Axis 4 Factsheet: United Kingdom

Geographical map: UK

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

The United Kingdom is situated off the north western coast of continental Europe. It is comprised of the Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and associated territories four countries England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and a number of islands. It is surrounded by the North Sea, the English Channel, the Celtic Sea, the Irish Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean. The length of the Great Britain mainland coastline is 17 820km[1] and the length of the Northern Irish coastline is 650km[2]. If the larger islands (counting Northern Ireland) are included the total length is 31 368km. There are over 1 000 islands, however only 290 are permanently inhabited. The largest lake in the UK is Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland at 381.7km^2 with the longest river being the Severn (354km) which originates in Wales and flows through England to its estuary in the Bristol Channel (England). There is very little commercial inland fishing in the UK.

Its population of 62.3 million[3] is slightly below average as consumers of fisheries products at 20.6kg per capita in 2005, compared to the EU average of 21.4kg[4].
The UK is the 3rd largest producer of fisheries products in Europe, producing 790,687 tonnes in 2007[5]. It imported €2 732[6] million worth of fisheries products in 2008, which accounted for 7% of all imports of food, beverages and tobacco in the UK

The production of the UK fisheries sector accounted for a very small part (0.10 %) of the UK's GVA in 2009[7] which in monetary value is €1 442 million. However, it also contributes to other support industries and supports other commercial and recreational activities, including tourism. Although relatively small, it has wider beneficial social impacts especially in remoter areas in maintaining local services and communities.

In terms of employment, the fisheries sector made up just 0.1% of employment in the UK in 2009, employing 33 534 people (12 212 full and part-time staff in marine fishing (the UK is the 6th largest employer compared to other member states based on comparable data for 2007), 14 331 full time equivalents in processing and 4,200[8] in aquaculture)..

Marine fishing and aquaculture make up almost all the UK's catch of 785 810 tonnes[9] with sea fishing representing 75% of catch and aquaculture 25% catch. Inland fishing accounts for less than 1% of catch. The UK fishes over 100 EU quota stocks as well as a wide range of non-quota species. The UK's fishing fleet is made up overwhelmingly of boats under 10 metres. England has the largest number of vessels in total; while Scotland has the largest number of boats over 10 metres. Aquaculture is an important industry in the UK producing salmon, rainbow trout, mussels, oysters and clams. There were 38 555[10] aquaculture sites in the UK in 2006, with 96% located in England. However Scotland produced 84% of the fish and shellfish by weight[11]

[1] Ordinance Survey
[2] Northern Ireland Costal and Marine Forum
[3] ONS mid-year estimates 2010
[4] FAO 2005
[5] DG Mare http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp_en.pdf
[6] Office for National Statistics (ONS) the UK's ONS do not produce detailed breakdowns of figures in GDP terms.
[7] Office for National Statistics
[8] Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey 2009-10
[9] 2009 figures, Eurostat downloaded August 2011
[10] EFF UK Operational Programme
[11] EFF UK Operational Programme

Overall in 2006 there were 388[12] fish processing companies in the UK employing some 17 000 workers with a turnover of €3 296 million. Processors are supplied by both the catching and aquaculture industries. The UK still has a large number of small to medium sized processors, although consolidation has taken place in recent years and is likely to continue as smaller processors face cost and supply-chain pressures. Fisheries processing is concentrated in England and Scotland with Wales and Northern Ireland hardly featuring in this sector of the industry.

2. The national response in terms of Axis 4

In the UK the responsibility for the EFF and Axis 4 rests with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) who has been designated by the UK Fishery Minister to act as the UK Managing Authority on behalf of Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). National delivery is devolved to the four constituent counties who act as Intermediate Bodies of the Managing Authority, through Marine Scotland, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland, the Welsh Government in Wales and through the MMO in England. Each of the four Intermediate Bodies has their own national rules which must conform to UK standards set by the Managing Authority (MA) and set out within the Operational Programme. The implementation in the UK will vary within the 4 Intermediate Bodies in terms of time scales and delivery structures, but core standards will be met in all areas. At present there are no operational FLAGs in the UK, however 6 FLAGs in England have submitted strategies and business plans which are in the final stages of the process of evaluation and allocation of funding.

