



farnet

G U I D E # 8



Marketing the local catch



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To access the details of the FLAGs and projects mentioned in this Guide, please go to www.farnet.eu/guide8-links

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In brief

This publication presents some of the options and tools fishermen and other local stakeholders can avail of to improve the marketing of the local catch, with the help of their Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG). It starts by looking at some of the reasons for, and benefits of, improving the marketing of local fisheries products. It then looks more specifically at the role of FLAGs, and how they can assist in the development of marketing projects. Finally, two innovative ways to improve marketing locally (direct sales, Community Supported Fisheries) are presented, as well as three practical tools that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the marketing strategy: digital tools, experience-based activities and labels and brands.

The different topics developed in this publication were identified in the run up to the FARNET conference on *“Marketing of the local catch”*, which took place in June 2013, in Stockholm. Before the conference, participating FLAGs were encouraged to take part in a survey to identify the different themes of interest for the conference working groups. The discussions and outcomes of the working groups have provided much of the content of this publication.

How to use this guide?

After a short introduction on the rationale for improving local marketing and the specific ways that FLAGs can support marketing projects, we present the five topics addressed in the Stockholm working groups through five toolboxes. These can be used independently but most of these options and tools

can also be combined to improve the marketing of the local catch.

The five logos developed for the *Stockholm conference* will identify each topic. They will also indicate when a link can be made from one toolbox to another.



Direct sales



Shortchains and Community Supported Fisheries



Digital marketplace



Experience



Branding and labelling

1. Why improve the marketing of the local catch?

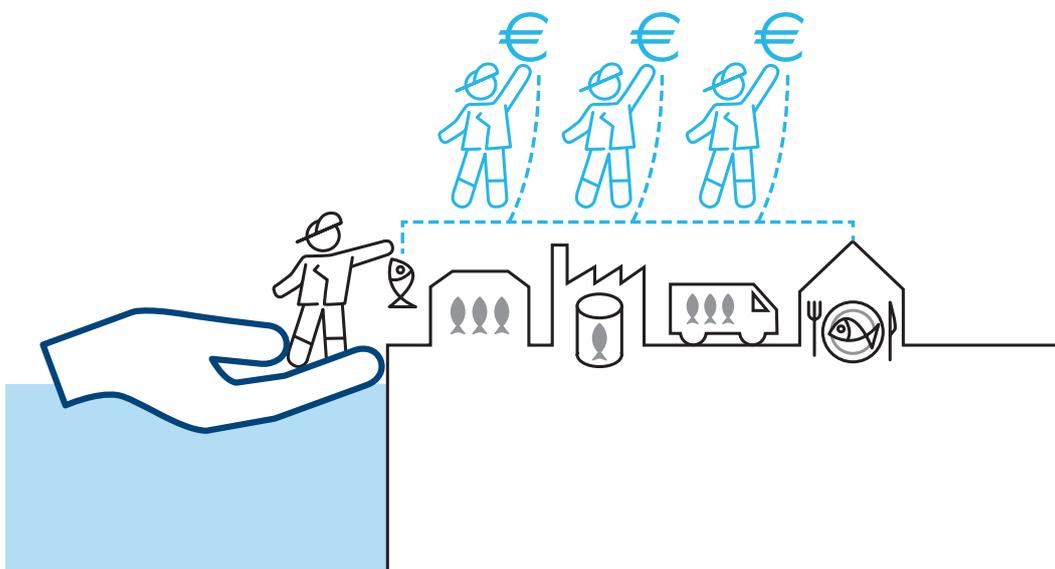
Creating a new relationship with the consumer

Fishing is not only a physically demanding activity, sometimes requiring long days at sea, it is also inherently uncertain, with one day's catch often completely different to the next, and with market prices varying in sometimes mysterious ways. This situation, combined with rising production costs linked to rising fuel prices and other input costs, means that fishing is a risky and difficult business. At the same time, however, the EU is the first market for seafood in the world, with European consumers showing an increasing interest in safe and quality seafood, which can be traced back to the producer.

Trends in food consumption and customer expectations in relation to product quality have evolved significantly in Europe in recent decades. "Consumers are increasingly concerned about food safety and food quality issues and value the origin as a useful quality cue". This concern is reflected in the growing number of products registered as protected geographical indication (PGI) or protected designation of origin (PDO) under regulation EC No. 510/2006 and the efforts at national and international level to foster quality or production labels (Label Rouge, organic labels,...).

¹ [Producers' and Consumers' Expectations towards Geographical Indications](#) – Ramona Teuber Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany

Figure 1: Axis 4 provides a wealth of opportunities for local fisheries professionals to go beyond the business as usual approach and benefit from market opportunities further down the supply chain > See also the FARNET [Leaflet – guide governance](#)



In Europe, *“the surge of local and regional foods is considered a countertrend against the globalization of trade in foods and converging demand patterns”*². This countertrend offers a real opportunity for local producers, provided they can develop a special link with the consumer and supply them with high quality locally produced seafood.

Developing this link with consumers can present a challenge for local producers, who are sometimes more familiar with technical processes to improve quality than with ways of building new relations with consumers.

And yet, in many areas the future of the fisheries sector is just as dependent on this relationship with consumers, and with other parts of society (tourism, restaurants, etc), as it is on maintaining high quality standards.

Today, in many instances it is not enough to produce quality fish. It must also be caught in a sustainable manner and you need to be able to tell its story and show how it contributes to improving the situation of local fishing communities.

Social and environmental aspects have become just as important as the core product in the value creation process.

With the right marketing approach, local products can become *“hyperproducts”*, opening up additional product attributes that highlight social and environmental dimensions, thereby meeting the expectations of a new generation of customers.

In the following pages you will find information on some of the alternative channels and tools, based on new technologies, brands and labels, or the experience economy, which can help in fostering this new relationship between producers and consumers.

² Parrott, N., N. Wilson and J. Murdoch (2002), “Spatializing Quality: Regional Protection and the Alternative Geography of Food”, *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Vol. 9 (3), pp. 241-261.

2. How can FLAGs help?

FLAGs are first and foremost a tool in the hands of local actors, to help them structure their activities at local level and to have a degree of autonomy in deciding on the future development of their area. FLAGs are what local communities make of them. Of course there are some rules to follow and project support has to fit with national and EU priorities. But within this, local stakeholders have considerable freedom to decide on the projects to support or not. Through such support, FLAGs can help local stakeholders in many different

ways to better market their catch. They can intervene at any point along the supply chain, from primary production to the end consumer.

It is important to remember, however, that actions supported by the FLAG must fit within the overall aims of its own local development strategy, which represents the mandate by which it carries out its activities.

Some of the ways FLAGs can help
Training on related technical issues
Assistance for project development (feasibility studies, market analysis, business plans,...)
Co-financing of projects
Drawing on FARNET support: facilitating the transfer of good ideas and examples from other areas (good practices, study visits, seminars, peer learning...)
Enabling the right connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Helping to find the right partners > Liaising with local authorities > Linking with other local industries > Linking with knowledge centres (universities, innovation networks, R&D platforms,...)

Training on related technical issues

Encouraging the acquisition of new skills at local level is an important goal of the FLAG. With regard to marketing, a good knowledge of the market potential of one's own product is key to success. While market studies and marketing support can be financed by the FLAG (see box below), it is also important to develop skills in this field. Improving skills in marketing techniques and approaches is, therefore, one example of

the kind of training a FLAG can provide. Other ideas for training include project management, business planning, feasibility studies, new product development, food safety and quality, communications and public relations.

Project development support

FLAGs can assist people who wish to turn their ideas into concrete projects. A good idea does not make a successful business on its own. A good idea is only the start of the process, and turning this idea into a successful venture requires time, dedication and knowledge.

The FLAG, via its manager/staff, its board members or its extensive network, will have experience to share regarding the necessary steps to take to ensure the best chances of success. The FLAG is a good place to start to discuss the different options and possibilities for developing a project.

Going beyond start-up advice, FLAGs can also provide support for feasibility studies and business planning. A feasibility study analyses the viability of a project and the different options/possibilities/conditions necessary to ensure this viability. The business plan follows on from the feasibility study, provided the venture is worth pursuing. The business plan draws on the findings of the feasibility study to chart the strategy the entrepreneur will follow to ensure the success of the enterprise. The content of a feasibility study will vary depending on the type of project. Some common elements are presented in the table below, but many of the toolboxes presented in the second part of this document also identify issues that are typically addressed in a feasibility study.

General elements of a feasibility study
Definition of the objective and activities foreseen
Technical analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Technical feasibility of activities and necessary equipment > Logistical implications (cold chain, transport, delivery...) > Elements of supply (volumes available, seasonality...)
Legal requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Business law requirements (authorisations, accounting and reporting obligations...), > Health and food safety regulations
Market analysis (see box below)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Estimates of demand (volume expected, market segments targeted, prices...) > Competition analysis
Economic and financial analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cost-benefit analysis of activities > Sources of finance > Cash flow projections

A vital piece of information for projects aimed at improving the marketing of local products is the market analysis. It is an important part of the feasibility study mentioned above, but is very often overlooked because people believe it is too technical or just a waste of time and that one should test the market and see what happens. Unfortunately, without a proper market analysis much is left to chance. However,

through FLAGs, local actors have access to support in carrying out these important preparatory steps, which can greatly increase their chances of success.

Market analysis

The objective of a market analysis is to assess the market environment into which a product or a service is to be offered for sale. The market analysis has to happen early in the product/project development process, so that the project can be tailored to respond to actual market needs. The market analysis can then be used to develop the marketing strategy contained in the business plan.

