flying the (F)LAG

The Leader Mittland Plus group was formed when two LEADER groups – Mittland and Timråland – merged. It now acts as a one-stop shop for local development in Västernorrland, a county in east-central Sweden. Here, LAG and FLAG are one and the same.⁴ Because Sweden has adopted a multi-fund approach for the 2014-2020 period, Leader Mittland Plus has resources from the EAFRD (€3 million), the EMFF (€758 000), the ESF (€481 000) and the ERDF (€348 000) to support projects under one single strategy. *“The funds are separate, but there’s plenty of flexibility,”* explains group coordinator Erika Larsson. *“Quality and alignment with the strategy are what really matters. When we get a project proposal, we channel it to the appropriate fund, according to its objective – rural, social or fisheries. That’s how it always works for smaller projects. We tend to submit more than one funding application for bigger projects – EAFRD for the rural part and EMFF for the fisheries component, for example.”*

The 12-member group comprises representatives from the public, private and non-profit sectors across the four municipalities, plus one representative of the local (largely recreational) fisheries industry. Erika and her colleague Anna Svedin are in charge of coordinating the group and helping draft project proposals, with the help of four local “inspirers” (their own choice of term for animators), one from each of the four municipalities. Once complete, the proposals are submitted to the (F)LAG, which selects the best bids according to quality.

The Leader Mittland Plus group’s strategy bears the catchy title “Lights in all Windows”. *“We chose the title because it encapsulates the challenge facing coastal and inland areas alike,”* says Anna. *“They’re sparsely populated and most of the houses are second homes, so they’re empty for 11 months of the year.”*

⁴ A LAG is a local action group under the LEADER programme (sustainable development). A FLAG is a fisheries local action group (local development of coastal and fishing-dependent areas). The abbreviation “(F)LAG” could therefore apply to the Leader Mittland Plus group.



▲ Erik Spade inspecting a culvert beneath a forest road.

The over-arching strategy is divided into a number of priority areas. *“One of our slogans is ‘an open forest and open seas,’”* says Erika. *“That’s where Erik’s project fits in. Social economy is also really important for us because it can provide jobs and local services in our villages. We’re also encouraging people to set up businesses, especially in the tourism sector, as a way to create new employment opportunities. Accessibility is another key word and, more generally, inclusion is one of the main thrusts of what we do. In fact, if we were writing our strategy today, inclusion would make up about half of the content.”*



▲ The Matfors model.

Model

The latest project to receive Leader Mittland Plus approval is a prime example of this drive for inclusive local development. In the small town of Matfors (population: 3 200) stands an abandoned industrial paper mill. A local resident used recycled materials to produce a stunningly detailed 12 m² model of the factory and the brick houses of the workers’ village. The town’s federation of 50 local charities has now decided to convert the former paper mill into a museum, and to make the model its main attraction. It has also founded a social enterprise employing around a dozen long-term job-seekers. *“Some of them are tradespeople, left unable to work*

after an accident, while others are unskilled workers,” explains project leader Lena Schmidt. *“We’re going to set up a workshop adjoining the museum, where they’ll be making handicrafts, including replicas of the small houses from the model to sell to visitors.”* Leader Mittland Plus is providing half of the total cost, from two funds – the EAFRD for the museum and the ESF for the social enterprise. The project will be up and running by the summer of 2018. *“This is the first time we’ve combined funds from the EAFRD and the ESF,”* adds Erika. *“We can’t wait to see how it turns out.”*

Pleasure-boaters and refugees

The tiny hamlet of Tynderö sits on the Baltic coast, where an inlet separates the mainland from an island. Harald Nordkvist is president of the local fishermen's association, of which all 65 members are amateurs. "Except for one boat, which supplies a fermented herring canning factory, there have been no professional fishermen around here since the 1980s," explains Harald. "Our future lies in tourism and pleasure-boating services." In 2013, the association began overseeing work to turn the small fishing port into a marina. A quay has already been built on the island shore and work has recently begun on a second project to construct a pontoon and convert a former ice warehouse into a café, restaurant and service centre for pleasure-boaters stopping off on the way to the High Coast⁵ in the north. As well as injecting fresh life into local tourism, the people behind the project also want to create jobs for refugees. "There used to be a refugee centre not far from here. It closed recently for logistical reasons. But when we submitted the proposal back in 2016, there were 400 refugees living in the local area. We thought that opening a café and service centre would give them a chance to find work."

"What Harald says gets to the heart of one of our main concerns," notes Erika. "Many of our projects are designed with refugees in mind. We tell them to 'bring their skills, and we will do the rest'. We can help them find somewhere to live, get a job, or even set up their own business." According to Statistics Sweden, there were 5792 asylum seekers living in the area covered by the Leader Mittland Plus group in 2016. So the (F)LAG has commissioned a study to look at the role of immigrants in local development. "Based on the results of the study, we plan to run a project targeting refugees," says Erika.

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Coast.

⁶ Sweden's People's Houses (*Folkets Hus*) have long been associated with the workers' movement. The Timrå People's House opened in 1901.



▲ Building a new pontoon in Tynderö.

The People's House

The coastal town of Timrå is home to one of Sweden's 600 "People's Houses", but "one of only a handful that are self-managed the way we do it", according to the Director, Christina Thonman. The centre, a sort of arty, relaxed setting, offers a wide range of cultural and leisure services, including a library, concert venue, recording studio, gym and café. It has hosted film screenings, plays, lectures and even live broadcasts streamed via satellite from the New York's Metropolitan Opera, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, and a recent TED Talk event in Vancouver. But what is most remarkable is the way in which the People's House is managed – mainly by young volunteers (aged 13-19), with a small paid team of employees and "seniors" (older youths who "worked" at the venue when they were teenagers).

"Each year, between 60 and 100 teenagers spend on average one day a week here," explains Christina. "We introduced our self-management programme back in 1985, as a way to modernise the people's movement.⁶ Young people manage everything here. But this is not a youth centre, we appeal to a much broader audience. Our aim is to target the entire community."



▲ The People's House in Timrå.



▲ Christina Thonman holding the "House without Racism" network plaque.



Around half of the young volunteers come from troubled family backgrounds or have special needs. "Often, they're the most resilient ones," says Christina, affectionately. The People's House has teamed up with the Leader Mittland Plus group to support a number of social projects and to work with refugees. For example, "People's meetings and the Söråker world" is a project aimed at creating an open, tolerant cultural venue and social arena, and the "Folkkan Garden" is a social garden, also developed as part of the People's House concept. "Last year, there was a bust-up between Afghan and Swedish youths. We had to do something about it, so we brought 15 young Afghans into the programme. It's working really well."

Car-sharing

Pascal Doré – a Dutch national living in Sweden for the last four years – arranged to meet us outside the petrol station in Ljustorp, a remote village in the municipality of Timrå. "See this petrol station here? It belongs to the community," he explains. "Local people formed a cooperative to be able to buy their fuel here." Pascal is a recycling consultant who often travels long distances for work. He sees transport as one of the region's major challenges, so, with a few friends, he decided to set up a car-sharing platform. "This is obviously a remote location," he adds. "There's a coach service, but it's limited. You need a car to get around here, but not everyone has that option – especially young people, the elderly and refugees. But there are also lots of commuters travelling to and from Timrå, Sundsvall and elsewhere on the coast. Our idea was to set up an online platform and an app to connect drivers and passengers in real time, for both regular trips and one-off journeys between villages. It's a proven model that works in other places – users pay a subscription and get an account, passengers pay drivers for each trip, and the platform manages the financial side of things. Everyone saves money and it makes transport more flexible. And because it keeps extra cars off the road, it's good for the environment too."



▲ Pascal Doré leads the setting-up of a car-sharing platform.

