

Axis 4 Factsheet: FRANCE

Geographical map: France



1. Context in which Axis 4 is being developed and main challenges faced

France's 5,500 km of coastline¹ and its maritime zone of 11 million Km², among the largest in the world, has long supported a thriving coastal and high seas fishing industry. Oysters, mussels, tuna, pilchard, herring, rainbow trout, and coquilles Saint Jacques make up the principal seafood catch.

The French market is known for the broad range of products it offers and its population of some 65 million inhabitants³ has steadily increased its consumption of fisheries products since 1960. Consumption per capita stood at 31kg per year in 2005, significantly higher than the EU average of 21 kg.⁴

The total production for 2007 was almost 800 000 tonnes, of which about 70% was from marine fishing, almost 30% from aquaculture and less than 3% from inland fisheries. This represents 12% of total Community production, putting France in

second place in the EU after Spain. In terms of the value of its landings and aquaculture production, France comes in fourth place after Spain, Italy and the UK⁵.

French maritime fishing takes place overwhelmingly (almost two thirds of captures) in the northeastern waters of the Atlantic, including the North Sea and Channel. Despite its significant small scale fishing, the Mediterranean accounts for less than 10% of the volume of France's catch, while its distant water fleet in the tropical waters of the Atlantic and Indian Ocean makes up the remaining third⁶. Its aquaculture consists mainly of mollusc production with most of the facilities located along the English Channel and the Atlantic coasts. However, France also has significant finfish aquaculture, both coastal and inland.

France's 7,900 vessels range from small scale coastal fishing boats to very large distant water trawlers and seiners. Only 1% of its vessels are over 40 metres, but in terms of engine power France's fleet is the second in Europe after Italy, accounting for some 16% of the EU total⁷. Small scale fishing boats of under 12 metres account for 74% of French vessels but while they employ the majority of fishermen they only account for 30% of production in terms of value.

And yet, fisheries account for approximately just 0.3% of overall employment in France, with about 64,700 individuals working in the sector, split relatively evenly between fishing (21,436), processing (21,676) and

¹ Only Metropolitan France

² Programme Operationnel, Fonds Européen pour la Pêche, Période 2007-2013, France

³ 2009, Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques

⁴ In 2005, Eurostat 2008

⁵ Eurostat 2008

⁶ FAO Fact Sheet, 2005

⁷ Eurostat 2008

aquaculture (21,600)⁸. In terms of fulltime equivalents, employment in the fisheries sector accounted for 13,462 jobs in 2006⁹.

The restructuring of the fisheries industry, shifting consumer preferences towards processed fish products and increasing tourism along the coast are all significant factors in France's fisheries areas. Coupled with a relatively poor integration of fishing communities into territorial development structures, they make integrated plans all the more valuable for obtaining a balance between preserving traditional fishing and natural heritage while at the same time taking advantage of the opportunities that new products and tourism can offer.

2. The National Response in terms of Axis 4

Given France's significant experience in territorial development and the fact that many inland fishing and aquaculture areas are covered successfully in Leader development programmes, Axis 4 in France is reserved exclusively for coastal areas – in particular small scale fishing and projects that promote synergies between fisheries areas and protected areas such as Natura 2000.

France has dedicated just 2.59% of its EFF budget to Axis 4 which implies €5.4 million in Metropolitan France and a little under €245 000 in French Guiana – the only overseas department (DOM) to implement Axis 4¹⁰. Given the relatively small budgets available to each FLAG (approximately €1 million for the whole programming period), the groups are expected to work with existing organisations on the ground to bring together professional fisheries and aquaculture organisations and their representatives, and territorial economic development actors to work together on local development projects.

3. The areas

In 2007 France boasted 121 marine *Natura 2000* sites¹¹. However, from the Norman coast in the North, to the Mediterranean island of Corsica in the South, French fisheries areas vary enormously in terms of environmental and climatic conditions and cultural and historic heritage influencing their development. Equally, the threats they face vary from environmental problems caused by pollution and industrial pressure on the one hand to economic pressures on the fisheries sector and competing demands for resources, for example from tourism in the South, on the other.

All of France's coast line, along with French Guiana, was considered eligible for Axis 4 measures. However, the potential threat that areas faced from declining fisheries was an important factor in the decision making.

The areas in France with FLAGs selected



11 areas were selected to receive funds for a FLAG. These are relatively evenly distributed along the whole French coastline, covering areas both north and south, and Atlantic, Mediterranean and the Channel. All areas include protected or environmentally managed areas (9 of which are Marine Natura 2000 sites) and offer significant environmental and cultural resources that can be mobilised for broad territorial development based on coastal and marine activities.

⁸ Employment in the fisheries sector: current situation (FISH/2004/4)

⁹ Annual Economic Report, 2008 (SGECA 08-02)

¹⁰ Implementation of Axis 4 is still in the initial phases in French Guiana and there is currently no FLAG in place.

