

# Basque-South Landes Coast EFF Group

## Summary of the strategy

### Overview of the territory

The candidature is being led by the Bayonne maritime area Local Fishing Committee in partnership with the two regions of “Adour Landes Océanes” and the “Pays Basque”. The territory covers an area of 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> including 85 km of Basque and South Landes coast as well as the Adour estuary. It contains seven inter-municipal associations with a population of 300,000. Situated at the heart of a dynamic euro-region, this territory has experienced strong demographic growth. Fishing, an ancestral activity which for a long period played a major role in local economic life, has been in decline for the past 30 years. Economic activity has shifted towards other areas (tourism, surfing, services) and the centre of population has gradually moved away from the main fishing ports.

### Main elements of the diagnostic

**A fishing sector which has been able to retain significant economic potential in spite of structural difficulties.** Bayonne’s maritime area has a substantial and diversified fleet (187 vessels, 62% of which are used for small-scale inshore fishing), 4 fishing ports (Capbreton, Bayonne, Saint-Jean-de-Luz/Ciboure, Hendaye) with high-performance port equipment and a unique fish auction market. All the sector’s actors, upstream and downstream, management, and the only maritime school in Aquitaine for training in professional fishing trades are located close to the ports. The territory’s great potential, on land as well as at sea, generated turnover of €60 to €66 million in 2005. However, a significant proportion of these monetary flows leaves the territory, in particular, on account of the numerous catches landed outside the area and sold away from the fish auction market at Saint-Jean-de-Luz/Ciboure. Furthermore, the sector remains weakened by structural and economic difficulties: scarcity of the resource, termination and reduction of quotas on some key species fished by the fleet, increase in fuel costs and rise in costs of aging vessels, recruitment problems and threats to the sustainability of certain professions and know-how in the territory due to absence of buyers for various companies in the sector. Furthermore, while local fishing methods deliver high-quality production, this is not effectively maximised owing to a lack of processing and well-known brands.

**Fishing inadequately supported on land.** Social links between the small, rather closed, local community of fishermen and the rest of the population are weak. There is a “sense of inability to communicate” between the people of the land and those of the sea which is intensified by the lack of integration of the ports into local socio-economic life. Over the course of the centuries, fishing has established a rich maritime heritage which various associations are attempting to maintain and to make better use of, but with little support from the local authorities. Above all, the absence of a site in the area’s main port for maximising this heritage underlines the distance between the territory and its maritime identity, and the lack of recognition for the contribution of fishing over the centuries. While the Basque coast is a highly attractive tourist location, with picturesque fishing ports which appear on postcards, the fishing sector has not made the most of this potential. There is strong interest in finding out about this traditional local activity, but no real tourist services have been developed with the sector to meet this demand. The fishing sector is not very well integrated into the dynamic of the coast owing to its low profile, a lack of recognition for the actors and the specific challenges facing them, and to the lack of a territorial approach to fishing in local public policies.

**Users not well integrated into the eco-management of the marine environment.** The Basque-Landes coast and the Adour estuary contain a great diversity of natural environments (Canyon of Capbreton, Landes dune belt, the rocky Basque coastline, inshore currents and coastal lakes, Barthes wetlands) which are home to some remarkable flora and fauna. These fragile ecosystems are subject to significant demographic, developmental and tourism pressures, which are sources of degradation and pollution. These environments also receive special attention through studies or programmes conducted on water quality, fishery resources and preservation and management of the area. However, only technical, scientific, institutional and associative bodies are involved. The users, and in particular professional fishermen, are rarely included, and sometimes even not informed. This is one of the consequences of the lack of recognition of the role of fishermen, not just as users but also as permanent and professional operators in the coastal area and estuary, and as managers of fishery resources. The role of fishermen is much more restricted under local provisions than under national or European ones aimed at sustainable resources management, such as a successful initiative to replenish salmon in the Adour and a scheme to clear up waste at sea. While various users are active on the coast, the lack of any significant communication and coordination risks intensifying tensions, in

particular between pleasure and professional fishermen.

### Challenges and strategy

Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses has enabled identification of four major challenges relating to sustainable development of the area to ensure retention of traditional activities and preservation of natural resources in context of the highly attractive nature of the coast and significant demographic and economic changes.

→ **Recognising and enhancing the image and professions of fishing:** How can fishermen be brought back to the heart of the strategy? How can the attractiveness of these professions be enhanced? How can these traditional activities be maintained in the territory? How can social links with the local population be strengthened and the maritime heritage and identity be maximised?

→ **Making better local economic use of fishery products:** How can the economic impact of the sector in the territory be enhanced and added value created from fishery products? How can stronger links be created upstream and downstream in the sector in order to support joint structuring projects?

→ **Promoting coordinated eco-management of the marine environment:** How can sustainable management of resources by professional and pleasure fishermen be fostered? How can all users be better involved in protection and management of the marine environment? How can recognition for the role of professional fishermen as co-managers of this area be achieved? How can conflicts between users be prevented and a balance between the preservation of the environment and maintaining economic activities be ensured?