Pascal put together a seven-strong team to submit a proposal to the (F)LAG, securing €73 000 in funding – €20 000 from the EAFRD and the rest from Sweden's Ministry of Agriculture and other sponsors. The platform is currently being developed by a social enterprise that specialises in computing. Meanwhile, Pascal and his friends have already started marketing the system. "We're targeting schools, charities and social media in particular," he explains. "It's about getting the ball rolling. We have to find 50 or 60 users to act as ambassadors, so we can reach a critical mass." The platform will be ready in August 2017 and the system will be up and running in January 2018.

Just the beginning

Erika Larsson sums up what community-led local development is all about in Västernorrland, and the prospects for EMFF-funded CLLD, which is only beginning: "Inclusion and accessibility are both local priorities targeted in all four funds. For us, the "lights in all windows" objective is one part of the solution. EMFF CLLD is still new for us, and we expect many more projects to come. We do get a lot of questions about the EMFF and the new opportunities it brings to our area. In fact, two new EMFF-projects will be presented to the next (F)LAG meeting: one is a local project about a future aquaculture park; and the other is a trans-national project on the economic impacts of seals and cormorants on aquaculture and fisheries, involving Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland. But this is just the start. The main aim of CLLD is local development regardless of which fund is used, and, as we don't separate the LAG from the FLAG, the development opportunities of the FLAG increase. We can be a lot more flexible and we can focus on doing what's best for the area, taking the best parts of all four funds in order to achieve the aims of our local strategy." ■

LEADER MITTLAND PLUS (Sweden)				
		<p>Area: 25 390 km²</p> <p>Population: 172 744 inhabitants</p> <p>Density: 6.8 inhabitants/km²</p>		
EMFF Budget		EUR		
	EU	National	Regional & Local	Total
Total	370 500	125 970	244 530	741 000
<p>CONTACT Leader Mittland Plus c/o Erika Larsson Box 890, S-851 24 Sundsvall Tel.: +46 70 316 23 66 info@mittlandplus.se www.mittlandplus.se</p>				

People

Supporting local innovation and risk taking: three FLAGs, three contexts



Rogério Cação



Pauline Chalaux



Pekka Sahama

Supporting innovation is a mandatory feature of CLLD, but FLAGs and managing authorities need to create appropriate conditions for such support. FARNET has asked representatives of three FLAGs how this issue was addressed in different fisheries areas. Answers were provided by **Rogério Cação** (President, Oeste FLAG, Portugal), **Pauline Chalaux** (Manager, Cornouaille FLAG, Brittany, France) and **Pekka Sahama** (Manager, East Finland FLAG).

FARNET Magazine: What is innovation for you? How important is it in your FLAG's work?

Rogério: Innovating is doing things differently in order to achieve better results. It is also about discovering alternative processes to reach the same goals. It means creating something new which responds to a concrete need.

Pekka: Innovation is a way of doing things in a new way. This is a very important aspect of our strategy and FLAG's work.

Pauline: For our FLAG, as part of the CLLD, it means developing new processes, new products, new ways of work, but also of dialogue/consultation for the benefit of the whole FLAG area. As other FLAGs in Brittany, we are also a LEADER LAG and we manage EMFF, EAFRD and regional funds under a single strategy. As

for the stakeholders, our goal is to include a maritime education, research and innovation expert in our FLAG decision-making body. It was not the case with Axis 4 of the EFF and we think it will support the development of innovative projects.

Can you briefly describe one or two projects your FLAG has supported that you consider particularly innovative? What did your FLAG do to make the project happen?

Pekka: We have a project called "Developing selective systems for vendace trawls". Vendace is the most important fish species in our fishery in East-Finland and vendace stocks are underutilised in many of our lakes. Trawl fishing is the most efficient and specific method. But in trawl fishing there is also a risk of by-catch of endangered land-locked salmon and brown trout. Commercial fishermen want to make their fishing method more sustainable. A totally new system has been developed, "escape opening", through which the salmon swims freely out from trawl. We have a video of the project.



People



It took almost two years to start the project. We studied experiences of selective trawl fishing methods abroad. Meetings were held with researchers and funders and commercial fishermen. As the project promoter, we found a private development company from our area. We found out that the project seemed to be so big that we also needed support from other axes of the EFF.

Rogério: The project “Pilado added value”, has been implemented by the Polytechnic of Leiria. It is about finding new use for pilado crab (*Polybius henslowii*), an abundant resource for which there had not been any use so far. Another project is “Do Mar ao Prato” (From the Sea to the Plate), which has also been implemented by the same institute. It promotes the synergies between science and gastronomy by developing a gastronomic guide dedicated to local traditions, which also integrates scientific information on the used marine species. The guide was designed in an appealing way, which turned it into an excellent tool for the promotion of tourism.

In order to stimulate innovative ideas, we launched open challenges to the creativity of project promoters through local and regional media, on our website and on Facebook, keeping in mind the potential in the universities. Then the projects just popped up on their own.

Pauline: The main innovative project we support in Cornouaille is a business incubator facility linked to a hatchery laboratory. It aims to attract, host and support new aquaculture businesses. The promoters are Agrocampus Beg-Meil (a research and training centre) and the intermunicipal body of Fouesnant in Cornouaille. The FLAG and the local Technopole Quimper Cornouaille technology agency support this project on three key aspects: networking, funding and political support. Another project we support is studying the possibility of developing spirulina aquaculture (producing dietary supplement from algae) in a social enterprise (integration through work).

One opportunity to get new project ideas was a meeting with civil society representatives at which the FLAG strategy (which included aquaculture development) was presented; this is where one of the promoters got its diversification idea!

How is innovation addressed in your FLAG strategy and in your animation activities?

Rogério: We organise animation meetings especially for potential project promoters. There, we show examples in order to stimulate their motivation.

Pauline: Innovation is very important in our strategy and we have two main criteria for the EMFF CLLD projects we will support: innovation and collaboration (pooling of resources) between stakeholders. We will certainly help all companies and other interested organisations in our area make contact with the bodies specialised in innovation that can help them develop their ideas.

Pekka: Innovation is important in the whole FLAG strategy in East Finland. For example, we have worked in partnership with the Eureka! Ranch, an innovation engineering company which helps in the development of innovative products and services (eurekaranch.com). We met Eureka! Ranch representative at the FARNET seminar in Holland. The company helped us increase the overall sales for frozen vendace. This work involved an export study of vendace roe which indicated a need for some certificate of sustainability. After that, we decided to make MSC pre-assessment, the first one for fisheries in Finland, and full assessment is running today. Now there are some positive views in the export market of vendace.

Do you have bodies in your partnership or do you work in close partnership with bodies that have a particularly strong link with innovation?

Rogério: Yes, we have strong links with the Superior School for Marine Technology and, as has been mentioned it, with the marine research institute of the Polytechnic of Leiria.

Pauline: We are fortunate to have in our partnership the Technopole Quimper Cornouaille, a local technology agency, particularly specialised on marine activities. We also have two research centres dedicated to marine biology, an applied research centre dedicated to the food industry (a partner in our *ialys* food cluster), and a good network of innovative local businesses.



▲ Cooperation with research and innovation centres in the Cornouaille and Oeste FLAG areas.

Is the risk of failure a particular concern? How do you address it? How do you draw lessons from failures?

Pekka: When I started my work as FLAG manager I had the mission to find new ways of working with the fisheries sector, with a big risk of failure. Innovative projects can lead to results only after many years. Results of the project need to be analysed carefully, through open reporting and discussions with all stakeholders.

Rogério: We have to face the risk of failure already at the stage of project assessment. It is then that we ask the project promoter about concrete options for concrete problems. Drawing lessons is primarily ensured through internal meetings with the promoters on the reasons for and consequences of failure. If the project is innovative, we will ask the project promoter to meet the local innovation agency. They are members of the FLAG and it's their task to accompany innovation. We'll also advise the project promoter to do a market study – with a margin of error – because it helps limit the project risk of failure.

Are there any obstacles to innovation in the implementation system? How might these be overcome?