¹¹ Programme Operationnel, Fonds Européen pour la Pêche, Période 2007-2013, France

<u>Name of the FLAG</u>	<u>Area (km²)</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Pop. density (hab/km²)</u>
1. Trois estuaires de la Canche, l'Authie et la Somme	4 000	59 449	15
2. Mers terroirs du Cotentin et du Bessin	unavailable	112 894	Unavailable
3. Pays de Cornouaille	2 540	340 260	134
4. Pays d'Auray	630	80 961	129
5. Marennes Oléron	356	35 131	99
6. Bassin d'Arcachon - Val de l'Eyre	1 494	119 523	80
7. Côte Basque - sud Landes	1 507	263 802	175
8. Rivage Pyrénées Méditerranée	270	48 964	181
9. Etang de Thau et bande côtière de Frontignan à Agde	350.6	136 500	389
10. Groupe FEP varois	1113.31	554 197	498
11. Corsica	8 722	279 000	32

As we can see from the above figures, population density is very high in some of the French areas. This is due to the presence of certain large coastal towns, although the majority of these urban populations would not be the target of the FLAGs' actions.

4. The selection process

In France, the DPMA relies on the ASP (Agence de Services et de Paiement) for the technical work on Axis 4, including for organising the selection of the groups. A single stage selection process was organised in which the call for proposals, published 27th June 2008, limited the eligible areas in France to the coast.

The call had three main sections including: 1) a description of the area and its problems, along with a SWOT analysis; 2) the partnership and the strategy, broken down further into the action plan and its measures; and 3) the budget. The deadline for presenting applications was 31st October 2008.

Groups presented their applications to their Regional Directorate for Maritime Affairs (DRAM) who were to check eligibility of each and seek the opinion of the COREPAM (Regional Commission for Fishing and Aquaculture) before passing the files on to the DPMA for selection.

A committee, known as the National Programming Commission (CNP), met in December 2008 to evaluate the applications. With the help of external experts, marks were allocated to each section of the application form. The DPMA then made the final selection based on the overall mark that the CNP allocated to each section.

In total 17 groups presented applications, from which 11 were selected. Five were approved in December 2008 and the remaining six in June 2009 following a series of amendments to the original applications.

This selection process was followed by a negotiation phase in which the ASP refined the action plan and negotiated the budget with the head of each group. A contract was then signed between the group, the DPMA and the ASP to cover the implementation of the action plan.

5. The groups

Given the limited budgets that the French FLAGs have been allocated and the presence of numerous local organisations operating in France, the French FLAGs have all been set up around existing bodies with varying input from local fisheries organisations, local municipalities, inter-municipal bodies, NGOs and civil society.

As well as representing a range of different socio-economic actors, each FLAG partnership must be made up of at least 50% private actors. Moreover, 50% of the FLAG members must be representatives from the fisheries sector. Both these requirements also apply to the "programming committee", the decision making organ of each partnership.

The "programming committee" considers the different projects submitted and accepts, postpones or rejects applications as well as deciding on the funding levels that projects will receive. On top of debating projects, the committee also discusses broader strategic issues regarding the future of their fisheries area and its economic activities, thereby acting as a platform that brings together different voices.

The President calls meetings and is helped by a salaried team to do so. He/she also chairs the meetings and is responsible for information on work and progress of the partnership.

6. The strategies

The French FLAGS have focused their strategies on issues that can be feasibly addressed with a limited budget of approximately €1 million for the whole programming period. Therefore, the strategies tend to work outwards from the fisheries sector by increasing its competitiveness through better marketing, labelling and shorter circuits. They also tend to focus on improving the linkages between fisheries, tourism, the environment and broader territorial development.

Some strategies include, for example, measures targeted at improved financial viability for local producers through promoting shorter circuits, relations with sectors other than the seafood industry, and the creation of labels/geographic denominations to promote high quality products.

Environmental management also features strongly in the French strategies, as do management mechanisms for bringing together multiple actors and their competing interests, and R&D measures dealing with, for example, accessibility to fisheries resources. Studies of this type are sometimes seen as a way to lever in funds for larger projects. Building on cultural heritage and tourism potential as a way of stimulating fishery activities is also a common focus of the French FLAGS.

7. Key features of administrative and financial systems

EFF Budget 2007-2013 and funding from National level

% of EFF Budget on Axis 4	EFF Budget on Axis 4 / €	National Funding /€	Total Budget /	Average Budget per group / €	Number of groups
2.64	5 699 644	5 535 936	11 235 580	1 million	11

- Local actors (potential beneficiaries) present projects to the FLAG
- Selection committee of FLAG considers and selects projects
- The Regional Directorate for Maritime Affairs (DRAM) gives its opinion on selected projects
- The ASP checks eligibility of selected projects on behalf of the DPMA
- ASP makes payment directly to beneficiary of approved project
- The DPMA assumes overall responsibility for coordinating and monitoring Axis 4 operations.

8. Networking and capacity building

France does not currently have a national network in place. In terms of coordinating Axis 4 work, the DPMA has been assuming the responsibility while the ASP carries out the operational monitoring.

On behalf of the DMPA, the ASP organised two awareness-raising seminars in October 2007, one in Lorient and the other in Sète, for fisheries professionals and territorial development actors. The idea was to introduce the concept of territorial development to fisheries professionals and, at the same time, to inform territorial development actors about the specificities of the fisheries sector.

Working meetings with each of the groups selected have also been held and a training guide for the FLAGS is currently being produced.

9. Resources or ideas that may be of interest to other countries

France offers a rich experience in local development and, as such, various interesting examples of how this potential can be harnessed to mobilise fishing communities to participate in broader territorial projects. Due to the small budgets of the French FLAGS the groups have had to be especially innovative in terms of their organisational structure. The FLAG from Le Var, for example, is led by the WWF-France, while others are led by professional organisations such as the local fishing committees.

10. Contacts and links

Managing Authority

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