

Axis 4 Factsheet: GREECE

Geographical Map: Greece



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

At approximately 16 000 km in length, Greece's coastline is the tenth longest in the world. The country boasts a vast number of islands - approximately 3 500 - 112 of which are inhabited. 90% of Greece's 11 million inhabitants live in coastal areas, the population of which, doubles during the summer season.

In terms of annual consumption of fisheries products, the Greek consumer is in line with the EU average, consuming approximately 21kg per inhabitant per year.

Following Latvia, Greece has the second highest employment rate in the fisheries sector in Europe. Indeed, its fisheries sector employs around 37 701 people, or 0.9% of the active population, of which 80% work in fishing, with aquaculture and

processing activities each accounting 11% and 9% respectively¹.

Greece's total primary production was around 208 266 tonnes in 2007, with a value of €931 million. This puts the Greek fisheries sector in 12th position in the EU in terms of production in weight but 6th place in terms of value. Sea fishing made up 45% of this production but accounted for 57.4% of the value while aquaculture accounted for 54% of production and 42.6% of the value. Production from inland fisheries is extremely limited, accounting for the remaining 1% of production².

The Greek fishing fleet is the largest in Europe in terms of number of vessels but just the fifth largest in terms of engine power and the seventh in terms of tonnage. This is explained by the fact that its 17 353 vessels are primarily small scale coastal fishing vessels of under 12 meters. The main marine species targeted are anchovy, sprat and cod. The Greek fishing sector has a number of key weaknesses, including the age of its fleet, inadequate training and ageing fishermen and low involvement of producers in the distribution of their products.

Aquaculture is primarily sea based and in 2005 provided activities for 1 030 enterprises. Aquaculture production is structured mainly around the production of shellfish, sea bream and sea bass. The sector faces several problems including the lack of a marketing strategy, the lack of spatial planning, difficulties related to the transportation of products and pressure resulting from other land uses such as coastal tourism.

There are 310 fish processing companies in Greece. In 2005 processing sector production amounted to around 59 300 tonnes with an approximate value of €294 million. Despite the fact that the sector has shown increase in terms of productivity, this has not yet transferred into an increase in profitability. Efforts are required to develop promotional campaigns and new products as well as the implementation of new technologies and the construction and modernisation of infrastructure. Radical support is also needed to help the marketing sector meet hygiene and modern marketing requirements.

A number of Greece's coastal areas and islands are dependent on fisheries activities and are currently facing demographic and socioeconomic problems due to shrinking capacity, lack of basic infrastructure, distance from the urban centers, low population density, ageing populations with low adaptability to new technologies and low levels of education. On the other hand the natural resources combined with their attractiveness as tourist destinations offer these areas an opportunity to reverse the negative impacts and achieve sustainable development.

¹ In 2002-03 (DG FISH 2004). The figure stood at 38 150 people in 2005 according Greek data.

² Eurostat 2008

2. The national response in terms of Axis 4

In Greece, €45 million (16.42% of its EFF budget) is currently allocated to Axis 4. The national objective is to use Axis 4 to promote the sustainable development of fisheries areas through the promotion of multiple employment and fostering links with other sectors. With this in mind, the implementation of activities under Axis 4 will pursue the following objectives: increasing the added value of fisheries products; promoting eco tourism; sustaining employment and creating additional jobs; promoting the coastal environment of fisheries areas and their natural and architectural heritage; improvement of local infrastructure and services so as to improve the attractiveness of fisheries areas; and encouraging the uptake of best practices through the promotion of inter-regional and transnational cooperation.

3. The areas and their key characteristics

The areas which applied for Axis 4 funding can be grouped into 2 broad categories: small, remote islands and mainland coastal areas (including lagoons). Regarding the island areas, in addition to issues of isolation, there is also the issue of creating an alternative model for the development of tourism based on new methods and quality - especially given the fact that in many cases it is the only viable alternative for the diversification of activities. Amongst the coastal areas, both underdeveloped areas and areas where there is a high concentration of fisheries activities tended to apply for funding.

Despite the fact that, geographically speaking, the areas did not necessarily have to coincide with national administrative areas or with zones established for the purposes of eligibility under the objectives of Structural Funds the following minimum criteria had to be met to be eligible: at least 0.82% of the economically active population of the area employed in the fisheries sector; the area covered should not exceed 6,000 m², the population of the area had to be at least 10 000 inhabitants with the exception of the areas comprised solely of small islands, in which case the area was to have at least 5 000 people. In coastal areas of the mainland and large islands, the boundaries of the area could not exceed 10km from the coast or 5km from the banks of a lake.



Based on the criteria established, the prefecture of Attiki was not considered eligible for Axis 4 (with the exception of the islands Troizina and Methana). Furthermore, areas that received funding from the Leader Axis of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EARD) were precluded from receiving funding from Axis 4 of the EFF and vice versa.

Within the framework of the public procurement tender, 16 eligible proposals were submitted and 8 groups were finally chosen. These 8 territories all included at least 2 protected areas – in fact one of them, Lesvos, included 11 Natura 2000 areas, making up over 80% of the FLAG's territory.