Rogério: Innovation is not understood in the same way by all stakeholders, for instance authorities look at innovative projects primarily from the point of view of eligibility. We had projects for which authorities had certain reservations, fortunately the promoters were able to eliminate these reservations by coming up with technical and scientific solutions. On the other hand, innovation is always an expensive process, and that's why the financial means are always scarce in relation to the ideas that come up.

Pekka: Actually, in the previous period we had a little more freedom to implement our strategy. For example, we are under CFP rules and common problems are "overfishing", etc. That's why we cannot finance projects which increase fishing effort, although many lakes here are "under-fished". EU rules seem to be stricter now than during last period and that does not help us to have innovative projects. To my mind, we FLAGs should have more liberty to implement our well-planned strategies – CLLD is only about 11% of the EMFF in Finland.

Is the managing authority or national network – or anybody else – providing guidance, capacity building focused on innovation, learning opportunities between FLAGs, etc.?

Rogério: Not specifically. I must say that innovation is part of the "official speech" but there are no concrete mechanisms or instruments for its promotion.

Pekka: We have had very close cooperation between Finnish FLAGs from the beginning – informal at first, but regular. We share the results and experiences very openly. This is very important and it helps a lot. FLAG managers, who represent many different skills and types of expertise, are really valuable support when planning innovative projects.

Pauline: We have Pôle Mer Bretagne Atlantique, an economic development cluster focused on the sea, which leads innovation in our region. The cluster facilitates the emergence of collaborative research and development projects and supports the growth of its member companies, particularly by placing new products, services and processes resulting from research on the market. We should also soon have a national network for EMFF CLLD. Innovation will certainly be a common topic on which we'll cooperate. ■

Interviews conducted (in English) in May 2017.



Focus

A CAREER IN FISHERIES OR AQUACULTURE?

The challenge of generational

A common challenge identified in FLAG strategies across the EU, from the Baltic to the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, is an ageing workforce and how to attract the younger generation into the sector.

Around Europe, fishing and aquaculture activities are diverse, as are the working conditions in the sector, retirement provisions and the education systems in place to channel new recruits towards a career in fisheries. And yet, a common challenge identified in FLAG strategies across the EU, from the Baltic to the Atlantic to the Mediterranean, is an ageing workforce and how to attract the younger generation into the sector. Something, it seems, needs to change if local communities are to preserve the know-how to profit from their fisheries resource in the future, and maintain healthy marine and fresh water ecosystems based on sustainably managed fisheries.

Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) attending the FARNET seminar in Latvia in March 2017 highlighted the average age of fishermen in their areas, which ranged from 49 (Brittany, France) to almost 60 (southern Finland), and expressed concern for the durability of the sector, and the resulting environmental and social impacts, if the current trajectory doesn't change.

While the barriers to entering the fisheries sector vary from country to country, and depend on the type of fishing or aquaculture present, certain issues are recurrent, including: a general lack of awareness and/or poor image of the fisheries sector as a career choice; concerns linked to the quality of life one can expect from a career in fisheries (working conditions, work-life balance, wages etc.); and the difficulties of obtaining permits and covering the start-up costs of acquiring a boat or an aquaculture farm.

This starts with the fishing or production activity for each species and extends right through to where and by whom they are eventually consumed, including how they are transported, traded, processed, packaged and marketed. Support can then be targeted at those activities that need strengthening and can have the most impact on the sector's success, and on ensuring that value generated stays in the area – a challenge that many fisheries areas grapple with.

Young fishermen

Fishing companies in many areas are struggling to find workers. This is especially true for off-shore fishing, given the tough working conditions and the long periods away from home and family that come with the job. Indeed, reports point to many fishing boats resorting to irregular ways of recruiting a full crew, including hiring immigrants that do not have their papers in order or recognized qualifications, or using retired fishermen to plug



▲ Young fishermen in Cyprus.



▲ Ben George, a fisherman from Cornwall, UK.

renewal

holes – despite rules against doing so and the physical challenges of taking on such tough work.

Small-scale coastal fishing also faces recruitment challenges, linked to a variety of issues, such as the perceived (and often very real) difficulties of making a good living from small-scale fishing, and the high start-up costs or the lack of quota made available in some areas. The poor image of the sector, which, in many countries, lacks the respect that professions such as teaching or nursing enjoy, also appears to play a strong role in dissuading young people (or their parents) of the merits of a career in fishing.

So how do we convince young people that life as a fisherman will offer them professional fulfilment and a decent living? This is the question that many FLAGs and fishing organisations are grappling with, along with strict legislation on taking youngsters on board and a lack of organised apprenticeships to allow them to learn the trade and transition to professional fishing.

Initiatives are under way around Europe, with varying degrees of success. FLAGs need to look at tackling the multiple factors that result in low interest on the one hand, and the significant obstacles on the other, to embarking on a career in fisheries.

This starts with a series of activities to help raise awareness of the fisheries sector and its contribution to society, while also promoting it as an attractive career choice. It also requires significant dedication to *actually* making the sector more attractive. For this, making the sector more profitable is fundamental, be it through the use of new methods or technologies to increase quality, optimize handling or improve marketing. Boosting the image of fishing as an interesting and challenging job, demanding environmental and technological know-how, and offering links to more “popular” activities such as tourism or marketing, can also make it significantly more attractive to young people.

Another set of more concrete barriers tend to be more country specific, and depend on the systems in place (or not) to train young people, provide start-up support, and ensure that permits and quota are accessible. FLAGs can help promote existing provisions. For example, many Member States have opened up Article 31 of the EMFF to provide support for those under 40 to purchase a vessel. More active promotion of this opportunity, and hands on support to take advantage of it, could help to improve uptake. FLAGs could also work more closely with national and regional authorities to ensure existing schemes are really meeting needs on the ground and, in some cases, they could organise their own local initiatives such as training and apprenticeships for young people.



Master-apprentice programme for young fishermen



Thanks to the combination of an apprenticeship project for young fishers, and FLAG support to improve a local fishing business, 33-year-old Tanja is now a successful fisherwoman and entrepreneur, selling her fresh and processed produce directly to consumers. She is one of 12 young people in her area who are now fishing professionally thanks to support from the local FLAG.

The ESKO FLAG (Finland) saw the number of fishermen in its area drop from 400 in the early 1990s to 100 in 2009 and 56 in 2017. This worrying trend meant that attracting young people to professional fishing has been a key priority for the FLAG. Training programmes were set up to support the entry of young people into fishing but uptake was too low to reverse the decline.

So, the FLAG took on an active role in identifying the conditions necessary to engage young people, and in selecting interested candidates that merited support and investment. In close collaboration with a number of young candidate fishermen, the local fishing association and the regional and national authorities, the FLAG supported a novel programme, based entirely on practical skills acquisition and “on the job learning”. Each apprentice took the lead in designing his or her own training objectives, covering fishing, marketing activities and running a business, and they worked alongside an experienced fisherman for one year. In many cases, the apprentices continued to work with their “master” after the end of the training, often with arrangements to take over the fishing business on the retirement of the older fisherman. The programme is already entering its third round of candidates and, so far, 80% of those trained have gone on to fish professionally.

“Listen, understand and do things differently if you want change”

Initially, the public authorities wanted to include a theoretical element in the training. However, honest exchange with interested youngsters revealed that there was no appetite for any form of theoretical training. This opinion was ultimately respected and the programme attracted “*surprisingly high interest*”.

Rejuvenating aquaculture

In some respects, aquaculture faces fewer barriers to attracting the young in so far as the working hours tend to be more reliable and easier to combine with family life. It is also a sector that is modernising rapidly – think automated fish feeding, recirculated and integrated systems, aquaponics, even urban aquaculture! This link with new technologies and complex electronic systems not only make the sector more attractive to the younger generation but also requires a skilled workforce and means that the work tends to be less arduous than traditional aquaculture.

