

Pays Pyrénées-Méditerranée
“Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees”
Application for Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund

presented by the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Area

Summary

Catalan boats, Collioure anchovies, the oceanological observatory at the Arago laboratory and the Cerbère/Banyuls natural marine reserve are well-known features of identity which are a testament to a long maritime history.

This territory has enjoyed a glorious maritime past which has today arrived at a crossroads – evolve and change or disappear.

In preparation of the application for Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund, all of the players in this area have been mobilised in an attempt to find solutions to this unavoidable change which casts uncertainty over the future of its seamen.

➤ KEY POINTS OF THE DIAGNOSTIC

The area described in this application is part of a wider area made up of the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Region. It corresponds to the Mediterranean coastal and marine area at the far east of the Pyrenees range bordering with Spain.

This extremely jagged coastline, known as the “côte rocheuse” or Rocky Coast, is made up of a series of inlets with steep, shale cliffs and sandy beaches. The superposition of these two physical components constitutes an area of ecological and socio-economic importance. Human activities along the rocky Catalan coast have always been primarily geared to the sea – fishing, inshore navigation and commerce. Today, they still make up a sector which is emblematic of this region.

In this area, the fishing community, the cornerstone of this application, is represented by one of the Mediterranean’s oldest professional guilds, that of Saint-Cyprien-Collioure (12th Century). Today, the vitality of this community, which has seen its prerogatives and area of expertise decline significantly since the middle of the 20th Century, seems inversely proportional to that of urbanisation and the transformation of the coast for tourism.

Today, the ports under the professional guild’s jurisdiction contain 61 boats, most of which belong to small operators (41), predominantly in Saint Cyprien and Port-Vendres. Between 2006 and 2007, the quantity of seafood products sold in the Port-Vendres fish market increased from 2,734 tonnes to 3,171 tonnes (+16%), but brought in a lower amount in euros.

The local economy is also based on significant agricultural potential in terms of area used (in particular for vineyards), production volume achieved and the number of associated jobs. All of these activities contribute directly to the territorial identity and image of the region. This is why the preservation of this living heritage also represents a significant challenge, already embarked upon with the labelling of the terraced vineyards of Banyuls and Collioure, a procedure which is to be followed up.

In terms of the wealth of monuments and protected sites, in particular archaeological ones, the Côte Vermeille also offers great potential for development of cultural heritage, and Collioure is one of 5 exceptional regional “Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees” application for Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund

maritime heritage sites identified by the “Mission Littoral” in 2006. The administrative authority thus has a mission to preserve its maritime heritage.

While urbanisation is inadequately managed, the region’s landscapes and built heritage are well preserved, as the inspectors from UNESCO noted in 2007. It has a remarkable natural heritage and landscape owing to the great contiguity of the maritime and mountain areas, which represents an important lever for economic and tourist development for the Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees. Tourist activity is heavily concentrated here in terms of physical space and length of season and is subject to fierce competition from more far-away destinations at similar prices but nevertheless generates an opportunity to make better use of local products with 4 million tourists, who are potential consumers, seeking authenticity, quality and safety with regard to food products and leisure activities.

Furthermore, this territory, the most southerly in France, is a strategic location, being at a geographical crossroads for the development of commercial activities, trade and cross-border cooperation, even though it has a precarious labour market owing to a significant number of seasonal jobs.

However, the significant presence of research and development, in particular with the Arago laboratory, affiliated to the University of Paris and founded in 1887 by Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers, presents an opportunity for territorial development. This laboratory manages a team of marine biology researchers and is one of four INSU/CNRS oceanographic observatories.

In conclusion, some traditional activities are under threat despite the fact that they contribute to the territory’s brand image. However, the *Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees* possesses great natural, cultural and scientific wealth which illustrates the area’s strong development potential.

➤ CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

The local public and private players within the proposed EFF Group have defined the development strategy based on a joint diagnostic. Through this application, they aim to endeavour to maintain traditional activity which goes hand in hand with all other territorial policies.

In the past, the institution of the professional guild demonstrated its relevance in the context of “ad hoc management” of a small fishing industry contained within a restricted territory. The number of boats remained stable and marine ecosystems were preserved. Unfortunately, for 30 years this institution has also shown its limitations, undermined by competition from more intensive methods of exploitation, the upheaval of various fishing reforms and the emergence of new usages (pleasure fishing, underwater hunting) which have risen sharply in line with the territory’s development of tourism. In light of more intense competition, some professional fishermen have struggled to adhere to their own professional guild’s regulations, which are sometimes seen as “outdated”. Pressure for increased fishing is a threat both to the future of fishing and to eco-systems.

