FLAGs must be proactive in shaping the future

At the recent FARNET conference in Quiberon, Mr Dominique Levieil, Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission, urged FLAGs to make their voice heard in the discussions on the EMFF and future programming. The Council of Ministers has already reached partial agreement on the CFP reform and the EMFF, based on proposals tabled by the Commission, and agreement with the European Parliament is expected in the second half of 2013.

Meanwhile, the Commission and Member States (MS) are actively negotiating the so called Partnership Agreements, which will define how individual MS will use the different EU Funds, and if and how they plan to apply Community-led Local Development (CLLD). These discussions are ongoing and Mr Levieil urged participants to be proactive in ensuring that the needs of fisheries areas were fully taken into account.

Axis 4 Days in France

France held its annual Axis 4 days in October 2012, hosted this year by the “Trois Estuaires” FLAG, in the region of Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The event provided an opportunity to discuss the initial findings of an evaluation of Axis 4 in France, and to explore possible improvements for the future. The links FLAGs have helped to develop between fisheries and territorial actors, and their role in improving the image of fishing and changing the law on pesca-tourism, were highlighted as some of the main achievements of Axis 4. Simplification and ensuring adequate budgets were identified as important considerations for the next programming period.

Lithuanian FLAGs prepare for the future

Lithuania’s third international Axis 4 event took place in Vilnius on the 20-21 November 2012. This year, the focus was on how to improve Axis 4 in the future, drawing on the experience to date. The event brought together Lithuanian FLAGs and Axis 4 stakeholders, together with Axis 4 representatives from Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Latvia and Estonia. Key challenges identified include the need to ensure a smooth transition to the next programming period, the need for adequate resources for animation, and the need to ensure that the fisheries sector remains at the heart of Axis 4. Participants also explored the potential of the multi-fund approach and decided to hold a common Lithuanian LAG and FLAG network meeting to discuss future options.
Baltic FLAG cooperation

Following an initial meeting at the FARNET conference in Olhão, Portugal, in June 2012, a group of FLAG representatives from the Baltic Sea area are now formally launching a regional cooperation network, with an initial focus on environmental issues. The South Baltic FLAG from Sweden and the ESKO FLAG from Finland will organise an international conference and inaugural meeting of the network in February 2013, in Helsinki. Further details from the South Baltic FLAG.

Two additional Spanish FLAGs in Cantabria

The Spanish region of Cantabria is in the final stages of selecting two FLAGs – one on the east coast and another on the west. This will bring to 31 the total number of FLAGs in Spain. Priorities for the eastern FLAG will include the development of quality standards and labels for local fisheries products and for the local tourism sector, as well as support for training and qualifications for fisheries sector workers. The western FLAG will focus on improving quality in order to differentiate its fisheries products in the market place. Further information.

Polish FLAGs cooperate on diversification

Two Polish FLAGs: Slowinska and North Kaszuby, are working together on a cooperation project on, “Diversifying fisheries areas and promoting good practices”. The project kicked off with a conference in Władysławowo, involving the two partner FLAGs, as well as Swedish and Estonian FLAGs. Follow-up actions have included a study visit to Finland and a training workshop in Poland on the legal and economic aspects of diversification. The latter included a presentation on ittiturismo, a form of pesca-tourism carried out on land (e.g. accommodation in fishermen’s houses, etc.), which could have application in Poland, where it is illegal for fishermen to take tourists on board their vessels.
Fish school for chefs

In Belgium, an innovative Axis 4 project called Fish2Know is helping to educate the next generations of chefs about local seafood. Catering professionals have an important role to play in introducing new products to consumers and the project, developed by the Zeebrugge auction and the Flemish fisheries institute (VLIZ), brings catering students to the auction to teach them about the local and sustainable sourcing of fish. The West Flanders FLAG contributed €94,680 of the €203,612 required to install a kitchen in the Zeebrugge auction house, where workshops and training courses are organised. The project will target 1275 students over two years.

National and international recognition for Axis 4 projects

The Mar de Silleiro cooperative from Baiona (Spain), which launched the 27percebeiros range of canned barnacles and barnacle pâté in 2010, recently announced that it had received interest from buyers in China, the US and the UAE. The project was supported by the Ria de Vigo-A Guarda FLAG and the beneficiary partly attributes this latest development to international exposure gained through FARNET.

In France, the Axis 4-supported “De Rivages en Calanques” project, a digital touristic trail that uses Quick Response (QR) codes as a less intrusive way of providing information along a protected coastline, received the 2012 Territoria Prize. Awarded by the French senate, the prize rewards best practice examples of digital technologies applied to territorial development. The project was supported by the Var FLAG.
State of play: 303 FLAGs, 2756 projects

By December 2012, a total of 303 FLAG were active in 21 Member States. Between them, the approved FLAGs have so far supported an estimated 2756 projects.1

Forthcoming events and activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29 January 2013</td>
<td>GIFS: Sustainable development of Inshore Fishing in Europe: the way forward</td>
<td>Rennes (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>Baltic FLAG Cooperation Network Launch</td>
<td>Helsinki (FIN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-22 May 2013</td>
<td>European Maritime Day 2013</td>
<td>Valetta (M)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1 This figure is based on information provided voluntarily by managing authorities between July and November 2012.
**Other news**

**European artisanal fishermen’s declaration**

Around 30 representatives of small scale fisheries in Europe met in Brussels, in November, to discuss, develop and adopt a common European Artisanal Fishermen’s Declaration. The aim is to put sustainable, artisanal and low-impact fishing at the heart of the ongoing reform of the CFP. Commissioner Maria Damanaki met with the group and welcomed the main points of the declaration.

**New learning and exchange network**

REDMAR is a new learning and exchange network, set up in 2012 to study and improve working conditions and practices in the fishing industry. As well as focusing on technical and scientific aspects, it also aims to promote equal opportunities, improve safety on board and improve the environmental sustainability of fishing.

**Follow FARNET on:**

![Facebook](facebook-icon.png) ![LinkedIn](linkedin-icon.png) ![Twitter](twitter-icon.png) ![YouTube](youtube-icon.png)

**Send us your news**

The FARNET newsletter is a resource for all those engaged in building a more sustainable future for Europe’s fisheries areas. Please send us news and information on your activities, which might be of interest to others working in this field. Contact: info@farnet.eu