However, aquaculture is still relatively unknown among the younger generation as a potential career option, and start-up costs can be prohibitively high. Besides, these start-up costs generally have to be borne for some time before a new operation sees any revenue, given that most species of farmed fish or shellfish take at least three years to reach maturity.

In many cases, taking over an existing aquaculture farm might make more sense than initiating a new production facility – and FLAGs can play a valuable role in supporting business transfers from retiring aquaculture farmers to the younger generation. However, it is not without challenges and requires time and dedication – not to mention capital investment.

An aspiring oyster farmer in Brittany, France, for example, is likely to have to compete with real estate investors also interested in buying strips of seafront for development. A retiring oyster farmer stands to earn significantly more by selling his property to a developer than transferring it to a younger oyster farmer. Under Axis 4, the Auray FLAG in Brittany worked closely with public authorities and the Shell-fishing Committee to put in place an Oyster Charter, signed by the State, the County Council and the local authorities, to prohibit the conversion of oyster workshops to other uses. This has helped to keep costs more affordable for new oyster farmers. Additional support might include introducing youngsters from different parts of the community to what can sometimes be a somewhat closed world.



▲ Father and son: Wolfgang and Stefan Stock, fish farmers in Wiesau, Germany.

Be it marine or inland aquaculture, small-scale coastal fishing or long-distance trawling, every segment of the fisheries sector faces specific challenges in attracting more young people into the workforce of the future. FLAGs will have to look at the

nature of their fisheries sector and design actions accordingly. However, what does seem clear is that no one action will solve the problem. Rather, a range of actions at local level – as well as a far-reaching response at regional, national and EU

level – will be necessary to ensure that in the future, local communities are in a position to sustainably exploit their fisheries resources. ■

Attracting the young to oyster farming

Having experienced a decline from 1 000 oyster farms in 1970 to just 300 in 2015, the Arcachon FLAG area has seen the number of oyster farmers stabilize, following work with 13 different schools to take pupils out on oyster boats to see what it means to be an oyster farmer.

Around ten youngsters a year are now starting up as oyster farmers in the FLAG area, thanks largely to this concerted effort to raise awareness in schools of the opportunities offered by a career in oyster farming. The project was led by the Shellfish Farming Committee, in close collaboration with the local maritime high school and career centres. It involved taking pupils on board boats equipped for pesca-tourism, to witness the work involved, ask questions and taste the local oysters. Good communication with local teachers proved essential, as these trips took place outside school hours, thereby needing extra dedication from the students and teachers alike.

European Fisherman's Pass – a cooperation idea

The cooperation corner at the Helsinki FLAG seminar sparked a new idea to make it easier to find and recruit young fishermen by improving mobility. The idea is to launch a Europe-wide campaign for a "European Fisherman's Pass" – a European recruitment site for young fishermen. It would involve a database with all vacancies and the required skills/certifications expected (e.g. for the specific fishing techniques in question). In practice, such an idea throws up challenges related to language barriers, different qualification standards in different countries and the need for resources to coordinate such a project. However, through small steps and strong cooperation, FLAGs may be able to offer a solution!

Any ambitious volunteers can contact the FARNET Support Unit at info@farnet.eu

Cooperation

Cooperation takes off in CLLD fisheries areas

“The path to greatness is along with others” (says the Spanish philosopher, Baltasar Gracián y Morales) and cooperation can certainly be fruitful when it contributes to common interests and goals. In 2017, cooperation in fisheries CLLD is beginning to emerge, as Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) seek inspiration, creative ideas and new opportunities by connecting with other FLAGs or with experienced Local Action Groups (LAGs). The fisheries sector is playing a leading role in some of these first CLLD cooperation projects, which can be found across Europe.

Over the last year, rules and procedures for FLAG cooperation have been developed in most Member States. Cooperation projects have already been selected in Estonia, Galicia (Spain) and Finland and further calls for cooperation projects will be launched during the summer of 2017. However, cooperation is an ongoing process which requires the joint effort of FLAGs, national networks and managing authorities to drive projects forward.

In most countries, cooperation is organised at FLAG level, although there are several Member States, such as Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, that have a more centralised approach, with a call overseen by the managing authority. In some regionalised countries, cooperation is organised by the regional intermediate body. In most countries, however, cooperation projects follow the same decision process as any FLAG project.

Transnational cooperation, defined as cooperation involving one or more partners from at least two member states, can bring additional challenges, as cooperation rules and procedures not only differ between countries but are also being developed at different speeds. To ease the process of finding a partner and understand how cooperation works in Europe, the FARNET Support Unit is putting together a Cooperation landscape,

(20 fiches on cooperation, one per every member state implementing EMFF CLLD) containing an overview of how cooperation is organised in every member state.

It is within this context that FLAGs have started to develop ideas and design the first cooperation projects for fisheries CLLD 2014-2020. Here we present three initiatives which focus on three levels of cooperation: the regional (involving partners from the same region), national (involving partners from the same country) and transnational approach, which can provide inspiration to those FLAGs that decide to follow suit in the future.

Seals and cormorants: Baltic transnational cooperation

Sixteen Baltic FLAGs, from Finland, Sweden, Estonia and Latvia, are collaborating in a project to reduce economic losses for fishermen caused by seals and cormorants. The FLAGs will work closely with small-scale fishermen along the Baltic coast to gather information on the damage caused to fish stocks by these predators and on how this impacts on their livelihoods. Activities will involve an in-depth study of the situation of seals and cormorants in all small-scale fisheries in the partner FLAG



▲ Sterilising cormorants eggs in Sweden.

areas. The ESKO FLAG in Finland is leading the partnership, and has already launched an initial research phase in its own area. It has also developed a partnership agreement, which is currently being signed by FLAGs from the other Baltic countries. In the coming months, they plan to organise several technical meetings, steering groups and actions to involve FLAGs from other Baltic countries such as Germany, Poland and Denmark.





▲ Margalaica, a cooperation project between Galician FLAGs, has created an integrated tourism package.

The key role of national networks and managing authorities

National networks and managing authorities have a role to play in encouraging FLAGs to cooperate and in supporting the process in a dynamic and proactive way.

For example, in Estonia, the national network has organised a cooperation meeting between Estonian and Latvian FLAGs, facilitated by an expert on communication and cooperation techniques. FLAGs learned about how to attract interest in cooperation at local level, how to motivate project promoters, and how to better advertise cooperation among local stakeholders. The meeting also provided an opportunity for FLAGs from the two countries to exchange experience, knowledge and good practices and discuss possible joint actions.

Methods and tools offered by national networks to foster cooperation include:

- > Technical guidance for FLAGs (provision of experts for thematic advice)
- > Organising FLAG meetings with specific topics on enabling cooperation
- > Facilitating exchanges with neighbouring FLAGs
- > Support for the generation and exchange of ideas
- > Supporting FLAGs in finding relevant partners

In addition, national networks can also provide support to the FLAGs when communicating in a foreign language, especially where language barriers are an impediment to join a transnational project.

The national networks in Finland and Sweden are actively involved in helping FLAGs implement cooperation projects, by translating information on existing project and opportunities.

Some managing authorities are also involved in fostering cooperation and helping FLAGs to find the right partners and ideas. This is the case of regional authorities in Galicia and Cataluña where meetings were set up to encourage cooperation among FLAGs from the same region or sea basin. In Galicia, the regional managing authority has organised a meeting with FLAGs and regional authorities from Asturias, Cantabria and the North of Portugal in order to identify barriers and needs regarding cooperation. The participants developed ideas how to achieve synergies and address common challenges for fisheries areas using cooperation projects. In Cataluña, FLAG managers, FLAG presidents, fishermen and other stakeholders from the North-Western Mediterranean Sea area (three FLAGs from Spain, two from Italy and one from France) gathered to discuss possible cooperation projects.



▲ Estonia's eight FLAGs work together to increase the value of local fisheries products.