Today, the fishermen are calling for inspiration to be drawn from the professional guild’s system of management to reconstruct a modern, efficient management model concerning the various means to exploit fisheries resources, in partnership with the existing structures.

Collectively, the members of the EFF Group, the majority of whom are represented by maritime professions, defined the challenges specific to this territory prior to the proposed development plan.

- The main challenge is to take account of the unavoidable decline in fishing activity and its need to adopt an approach based on sustainable development;
- Maintaining fishing activity must be based on overall consideration of the diversity of players in the area, their decompartmentalization and the reclassification of maritime professions (small operators, deep-sea fishermen);
- The implantation of artificial reefs proposed by the local authorities represents an opportunity to decompartmentalize the players in favour of a collective and productive approach;
- The challenges linked to the development of tourism presuppose the preservation of traditional activities as well as close interaction between players in tourism and fishing;
- Inversely, traditional activities should enhance the attractiveness of the territory as a tourist area;
- Efforts undertaken with regard to research and development to improve water quality should harness multi-partner cooperation;
- Research into profitability for “small operators” is a priority confirmed by the Group;
- Finally, the aging of the age pyramid in the sector will receive special attention as part of an organized approach to transfer know-how and improve the image of maritime professions.

All of these challenges are reflected in one or another of the local or supra-territorial development strategies initiated in the area of the *Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees*: SAGE, River Agreement, Regional Agreement, Sustainable Management and Development of Tourism Programme.

This territory combines most characteristics of the analysis proposed by the National Strategic Plan (Plan Stratégique National). In this respect, it positions itself as a test territory for the implementation of its Operational Programme using the lever of the methodological axis. Therefore, the EFF Group, organized as part of this application, proposes a development plan which is completely in line with the National Strategic Plan framework: its implementation will be facilitated by the mobilisation of other EFF axes. Furthermore, the Group’s constitution enables a genuinely coordinated approach to ensure sustainable development.

➤ THE LOCAL STRATEGY RETAINED: OBJECTIVES and MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The local development strategy proposed by the EFF Group of the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Region aims to achieve the following objectives:

1/ Research and development to ensure the preservation and development of fishing resources and improve accessibility to these: This axis of intervention should enable the support of any initiative which fosters permanent exchanges between the various users of the maritime area in order to capitalise on any investment in it. With regard to co-financing, the local authorities and public organizations in the area (laboratory, marine reserve, SIGA Tech) are already working on the set-up of a knowledge tool, and better use will be made of their investments thanks to the EFF Group.

2/ Encourage short sales circuits and enhance the attractiveness of the *Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees*: The aim of this axis is to create added value for operators in the fishing sector by making better use of local production: by supporting the development of short sales circuits, supporting a collective approach to the

promotion of seafood products, the development of certified quality approaches (South of France quality approach) and the organization of attractive producer markets. However, in an attempt to take account of the wide range of usages and users in the area, the Group plans to support all actions aimed at the enhancement of the area's attractiveness in a coordinated framework (creation of new tourist products, underwater routes). This axis is to be used to take action to enhance the image and reputation of the coastal area and marine products in the context of their local and territorial identity and to enhance their competitiveness. These approaches are completely in line with the territorial (region), administrative authority and regional programmes for tourism management and are based on the quality approaches proposed by the Regional Council of Languedoc-Roussillon. In this respect, they could benefit from funding from the local authorities concerned.

3/ Supporting maritime professionals with major economic and ecological change:

Intervention is planned on 2 levels to achieve this goal:

- The restructuring of the professional organisation and support to achieve a sustainable development dynamic through fundamental repositioning of the professional guild;
- Management planning of jobs and skills and economic change;

In order to support this approach, the intention is to cooperate with other EFF Groups to ensure added value in terms of exchange, lessons learned, new ideas and even joint actions. Initial contacts have been made, in particular with the Janda Coast Group in Andalusia.