A good market analysis typically includes information about:

- > The likely demand for the product or services, looking at both quantitative and qualitative aspects:
 - Quantitative: how much can I expect to sell and when?
 - Qualitative: what market segments are there (different types of customers with different taste/needs)? What type of product is required for which segment?
- > The distribution channels that can be used to reach the target consumers;
- > The potential sale price;
- > The state of play regarding existing competition.

Estimating the potential demand (both quantitative and qualitative aspects) for a product is difficult, but it is important to have some indication of how a product will be received and therefore its chances of success. There are various ways of assessing demand, some more resource-intensive than others. The most common tools include:

- > Focus groups, which gather a limited number of potential customers to discuss the product. Selecting the right people to take part in a focus group is crucially important, and the discussion questions and facilitation techniques must also be prepared in advance
- > Surveys, which have various forms, but whether conducted on the street, by telephone, via internet or face to face, surveys always involve asking people to answer a set of predetermined questions on their purchase habits and tastes, which can then be extrapolated to estimate the market potential. The reliability of the survey increases with the sample size, but so does the cost of the operation. Survey questionnaires can also be technically demanding to develop, distribute, collect and analyse and often require external assistance.





- > Semi structured interviews, which can be as simple as chatting with potential partners or customers such as local restaurateurs or shopkeepers, can also provide valuable information about possible volumes and about consumer tastes and needs. To get the most from such conversations, it is important to prepare some questions in advance and to make sure that you ask the same questions to the different people you speak with in order to allow for a comparison between the different answers, while also leaving room to adapt the interview to the respondent and to the flow of the conversation.
- > Competition analysis looks at what other, similar initiatives are doing locally and elsewhere and uses this as a basis to estimate demand. It could also be interesting to interview these potential competitors, but this is not always possible, for obvious reasons.

As will be shown in several examples in this guide, successful marketing approaches often require people to think “outside the (fish)box” – to find new ways of doing things or doing things differently. In most communities, you will find forward thinking people, ready to innovate and take risks. The FLAG should be

there to support these people in their endeavours. In turn, these “early adopters” can help the FLAG in promoting these new possibilities by demonstrating the potential benefits for the wider territory.

Cofinancing projects



In the post financial crisis world in which we now find ourselves, access to credit has become extremely difficult. FLAGs have a budget at their disposal, which they can use in the way they believe best responds to local needs. Depending on the size of their budget, and on their priorities, some FLAGs will be able to contribute to the cost of developing new projects. This can happen through either grant or loan schemes, again depending on the FLAGs resources and strategic approach. As a rule, the better a project fits with the FLAG’s priorities, the greater the chances it stands of getting funded. In addition, FLAGs can also help in smoothing the relationship with local banks. FLAGs can, for example, negotiate preferential rates for loans or bank guarantees for project promoters receiving support from Axis 4.

Drawing on FARNET support

FLAGs are also part of FARNET (the European Fisheries Areas Network), which brings together 300+ FLAGs from across the European Union. FLAGs are, therefore, connected to many other fishing communities throughout Europe and can draw on the experience of thousands of different projects. Through the FLAG and FARNET, local project promoters can learn from the mistakes and successes of others who have been there before.

The project *“Fisch vom Kutter”*, for example, has been successfully transferred to Denmark (*Havfrisk fisk*) and to Sweden (*fiskonline.se*), thanks partly to the information transfer that FARNET facilitated through its publications and conferences. Members of the North and West Cumbria FLAG (United Kingdom) have also paid a visit to the German FLAG behind the “Fisch vom Kutter” project (AktivRegion Ostseeküste FLAG), with a view to developing a similar initiative in the north west of England.

Figure 2: Axis 4 is about creating a meeting place for experience and challenges, with FARNET acting as a matchmaker > See also FARNET [Leaflet - guide governance](#)



Enabling the right connections

A FLAG is made up of many different partners and can, therefore, draw on a wide range of expertise at local level. Depending on the needs, the FLAG will often be able to link project promoters with the relevant expertise. Typically, the board of a FLAG will include:

- > **local fishermen or entrepreneurs** who can bring their business expertise;
- > **research centres**, which can bring knowledge or help with regard to research and development processes;
- > **tourist boards**, which can provide advice regarding the tourism industry, as well as promotional and communication activities...
- > **social or environmental non-profit organisations**, which can help with sustainability or inclusion aspects.

Finally, FLAGs being public-private-partnerships are also a meeting point for these two worlds. FLAGs can help in creating linkages and hence improve the relationship between local businesses and local public authorities. Many projects face regulatory constraints and require authorisations or permits from such local public authorities. Through the work of the FLAG, communication and understanding between project promoters and local public bodies can be improved and streamlined.

3. Options, tips and advice: five toolboxes

This section presents in more detail, and in the form of five practical factsheets (or toolboxes), some of the options available to local actors to improve the marketing of the local catch. The first two toolboxes highlight alternative marketing channels that are increasingly used in fishing communities to sell the local catch: **direct sales** is a traditional method of selling local fish in some communities, while in others it has yet to be developed; and **Community Supported Fisheries** are schemes that create a link between consumers and producers based on mutual commitment and respect. Many successful schemes already exist in North America and fishing communities in the EU are slowly starting to catch on to this innovative marketing approach.

The last three factsheets present tools that can be used by local actors to reinforce their marketing strategies. **Digital tools** offer many new possibilities to local producers to improve the marketing of their catch, while the **experience economy** can help local producers to turn the purchase of fish into a special experience that creates a lasting impression in the mind of the consumer. Finally, **labels and brands** are highlighted as a means of ensuring that local products stand out from the crowd and capture a particular market niche.





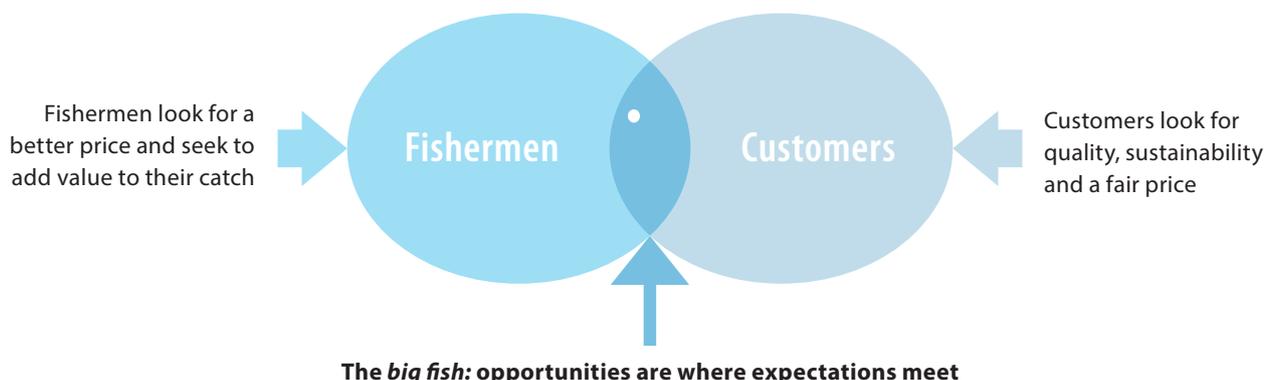
3.1 Direct sales, the basics

What is it?

Direct sales initiatives are the ultimate form of short chain distribution³, as they involve the fisherman or family members selling directly to the end consumer,

without intermediaries. In the following examples, we show how direct sales can facilitate the meeting of fishermen and consumers.

³ Short chains include all forms of sales where fishermen sell their catch to the final consumer with a maximum of one intermediary.



Options

Direct sales are frequently used by coastal fishermen to sell part of their fresh produce and diversify their sources of income. Such initiatives are usually launched by individual fisherman, and are generally not the result of a collective approach. Direct sales activity varies from one area to another, however: in some regions it is a traditional activity (often undertaken by the wives of the producers), while in others it is not allowed or not practiced at all. With the current trend towards the development of short chains, this activity is becoming more popular and can be a good way to meet consumer demand for authenticity, quality and traceability.

Different direct sales options exist, involving different logistics and investment requirements, and different risks and constraints. As shown in the graph below, these options include sales at the place of production or landing (close to the boat), which is the most common, as well as sales in the producer's shop (as fishmongers), mobile sales (fish or farmers' markets) and **remote sales (on line or by delivery)**.