Margalaica: FLAGs cooperating at regional level

Margalaica is an ambitious project developed by Galician FLAGs to bring together fisheries and maritime stakeholders to create an integrated tourism package along the Galician coast. In the previous programming period (2007-2013), the project focused on promoting local fisheries products and heritage of fishing communities. A comprehensive website facilitating online booking and sales of tourism products has been developed. This covers all of the seven Galician FLAG areas, with 57 fisheries companies presenting 97 different tourism products including accommodation along the Galician coast, restaurants that promote local fish, maritime heritage museums, maritime sport activities, etc.

With the new phase of the project, the FLAGs plan to further strengthen collaboration between the fisheries sector and tourism stakeholders in the area. While the first phase focused primarily on promoting individual products on a common platform, the second phase will seek to link them into specialised tourism packages. For example, the FLAGs will propose a unique package of tourism activities along a lighthouse route along the Galician coast. All products in this package

will benefit from the quality standards set by the Margalaica brand and will promote local destinations that are not well known to tourists but are considered to be of high cultural value.

A joint marketing strategy: FLAGs creating synergies at national level

Estonia's eight FLAGs have decided to work together to increase the value of local fisheries products while linking them with the coastal identity. They have developed a plan to promote local fisheries and aquaculture products and local undervalued species under a common brand. The first joint activity was to promote local fish and to raise the profile of small-scale fisheries and artisanal fishing heritage at national level during the country's best known culinary attraction, the Estonian Food Fair. With more than 100 000 visitors and 500 exhibitors, the festival is one of the most important events for the food industry. Local fishermen and producers from all FLAG areas had the opportunity to market the "local experience" of their fish while drawing attention to the sustainability and quality of small-scale fisheries products. Next phases of the project involve creating a network of consumers, retailers, restaurants and fishmongers at

national level, and to introduce artisanal fisheries products to the general public. The eight FLAGs will continue working together to promote their coastal identity, enhance visibility of the local fisheries sector on the national market and strengthen connections between local businesses from all FLAG areas. ■

FLAGs interested in finding partners for a specific cooperation project can use the partner search facilities at the FARNET website or at the website of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD).

Report

AQUACULTURE IN TIRSCHENREUTH [GERMANY]

The Land of Four Thousand Ponds

Tirschenreuth, in north-east Bavaria, is home to around 60 professional fish farmers and some 4 700 ponds. The area's identity and local development strategy are based on aquaculture and carp, the area's flagship product, and has received support from LEADER, the EFF and, more recently, the EMFF.

On the A93 motorway, just before the exit for Tirschenreuth, there is a brown tourist information sign with a picture of a carp and the words, "Welcome to the Land of a Thousand Ponds". As you leave the *auto-bahn* and travel along the trunk road, you pass through a landscape dotted with ponds, big and small, nestled between fields and woodland.

"Actually, we have more than 1 000 ponds here," explains Stephanie Wenisch, tourism coordinator and, until recently, manager of the Tirschenreuth – Land of a Thousand Ponds FLAG. "There are 4 700 ponds in the Tirschenreuth district and the three neighbouring villages, which the FLAG also covers. We have around 1 000 owners, but only 60 or so are professional fish farmers – ten full-time and 50 who farm fish to top up income from elsewhere. The Cistercian monks began fish farming here in the early 11th century. The land in the valleys was not really suitable for agriculture but the clay and kaolin-rich soil makes it ideal for ponds and carp farming."

Tirschenreuth's aquaculture tradition dates back almost 1 000 years. "Originally, it was the monastery that started building ponds on a larger scale," recalls FLAG manager Fabian Polster. "But over time, local people also began building ponds and rais-



▲ "Stairway to Heaven" offers a panoramic view of Tirschenreuth's ponds.

ing fish, as there was good money in it. So the ponds have always been divided up into smaller, family-run aquaculture plots. That's what makes our area so unique. Unlike the vast fish farms you see in Poland, for example, our ponds measure just 0.6 hectares on average, and we have about 1 000 owners. Some pond farmers only have two or three ponds, whereas the professional fish farmers

own 30 or 40 ponds or even rent additional ponds if they can get them. Without farming, the ponds are lifeless. Nature quickly takes over again. Abandoning the ponds would have a big impact on biodiversity and on the region's cultural landscape."



Solidarity

Aquaculture is a long-standing tradition in the area, ingrained in the social structure. Because the ponds form an interconnected network, owners have to work together when they want to drain the water and harvest the fish. *“For generations, Mister X has known that he has to drain or fill his pond on a particular day so his neighbour can do the same afterwards,”* adds Stephanie. *“There’s a natural sense of solidarity that binds the families here together.”*

However, aquaculture has not always had the economic and cultural standing it enjoys today. Two decades ago, Tirschenreuth’s economy was in terrible shape, after two other local industries – porcelain and textiles – collapsed. *“We had to do something,”* recalls Hans Klupp, president of the FLAG and the Upper Palatinate⁷ fish farmers’ association. *“We realised that one way to redevelop the local area was to revitalise aquaculture, make it a core part of our identity and harness its tourist appeal. People had forgotten about this unique feature of our region. So we created the ‘ARGE Fisch im Landkreis Tirschenreuth e.V.’ consortium in 1995 to bring together local fish farmers and restore aquaculture to its rightful position. Support from the LEADER programme meant we were able to organise a carp festival and team up with other fish-farming regions from across Europe. Things really took off with the advent of support from the EFF Axis 4 in 2009. We began launching all sorts of new projects and, although several manufacturing firms have since been estab-*



▲ Transferring carp from one pond to another.

lished in the area, and the local economy has begun to recover, aquaculture is now our flagship industry. It is central to rural development, our identity, and local tourism. ‘The Land of a Thousand Ponds’ has become our brand.”

Funding from the EFF Axis 4 was used to develop promotional material (brochures, packaging, gifts and a beautiful recipe book), install interactive digital equipment at the impressive municipal museum (which includes a large section on aquaculture), create a new fishing area at the Bärnau-Tachov archaeological open-air museum (a fisherman’s house, boat, smoke house, etc.), and install pond fishing-themed street furniture and playgrounds in the local villages. The latter began as a citizen-led arts initiative in the small town of Kemnath (population 5 400). Since then, fish farming has become a cultural staple across the whole area.

The “Phantastic Carp Trail”

Fine arts teacher Susanne Vönhoff is heavily involved in local community life. In 2005, Susanne, Hans Klupp and Wolfgang Lippert (president of the LEADER group) decided to take inspiration from the “CowParade” movement – vibrantly decorated, life-size fibreglass cows that spread from Zurich in the early 2000s – and create their own version, this time with carp. They found 20 sponsors – including the local authority and local businesses – and raised enough money to make 13 cow-sized carps. They then ran a competition for artists and school children to decorate the sculptures. The project was a huge success, and there are now 28 of these vast fish at key points along the *Phantastischer Karpfenweg* (The Phantastic Carp Trail), which follows the course of the town’s former ramparts. *“You normally see this kind of thing happening in big cities,”* explains Susanne. *“So it wasn’t an obvious choice here in the countryside, where people might find it harder to accept. But the reaction was great. Everyone in Kemnath got on board with the project and played their part. We’re really proud of what we’ve accomplished. The project even featured on the Germany – Land of Ideas website! The concept has also spread across the local area. Every time a new housing estate or business park appears, the local authority installs a carp to mark the occasion. And local fish farmers, fish restaurants and even some shops have carps outside their premises. There are now around 160 of these sculptures in total. It’s become the much-needed visual symbol of our region!”*



▲ Enjoying the “Phantastic Carp Trail”.

⁷ Tirschenreuth is part of Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz) – one of the seven administrative districts of Bavaria (not Rhineland-Palatinate, as its name would suggest).



▲ Tirschenreuth Fish Museum.



▲ Fish farmers use fiberglass fish to signpost their premises.