→ **Including fishing in the territory's development policies:** How can the status and role of fishermen in the territory be reconfirmed and recognised? How can the links between the land and sea be rebuilt? How can the sector be integrated into the territorial development dynamic?

The strategy aims to meet four major challenges through **7 operational objectives:**

**1- Improving access to the professions, the set-up and transfer of companies** by making fishery professions more attractive, encouraging set-up and revival of activities in various professions, providing opportunities for retraining and/or multiple activities within the sector and by facilitating access of young fishermen to accommodation.

**2- Creating dynamism in the fresh products trade** by expanding marketing, developing new services connected with fish auction sales and developing sales circuits other than auction (particularly short circuits).

**3- Making better use of local fishery products** by supporting development of high added value processing, development of joint, high-quality approaches and promotion of local fishery products.

**4- Making better use of local fishing and the maritime heritage** by re-establishing the maritime vocation of the Récollets peninsula, maintaining and making better use of maritime heritage for the general public and by organising and developing promotional offers connected with local fishing.

**5- Promoting more responsible fishing** by improving knowledge about the resource and the environment through close partnership between fishermen and scientists, ensuring sustainable management of the resource and making better use of and achieving recognition for fishermen as actors in sustainable management of the environment and reducing the energy dependence of the fleet.

**6- Involving users in coordinated management of the marine environment** by developing bodies for ensuring coordination and good practice rules; coordinated joint actions and initiatives to raise awareness and provide education on the environment.

**7- Organising a new type of governance** to support mobilisation of the group and involvement of actors, to develop joint, intra-sector approaches, partnership approaches with other actors in the territory and to encourage inclusion of fishery issues in territorial policies (this objective covers the other six).

### Added value provided by the development strategy

The Group's strategy aims at both:

- **improved participation by and recognition of fishing** as an essential economic actor in **development and management of the territory**, as an actor responsible for eco-management and as a key actor in the attractiveness and identity of the territory.

- **greater inclusion of the challenges facing the fishing sector in territorial policies** (accommodation, transfer of companies, making better use of local products, tourism).

The defined strategy should also enable **integration of the fishing sector into the dynamics of territorial development**, especially in projects that contribute to its tourist attractiveness, that enable better use to be made of its products and professions. Recognised as actors, and not just as ordinary users, the professional organisations should be more involved in area management projects, which will ensure greater account is taken of their interests in approaches and decisions taken in the interest of sustainable development of coastal areas.

The strategy emphasises the **establishment of new forms of governance which are currently lacking** in the territory and should therefore enable:

- establishment of collective, coordinated approaches between actors in the fishing sector, which will allow development of more structural and coherent projects (Axis 4 is a lever which will also enable greater mobilisation of the sector with regard to the financial opportunities available within other axes of the EFF, in particular Axes 2 and 3),
- development of synergies and partnerships with local authorities and other actors “on the ground” to lead the sector out of its isolation and make it part of local development approaches,
- opening up to and exchange with other fishery territories (national or international cooperation).

This strategy includes a **cross-border dimension specific to the territory**. The territory’s particular geographic location at the foot of the Bay of Biscay and at the heart of the Basque euro-region has a strong impact on the territory’s development challenges, and, in particular, those related to fishing. The strategy defined within the framework of Axis 4 has taken particular account of the cross-border challenges in an effort to both consolidate the sector’s economic potential and to make better use of the maritime heritage and promote coordinated environmental management of the coast.

### Development and financial plan

The development plan contains 9 actions: 7 actions correspond to the strategy’s 7 operational objectives, 1 action to cooperation and 1 action to functional operation.

The financial plan anticipates an **overall programme cost of almost € 1.6 million** over a five-year period (2009-2013), of which € 550,000 will come from the EFF and € 550,000 from national public contributions (an EFF co-financing rate of 50%).

A tangible sign of the involvement of private actors in this programme, in particular from the fishery sector, is that the proportion of self-financing amounts to at least 30% of the overall cost under the financial model. Discussions with local public co-financers have confirmed that the strategy put forward has their financial support (also see the letters of intent). The balanced, equal distribution of the national public contributions between the government (30%), the Aquitaine Regional Council (30%) and the two General Councils of Landes and Pyrénées-Atlantiques (30%) underlines the commitment of all parties to supporting this candidature. The remaining 10% will be met by other local actors (municipalities, groups of municipalities, inter-municipal syndicates and port operators). It may well be the case that the latter, in view of the territorial dynamic created and the projects which will emerge, will then invest to a greater extent than anticipated.

### Involvement and mobilisation of actors to draw up the candidature

**A partnership between the sector and the territory.** At the initiative of the Local Fishing Committee, the candidature for the Axis 4 EFF project was steered by a technical committee formalising the partnership between the Local Fishing Committee, the two regions - “Pays Basque” and “Adour Landes Océanes” - and the General Council of the Pyrénées-Atlantiques (which contains the main fishing port in the area). All the public partners (Maritime Affairs, under-prefectures, regions, local authorities) were also brought together through the founding of a steering committee which met on 29 August for the official launch of the candidature, and on 13 October to validate the strategy drawn up, the composition of the Programming Committee and the financial plan.

