

Fish from the Auction

FLAG: Ebro Delta

Catalonia, Spain

Project overview

“Peix de llotja”, translated literally as “fish from the auction”, has brought local fishing organisations together to promote their production to local restaurants by developing a brand that awards stars to restaurants that commit to buying their fish directly from their local auction.



In Spain, the auction is the first point of sale for all fish and most buyers in the Ebro Delta auctions purchase in mass before selling on to clients such as supermarkets and fish mongers. Restaurants also tend to depend on wholesalers, prioritising price rather than whether fish is sourced locally. In order to improve sale prices of local fish and help make sustainable, local fishing pay, the Association of Fishing Guilds from the Ebro Delta, coordinated an initiative to increase the consumption of fresh, local fish in the area’s restaurants. The idea was to encourage restaurants to buy directly from the local auction of each guild while putting in place a certification system to guarantee the origin of local fish. The association of guilds worked closely with restaurants, tourist operators and the FLAG to diversify their buyer base and take advantage of increasing tourism to promote the area’s fisheries products.



The project involved outreach work to promote the concept of a brand that promoted certified, fresh fish from the local auction as well as identifying restaurants that would be interested in benefiting from this branding. Promotional material, including a brand logo, flyers and plaque, was designed and agreement signed with a number of restaurants in which they undertook to purchase a certain quantity of local fish per year. Depending on how much they buy, restaurants are awarded one, two or three stars, evoking the Michelin starred restaurants. A website was also

designed to promote the scheme and local fish species, and a recipe book of typical fish dishes from each participating restaurant is being produced for distribution in the restaurants and online. The project promoter has also been active in attending gastronomy fairs to promote the “fish from the auction” brand.



The final stage consisted of a system of control to ensure participating restaurants comply with their commitments to purchase local fish. This is done through anonymous customer visits to check the quality of the fish being served, checks of auction receipts and non-renewal of the branded plaque in case of non-compliance.

Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** Adding value to local fisheries products, short circuits, marketing the local catch.
- › **Effectiveness/efficiency:** The project is still in an early stage but has already been effective at fostering cooperation between the four fishing guilds of the Ebro Delta as well as building links between the fisheries sector and the tourist and restaurant sectors. A total of 8 restaurants are taking part in the scheme so far and, after the first year, the Association of Fishing Guilds estimates that first sale prices of fish species typically purchased by the restaurants (e.g. sea bream, octopus, monkfish...) have increased by around 10-15% in the local auctions.

The participating restaurants, for their part, benefit from the promotion and credibility that comes with a brand developed by the fisheries sector itself. Thanks to this project, the offer of certified, local fish in the area's restaurants is increasing which in turn is contributing to the territory's offer of quality tourism in which the local gastronomy, based on sustainably produced resources is valued and promoted.

- › **Transferability:** Schemes to encourage restaurants to offer more local fish are relevant in many fisheries areas around Europe where the sector is struggling to remain competitive in a globalised market. A number of Mediterranean FLAGs are studying the possibility of adopting the same methodology and identity of "Fish from the Auction" through a cooperation project that would develop the concept into a Mediterranean-wide brand. FLAGs interested in similar initiatives should follow the results of this project closely as it develops.
- › **Final Comment:** This type of project poses the double challenge of convincing restaurants to buy directly from the auction and ensuring compliance of participating restaurants. For restaurants that join the scheme in Spain, this implies putting down a significant deposit in order to become a "buyer" at the local auction as well as being more time consuming than receiving a delivery directly from a wholesaler. In terms of controls, this project links certification to the amount a restaurant spends at the local fish auctions. This system tends to put smaller restaurants at a disadvantage but is considerably easier than the alternative which is a system based on the percentage of fish a restaurant buys locally.

Total cost and EFF contribution

Total Project total: €23 925

- › EFF Axis 4: €8 155
- › Regional co-financing: €8 155
- › Association of Fishing Guilds of the Ebro Delta: €7 615

Project information

Title: Fish from the auction

Duration: from January 2013 –

Case study date: January 2014

Project promoter

Association of Fishing Guilds of the Ebro Delta

Pascual Chacón Sánchez

condelt.pascual@dsi.es

+34 977 48 10 26

www.peixdellotja.com

FLAG details

Ebro Delta, Spain

grupacciolocalitoralebre@gmail.com

+34 620118393

[FLAGfactsheet](#)

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