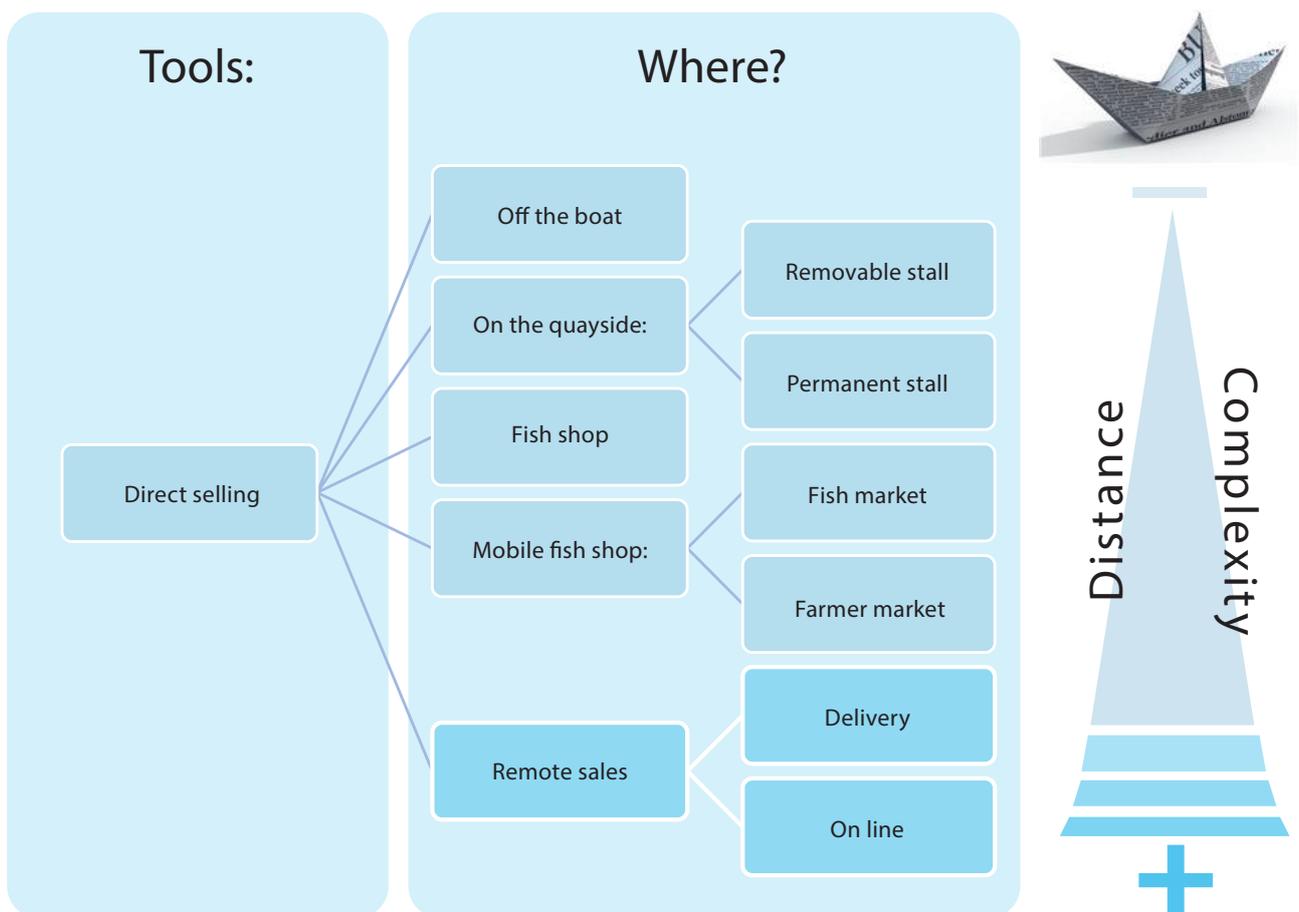
Digital marketplace



These different options have been ranked in the graph below according to the potential geographical area of coverage, which implies both costs and benefits. In terms of benefits, being able to sell products further away from the landing place opens up the possibility of a much bigger market. However, in terms of costs, the further away sales happen from the boat, the more investment is required (purchase/rental of equipment,

vehicle, premises, cost of compliance with public health requirements, etc.). The investment in terms of manpower, particularly the time spent selling, can also be sizeable. Therefore, a thorough cost-benefit analysis needs to be carried out to identify the most appropriate option, as explained below.

Figure 3: Many different options exist for direct sales, some close to the boat, others further away. In general, the greater the distance from the boat, the greater the complexity of the operation.



What are the benefits for me? For my territory?

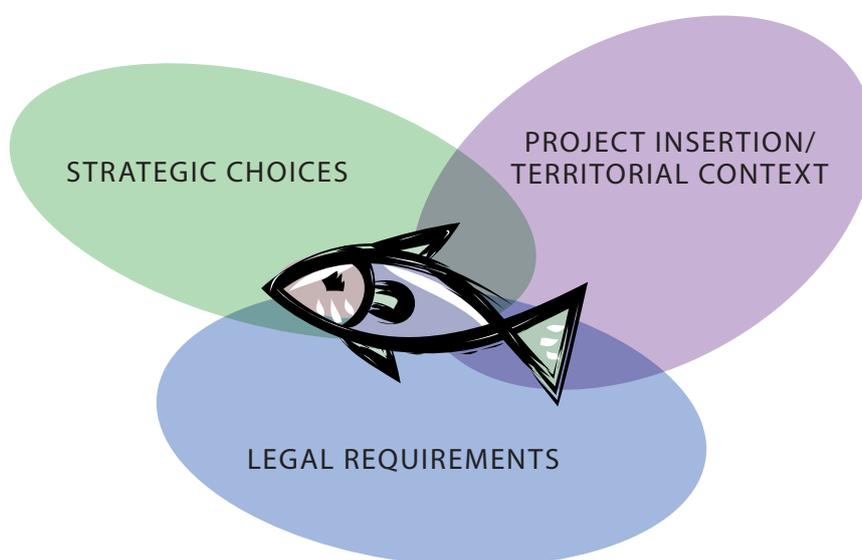
FISHERMAN	TERRITORY
Add value to the production by increasing the price – sell the product at an advantageous price for both fishermen and consumers	Promote the territory through its products and activities
Develop new markets, diversify sources of income	Maintain primary activities in the territory
Promote local products, lesser known species and seasonality	Promote and showcase the profession and its know-how
Create employment (family, crew,...) through the sale of seafood	Keep traditions alive
Reinforce the position/visibility of fishermen in the territory	Create links with consumers – an interface between producers and consumers – and facilitate discussions on expectations, needs and constraints
Ensure quality and traceability (provenance)	Create a local dynamic – generate activity on the quay, create an “attraction” for tourists

Key questions I need to ask myself before starting

This section considers some of the key questions a producer should be asking himself/herself before launching into a new direct sales project. These questions have been grouped around three main themes: those related to the overall strategy; those linked to

technical or legal requirements; and those that look at the project in the wider territorial context. This is not an exhaustive list but can be a good basis from which to start.

Figure 4: Three conditions to fulfil to engage in direct sales.



● STRATEGIC CHOICES

These are all questions related to the objectives and motivations of the entrepreneur and the choices they have to make.

OBJECTIVES: *Regarding my needs and my motivations, what do I expect from this new activity?*

Do I want to create a regular activity or a seasonal activity?

Selling directly can be done on an occasional basis, to fit with the peak of the tourist season, for example, or it can be turned into a year round activity. The investment required (notably in terms of point of sale) will differ accordingly.

How much do I expect in terms of revenue? Do I want to create an additional source of income or a full-time job? What are the implications in terms of investment?

One should review his/her expectation regarding the additional revenue generated in order to plan the appropriate production/investment. And while the investment in terms of money can be limited and will depend on the type of direct sale system chosen, the investment in terms of time should not be underestimated. Selling one's own production requires time: additional time is required for the act of selling itself, but also for preparation (storage, preparation of point of sale, packaging purchases, etc) and to clean up afterwards. Other additional tasks also include accounting work and dealing with unsold products.

Who will sell the products?

The person in charge of selling should be either the fisherman or someone from their close family/environment so as not to lose the direct connection with the producer. The ultimate choice will depend on a number of factors, including the fisherman's availability, the inclination of the fisherman towards direct contact with consumers, the availability of family members, etc.

Market related questions

A good market analysis is essential to the success of any project. This is why the introductory chapter proposes a specific focus on market analysis as a prerequisite to all activities covered in this publication. We will, therefore, only highlight here the points which are specific to direct sales initiatives.



How to set the price?

To define the price of a product, you have to:

- > Estimate the cost price (how much does it cost to produce AND market);
- > Know the mean price and trends among competitors – avoid conflict by fixing a too low price;
- > Know your customers, their expectations and how much they are prepared to spend.

What can I sell and when? How can I estimate the volumes I might be able to sell?

The catchment area (i.e. the geographical area one can reach with his /her product) for a direct sales initiative is usually limited, as the further away one goes from the point of production/landing, the greater the need for intermediaries. For rural products in France, the catchment area for local points of sale has been estimated at around a 20 km radius, for example. This means that local customers are not likely to travel more than 20 km to come and buy the product directly from the producer. This figure will vary, depending on cultural habits and other factors, but it can serve as a guide to estimate the number of potential customers one can hope to reach locally, and hence the potential sales volume. In regions with a high proportion of secondary residences, volumes will vary with the rate of occupation, with holiday times representing the peak of the potential demand.

Can I sell all my production this way?

This depends on the potential demand and hence the catchment area. The proximity of large consumption centres will help in terms of the volumes that can be sold directly, but in the majority of cases, direct sales tend to complement other sales channels, except in cases where producers with limited production specialize in supplying customers directly, which is more common with high end products (high quality fresh fish, lobsters, etc). To increase the size of the catchment area, the producer can try to move the point of sale closer to potential customers (using mobile sales stands, taking part in markets, etc.) or use delivery systems coupled with online or telephone sales.



Not all customers will be comfortable cooking the different species you might sell. Preparing some suggestions on how to prepare such or such a fish can help to overcome these concerns and may encourage people to try a new species. You might also want to sell some of the other ingredients required for a recipe (lemon, fennel, onions, other local condiments...) or even to provide tastings of some of the possible recipes on the spot.

Are all products adapted to this type of selling?

Some products, especially those that require a higher degree of preparation before being eaten, or fish species that are less familiar to consumers, might prove more difficult to sell directly than others. Still, the reluctance of consumers to buy lesser-known species can be reduced by either helping with the preparation (filleting, for example, but then beware of health and food safety regulations, see point below) or by giving out information on recipes. Permanent residents will typically have a higher degree of acceptance of local species than tourists, so sales techniques and advice will have to be adapted accordingly.

Does the demand correspond to my production?

In marketing terms, this question is usually asked the other way around, as one should normally only produce according to market demand. However, while one can adapt to demand by targeting one species more than another, for example, by using special gear or targeting/avoiding certain areas at certain times of the year, some seasons remain more favorable to catching one species over another. It is, therefore, important to assess realistically what can be sold in what season and to match this as much as possible with the potential catch that can be produced at that time of the year. This is especially true for direct sales, as by nature the demand is more local and hence sales possibilities are more limited, both in terms of volumes and in terms of fish species.