Fresh momentum

As well as becoming a flagship symbol, increasingly recognised by tourists in Germany, aquaculture in Tirschenreuth ('the other Bavaria') has also developed and diversified. EFF Axis 4, and, more recently, the EMFF, have helped to improve quality, added value and direct sales in recent years, adding much-needed oil to the machine.

Several generations of the Bächer family have farmed 60 ponds in Wiesau, covering around 40 hectares. More recently, they also opened a 52-capacity restaurant and a shop selling filleted and smoked fish, as well as fish sausages and burgers. This provides an outlet for some of the fish they produce, drawing in customers from a 50 km radius. "In the past, the region's farmers used to export most of their carp," explains Sophia Bächer. "We didn't eat much of it around here. It was viewed as a poor-man's dish. But things have changed in the last 20 years."

Sophia's grandmother introduced carp filleting to the region. The bones are crushed, making them so fine they can be eaten without even noticing. "This innovative new method meant we moved away from serving baked full carp with the head and bones intact, which is unpopular with younger people," adds Sophia. "Our filleted carp is a real success."

The Bächers manage the entire process, from breeding and rearing to selling. They are one of only a handful of fish-farming families that also produce fish larvae. As well as running a restaurant and shop,

they sell larvae, juveniles and adult fish to other fish farmers and fishermen's associations so they can repopulate ponds. "This is a very viable fish farm because they have diversified," explains Stephanie Wenisch.

The Stock family, also in Wiesau, run an 85-hectare farm, including 40 hectares of farmland, five hectares of forestry, and 40 hectares of fish ponds. In 2011, a stone got lodged in a machine, producing sparks that set fire to the hay stored in the barn. All of the Stocks' farm buildings burned to the ground, leaving only their home. They have since rebuilt the farm, but the family has now taken its business in a different direction. "I used to rear cattle," explains Wolfgang Stock, who is also a FLAG board member. "Now, I focus solely on fish, which on average accounts for around half of our income, a third of which comes from direct sales. Aquaculture is becoming an increasingly lucrative business. It's the future. My son, Stefan, is now training as a 'Fisch Meister'. He wants to take over and expand the farm."

Alongside carp, the Stocks also farm Arctic char and trout, which allows them to live off fish farming all year round. The farm produces 35 tonnes of fish each year and, like many other professional fish farmers, in recent years the family has had to buy in around a third more to meet demand. As well as running a farm shop, Wolfgang supplies live fish to around 50 restaurants, completing a delivery round of between 1 000 and 1 200 km that includes Munich and Stuttgart.

Guided tours

In Mitterteich (*Teich* meaning pond in German), 34-year-old Thomas Beer and a few helpers are busy moving two-year-old carp from one pond to another and harvesting the zander that they find. "Zander fetch a much higher price than carp," indicates Thomas. "They account for around 60% of my fish-farming income, compared with 30% for carp, despite much bigger volumes. What's more, the two fish complement each other well. Carps are good for the pond ecosystem. Zander wouldn't survive without carp."

Thomas' farm includes 40 hectares of ponds, and aquaculture makes up 70% of his income. The rest comes from agriculture (10%) and hospitality and catering (20%). Three years ago, the Beer family diversified into tourism, opening a restaurant and guest rooms on their farm. Because there are plenty of ponds in the area around the farm, tourists can really experience the *Land of a Thousand Ponds*. Thomas has been running guided tours in the area for many years, giving visitors an insight into fish farmers' work and their environment. "I run 20-30 tours for groups of 20 or more people every year," he explains.





▲ Fish farmer Thomas Beer.



▲ Ms Stock's fish grill.

The guided tours – another contributor to the local economy – have also been helped by the EFF Axis 4, which funded a “certified pond guide” training course in 2013. There are now around 20 guides – fish farmers, restaurant owners and environmentalists – qualified to show tourists around the area and teach them about the important role that traditional aquaculture plays in environmental conservation.

On the infrastructure front, one of the programme’s highlights was the FLAG-supported construction in 2012 of a futuristic-looking observation tower (“Die Himmelsleiter” / The Stairway to Heaven), which blends seamlessly into the landscape. Walkers can climb the tower and enjoy stunning views of The Land of a Thousand Ponds.

But there are storm clouds on the horizon too, as Tirschenreuth’s fish farmers seek to deal with a new challenge. In the past few years, this “naturalised” pond landscape has begun to attract new, unwanted and unexpected visitors – cormorants and, more recently, otters. Despite being further from the sea than almost any other German region, fish farmers here face the same enemies as coastal fishermen. “Look at this,” says Thomas, pointing to the remains of a zander eaten by an otter. “This was a 10-year-old in prime breeding condition. This one fish can lay a million eggs – enough to repopulate an entire pond. The cormorants and otters are destroying a third of my output. They’re a real problem, along with beavers that block the pond drainage outlets.” Thomas has responded to this threat by experimenting with indoor aquaculture, installing zander rearing tanks inside one of his barns.

On the map – and on the menu

“Selling is no longer an issue, but producing is,” explains Hans Klupp. “The cormorants, otters and beavers are threatening production to such an extent that some small-scale fish farmers are thinking about giving up altogether. When we set up our fish farmer consortium some twenty years ago, selling the fish was the biggest headache. Everything was sold through wholesalers with no added value. These days, the Stocks, Beers and other professional farming families have to buy in

fish to meet customer demand. Direct sales have doubled in just a few years. Restaurants used to shun carp, but now they serve it up in large quantities, in many different ways. We’ve identified no fewer than 200 recipes! Carp has become a trendy product.”

By funding community-led projects and promotional materials that benefit fish farmers and the population as a whole, EFF Axis 4 and, more recently, the EMFF, have helped put carp, aquaculture and the local area on the map, and on the menu in restaurants far and wide. ■

TIRSCHENREUTH (Germany)

Area:
1 084 km²

Population:
76 308 inhabitants

Density:
70 inhabitants/km²

FLAG budget	EUR			
	EU	National	Private	Total
Total	487 500	162 500	–	650 000

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Perspective

FLAG support to Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries

Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries (SSCF) represent the vast majority of jobs and vessels in the EU fisheries sector. However, for various reasons, this part of the fleet has traditionally struggled to make the best use of the support available through different funding schemes, including the EU fisheries fund.



▲ Castro fishing port in the Solento FLAG area, Italy.

Lack of resources, both in terms of time and money, the lack of skills/knowledge necessary to apply for funding, a dislike of administrative procedures, the fragmented nature of the segment, which does not favour collective action, or poor representation in decision making circles – these are only some of the factors that have prevented the small-scale fishing sector from fully benefiting from the possibilities offered under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF). Looking at the specific measures⁸ aimed at supporting SSCF in the EFF, there has been uptake in only a few Member States (mostly Poland and Portugal), amounting to just €55 million for the whole EU⁹.

FLAG support is not restricted to a specific segment of the fleet but experience has shown that FLAGs have worked well with SSCF. Indeed, this segment is generally well rooted in local fishing communities and is likely to be interested in the type of support provided by FLAGs. With their capacity for outreach, and their strong presence in local fishing communities, FLAGs are well positioned to assist local

project promoters navigate the administrative hurdles and turn their ideas into concrete projects. This can be attractive for small-scale producers, but the extent to which FLAGs have been supporting SSCF in Europe remains unclear. There is a need, therefore, to corroborate anecdotal evidence with some concrete data.

Methodology

As the information collected on FLAG projects in the previous period did not specify the segment of the fleet supported, a survey was required in order to solicit more detailed information.¹⁰ The FARNET Support Unit, in collaboration with DG MARE, developed a questionnaire aimed at collecting quantitative information on the support provided by FLAGs to SSCF. The survey was deliberately limited to only a few questions and designed in a user-friendly way (i.e. using ranges instead of exact figures). This ensured a higher response rate among FLAGs, which were busy launching their operations at the time of the survey (February 2017).

