

Community Seafood Officer

FLAG: Northern Devon
 Devon, United Kingdom

Project overview

A combination of one-to-one engagement with local businesses and English fisheries, the promotion of networking amongst them and the provision of business mentoring support has increased the supply of local fish into the Northern Devon market and led to the creation of three new local fish outlets.



A study carried out by the Northern Devon FLAG had identified a series of gaps in the local fish supply chain, and a low profile for locally caught seafood in the area. This project addresses these gaps by developing a local supply chain from sea to plate and up-skilling local food businesses to use more local seafood. To take on this task, a dedicated Community Seafood Officer, based in the area, has been recruited to animate, network and inspire connections between the fishing sector, restaurants, retailers and local community. It is a full-time position, funded for three years and requiring a broad set of skills and experience

ranging from knowledge of the food sector to business development to marketing. The Community Seafood Officer is supported by a steering group of four volunteer stakeholders from the seafood, hospitality, processing and tourism sectors.

This has provided support and advice to businesses to attend and exhibit their produce at existing and new events focusing on locally caught fish and seafood. The project also includes a small marketing and sponsorship budget to encourage individual companies to 'try out' new activities which, if successful, can be continued or repeated. From the beneficiaries' point of view, one of the real successes of the project is the one-to-one support given by the officer, building their confidence and helping to navigate what can sometimes be off-putting barriers, such as a lack of knowledge of how best to market or promote their product. Some examples of new initiatives resulting from the project include: the creation of "[The Glorious Oyster](#)" seafood shack; the street vendor [Seadog Foods](#); and [Sunfish Cuisine](#), offering gourmet seafood hampers and barbeque fish boxes.

Key lessons

- › **Relevance to FARNET themes:** Improving the image of fisheries, short circuits, adding value to fisheries.
- › **Results:** The project is still underway but capacity has already been built within a number of small businesses helping them to become more sustainable and giving them the tools to develop their business more independently, translating their ideas into action. Results to date include:
 - 7 local events expanded to celebrate local fish, fishing heritage or the marine environment
 - 2 new events celebrating local fish, fishing heritage or the marine environment
 - 19 businesses engaged through active participation in a project or event
 - 5 community organisations supported
 - 100 businesses benefitting from marketing or promotion through a project or event
 - 14 businesses trained or mentored
 - 3 new fish outlets created
- › **Transferability:** This project shows that direct, one-to-one support to targeted businesses can play an effective role in promoting sustainable fisheries to the business community and ensuring there are viable activities that can add value to local fisheries. This type of project could be transferred to many FLAG areas in which the local supply chain is underdeveloped. A major condition for success is the capacity of the officer hired. In this case, experience in the food sector, business, events and marketing meant she could provide a bespoke service to businesses and organisations looking to develop and pursue new opportunities related to fish and seafood products. Other tips to consider for successful transfer include: the development of a good database for regular communications and a toolkit of useful information resources; the targeting of businesses in the low tourism season when they're less busy and planning for the year ahead; the use of existing networks, public bodies, NGOs and charities; and starting small and laying solid foundations.
- › **Final Comment:** This project was developed from solid needs analysis within the local area and has a focus on the 'celebration' of fish and fishing to engage communities. It has provided both animation and investment to link interested businesses together, helping to develop new promotional and supply chain opportunities for locally landed fish

Total cost and EFF contribution

Total project cost: €152 280

- › EFF Axis 4: €57 100
- › National co-financing: €44 955
- › Private: €38 080

Project information

Title: Community Seafood Officer

Duration: 3 years (October 2012 to September 2015)

Case study date: April 2015

Project promoter

North Devon+

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[Northern Devon FLAG factsheet](#)

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