PROJECT INSERTION/TERRITORIAL CONTEXT

How to establish my project in a given area?

In some areas, direct selling is a new concept, which means some effort is required to develop and establish the practice within the territory. This can, sometimes, create disturbances in the existing landscape. Making the right decisions from the start and anticipating possible problems is key to the success of new direct sales initiatives.

What are the possibilities in terms of location?

An existing or new facility? Is there already some infrastructure that can be used to develop direct selling in the area (stand/stall on the quay, producers' markets...)

Choosing the right location for direct sales is paramount. In some areas, direct sales booths or stalls exist, and it is worthwhile assessing their location, availability and rental price to see if these existing facilities are suitable. Talking to fishermen or traders already using these facilities can also provide useful information.

What are the other possibilities?

In areas with no existing facilities the producer will have to choose the location. In this situation, some important considerations to take into account include: accessibility, parking options, legal authorisations required, the possibility for synergies with other activities that might attract customers, etc...

How convenient is it to get to the place where I want to sell my products (for fishermen but also for consumers)?

If selling from the boat, the number of locations is limited but the boat will have to be moored in an area that is easily accessible to the public, and this access will have to be negotiated with the local authorities (harbor master). In the case of mobile stands, there are sometimes dedicated spaces for this (market places). Otherwise, some arrangement will have to be negotiated with the local authorities.

Is the site visible enough? Can signs be erected at certain points along the route to the direct sales location?

In any case, the location should be advertised via billboards located at strategic points, to highlight the possibility of buying fresh fish directly.

What other communication channels can I use to advertise my products?

Some other communication possibilities include local radio and newspapers, or easy to use web tools such as **Facebook, Twitter, etc** Local tourist offices can also be good information points, while local shops and restaurants may also be willing to promote the initiative by accepting to display posters or leaflets.

Digital marketplace





Be visible and attractive

Prepare communication tools

- > Written – what tools should I use? – Effective signposting is an important means of notifying potential customers
- > Oral – what is my narrative? What message(s) do you have for consumers? e.g. preparation advice...
- > The story that goes with the product is as important as the product itself; it is a part of the value added. It is not just a matter of selling a product, but also of establishing the link to the fisherman.
- > Pay attention to the presentation of products (organisation, display, the use of colours, and type of products,...) and try to create an attractive “universe” with the use of accessories (signage, decoration, promotional materials, cards, uniforms...).

What is the potential for synergies with existing services?

Other activities such as museums, local shops and markets, auction visits, harbour tours, marinas, etc will help to increase the flow of visitors to the point of sale. Synergies in terms of communication can also be sought with these other activities, with a view to creating a special ‘*experience*’ for customers

Experience



And what, if any, is the competition? Is direct selling conflicting with any existing activities?

Other local suppliers of fish (auctions, fishmongers, fish shops, etc) might not welcome the idea of fishermen selling their fish directly. It may be prudent to take the time to speak to these operators to explain the initiative, reassure them about the objectives and volumes concerned, and discuss any possible collaboration. Anticipating potential conflict is key to avoiding misunderstandings and finding solutions.

“Do not kill the middleman, involve or become the middleman” – in Fishermen’s Direct Marketing Manual, Sea Grant Study⁴

⁴ <http://wsg.washington.edu/communications/online/FishDirectMarMan.pdf>

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

What are the rules/regulations on direct sales in my area?

Direct selling is subject to different types of legal limitations and requirements. These controls can have different origins (EU, national, regional, local) and scope: linked to business law, to food and safety requirements, to the control of fishing operations, to consumer information and traceability requirements, and to local planning regulations. As a general rule, many of these requirements will be lowered or diminished provided that direct sales operations remain below a certain volume and are targeted at final consumers.

At EU level, for example, legislation requires that fisheries products can only be sold to registered buyers, to producer organisations or via registered auctions and that a first sale note is established⁵. However, “a buyer acquiring fisheries products up to an amount of 30 kg which are not thereafter placed on the market but used only for private consumption shall be exempted” from these obligations⁶, thereby allowing some flexibility in terms of direct sales.

In terms of consumer information, EU legislation also states that “small quantities of products sold directly from fishing vessels to consumers” may be exempted from information requirements related to the catch area, the production method and the commercial designation of the species among others⁷. However, the value of these quantities should not exceed €50 a day per consumer.



Check list

Draw up a checklist of all the equipment you need for setting up your point of sale. List all the different items required, including water, power, ice, cleaning table, knives, pens, bags, small coins, bin bags, carrier bags, a covered waiting area, etc... and check before leaving your boat/warehouse/house that you have everything with you.

Regarding food safety, part of EU law again does not apply “to the direct supply, by the producer, of small quantities of primary products to the final consumer or to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer”⁸.

⁵ A note buyers or sellers of fish products have to establish and send to relevant authorities when fish products are first marketed. The first sale note content is defined by art.64 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 but typically contains information on species, volumes, prices, origin of fish (including boat name),...

⁶ See art.59.3 and art. 65.2 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system, please note amendments of thresholds are foreseen in regulation

⁷ See art. 35.4 of art.35.4 of Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, repealing Council Regulation (EC) N° 104/2000.

⁸ See art.1.2c of Regulation (EC) 852/2004 and art1.3c of Regulation (EC) 853/2004, more information on EU food law can be found on p.28 of [FARNET Guide #3 on adding value to local fish products](#)

Instead leaving it to national law to regulate such practices. This means that what is allowed/required regarding food safety during direct sales operations will have to be checked with relevant national authorities. As a general rule however, food safety requirements (regarding procedures to follow and equipment to install) increase along with the extent of the processing the fish undergoes. Whole fish and shellfish are commonly allowed to be sold directly, but even filleting a fish will require certain adaptations to the boat or point of sale and may only be allowed for limited quantities. Be aware in any case that food safety is considered to be the responsibility of the operator. So no matter what food safety obligations exist or don't exist, you are ultimately responsible for providing a safe product to your customers.

EU legislation also requires for fisheries products to be traceable at all stages of the value chain. However, traceability requirements may be waived by national authorities for small quantities sold directly from fishing vessels to consumers, provided that these do not exceed the value of € 50 per day per consumer⁹.

At national level, some countries (Spain and the Netherlands for example) have an obligation to land and/or sell all fish or some specific species through an official auction. This can represent a barrier to direct sales but fishermen are sometimes able to buy back their fish through the auction before selling directly. This means that an auction obligation does not always prevent the development of direct sales activities.



Sell but don't smell!

Customers may want fresh fish, but they don't want themselves or their car smelling of fish, so it is advisable to foresee some kind of packaging – reusable bags with your boat's logo might be an extra cost but could also be a way to promote your business and build customer loyalty.

As a general rule, we can say that provided volumes remain small, there is a certain tolerance towards direct sales in the various legislation, with a degree of harmonisation ensured at EU level in certain fields (see table below for a summary of the different EU legislation that foresees direct sales exemptions). However, Member States are often ultimately responsible for implementing the framework for direct sales operations and can choose to be more restrictive. What complicates the matter further is that regional or local authorities are very often in turn empowered to regulate direct sales activities at the local level. The best advice, therefore, is to make sure you get in touch with the relevant authorities in your area to ensure clarity on requirements/authorizations related to direct sales. Your FLAG can help you liaise with these authorities.

If you feel the restrictions linked to direct sales activities would limit your activities too much, you may want to establish yourself as a buyer/seller of seafood and comply with the necessary requirements in terms of the various legislation mentioned above (food safety, consumer information and business law), requirements which will vary again depending on the nature and extent of the activities foreseen, but which often offer some degree of flexibility for small establishments.

⁹ See art. 58.8 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 establishing a Community control system and art. 67.14 of implementing regulation No 404/2011

Summary of the different EU legislation which foresee possible exemptions for direct sales

Possible exemptions for direct sales	Conditions	Indicator	Corresponding EU text
Buyer registration requirement + first sale note establishment ¹⁰	private consumption	max 30 kg per purchase	Art.59 and art. 65 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009
EU food safety law	small quantities/ primary products to end consumer or local retail establishment supplying final consumer	to be defined by Member State	Art. 1.2c of Regulation (EC) 852/2004 and art1.3c of Regulation (EC) 853/2004
Traceability requirements	small quantities sold directly from fishing vessel to consumer	max €50 per day/ consumer	Art. 58.8 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 and Art. 67.14 of implementing regulation No 404/2011
Consumer information	small quantities of products sold directly from fishing vessels to consumers	Refers to art. 58.8 of (EC) N° 1224/2009, i.e. max €50 per day/ consumer	Art.35.4 of Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products, repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 104/2000

¹⁰ Under certain conditions (max 50 kg landed per species and sampling system in place), fishing vessels of less than 10 metres can also be exempted of first sales note establishment by art.65.1 of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1224/2009 but to our knowledge this possibility is not being applied by any member state at the moment.

Things to watch out for

Before the selling

- > Do not underestimate the time needed before and after the sale itself: for preparation, cleaning, transport, etc.;
- > Foresee a system for the management of unsold product;
- > Practice “good neighbour relations” and avoid conflict by explaining your project to other stakeholders.

During the selling

- > Make the best use of customer interaction by asking questions, trying to find out what they are looking for and what their needs are.

Real life examples

Example Axis4: the Stockholm fishmarket: with the support of the Stockholm FLAG, local fishermen have developed a collective project to facilitate direct sales in the heart of Stockholm. Read more about this project in the [FARNET Magazine #8](#) and follow their sales on [social media](#).



