Since 2007, under Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund, a considerable wealth of local development experience, tools and methodologies have been accumulated through the work of some 300 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs), institutions and networks in the 21 Member States involved in the programme. The FARNET Support Unit facilitated the European networking that allowed for the development of this knowledge, referred to here as ‘the FARNET experience’.

This special insert is designed around two main stages of the local development process: the preparation of the local strategy, and its implementation, with each stage being presented through ten key points.

Ten key points for drawing up a territorial development strategy

These ten points represent successive stages in producing a coherent action plan that addresses the needs of the territory. However, some of these stages have to be carried out in parallel. The ultimate objective is to achieve a high level of coherence in terms of:

> The territory, which must be appropriate to this kind of action,
> The partnership mobilised within the territory, which must be dynamic and effective, with a composition reflecting the strategic priorities, and
> The strategy, which should be ambitious but also realistic, targeted and coherent.

1. DEFINITION OF THE AREA
The target area should have sufficient geographical, economic and social coherence, a sense of identity, critical mass, but above all there must be a willingness of local actors to work together – the delimitation of the intervention area is complex and requires a high degree of coordination.

2. MOBILISATION OF THE LOCAL POPULATION
The local development strategy is drawn up in close cooperation with the population, in particular the fisheries communities, taking advantage of their knowledge and experience, demonstrating that ways forward are possible and gradually encouraging as many people as possible to become involved.

3. THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP
A largely open partnership strengthens the legitimacy of the strategy, facilitates the reaching of consensus, reduces resistance and opposition to projects, increases creativity and innovation, and fosters the generation of ideas and solutions. We are talking here about a relationship that:

> brings together – on an equal footing – entities from the public, private and civil society sectors;
> is long-term i.e. goes beyond a single project or short-term cooperation;
> recognises that partners are stronger when they work together, building on each other’s strengths and assets.

This document should be of value to all local action groups, whether preparing their strategy for the years to come, or progressing to its implementation. It is designed in particular for those who wish to have a general overview of this experience. For those who want to go further, it provides easy access to the entire range of FARNET literatures – magazines, technical guides and “best practice” factsheets, which illustrate the diversity of the strategies and actions carried out across the European Union.

Footnotes:
1. Links to publications and other documents referred to on the FARNET website https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/crm/farnet/
2. A FARNET USB stick with all relevant FARNET documentation has also been developed and is available by contacting the FARNET Support Unit (info@farnet.eu)

2. In addition, the LEADER tool kit available on the website of the European Network for Rural Development is also useful for enriching the territorial development approach in fisheries and coastal areas: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en/leader/leader-tool-kit
4 COORDINATION WITH OTHER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES IN THE AREA

In many areas, local development is also supported by other funds, for example under rural/urban development or social inclusion policies. The objective is that these different initiatives are mutually supportive, ensuring better use of existing human and financial resources.


5 AREA PROFILE AND ANALYSIS

The objective here is to describe, with a limited number of key figures and in a concise way, the situation in the area: current trends, in particular with regards to the local economy and employment market, demographics, infrastructural and environmental issues. It focuses in particular on local fisheries communities, resulting in a list of specific advantages and disadvantages. The goal is to provide a realistic description of the area and how it works, focusing on the key elements that will be needed for the next step, the SWOT analysis.

6 SWOT ANALYSIS AND DEFINITION OF NEEDS

The analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is a key exercise, which brings together all of the data gathered, takes account of the expectations of the population, in particular the fisheries community, and the commitment of the partnership, and assess this in the context of the main axes of the strategy to be pursued. This allows for the identification of the development needs of the area and of its population, as well as the establishment of commonly agreed priorities.

Several FARNET Guides explore some possible strategic themes:

O FARNET Guide no. 3: “Adding Value to Local Fishery and Aquaculture Products”
O FARNET Guide no. 5: “Diversification of Fisheries Areas”
O FARNET Guide no. 6: “Green Growth in Europe’s Fisheries Areas”
O FARNET Guide no. 8: “Marketing the Local Catch”
O FARNET Guide no. 9: “Fisheries and Tourism, Creating Benefits for the Community”

Possible FLAG strategies have also been illustrated in various reports, good practices, reviews and interviews in a number of FARNET publications, as well as in the description of each of the 312 FLAG beneficiaries of Axis 4.