	EFF amount	National and local public contribution			Other public funding	Total public expenditure	Possible private contribution	Total cost	EFF as % of total cost	EFF as % of total public expenditure
		State	Region	Admin. Auth.						
Action 1	170 000	21 250	42 500	85 000	85 000	403 750	21 250	425 000	40%	42.11%
Action 2	170 000	21 250	42 500	85 000	85 000	403 750	21 250	425 000	40%	42.11%
Action 3	170 000	21 250	42 500	85 000	85 000	403 750	21 250	425 000	40%	42.11%
Functional action	60 000	12 000	18 000	18 000	12 000	120 000	30 000	150 000	40%	50.00%
Cooperation action	30 000	5 000	8 000	15 000	13 000	71 000	4 000	75 000	40%	42.25%

Total	600,000	80750	153500	288000	280000	1402250	97750	150000	40%	42.79%
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All of these axes will be supported by organization and management from the EFF Group.

➤ **ADDED VALUE FROM THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY EXPECTED IN THIS TERRITORY IN COMPARISON TO OTHER INTERVENTIONS**

Various local development approaches predate this application. The maritime professionals were involved in most of these approaches (sustainable development strategy of the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Region 2007/2013, Leader 2007/2013, Sustainable Management and Development of Tourism Programme).

In view of the scale of the economic difficulties and/or lack of professional organization close at hand, these players were nevertheless absent in the pre-operational or strategic phases.

Furthermore, through the application for Axis 4 of the European Fisheries Fund, an EFF Group was set up mobilizing all of the partners in a targeted and federative approach. This involves taking the coast into account not just as an acquired asset, but as a development challenge, which, since it is fragile, requires joint collective consideration and action. The intercommunal level as a support area for the application also enables the mobilisation of players (in particular political ones) which are not heavily involved in the development challenges of the coastal area of the *Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees*.

The cross-border dimension of the territory and the project, which has forged effective partnerships, in particular with regard to water and forestry resource management, gives the project greater scope in terms of consideration and structure.

Finally, bringing together slope/border problems relating to the land/sea/basin makes good sense in this approach.

Bringing together and managing EFF, LEADER and TERRITORIAL AGREEMENT within the same territorial organizational structure, the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Region, supporting the EFF Group, will ensure coordination and complementarity.

• **MAIN FORMS OF PARTNERSHIP**

The *Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees* benefits from a strategic geographical position, exceptional wealth in terms of heritage, a well preserved coast and a unique mix of stakeholders which could make up an extremely effective partnership.

This territory has great experience of partnerships and cooperation at both local and European levels. Since 1999, transversal and multi-partner approaches have increased with the emergence of the voluntary, bottom-up approach and the set-up of territorial projects based on general interest. All of the public and private players have therefore become used to working together on the definition of joint development challenges and consideration of coordinated responses approved by all parties. The implementation of partnerships is all the more important and genuine as the region is an Employment Area Committee and, in this respect, the organization is based on territorial social cooperation to provide impetus or to support actions within the framework of a local employment

development project. The partnership put together is re-approved in the organization set up to manage the programme.

The Development Council of the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Region has enabled the establishment of a dynamic of partnership and exchange between the public and private players, the involvement of all players in decisions and the provision of operational resources for the Development Council. Furthermore, the mobilisation of multiple partners within the EFF Group will also contribute to consideration of the wide range of uses of the area affected by a natural marine park.

➤ CONCLUSION

Population growth on the coast is accelerating, which exposes the sea, a very specific area which is fragile and precious, to greater pressures. This situation puts certain activities at risk, in particular those making a living from marine resources. At the same time, uses for this area continue to develop. With regard to the maritime aspect, there has been a significant political and institutional dynamic aimed at enhancing preservation and management of the area. It is therefore a well organized territory which is now able to act as a development tool to support local players.

The project presented as part of this application should enable all users of this area to work collectively on a joint sustainable development project, and therefore not oppose the economic sector and sustainable resource management.

This should see a decompartmentalization of considerations and local players, development of knowledge tools, with an opening up of science to the socioeconomic players and local authorities, the search for more economical use of resources and local products, taking into account sustainable development and innovative actions relating to the structuring of the professional fishing organization through the revitalisation of the professional guild of Collioure, which has the potential to rally players excluded from all approaches to date: in particular fishermen's wives.

Finally, consultation and mobilisation efforts undertaken when drawing up this application have illustrated the great enthusiasm from the players, who have seen a way to come together around the table in order to exchange views, highlight their difficulties and attempt to find joint solutions. This constructive, yet still fragile, dynamic would realise its potential if it could implement the 'Mediterranean Coast of the Pyrenees' development plan.