Additional resources if you want to go further

- > [Outputs of the FARNET.Lab in Stockholm on Direct-Sales, by Marie Lesueur](#)
- > Two external resources clearly stand out at the moment for those who would like to develop a direct sales project. They are both from Alaska but most of the information is valid for any fisheries areas.
 - A hands on market study on the set-up of a direct sales point in the Juneau area in Alaska: <http://bit.ly/Lkd1RV>
 - The Fishermen’s Direct Marketing Manual from the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program: <http://bit.ly/1gmVPZW>



3.2 Short chains: community supported fisheries and fish basket schemes

What are they?

Community Supported Fisheries (CSF) and Fish Basket Schemes are two forms of short chains¹¹ in which producers and consumers enter into a form of contractual engagement whereby:

- > the producer undertakes to supply fresh fish caught locally; and
- > the consumer agrees to buy a fixed quantity of fish on a regular basis at a set price.

In so doing, both parties commit themselves to specific engagements that ensure a stable and trusted relationship. Some schemes foster a stronger relationship between fishermen and consumers than others. Indeed some consumers will be attracted by these

schemes as they ensure a trustworthy source of good quality product at a reasonable price, others may also like the community aspect and the idea of supporting local businesses, which turns the act of buying into a civic commitment and political statement. Local schemes should be able to cater for these different types of consumers.

These schemes have the advantage of being able to reach out further than direct sales, to reach a potentially wider consumer base.

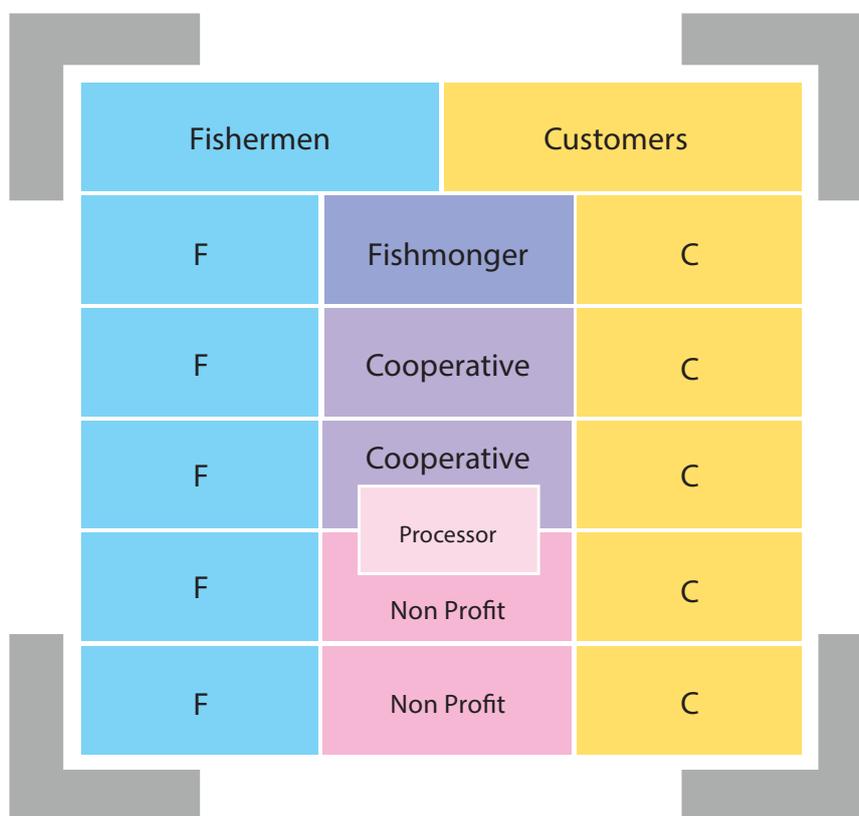
¹¹ Short chains include all forms of sales where fishermen sell their catch to the final consumer with a maximum of one intermediary.

Options

Quite a few options exist for setting up Community Supported Fisheries. Contracts can be agreed between fishermen and consumers directly, or through a distribution scheme (which can include processing) or an intermediary, which would then take care of the logistics. The key is to always keep the fisherman at the heart of the operation, and not to lose sight of the ultimate goal: to ensure a better price and quality fish, for the benefit of both fishermen and consumers. The range of possible options includes:

- > An individual fisherman developing his/her own scheme;
- > A cooperative of fishermen developing their own scheme;
- > An intermediary (non profit), linking fishermen and consumers, taking care of logistics;
- > A processor working for a fee, in cases where a certain degree of product preparation is involved (e.g. filleting).

Figure 5: A CSF can be composed of several building blocks but its focus and key objective remain to deliver locally sourced fish to a group of customers at a fair price, and to strengthen the link between fishermen and their community.



AMAPs to AMAPAP in France

AMAPs (Associations for the Maintenance of Family Farming, the French equivalent of CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture)) have a long tradition in the French countryside. These schemes aim to create a direct link between small scale farmers and consumers, where consumers commit to purchasing a share of the local production at a price that is set in advance. Originally limited to agriculture products, many AMAPs have evolved to become AMAPAP (+AP, aquaculture and fisheries) and now also offer fish products, stemming from local fishermen or fish farms. The obvious advantage for the latter is that they did not have to set up a whole new scheme but could piggy back on the existing AMAP operations, both in terms of the consumer base and logistics. A potential downside is that the existing operations might not always correspond to the needs or interests of the fish suppliers (cold chain issue, supply charter, volumes or diversity requirements, etc).

What are the benefits for me? For my territory?

FISHERMAN	TERRITORY
Stability of price and demand	Diversification of activities
Additional income	Improved image of the territory
Diversification of sales channels	Diversification of local product supply (fresh local fish)
Improved visibility	Reinforcement of local producer's position in the territory
Reaching out to new customers	Revival of relationships within local communities
Establishing a link to the rest of the community	

Questions I need to ask myself before starting¹²

Understanding and motivating fishermen and finding product champions

CSFs can typically be started by a group of fishermen or by members of the community interested in getting fresh fish at a fair price. They usually require more than one boat, as supplying a scheme of this sort requires minimum volumes. So whether you are a fisherman yourself or a member of the community or FLAG, you will need to find fishermen that are interested in taking part in the scheme. The best approach is to start small and work with a few fishermen at first, ensuring that practical aspects are sorted out and trust gradually developed. Fishermen have to be at the heart of the scheme and their motivation and commitment have to be high for the scheme to be successful.

Carrying out a feasibility study

A feasibility study will look at the different elements of a project to assess whether the activities envisaged are viable, and if they are, under what conditions. It will typically cover financial, technical, legal and market aspects. The result of the feasibility study will feed into a business plan, which presents the strategy to be followed to reach the objectives of the project.

On the financial side, one should carry out a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the operations envisaged. The box below highlights in simple terms the main costs and benefits that should be taken into consideration when setting up a CSF. All cost-benefit analyses are based on a certain set of assumptions, however, which implies an inherent element of uncertainty. While the cost side assumptions are generally easier to assess, by enquiring about the cost of this service or that product, for example, assumptions regarding the potential revenue are more difficult to make. Indeed, they relate to the potential demand one can expect for a certain service or product and that demand is not always easy to assess. This is why a thorough market analysis is so important (see the introductory section for more information on market analyses).

¹² The series of steps presented in this section follow the recommendations developed by the CSF working groups, developed during the FARNET seminar on marketing the local catch, held in Stockholm in June 2013.

Income (+)
+ Number of potential customers (shareholders) times the average price per fish basket <i>(Usually more complicated as different types of baskets can exist)</i>
Costs (-)
- Price of raw material <i>(Fish price (cost of production + fisherman's margin), ice if needed, vacuum packaging or other packaging, bags,...)</i>
- Processing cost if any (e.g. in case of filleting) <i>(Voluntary or paid manpower? Subcontracted to existing association for a fee?)</i>
- Packaging costs <i>(Voluntary or paid manpower? Subcontracted to an existing association for a fee?)</i>
- Delivery costs <i>(Voluntary or paid manpower? Subcontracted to existing an association for a fee? Buying own delivery van?)</i>
- Administration costs <i>(Accounting work, membership management, delivery organisation,...)</i>

To see an example of cost-benefit assumptions for a hypothetical CSF, please refer to [the NAMA website](#)

Key to the success of any CSF is the commitment of both consumers and producers. Consumers commit themselves to buying a certain quantity of fish at a certain price, while fishermen commit to providing good quality fish caught locally. In many cases, several boats and fishermen will be supplying the scheme, an important consideration, therefore, is ensuring consistency. All CSFs must have a charter in place, ideally drawn up by the fishermen themselves, and to which all fishermen entering the scheme should commit. The charter will include common procedures and rules for ensuring quality, sustainability and local sourcing. The criteria to be included in the charter should be looked at during the feasibility study stage, as they may impact on the organizational process.

Sorting out the logistics in terms of products, packaging, pricing, storage, delivery dates and collection points, staffing, and so on

Once the feasibility study has been completed, and provided the outcomes are positive, it is then time to get things in motion. Logistical issues have to be organized, such as delivery mechanisms (delivery van, boxes,...), packaging operations (who is doing what, when and where), where to store products awaiting delivery or pick up, setting up the calendar and choosing the location for pick ups/deliveries,...

The complexity of the logistics will depend on the choices made: type of products supplied (fresh, whole fish vs filleted), the range covered (how many landing places) and the area targeted (number of pick ups, distance from landing,...),...

Two US-based associations have developed publications that go through all of these tasks on a step by step basis. We encourage you to make use of these very useful and interesting resources, which are referred to at the end of the chapter.

A media and communications plan

A CSF by nature is also a public relations exercise. Making the scheme known, communicating about its objectives, and informing potential participants about the operational aspects of the scheme are all key to attracting new customers. The feasibility study/business plan should identify the target groups you want to reach. The next step is to set in motion the communication actions needed to reach these target groups.