The survey was sent to all FLAGs from the previous period (312 FLAGs), as well as to FLAGs already selected for the current period at the time of the survey (280 in February 2017). Due to some overlap between the two groups, the survey was made up of two parts¹¹:

- > a common part for all FLAGs (both new and former FLAGs),
- > a specific part, only for FLAGs that existed in the 2007-2013 period.



⁸ Article 26 and related articles of the Regulation 1198/2006.

⁹ SSCF could benefit from other EFF measures but no data is available at the time of writing.

¹⁰ This article sums up the findings of a technical report prepared by the FARNET Support Unit. The full report is available at the following link: www.farnet.eu/library/technical-reports.

¹¹ The questionnaire used for the survey is presented in annex of the report which is available on the FARNET website.

The common part was limited to information about the FLAG and made a distinction between the “former” and “new” FLAG. It included a question on the scale of SSCF in the area, as well as the expected level of support in the 2014-2020 period. Those FLAGs identified as already existing in the past programming period were then allowed to answer a series of additional questions on their support for SSCF in that period.

A total of 141 FLAGs responded to the common part of the survey, representing a 50% response rate¹² and around 40% of total FLAG population (see report for further details).

Of this total, 99 FLAGs took part in the second part of the survey, representing around 30% of the FLAG population of the 2007-2013 period. This was considered to be a high response, especially given that many FLAGs had ceased to exist at the time of the survey¹³.

Despite the fact that defining SSCF is always a difficult exercise, to ensure coherence between data collected across the EU, a common understanding was required. A definition was developed, therefore, based on the definition in Regulation 508/2014¹⁴, but adapted to account of inland fisheries and shellfish gathering on foot.

It thus includes:

- > coastal fishing carried out by vessels of less than 12 meters overall, and not using towed fishing gear (i.e. trawl and dredges)
- > inland fishing carried out by vessels of less than 12 meters overall, and not using towed gear,
- > fishing and shellfish gathering on foot.

Importance of SSCF in FLAG areas

FLAGs were asked to indicate the percentage of fishermen in their areas that could be classified as belonging to the SSCF segment. Around half of the respondents of the survey (70 out of 141 FLAGs) indicated that the majority of local fishermen (above 80%) belonged to the SSCF segment. This suggests that at least 70 FLAGs, or around 20% of the total number of FLAGs foreseen in the 2014-2020 period, will work predominantly with SSCF. It is very likely however that many more FLAGs will have a strong focus on SSCF. Extrapolating to the total FLAG population based on the survey is difficult, however. Indeed, the high response rate among FLAGs with a strong SSCF representation could indicate a certain level of bias in the sample (those FLAGs working more with SSCF having a higher interest in answering a survey on SSCF, for example). We tried to account for this by removing those FLAGs that we knew did not have SSCF in their areas. We knew, for example, that inland FLAGs in Poland, Germany, Latvia and Lithuania did not have any commercial inland fishing (or very little), while we also took out inland FLAGs from Romania and Bulgaria that did not have any commercial fishing activities.

Removing FLAGs with no SSCF, left us with a population of around 285 FLAGs likely to have SSCF activities. Therefore, the 70 FLAG areas mentioned above, where SSCF represented 80% or more of local fisheries activity, represent around 25% of FLAGs likely to have SSCF. In other words, one out of four FLAGs (which have commercial fishing activities in their area) is located in an area of very high SSCF activity.

Share of FLAG projects devoted to SSCF

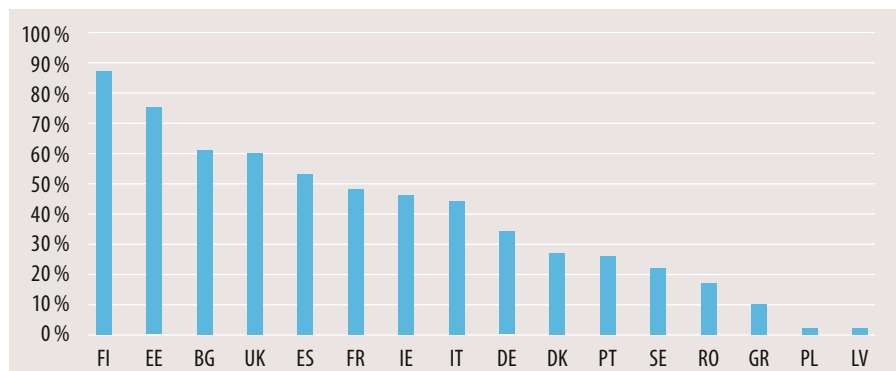
A total of around 12 000 projects were supported under Axis 4 of the EFF in the 2007-2013 period. Based on the answers received from 95 FLAGs, we estimate that around 2 700 of these projects were targeted at SSCF. “Targeted at SSCF” means that:

- > the project promoter was a small-scale coastal fisherman/woman or an SSCF association; or
- > the project promoter was another type of stakeholder (FLAG, municipality etc.) but the project was designed to benefit SSCF primarily (e.g. new pontoon or landing facility etc.).

These 2 700 projects represent around 23% of FLAG projects supported in the 2007-2013 period¹⁵. However, as explained above, some FLAGs may not have supported any SSCF projects, as they had no commercial fishing activities. This is important, as inland FLAGs with no commercial fishing activity accounted for around 5 000 projects in the past period (out of 12 000 projects in total), limiting to 7 000 the number of projects that could potentially be targeted at SSCF. Therefore, this means that the 2 700 projects targeting SSCF actually represents close to 40% of projects (2 700 out of 7 000) in FLAG areas with commercial fishing activities.

The share of projects targeting SSCF varies by Member State (see Figure 1), representing more than half of all FLAG projects in five MSs (FI, EE, BG, UK, ES). These five programmes can therefore be considered as being primarily targeted at SSCF. In Finland and Estonia, SSCF projects accounted for more than 75% of projects. Interestingly, these are also two MS with a very important inland fishing component, which was strongly supported by FLAGs.

Figure 1. Share of projects targeted at SSCF by MS



12 As the survey was sent to 280 existing FLAGs at the time of the survey (February 2017).

13 No information was received from Belgium, Cyprus, Netherlands, Lithuania and Slovenia.

14 Regulation 508/2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

15 Please note: no information was received from Lithuania, Slovenia and Cyprus. However, given the small number of FLAGs/projects in these countries, the missing information only marginally influences the results and, if anything, would contribute to slightly increasing the total number of projects supporting SSCF.



▲ Small scale coastal fishing in Hastings, England, UK.



▲ An oyster farmer in Brittany, France.

SSCF represents 40% of the projects and 30% of the budget of FLAGs in areas with SSCF activities.

Budget devoted to SSCF

FLAGs were asked in the survey to estimate the share of their total public funding spent on projects targeting SSCF in the 2007-2013 period. Around 100 FLAGs (out of 312) answered this question, which allowed us to estimate the total public support (EFF and national co-financing) for SSCF in the period 2007-2013 at **around EUR 140 million**¹⁶.

In other words, around €140 million of public money was invested by FLAGs in SSCF in the period 2007-2013. This represents close to 20% of the total public money available to FLAGs in this period.

However, the share of the budget devoted to SSCF increase to close to 30% of total public expenditure if we look only at FLAG areas with SSCF.

The share of the total Axis 4 budget targeted at SSCF varies considerably by MS (see Figure 2 below). None of the four MS with the largest budgets overall spent more than 30% of their budget on SSCF projects. This is quite striking in the case of Poland, which despite having by far the largest Axis 4 budget overall (around €250 million), spent only around 5% of this budget on SSCF.