In addition, coastal areas are expected to face several new challenges, for example: the territorial impacts of the reformed Common Fisheries Policy; blue growth opportunities but also the risks associated with intense coastal development; climate change and the energy transition; and job creation and the fight against poverty. These challenges are opening up possible new areas of strategic focus for the FLAGS and need to be carefully assessed.

O FARNET Magazine no. 12: “Sailing towards 2020” p.4

7 STRATEGY

The strategy provides coherence between the area profile and analysis, the priority needs to be addressed, the objectives, the resources and the implementation measures proposed, while paying attention to synergies with other strategies and policies targeting the area. It ensures that actions foreseen by the partnership reinforce each other and contribute to the realisation of a shared vision for the territory.

8 INNOVATION

Stimulating innovation is one of the fundamental principles of the local approach. The objective is to encourage new, forward looking and entrepreneurial approaches and solutions…

Examples of types of innovation which commonly emerge include:
> The way a project is developed or managed;
> Who is involved in the project and how they are involved;
> How the project is resourced;
> How the results or lessons are identified, used, disseminated or communicated;
> How the project becomes self-sustaining;
> How the project links to other initiatives. (In FARNET Guide no. 1)

9 NETWORKING AND COOPERATION BETWEEN TERRITORIES

A key factor in the success of the strategy is the opportunity to take advantage of membership of the FARNET network. The network fosters learning and the sharing of experiences. It also enables joint ventures to be established with other areas to implement strategic cooperation projects, which require the support of several territories in order to achieve their full potential.

O FARNET Guide no. 2 “Working together for EU fisheries areas”

10 ACTION PLAN

The action plan sets out the main axes of the strategy with indicative budgets and actions, in line with the resources that can be mobilised under the EMFF and, if necessary, other structural and investment funds.

O For points 5 to 10, FARNET Guide no. 1 “Area-based Development in EU Fisheries Areas” – Chapter 4a – “Developing Effective Strategies” and 4b “Key Features of the Development Strategy”


4. FLAG Factsheets and contact information https://web gate.ec.europa.eu/fpiis/cms/farnet/tools/flags
Ten key points for the implementation of the territorial development strategy

The implementation of the development strategy, also presented in ten key points, represents a complex combination of human, financial and logistical resources and procedures that need to be carefully coordinated. This requires discipline and an ongoing dialogue with the local community, project promoters, and all the people and institutions that can contribute to its success.

O FARNET Guide no. 1 “Area-based Development in EU Fisheries Areas” – Chapter 4c – “Preparing an implementation plan (business or action plan)”

O FARNET Magazine no. 10 “Putting learning into practice”

1 ANIMATING THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

Leadership, diversity, complementarity, open-mindedness and sufficient availability are some of the key factors to ensure the partnership works successfully.

O FARNET Guide no. 4 “Steps for success” – Chapter 1. “Managing Effective Partnerships”

2 TECHNICAL TEAM

A motivated, dynamic and well-qualified team is a key success factor for the territorial development strategy. Taking account of the requirements of the fisheries community and local actors, its role is to provide information, create impetus, coordinate and support individual and collective projects, contribute to the evaluation of projects and the programme, work as part of a network with other territories, and ensure the administrative and financial management of the programme.

O For points 1 and 2, “South-West Flag Lab recommendations: The FLAG ‘dream team’”.

3 COMMUNICATION

High-quality communication (via local events and media, a website, etc.) enhances the profile of the FLAG and generates awareness of and interest in its activities. It is vital to encourage, to show commitment, to communicate ways of supporting projects, to provide information on results, and to highlight the seriousness of the approach to local partners, as well as regional, national and European authorities.

O FARNET Guide no. 4 “Steps for success” – Chapter 3. “Active project development and selection”

4 INVOLVEMENT OF THE LOCAL POPULATION

This is necessary throughout the implementation of the local development strategy. Working meetings, working groups and creative sessions establish a link between all those wishing to demonstrate a commitment, and will contribute to the gradual emergence of promising projects for the future.

O For points 3 and 4, FARNET Magazine no. 11, article, “Improving communication and participation”

5 SUPPORTING PROJECTS

One of the main missions of the FLAG is to identify, stimulate and support, from the ideas through to their implementation, projects emerging from fisheries communities and other sectors.