Once you connect with these groups, make sure you continue to communicate about the scheme, about what is being sold, and the benefits it generates for both fishermen and consumers in order to maintain ongoing interest in the scheme. This is necessary to ensure you continue to attract support from your local community, generate interest among other fishermen who might be interested in joining the scheme, and that you maintain or even grow the numbers of participants over time. The local media (newspapers, radio, TV) are likely to be interested in such a new, dynamic initiative at local level. In addition, new technologies have made other media tools easy and free to use. Think about using **Facebook**, **Twitter** or other platforms to communicate directly with potential consumers and information relay points.

Digital marketplace 

The launch

The first pick up/delivery activity is where everything has to come together to get fresh local fish to the customer taking part in the scheme. Reaching that point will be an accomplishment in itself, but this will really only be the beginning. Make sure you keep the quality standards high and that you maintain a close relationship with your scheme members to ensure a high level of satisfaction. Keep a close eye also on your fellow fishermen, to make sure that they are happy and hence motivated to maintain high quality standards. The first pick up/delivery should be considered and used as a PR opportunity. Make sure you invite prominent local figures (chefs, politicians, **artists...**) and the local media, to help raise the profile of the scheme. Linking it to a tasting event can also help to attract interest and ensure it stays in the minds of all those involved.

Experience 

Slow Fish

Slow Fish is part of the Slow Food International movement and campaigns for quality local fish at a fair price. Through events, the social media and press promotions, it connects fishermen, chefs, retailers, scientists, academics and other advocates under the principles of "slow food," thus helping to create guidelines for small-scale sustainable fishing and the market value chain. The Slow Food website lists CSFs that have worked with it on its campaign, and shared its experience at events with an international audience of fishermen. [More information on Slow Fish](#)

Things to watch out for

- > If fishermen are not distributing the fish themselves, there is a need to ensure regular direct contacts with the customers (by taking part in the distribution process periodically, for example), as the close relationship with producers is key to the success of these schemes.
- > Ensure variety in the fish packages. Do not serve the same fish over and over again, and try to give advance warning to customer of the fish they can expect to receive, so that they can plan accordingly. In case something goes wrong and you are not able to provide what you said you would, communicate! New technologies offer easy ways to provide this type of evolving information.
- > The price for the fish package is usually set at the beginning of the season and remains fixed, while the actual value of the package will depend very much on the type of fish or shellfish provided. So while the average price set at the beginning of the season ensures that the margins are evened out over the length of the season and the spread of species (higher when lower value species are supplied and smaller when higher value species are on offer), an additional safety net for fisherman is to allow for some flexibility in the weight of the package. Proposing a weight range for the package (i.e. between 2 and 3 Kilo), instead of a set weight, allows some room for manoeuvre and avoids loosing out on high value species when market prices are high.



Tell a personal story with some of the deliveries: how the fishing trip went, who caught the fish on what boat, using what type of net or technique and so on. Additionally, recipes or cooking ideas can be a nice bonus to offer customers, especially if the scheme is trying to market new or lesser known species. When available locally, some coordination with vegetable basket schemes can also provide opportunities to offer fish/vegetable matches.



A calendar with the type of fish/shellfish available in the area, depending on the season, can be a good marketing tool. Organise regular get-togethers between CSF members to keep the spirit alive!

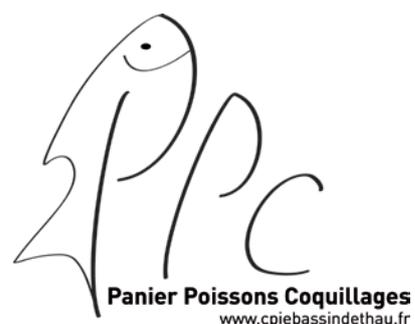
Real life examples

Catchbox.coop: with the support of national ([DEFRA](#), [Cooperatives-UK](#)...) and international partners ([SEAWEB](#)), the UK's first CSF builds on the experience of the US CSF marketing schemes. [The website of Catchbox explains the idea of a CSF as a version of a "co-op."](#)



"Panier de la mer" ("Basket from the sea") Axis4: Aiming to develop a market for local fisheries products, this short chain distribution scheme was developed by CPIE¹³ of Thau in 2008, building on a small scale initiative previously covering a single village. With Axis 4 of the EFF and national co-financing, the Thau FLAG (FR09) funded 50% of the €77 250 investment, covering feasibility studies on pick-up points, times of delivery, as well as connectivity with local events and workshops to generate support.

Launched in 2012, the scheme evolved as a network of 4 fourpickup zones. By the end of 2013, it had attracted 690 registered buyers distributed over 50 surrounding municipalities. Based on principles and objectives similar to those of Community Supported Fisheries, buyers need to register upfront on the scheme's website to buy local seafood. More information on [this good practice available here](#).



¹³ Centre Permanent d'Initiatives pour l'Environnement are french associations for environmental education.

Additional resources if you want to go further

CSF schemes are much more advanced in the US, which is the source of much of the available resource material. The lessons contained in these guidance documents are also valid for the European context. For those interested in going into more detail, here are some key documents that can help in setting up a CSF:

- > [Outputs of the FARNET.Lab in Stockholm: Short chains and CSF](#), by Shannon Eldregde of Cape Cod CSF and [Jack Clarke](#) (Catchbox.coop):
- > An introduction to [Starting and Maintaining Community Supported Fishery](#) (CSF) Programs:
- > A web based [«baitbox» for fishermen willing to set up a CSF](#), by the Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance
- > A short and quick [step-by-step guide to setting up a CSF](#), by the Alaska Sustainable Fisheries Trust



3.3 The Digital Marketplace

What is it?

The digital marketplace refers to a variety of tools and communication channels that use new technologies to give seafood professionals a shop-window to promote and sell their products. Widespread internet access and the simplification of technologies and devices are opening up many new market possibilities for local producers and the variety of tools is constantly expanding. Complexity, costs and efficiency can vary,

however, and a clear understanding of the different options and their requirements is needed before “going on-line”.

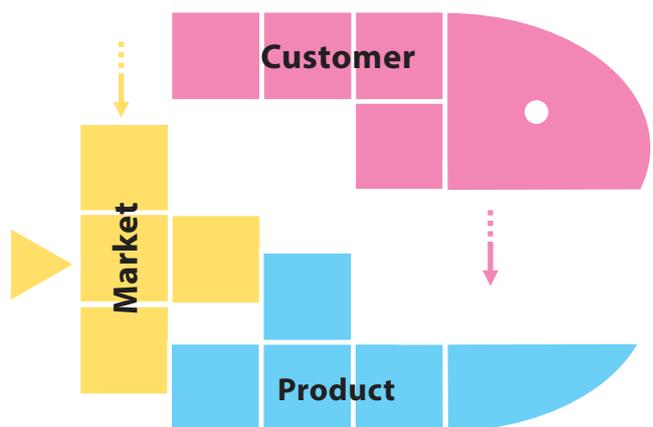
Here are a few examples and tips on why local stakeholders should give it a second thought, how to get started and what to look out for.

Options

Digital tools are as diverse as the reasons to use them. They can be used at all levels of the distribution chain, helping to ensure more integrated and more traceable sourcing mechanisms.

They can be used by fishermen to report their catch and ensure traceability, thereby easing the process of collecting and communicating data about the **product** to the final customer. With the opportunities offered by on-line auctions and sales platforms, they can also provide new entry points to multiple **markets**. In today’s marketplace, customers source both food and information differently, and digital tools are providing unique opportunities for fishermen to inform directly and create new types of relationships with their **customers**.

Figure 6: digital tools allow these three blocks to be configured into new market opportunities

