

*Programme of the Var area Association
for Small-Scale Inshore Fishing and Sustainable
Maritime Activities*

Summary



**BRINGING TOGETHER THE ACTORS
CONCERNED TO FOSTER SMALL-SCALE
INSHORE FISHING AND SUSTAINABLE
MARITIME ACTIVITIES**

DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL PROJECTS



Background history

The new EC fisheries policy 2007-2013 has been in force since December 2007. “The European Fisheries Fund” (EFF), its new financial instrument, has taken over from the “Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance” (FIFG).

Axis 4, which encourages “sustainable development of fisheries areas”, is innovative in aiming to create groups of local actors responsible for defining and implementing a development strategy.

The St Raphaël fishing guild and WWF France (a global environmental protection organization) have worked closely together since 2004 to establish an experimental approach to local and sustainable management of small-scale fishing known as “Concerted Joint Action on Exploitation and Management” (Unité d’Exploitation et de Gestion concertée UEGC).

This partnership approach is in line with the EFF Axis 4 objectives, as it involves forming a group for local management of “fisheries, the coastal area, natural heritage and culture.”

In order to cooperate and implement an effective and relevant development strategy in the territory, this group had to be made up of various actors: fishermen, associations, consultative bodies, scientific institutes, maritime affairs bodies and local authorities

A call for a national project was made at the end of June by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and CNASEA (National Centre for the Management of Agricultural Structures).

The local Var committee, the Var fishing guilds and WWF France have since worked together to carry out an on the ground study of the area and to define a development plan (in cooperation with various other actors).

The application was submitted to and accepted by the National Commission in December 2008.

Administrative implementation

This programme will be administered through the setting up a non-profit association (law 1901).

This association has links with the DPMA (Directorate of Maritime Fishing and Aquaculture at the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, management authority) and the ASP (formerly CNASEA, payment agency). The role of this association is to act as the legal structure for the programming of Axis 4 EFF funds allocated to our programme.

This association contains a special body: the programming committee, which will programme projects that meet its development strategy (after scrutinizing the case).

The association will be supported by two managers, one dealing with administrative and financial matters, and the other with technical issues.

Technical management was offered by WWF France, and a technical manager was recruited specifically for this position. He has been available to the association since 1 July 2009.

Timetable

This association was duly established on 2 July, the date of its founding general meeting. An announcement in the Official Journal should appear in the course of the summer.

We hope to convene a first programming committee at the end of October.

Commitment to this association and attendance at the programming committees involves 3 to 4 meetings a year.

The area of application

All the Var coast municipalities (or public authority for inter-municipality cooperation) and, more specifically, their coastal waters are involved in this programme. They benefit from projects and/or support them.



Strategy of the Var region association of actors in small-scale inshore fishing and sustainable maritime activities

Sustainable fishing has long been a challenge and an aim for Europe. In light of this, the association aims to find a balance that will enable sustainable development of fishing in the Var administrative region (département). In other words, fishing that will create wealth and provide employment, while at the same time conserving bio-productivity and balance of the ecosystems, and contribute to activity in the coastal territories. The strategy is divided into 4 technical actions.

1- Understanding the environment and defining fishing practices

The projects which make up this action aim to provide knowledge on resources for the entire territory. More specifically, this involves quantifying the various forms of fishing (professional fishing, amateur fishing and underwater hunting) and carrying out follow-up analysis on the state of the environment (species and habitat). At the same time, indicators of the impact of fishing and the state of the environment will be developed and/or tested.

All of the data collected will be geo-referenced as far as possible to feed into a GIS (geographical information system).

This data is intended to provide all coastal actors with better knowledge on the state of the resource and the environment and to ensure they are well conserved.

This action will prioritize the sharing and transfer of this knowledge. All co-funded projects must include a means of sharing knowledge and re-transcribing it into public policies (publications, information bulletins, etc.). This action will also support legal and socio-economic study projects, in particular concerning the economic value of small-scale fishing.

2- Making better use of small-scale inshore fishing and marine products

The direct sale of products caught on the day's tide is a key characteristic of small-scale fishing in the Var region. This practice makes better use of marine products and enables fishermen to make a good return while ensuring limited exploitation of the resource. It is therefore important that the association acts to maintain, promote and develop the points of sale that showcase the diversity of small-scale trades practiced by deep-sea fishermen in the Var region, which in turn will promote integration of these sites into the coastal ports. Finally, methods of creating new outlets for the sale of fisheries products (AMAP, starred restaurants) will be taken into account. This approach will aim to enhance and develop sustainability of fishing companies and diversification of economic activities in combination with an on the ground impetus. For example, fishing tourism initiatives will be implemented in cooperation with professional Italian fishermen who have already developed this activity. In general terms, exchange and cooperation with other groups of local actors set up under Axis 4 of the EFF (in Italy in particular) will be fostered in order to share experiences to the benefit of all parties concerned.

3- Innovation through development of coordinated management and diversification of the territory's practices

The Var administrative region (département) is an area ripe for local development of professional fishing activity. The administrative region's local fishing committee includes the Var fishing guilds and covers the entire coastal area. However, fishing in the Var region is subject to various pressures. The heavy population concentration on the coast coupled with significant development of tourist activities (pleasure fishing, diving, sailing) are a burden on marine ecosystems and are in direct competition with fishing and aquaculture activities. The aim of the association's actors is to integrate these professions as part of the overall approach to developing the area.

4- Cooperation to experiment with fishing tourism and make better use of the professional guilds

All projects carried out as part of this action must be partnerships or exchanges with other actors coming together to address the issue of fishing tourism as part of implementing Axis 4 of the EFF.



This action aims to ensure that tourism is not a burden on the profession, but rather becomes an additional source of revenue, by developing high-quality tourism products and making better use of small-scale inshore fishing. As part of developing fishing tourism in PACA, a partnership which has existed since 2006 will be maintained with Legua Pesca, an association of fishing cooperatives in Italy, in order to consolidate experimentation in the Var. This experimental action will provide support for establishing links between fishing companies and tourism booking centres on the coast and inland to attract custom and organize trips to sea.

The aim is to address economic and heritage issues that will enable fishing to expand its market. This diversification will provide additional revenue, make the work less strenuous and make better use of small-scale inshore fishing “culture” in terms of its traditions, history, ports, methods, its various professions and products.

This action will also make possible technical exchanges with other Mediterranean EFF groups on the subject of professional guilds and making them more effective in dealing with public authorities. The ancestral structure of professional fishing in the Mediterranean, which has proven its worth, has to be better taken into account.

Making better use of the activity, exchange and communication

Finally, communication will become an integral part of the work anticipated by the association. Good fishing practices (coordinated management, eco-labelling), the quality of marine products and the structuralising function of the profession of deep-sea fishermen will be communicated to the general public and other actors in the administrative region.

The association intends to adopt a networked approach. Other groups of local actors will be set up under Axis 4 of the EFF on the French and European coasts and exchange of experiences with other Mediterranean groups is vital.

The programming committee will ensure that the messages and results of every project will be communicated effectively to various target groups and actors.

Conclusion

The proposed development strategy is innovative as it brings together, for the first time, most of the economic, institutional and territorial development actors on the administrative region’s coast, as well as users of the sea and civil society.

The development strategy takes into account and complements all other actions implemented in the territory and encourages synergies.