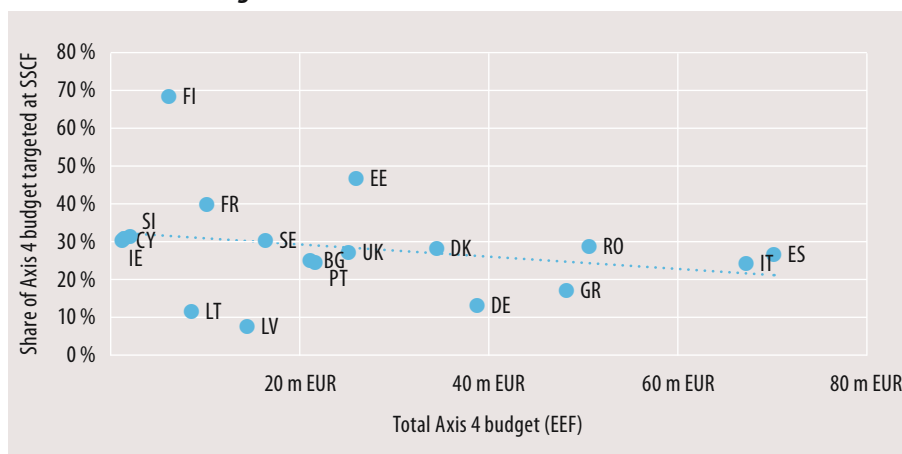
This could suggest a difficulty in spending large amounts of money on projects targeted at SSCF, possibly due to the limited investment capacity of SSCF operators and/or the small size of SSCF projects. In other words, the transaction costs¹⁷ of supporting SSCF are perhaps higher than for other types of projects. In this scenario, a specific strategy and/or system may be needed in order to target SSCF effectively.



In fact, there is a slight negative correlation between the size of the total public budget available in a Member State and the share of that budget spent on SSCF (see Figure 2).

N.B.: Poland has been taken out of the graph as its comparatively very large budget renders the graph unreadable. But the fact that Poland also has the lowest share devoted to SSCF of all MS would actually reinforce the negative trend highlighted in this graph.

Figure 2. Correlation between total Axis 4 budget per Member State and share of that budget devoted to SSCF



¹⁶ For details of the methodology used to extrapolate to the total FLAG population, please refer to the technical report available on the FARNET website.

¹⁷ Transaction costs are defined as those costs associated with an economic transaction. In the FLAG context transaction costs can be understood as the costs linked with the time and resources needed to support a SSCF project beyond the actual financial grant (support to project promoter, administrative follow up,...).

Types of SSCF projects supported by FLAGs

From Figure 3, we can see that the types of FLAG projects targeted at SSCF are quite varied. The two most popular categories of projects were product promotion and support for the diversification of activities outside of fisheries. Supporting diversification within the sector, and support for small-scale infrastructure and improving working conditions were also popular. The least common projects were those related to supporting governance of SSCF and improving the situation of women in sector. The reasons behind the low levels of support for these categories of projects is worthy of further investigation.

The types of projects also differ by country. While product promotion remains the most popular category, adding value to the local fishing heritage was also an important category in Spain, for example. In France, improving the environmental sustainability of fishing practices was the most popular category on a par with product promotion. In Italy, the focus was on supporting diversification within the fishing sector, while FLAGs in Finland and Germany put considerable emphasis on improving working conditions and infrastructure. FLAGs in Greece and Poland concentrated mainly on diversification of activities outside the fisheries sector.

Figure 3. Types of SSCF projects supported by FLAG (number of positive answers per category)



Other forms of support

The survey was also used to test out another assumption about FLAGs i.e. that these local partnerships were offering more than pure financial support to project promoters. Of the FLAGs that responded to the survey, 90% provided or envisaged providing other non-financial types of support to SSCF.

The most common types of non-financial support FLAGs provide are presented in Table 1. Helping to access other types of funding was clearly a priority for FLAG managers, likely motivated by the desire to preserve their own, sometimes-limited, budget. SSCF operators also typically struggle with the administrative procedures associated with public funding, so the assistance of FLAG managers was also often solicited in this regard. Creating linkages between different actors is at the heart of CLLD and, not surprisingly, fostering collaboration between SSCF and other stakeholders was also an important element of non-financial support.

This confirms the status of FLAGs as important providers of assistance to SSCF and other local stakeholders, beyond pure financial support. This is a role that often gets overlooked or is not documented in the quantitative evaluation of FLAG results, but which forms an integral part of the added value of CLLD.

In the future

FLAGs were asked to provide an estimate of the share of their budget that will be spent on SSCF in the current period (2014-2020). Based on the data provided, we estimate that the total amount of public money channelled to SSCF through CLLD is likely to increase to around €210 million (from €140 million in the 2007-2013 period). The share of the budget would, therefore, rise by around 10%, to over 30% of the fisheries CLLD budget.

Table 1. Types and share of non-financial support provided by FLAGs to SSCF stakeholders

Type of non-financial support	Share of FLAG from the sample who provided/will provide this type of support
Support to access funding from other programmes (e.g. other EMFF measures or other types of subsidies/financial instruments)	75%
Fostering collaboration between SSCF and other stakeholders (i.e. other economic actors, scientists...)	74%
Helping the local SSCF to get better organised	57%
Improving the representativeness of SSCF in public decision making	49%

These figures should of course be treated with caution as this is just an estimate, and looking into the future is never easy. However, a number of factors would seem to support our prediction of an increased level of financial support targeted at SSCF in the 2014-2020 period:

- > An increase in the number of FLAGs: 358 compared to 312 in the 2007-2013 period, which means that by default more money will be spent in fisheries and aquaculture areas.
- > An increase in the budget for CLLD, and in the numbers of FLAGs in specific Member States such as Spain, Italy and France, which were seen to be supportive of SSCF in the 2007-2013 period.

- > Reduced support for inland areas without commercial inland fishing activities in some Member States (Poland, Latvia), coupled with a drastic reduction in the CLLD budget in Poland (reduced by €160 million), leading to a clearer focus on coastal areas.
- > The application of CLLD in Croatia (with its important SSCF sector) for the entire programming period.

These factors all suggest a likely increase in FLAG support for SSCF. We will have to wait and see if this materialises in the future.

Overall, the survey confirms the important role played by FLAGs in supporting SSCF. While FLAG support is open to all segments of the fisheries and aquaculture sector, this survey supports the fact that SSCFs are natural partners of FLAGs. The study will be complemented by a series of case studies, which will allow us to retrieve more information on how FLAGs have been supporting SSCF. Good practices, tips and tools will be identified, which will be shared within the network to help further improve the relationship between FLAGs and small-scale coastal fishermen in Europe. ■

FARNETwork



Country | M€: Total public budget | Number of FLAGs with approved strategies / Number of FLAGs planned (information estimated by the FSU as of Sept. 2017)

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CLLD in practice



Discovering marine life with local fishermen

(Barlavento do Algarve FLAG, Portugal)

Like many sons born into fishing families, André began fishing on his father's boat at a young age, sparking his curiosity for the marine environment. Today, he shares his curiosity and passion for the marine environment with local tourists. Find out how on farnet.eu.



Teaming up to throne Queen Scallops

(Ría de Vigo – A Guarda FLAG, Spain)

Scallop fishermen teamed up with scientists to study the possibility of cultivating Queen Scallops, diversifying their production method and improving the sustainability of their activity. Find out how on farnet.eu.



Streamlining project selection and decision-making

(Denmark)

The Danish managing authority developed an IT system to help facilitate the work of all CLLD actors with supporting projects, significantly cutting down the time needed for FLAG/LAGs to process applications while providing everyone with a good overview on projects. More technical details on farnet.eu.



Ensuring local community involvement

(Liepaja FLAG, Latvia)

To increase local involvement and foster a sense of community belonging in a more “fun” way, a best projects award has been organized every year, attracting an ever-growing audience. Read more about this good practice on farnet.eu.



Bringing the Heritage Trail to life

(Northern Ireland South East Area FLAG, UK)

Fishing communities were given a major boost with a new Heritage Trail that showcases the region's history and provides an interactive visitor experience thanks to mobile apps giving real-time news feeds telling the stories of local fishermen. Get inspired on farnet.eu.

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