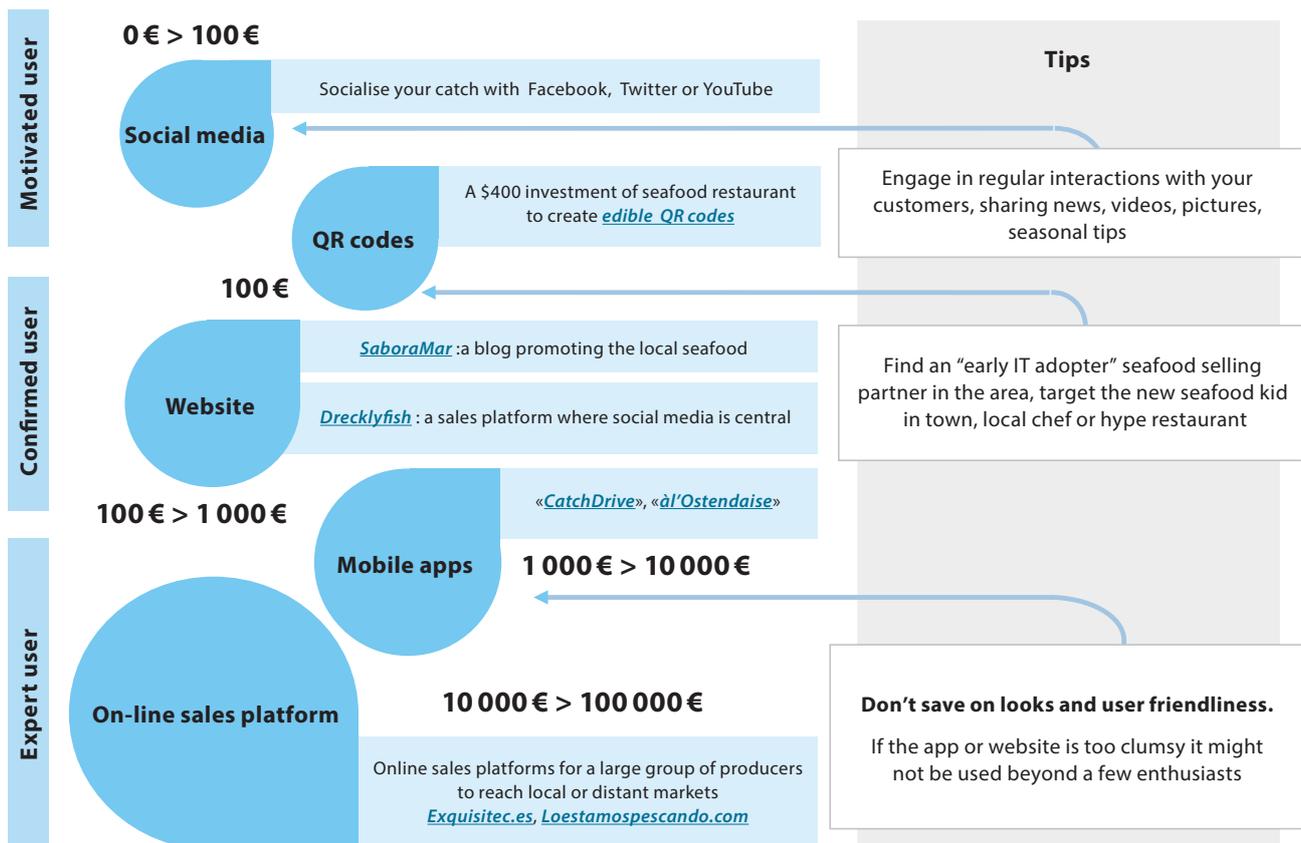


In this guide we will mostly look at the way digital tools and media can be used by fishermen and fisheries communities to communicate differently outside of the sector, to create and strengthen market opportunities.

Depending on the aims and ambition of your digital marketing strategy, the financial investment can range from close to zero to hundreds of thousands of euros. For instance, developing an online communication about your product or fisheries through

social networks (see focus below) can be virtually free. However, even low cost initiatives require that you regularly dedicate some time (either on land or at the fishing grounds) to ensure that your digital activity or products is kept up-to-date and relevant.

Figure 7: the figure above gives examples of digital tools, from low cost to higher cost and more complex marketing possibilities.



Some definitions and examples:



 **Social media:** refers to online communication platforms where users exchange multimedia information. These platforms allow for a high degree of interactivity but depend mostly on content generated by the users themselves.

Drecklyfish – Axis 4 project

UK Cornish fishermen facing low profitability have started to look at ways to use social media to raise awareness about the quality of their products and achieve a better price. By developing an auction on Twitter, not only were they able to achieve a higher price for their catch, but they also generated enough profit to deliver the catch to local customers for free. This kind of result can only be achieved, however, by properly assessing the balance between the size of the market you want to reach and the supply you can provide.

> <http://www.drecklyfish.co.uk/>

Please refer to the section below: [“Social media is the ‘grapevine’ of the 21st century”](#)



 **QR codes:** a new generation of barcode tags that contain multiple information on a product and redirect automatically to a webpage when “flashed” with a smartphone or tablet.

Using QR codes to foster traceability and communicate on quality.

ICTs are giving a radical and positive boost to traceability concerns (<http://thisfish.info/>). Some seafood restaurants are pushing the boundaries of technology by, for example, decorating plates with edible squid ink QR codes. Flashing a simple QR code, which can be generated easily by fishermen themselves, enables customers to trace the fish they’re eating, such as through the US [Trace and Trust](#) or [Red’s best schemes](#), which lets consumers know who caught the fish, when it was caught and the method of harvesting. This new way of raising awareness can trigger curiosity and increased demand for local products, thereby helping to revive local fisheries.

Branding and labelling





Websites: can either be very light and “blog-like”, to ensure a minimum online presence and share limited amounts of information, or complex tools, combining multiple features and allowing high user interactivity.

The on-line sales platform, Loestamospescando.com – Axis 4 project

Thanks to the support of the Costa da Morte FLAG (ES03), local Cofradías (Fishermen’s associations) involving more than 500 Galician fishermen and shellfish producers developed a pilot online sales platform. The platform aims to diversify the customer base and shorten the distribution chain of local fisheries products.

How does it work: The loestamospescando.com platform allows customers to place orders by phone or on-line at a maximum agreed price. The transaction is done through the auction, with the Cofradías acting as the buyer, purchasing its fishermen’s catch to honour Loestamospescando orders, operating within the limit of the maximum price agreed. Through the involvement of Cofradías, Loestamospescando therefore provides customers with a “buyers seat” at the auction, ensuring a fair price for the fishermen, while enabling customers to save on intermediaries. The logistics of the delivery is then handled by the sales platform.

> <http://www.loestamospescando.com/es/>



Mobile apps: refers to websites and applications developed for mobile use, whether on tablets or on smartphones.

Local Catch

Local Catch is a marketing platform that provides customers in the south of England with information on the source, type and availability of local seafood. Through an on-line platform, combining desktop and mobile apps, fishermen and local seafood retailers can meet to advertise their catch. Participating fishermen appear in a web-based directory and interactive map, as well as in a mobile app developed by the project. This platform also provides marketing and public relations support to fishermen and is integrated with social networking sites. Around 42 seafood businesses took part in the scheme in 2013.

> <http://www.localcatch.co.uk/>

What are the benefits for me? For my territory?

FISHERMAN	TERRITORY
Shortening the communication chain:	Making the territory digitally attractive:
On-line media tools shorten the distance between the producer and consumer. The former takes the lead on the style, content and frequency of messages he/she wants to communicate.	Showing that the area fosters innovative approaches will reflect positively on the attractiveness of the territory, attracting the attention of IT project promoters and investors.
Adding value by personalising your product:	A new set of tools for the FLAG to develop the territory:
As outlined in the experience economy section of this guide, local products contain more than meets the eye. On-line media can help in sharing the personal stories behind local fisheries with a larger audience.	Websites and social media can be used as tools to develop the territory, as is already being done by FLAGs such as Larnaca (CY), Peniche (PT), Adriatico-Salentino (IT), Aberdeenshire (UK), and Opolszczyzna (PL).
Catching and landing the freshest news:	Being part of a network:
Informing from the fishing ground will keep the interest in your activity and products alive. It can also position you as an “early adopter” of digital seafood marketing and confirm yours as an active and dynamic business.	When visiting a project, or taking part in a local, national or EU event, a FLAG manager can post short and relevant updates that will testify to the positive online reputation of the FLAG and its territory.
Reaching new markets, new customers:	
Digital tools can help in reaching new customers that traditional distribution channels cannot reach.	
Creating alternative marketing channels:	
As the examples above show, new technologies can be used to market products directly, in a different way, and hence improve margins.	

Figure 8: Posing with the catch for a #pelfie (a pesca selfie), fishermen can use social media to attract new customers and enhance their reputation. All leading to better marketing opportunities.



Questions I need to ask myself before starting

- > **Where do I start?** Build consumer trust and engage with them in real-life, only then will you be able to capitalise on that trust to open new markets with on-line tools. It is essential to understand supply, demand, and the geographical boundaries within which your products will have to remain competitive, and keep the focus on their added value – fresh, and locally caught.
- > **Who can help me define my project?** An ambitious project, such as developing a dedicated on-line tool (sales platform or a phone app to inform customers about your catch) will require technical expertise and team work, and the FLAG can help you find this. For example, there may be an IT or business school in your area that might be interested in developing this with you, in the context of a final year exercise perhaps. A *hack-a-thon* applied to local fisheries could be an example. ([learn more online](#))
- > **What to communicate?** Fisheries have a strong visual component (fish species, processing facilities, the people working there) and video platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, Dailymotion...) and photo-sharing platforms (Instagram, Tumblr...) provide easy tools to illustrate what you fish for and how you prepare it.



If you are considering developing a website, you, or your web design company, should adopt the most recent web language technology, the HTML5. This will ensure maximum compatibility with handheld devices such as smartphones and tablets, which are being increasingly used by customers when searching for a restaurant, seafood shop or to share a recipe.

Focus: “Social media is the ‘grapevine’ of the 21st century”

Social media have become a powerful and inexpensive way to transfer the “word of mouth” and use it as part of an efficient and measurable communication strategy. The “reputation economy” is the key to social media efficiency: gaining the trust and satisfaction of users will turn customers into product ambassadors, who interact with potential new customers, highlighting their positive experience of your product. Although the use of social media is free, it still requires a considerable effort to ensure the timely delivery of messages, and to create a “tone” and recognisable style of communication. For professionals, it is also a new way to keep informed about market developments: social media can be effective information sources on market developments such as prices or landings in neighbouring harbours/countries. Similarly, these are easy to use tools to keep your network active and stay in touch with fellow fishermen.

Facebook? Twitter? Foursquare? What to expect from different tools: Visit the FARNET website for a comparative assessment of three social networks that could help you to promote your activities and products and gain customers. [Read more online](#)

Key things to watch out for

Don’t forget to update: Whether working on a webpage or in the social media, make sure to post regular updates. The person behind the keyboard (the fishermen, spouse, associate...) should also communicate with a personal touch and create a “real feel/real time” communication style.

The big picture: social media should never be a ‘*stand-alone*.’ Instead, it should be fully integrated into the producer’s marketing strategy. Promote your Twitter account on your market stall, organise a competition on Facebook and advertise it in your shop, and encourage customers to check in on [four-square](#) at your harbour sales’ spot.

Social media is about being... social: rather than sticking to your own products and the “usual suspect” customers, these tools should encourage you to develop and react to the messages and stories of others, creating a community feel and reaching out to a wider online audience.



