

Drecklyfish: selling local seafood on Twitter

FLAG: Cornwall and Isles of Scilly

Newlynn, Cornwall, UK

Project overview

In Cornwall, UK, three fishermen started using social media for direct sales to increase their customer base and add value to their catch. Using Axis 4 to strengthen their digital skills and scale up operations, they are now recruiting new fishermen into the scheme and creating the conditions for a land based job position.



Fishermen Kevin, Francis and Andrew were not satisfied with the prices paid for their catch in their home harbour. The group decided therefore to start selling their catch online, with a simple website linked to facebook and twitter accounts, aiming to find new customers and get a better price for their catch. The website allows the fishermen to sell seasonal and fully traceable¹ line caught fish and pot caught crabs and lobsters, but the real success factor came from the introduction of social media in the sales system. Indeed, by using twitter as an on-line auction (@Drecklyfish) fishermen allowed a whole new customer base to follow their operations and bid as soon as the fish was caught, photographed and posted online.

With limited material and time, fishermen soon hit technical limits to satisfy their new customers. Axis 4 support came at this point, enabling the fishermen to scale up operations to face a growing demand. It covered the acquisition of new packaging material, facilitated the access to a dedicated work space with internet connection and financed a specific IT training course to help them master new communication tools.

1. Drecklyfish fishermen are certified by the UK's [Responsible Fishing Scheme](#) run by Seafish.



Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** innovation, added value.
- › **Results:** The average price they get for their catch has been increased, with some species achieving a 50% value increase compared to the price achieved through regular auction. Now recruiting new fishermen into the scheme, the three fishermen are also looking to establish a permanent position of employment for a land based administrator to deal with the logistics. Other benefits include greater visibility for local seafood and the area in general.
- › **Transferability:** Notwithstanding the different legal requirements related to direct sales in your area, promoting the catch through social media is an inexpensive and innovative way to increase your customer base. Although cheap to put in place, it is best to start by a test phase: the Drecklyfish team began with a short pilot phase between February and March 2013, selling only a small part of the catch to establish the right marketing strategy.
- › **Final Comment:** customers are increasingly looking for locally caught, traceable and “socially” rich products. There is also a growing tendency for customers to share their personal experience of a product through social media, a tendency that can be turned into added value by producers. This innovative project shows how local fisheries communities can use Axis 4 to make the most of modern technologies to increase their income and create new job opportunities for the territory.

Total cost and EFF contribution

Total: € 10 258

- › EFF Axis 4: € 7 695
- › Private contribution: € 2 565



Project information

Title: Drecklyfish

Duration: September – October 2013 (IT training and hardware acquisition)

Case study date: November 2013

Project promoter

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[FLAG factsheet](#)

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