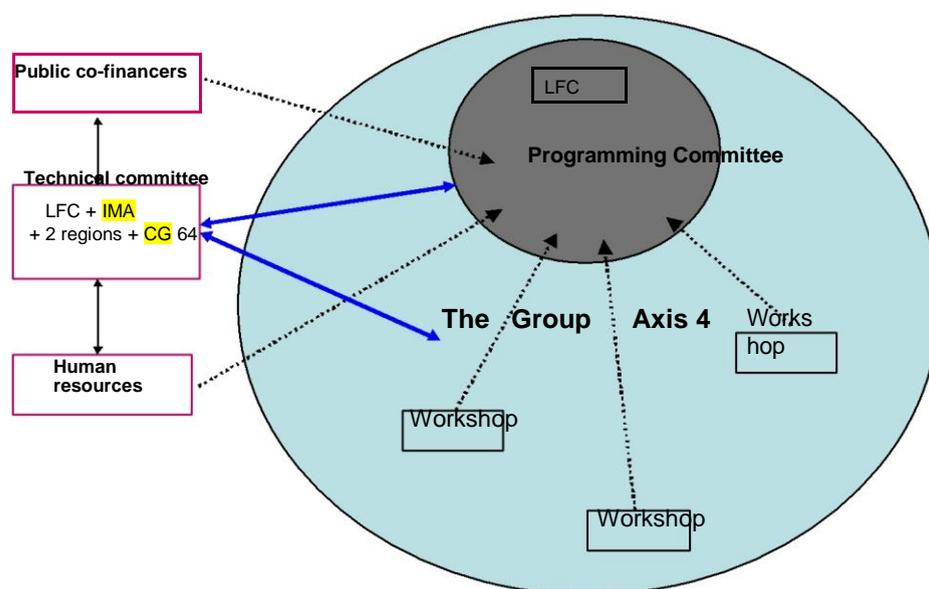
**A broad, participative approach.** Despite the limited time allowed, the technical committee wanted this candidature to be based on broad cooperation, organizing a large public information meeting, six cooperation workshops, bilateral meetings with local authorities and actors from the sector. This

approach was conveyed through extensive communication via the media (written and audio-visual), the communication platforms of the sector and the region, sending summaries of the workshops to a mailing list of 220 people compiled over the course of the weeks. In total, around a hundred people followed and took part in the drawing up of this candidature, with broad representation of the various socio-economic actors from the territory and the fishing sector (fishermen, wholesale fish traders, fish auction market traders, processing operators, association of seamen's wives, maritime school) as well as outside the sector (local authorities, port operators, IFREMER, tourism offices, environmental and cultural associations, economic development support agencies, sailing enthusiasts, the surfing sector).

**Initial dynamic created.** This broad, participative approach has enabled the development of a joint strategy as part of a genuine bottom-up approach: the actors were involved in analysing the problems and drawing up possible solutions to resolve them. The exchange and debate enabled initial constructive dialogue between actors not used to working together - they either did not know one another at all or not very well - bringing willingness to find common ground and overcome differences of opinion and to make progress. Synergies have even started to emerge with tourism offices, local authorities, an environmental association and amateur fishermen. These weeks of cooperation have led to sharing information and explanations, mobilisation and confirmation of interest in this kind of approach that requires support.

### Steering and implementation of the programme

As major factor in the success of the programme, the new governance established to steer and implement the strategy aims to ensure mobilisation and to build upon the initial dynamic created.



The **Axis 4 Group** is the broad informal partnership established in the course of producing the candidature. It remains open to any actors wishing to become involved in the strategy. **The Local Fishing Committee is the support structure** which gives the group existence in law.

The Local Fishing Committee will mandate the **Programming Committee** to decide on the support provided by Axis 4 for the project promoters based on the strategy defined. This Programming Committee, responsible for steering and implementation of the strategy, is made up of 30 members (17 from the fishing sector and 13 from outside, 21 private actors and 9 public) giving broad representation to the various socio-economic actors involved in the strategy.

The Programming Committee will not be the only place for exchange and debate on the approaches adopted. To ensure involvement of all those mobilised, **workshops** will be set up to feed into the strategy and foster emergence of joint and cooperative projects.

Recruitment of a **head of the Axis 4 project** is planned to provide the Local Fishing Committee with the human resources required to fulfil its role as an organizer, driving force and coordinator of the approach. He/she will be responsible, in particular, for the activities of the Programming Committee and the workshops, the set-up of a system to monitor and evaluate the programme and the communication plan. He/she will support the set-up of projects and will check, in cooperation with the

planning departments of the public co-financers, the technical aspects of the files to be presented to the Programming Committee. He/she will be involved in the various territorial bodies that could be of interest to the fishing sector and the national and European network of the EFF Group. A small **Technical Committee** will enhance the engineering expertise and guarantee the smooth operation and efficiency of this new form of governance.