O FARNET Guide no. 4 “Steps for success” – Chapter 2. “Cultivating private sector involvement and investment”

6 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The skills and knowledge of local actors might have to be developed to ensure the emergence of high quality projects that respond to strategic objectives. Special attention should be paid to young people and women, who play a key role in the implementation of various projects, as well as to the FLAG members, in order to facilitate their understanding of the local development approach.


7 THE SELECTION OF PROJECTS

There are various procedures involved in the selection of projects. They need to be carefully thought out in order to stimulate and support “good” projects, which contribute most effectively to the strategy agreed by the FLAG.

O FARNET Guide no. 4 “Steps for success” – Chapter 3. “Active project development and selection”

8 PARTICIPATION IN THE NETWORK AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER TERRITORIES

Cooperation and networking are at the heart of the FARNET experience. Participation in the network and cooperation “can be a source of new ideas and methods, which contribute to the implementation of certain aspects of the local development strategy; It can provide an opportunity to expand existing projects or develop new projects by pooling skills and resources and/or opening up new markets or business development opportunities.” (Guide no. 2).

O FARNET Guide no. 2 “Working together for EU fisheries areas”

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The FARNET Experience

9 FUNDING

The delivery system put in place has a significant impact on the operation of the FLAG, the nature of the projects funded, and on the motivation of the potential project participants. Rigour, transparency and the avoidance of conflict of interest are vital to ensure the effective management of the public funds made available to the local partnerships. A delicate balance between simplicity and risk control has to be sought with the managing authorities in order to make the intervention of the FLAG as effective as possible.

O "European Structural and Investment Funds. Orientations on Community-Led Local Development for Local Actors", May 2014. Chapter 7. “How to make CLLD safer, faster and easier for local action groups?”

10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and temporally defined) indicators enable progress to be followed and the results of the strategy to be evaluated. The evaluation approach can take various forms, which may be combined: external evaluation, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, “learning circles”, etc.

Too often people see monitoring and evaluation as a burden, a necessary evil, a diversion from the real work. In fact, this should be the fun bit – finding out what works, seeing the evidence that your effort has been worthwhile, learning how you can do better in future." (In FARNET Magazine no. 10)

O FARNET Magazine no. 10 – Article “Peer-to-peer learning and mentoring” p. 10–13

Learning together, working together to create a better future, and gradually achieving development in coastal areas that is “smart, inclusive, and sustainable”; this is the essence and the challenge of the FARNET experience.

Three key texts for the period 2014 –2020

1 COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (CLLD) PROVISIONS

This generic term covers all local development approaches, whether they concern rural (LEADER), coastal and fisheries (FARNET) or urban areas. European cohesion policy for the period 2014–2020 highlights this new approach, which it defines as follows:

“Community-led local development shall be:
> focused on specific sub-regional areas;
> led by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in which, at the decision-making level, neither public authorities, as defined in accordance with national rules, nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights;
> carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral, area-based local development strategies;
> designed taking into consideration local needs and potential, and shall include innovative features in the local context, networking, and, where appropriate, cooperation”. (In article 32)


2 THE REGULATION ON THE EUROPEAN MARITIME AND FISHERIES FUND (EMFF)

Title S, chapter III focuses on the sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture areas. Article 63 sets out the EMFF’s means of intervention to support the local development strategies, conceived by the local stakeholders and fisheries local action groups: “Support for the implementation of community-led local development strategies may be granted for the following objectives:
> Adding value, creating jobs, attracting young people and promoting innovation at all stages of the supply chain of fishery and aquaculture products;
> Supporting diversification inside and outside commercial fisheries, lifelong learning and job creation in fisheries and aquaculture areas;
> Enhancing and capitalizing on the environmental assets of fisheries and aquaculture areas, including activities to mitigate climate change;
> Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas, including fisheries, aquaculture and maritime cultural heritage;
> Strengthening the role of fisheries communities in local development and in the governance of local fisheries resources and maritime activities”.

3 GUIDANCE ON COMMUNITY-LED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL ACTORS

This guide aims to provide support for local actors and practitioners in drawing-up more targeted and better quality strategies, clearly focused on results, and taking account of external conditions.

5. FARNET Magazine no. 10 – Article “Peer-to-peer learning and mentoring” p. 10–13

05/2015