3. The areas and their key characteristics

The UK will be focusing on coastal regions for EFF Axis 4; there is no intention at present to support any inland fisheries. The criteria for inclusion in the UK programme are based upon their ability to demonstrate at least two of the following: low population density; fisheries in decline and small fishing communities. There is an additional eligibility criterion in England that the fisheries area must include at least one active landing port. The areas in England that have successfully completed the Expression of Interest (EOI) stage are Cornwall, Hastings, Holderness Coast, North & West Cumbria, North Devon and North Norfolk. In Scotland, 12 FLAG areas have successfully completed the EOI stage (Aberdeenshire, Moray, Angus, Fife, East Lothian, Scottish Borders, Dumfries and Galloway, Highland, Ayrshire/Argyll & Bute, Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland). In Northern Ireland there is expected to be just one FLAG along the County Down coast as this 25 miles stretch is the only ‘fisheries dependent area’ on the Northern Irish coast. Wales have indicated that there will be a maximum of 3 FLAGs, which will be chosen from the convergence area of their coastline. Three expressions of interest have been received from Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. No strategies or business plans have been approved in the UK to date.

4. The selection process

The UK is adopting a competitive two stage processes which comprises an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) form being completed with successful areas being invited to develop a local Strategy and Business Plan. This does not apply in Northern Ireland where due to the ‘fisheries dependant area’ being confined to a 25 mile stretch of coastline and 3 villages only one FLAG is being established and the EOI stage is not being used. England is the furthest ahead in its selection process with 6 areas having completed the expression of interest (EOI) stage and subsequently submitted strategies to the Managing Authority (June 2011). In Scotland, 13 FLAGs have completed the EOI stage and will submit local fisheries development strategies and business plans to Marine Scotland in early September 2011. The MA in Northern Ireland is actively supporting FLAG development through its EFF coordinator and the FLAG is expected to be in place by August 2011 with the strategy agreed by October 2011. Wales received three EOIs in May 2011.

5. The groups

The composition of the FLAGs will vary across the UK, and the representation within each group is formed as during the selection and approval process.
In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, groups will be set up independently of LEADER, with certain areas drawing previous LEADER experience, whereas in Scotland the intention is for the FLAGs to mirror the LEADER areas and to deliver their separate strategies in conjunction with the LEADER LAGs with Local Authorities acting as Lead Partners for the FLAGs.

[12] EFF UK Operational Programme

6. Key features of administrative and financial systems

The table below describes the budgets available at Member State Level. The four individual administrations are responsible for allocating specific budgets to their own FLAGS

EFF budget 2007-2013 and funding from Member State level

% of EFF Budget on Axis 4	EFF Budget on Axis 4 / €	National Funding /€	Total Budget / €	Average Budget per group / €	Number of groups
8.4%	11 598 450	9 527 638	21 126 088	ranging from 400 000 - 3m	23

This table does not show the significant variations in funding between the UK regions. In England the budget is circa €9.2 million (€4.6 million EFF and €3.9 million from national funds) while Wales has a total budget of €1.08 million (€541 000 EFF). Scotland's EFF budget of €8.868 million (€4.96 million EFF) is not being directly co-financed by Scottish Government but by other recognised public bodies on a regional basis.

Administrative procedures will be broadly similar across the regions, although there are important differences regarding who controls the payment to the final beneficiary:

- Local actors (potential beneficiaries) present projects to the FLAG
- Selection committee of FLAG considers and selects projects. In England projects over £100 000 threshold are selected by FLAG and reviewed by the England IB Panel.
- In England, the Regional Administration delivers the funding directly to the final beneficiary at the request of the FLAG. It is likely to be similar in Wales and Northern Ireland, although this is still to be confirmed.
- In Scotland the Lead Partner of the FLAG is responsible for implementation of all aspects of Axis 4 at the local level.
- FLAG responsible for monitoring and evaluation to ensure effective implementation of projects

7. Networking and capacity building

At present no official networks have been formed in any part of the UK or at national level although it is envisaged that partnerships and a UK FLAG network will be formed. Informal networking is developing in each region and this is being facilitated by the Regional Authorities. FARNET has provided training to FLAGs and technical assistance to the sponsorship bodies in England and Scotland.

8. Any resource or idea that may be of interest to other countries

The UK developed the Axis 4 proposals later in the programme period, and while being at an early stage in the development and delivery, good progress is being made. Where appropriate, development will build on the knowledge of LEADER and/or local development to ensure sound partnership working and a bottom up approach.

9. Contacts and links

Managing Authority
Axis 4 Contact: Philip Lynn
UK EFF Axis 4 Programme Manager
Business Relations Team
Marine Management Organisation
PO Box 1275. Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 5BN
Tel.: + 44 191 376 2507
E-mail: philip.lynn@marinemanagement.org.uk

Last updated: 7th September 2011