<u>FLAG area</u>	<u>Surface area /km²</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population Density</u>
1. Kavala	495	19 804	40
2. Chalkidiki	416	13 308	32
3. Thessaloniki	388	35 238	91
4. South Ipeiros – Amvrakikoy	1 006	54 392	54

5. Aitoliki	227	32 022	141
6. The Cyclades	670	33 858	50.5
7. Dodecanese	135	16 441	122
8. Lesvos	482	45 029	93

4. The selection process

The Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food opened a call for up to 9 Greek fisheries local action groups (FLAGS) in October 2008. The call defined the broad conditions to be met in order to benefit from Axis 4 and invited fisheries groups to submit local development strategies and the boundaries of the area that each proposed to cover. In accordance with national procurement legislation, candidate FLAGS were given 52 days to prepare and submit their applications.

Each proposal was assessed against three main axis of evaluation: the characteristics of the geographical area itself, the local development strategy and the adequacy of the local action group. Of the 16 groups that applied, 8 were finally selected. These FLAGS were then invited to review their local development strategies, in accordance with eligibility, providing any necessary amendments before final approval was given to them. The final decision and approval of the groups was made by the Minister of Rural Development and Food in August 2010.

5. The groups

With a total public budget of between €4.5 million and €5 million each, the Greek FLAGS are for the main part comprised of public limited companies (S.A.) that have been set up around existing organisations (Leader local action groups or groups that implement programmes for the development of rural areas), albeit the tender was also open to newly established groups.

Public and private actors must both be represented in the Greek FLAG partnerships. The composition of the decision-making body is as follows: a) local economic and social partners and other civil society representatives in the area (such as associations of farmers, fishers, women or young people) must make up at least 50% of its members (and at least 20% of these partners and representatives must come from the collective bodies of professional fishers) and b) the organizations that serve the interests of the public sector in the area, regardless of their legal form, must account for at least 30% of its members.

The decision-making committees within the FLAGS are comprised of 5-11 members. It should be noted that the committee for the implementation of Axis 4 does not necessarily coincide with the board of governors of each FLAG. In terms of salaried staff, the Greek FLAGS employ approximately 2-3 persons full-time.

6. The strategies

The local development strategies developed by the FLAGS focus on the themes listed in the call launched by the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food, including: private investments by fishers for the diversification of economic activities outside the fisheries sector; private investments by non fishers for the sustainable development of fisheries areas (ecotourism, accommodation facilities, services for the benefit of small fisheries communities etc); and public investments for tourism-related infrastructure and services as well as infrastructure that contributes to improving the quality of life in fisheries areas and the renovation of villages.

Investments foreseen include accommodation facilities, eco-tourism, development of local fisheries products, and the development of alternative sources of income for traditional aquaculture units, such as offering guided visits to the facilities of the aquaculture units.

7. Key features of administrative and financial systems

EFF budget 2007-2013 and national funding

% of EFF Funding on Axis 4	EFF Funding on Axis 4 / €	National Funding /€	Total Funding / €	Average Budget per group / €	Number of groups
16.42	33 300 000	11 700 000	45 000 000	4.5 - 5 million	8

The selection of projects and payments to the beneficiaries will follow the procedure outlined below:

- The FLAG organizes the selection process
- Potential beneficiaries submit investment projects to the FLAG
- Investment projects are evaluated by the FLAG on the basis of a uniform core of criteria, tailored to suit the needs of each particular geographical area. The core of evaluation criteria was drawn up by FLAGs that have extensive LEADER experience and ratified by the national monitoring committee³ for the Operational Programme “Fisheries”.
- The FLAG selects the projects for support
- The FLAG carries out verifications that cover the administrative, financial, technical and physical aspects of the projects. The monitoring of implementation, and payments of the project investments are solely the responsibility of the FLAG.
- Finance is transferred to the FLAG once the first projects are selected.
- The FLAG then makes payments to the final beneficiaries, in accordance to the terms and conditions of the national system for management and audits and ministerial decisions regarding the implementation of Axis 4.

8. Networking and capacity building

Axis 4 in Greece will support activities for inter-regional and transnational cooperation among groups in fisheries areas through networking and dissemination of best practice. All 8 FLAGs are interested in developing inter regional and transnational projects.

The Managing Authority is planning to develop a national FLAG network which will be financed from Greece’s EFF Technical Assistance budget.

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

As mentioned above, all of the 8 Greek FLAGs have shown interest in developing transnational projects. FLAGs from other member states may find partners for transnational cooperation projects in Greece.

Greece has implemented the LEADER initiative and the bottom- up approach in the past successfully. This experience is a resource worth tapping into by countries seeking know-how for the planning and implementation of Axis 4.

10. Contacts and links

Axis 4 Contact person: Mrs Mitza Edge
Hellenic Republic - Ministry for Rural Development and Food
Administrative Division for Community Funds and Infrastructure
Managing Authority “Fisheries”
Ierosolymon 6
112 62 Athens
Greece

E mail:megke@mou.gr
Phone: +30 210 866 56 33
Fax: +30 210 867 61 61

³ A basic core of evaluation criteria was approved by the Monitoring Committee for the Operational Programme Fisheries’ 2007-2013 in March 2008.