The FLAG manager should allocate part of the FLAG’s animation time to fostering a robust on-line presence, developing a content-rich and user friendly website and lighter social media in order to maximize the visibility of the FLAG and its beneficiaries.

Links with other themes

The variety of online tools described above can help the professional to “save” on intermediaries, either in the sales or marketing processes. These tools are precious auxiliaries when developing *direct sales* or *short chain circuits*, where a strong link must be established and sustained between the producer and the customer. Their format and multimedia possibilities are also an important asset when presenting local

seafood products, helping to transform the purchase of local seafood into a memorable *experience*. Digital tools empower professionals to become promoters and on-line story tellers of their products.

Direct sales



Short chain circuits



Experience



Additional resources if you want to go further

- > [Outputs of the FARNET.Lab in Stockholm: the digital marketplace, by Henriette Reinders](#)
- > **Social media as a tool for territorial animation: Focus of the *ENRD magazine May 2013***
- > **The evolution of digital shopping: [The retail revolution](#)**
- > **Building a website for free**, with tools such as [WordPress.com](#) or [Google sites](#). Search in some of the very complete tutorials that exist online to help you secure an online presence like [Socialbrite](#) or [w3schools](#).
- > **How [to build your own QR codes?](#)**
- > **Three Axis 4 Facebook pages, developed by fishermen and seafood professionals:**
 - [Jean sur Mer: a seafood truck owner communicating with customers on Facebook](#)
 - [27Percebeiros](#): a company set up by *Mardesilleiro* with the support of Axis 4
 - [Fiskmarknad](#): Stockholm fishermen engage with urban customers to inform them about downtown direct sales initiatives
- > **Examples of mobile apps and online tools used to increase the visibility and traceability of seafood products**
 - [Catch Drive: a direct sales application](#) Axis4 developed by the Urk fishermen association to gain greater market access and facilitate direct sales from the boat (supported by Axis 4)
 - [A l'Ostendaise](#) Axis4: this app takes the user into a fisheries heritage trail in Ostende, Belgium, provides advice on seasonal fish and gives access to local catch recipes and meet-and-greet opportunities with fishermen.
 - Catch monitoring and traceability: [DigitalDeck: an app to report the catch and reduce the paper trail](#) (EcoTrust US)



3.4 Fisheries and the experience economy

What is it?

*“Tell me and I will forget.
Show me and I might remember.
Involve me and I’ll understand”*
Benjamin Franklin

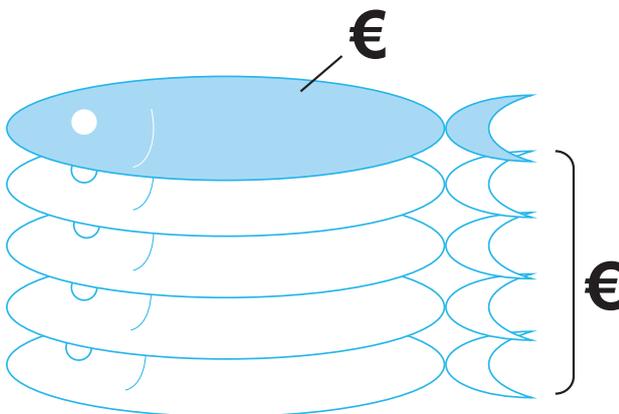
Providing high quality products at a fair price is no longer a means of differentiation in the marketplace, but a basic expectation of customers. The differentiation, especially in the context of direct and short chain sales, is increasingly to be found in the way the producer/seller manages, not only to put a fish in the customer’s bag, but also to convey a lasting and positive story. Capitalising on the experience potential of your activity means creating novel ways

to differentiate your product, turning the “access”, “purchase” and “use” steps taken by the consumer into a new currency and source of personal and intellectual enrichment.

Seafood is a “hyper product”: value its different dimensions. Applying the “experience economy” to a local fisheries product means creating value out of the product’s multiple aspects: its origin, its life, the experience and anecdotes of its producers, and the hidden qualities and dimensions of the product. It means moving beyond the simple consumption value of the product to valuing its different intangible dimensions.

Options

Figure 9: *There is value below the surface.*



As explained above, there are many different aspects that can be explored to generate experience and value in local fisheries products. In marketing terms, there are key elements that can help turn a classical sales strategy into an attractive, fun and interactive experience for customers and a source of value for producers.

The main elements you can use to value a product are its “Properties, Presentation, People and Promotion”.

Properties: when boiling down your business to its fundamentals you will find elements that carry an experience value. The name of the fishing ground, the life cycle of the catch, your boat's silhouette, the gear, the sales spot... these fundamentals can be unique and help **differentiate** your product.

Example à Capitalise on the image of the fishermen/boat (leaflet, websites, brand...), or on the atmosphere surrounding the fish market, auctions and boat's arrival. In the harbour of La Cotinière, Oléron, FR, a fishmonger has developed a concept store where customers can [go behind the scene and visit the auction across the street](#)

Presentation: your product and its properties will benefit from some scenography. Aligning filleted cod on ice is good, but "playing with the food" (although advised against by our parents) will really catch the customer's eye.

Example à In Seattle, the [flying fish market](#) became an entertainment venue as much as a market place.

People: the opportunities for interaction with customers are endless and depend on the level of commitment and interpersonal skills of the producer. Welcoming customers behind the scene, showing them how to filet, or sharing a story from your days at sea are all ways of enriching the buying experience.

Example à Teach the fish: Involve customers in seafood training (cooking, preparing, filleting,...) learning how to [prepare the whole fish](#)



"Your daily routine is someone else's adventure": don't underestimate the experience potential of your everyday work, which can be exotic and colorful to outsiders.

Promotion: use the fundamental properties and the specific images of the trade to develop an original promotional campaign, with leaflets, on the street, or on **social networks**. The more talented fish sellers among you might want to write a song, as this UK-based singing fishmonger did, becoming a YouTube sensation with his "[one pound fish](#)". Competitions, discounts, cooperative marketing with partners and events are other possible options.

Digital marketplace



Example a **Food pairing:** create new markets by associating your fish with other quality products from the area; capitalise on the «territorial brand» and exclusivity of a local wine, bread or cheese, for example.

Branding and labelling



Example à *Think outside the (fish)box*: find partners in totally different sectors. Your fish can become the source of an artistic experience expressed by a local artist: [see this example](#).



"A happy customer will talk about his/her experience with two or three people, an unhappy one will talk about it with 30."

Opening the door to customer experiences: [the Fonda sea bass farm, Piran, Slovenia.](#)

Founded by Slovenian marine biologist, Ugo Fonda, the Fonda sea bass farming activity started in 2003, with the goal of developing a high grade product, in terms of quality, image and environmental sustainability. Employing 20 to 30 people, depending on the season, the company is located in the Gulf of Piran, at the southernmost tip of Slovenia. With a limited output of 50 tonnes a year, the farm is fighting a constant battle to deal with the pressures imposed by mass market production. Now managed by Ugo's children (Irena and Lean), both marine biologists, the company is making considerable efforts to niche market its products as an "experience" of quality and uniqueness. Considering the 4Ps, **how is this "experience" being brought to life?**



Presentation of the Properties: Irena is the company's CEO and she is constantly on the lookout for Slovenian catering professionals and opportunities to place "her" sea bass on their menus. Her aim is to get to a situation where being "Fonda farmed" becomes a selling point on the menu. The fish, as a wine, become a "terroir" product and are presented as a local harvest, becoming far more than just "fish".

Promotion of quality: the wine metaphor is particularly relevant and has been part of its strategy to market its sea bass jointly with locally produced wine, but also salt and oil, for which a special packaging was designed to emphasize the quality and complementarity of these products. By doing so, the company managed to embellish its own "niche" marketing strategy with the vocabulary and style of the high-value added wine market.

The People, the processes: the company understood early on that marketing starts at the production site. By developing an open door policy and welcoming visitors and tourists "backstage", the Fonda farm transforms its day to day operations and working atmosphere into a source of added value and experience for visitors. For example, the Fonda farm proposes kayak tours of its production site, where Irena and her colleagues introduce visitors to their sustainable production techniques and the surrounding ecosystems (the farm is located in a marine reserve). Visitors can also get actively involved, as they are encouraged to collect and bring back to the plant any floating debris they encounter.

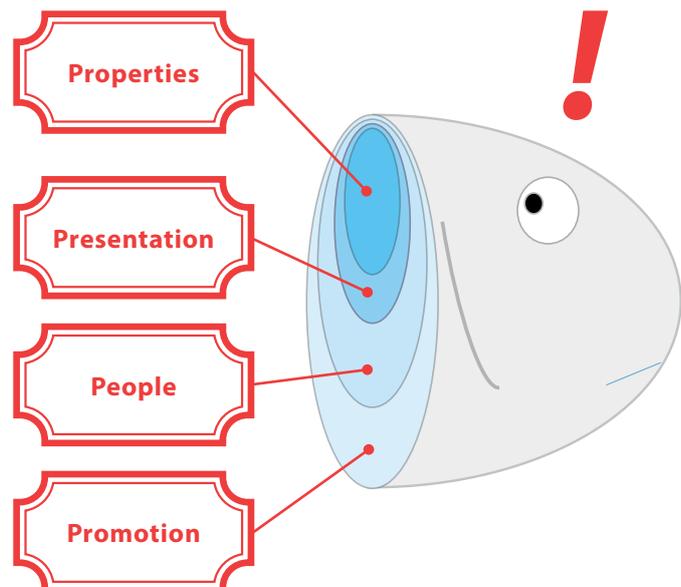
Recently, the farm received support from the Slovenian FLAG Ribič for the purchase and adaptation of an electric hybrid boat in order to provide longer eco-tours of the production area. In less than three months, the boat has already welcomed several hundred visitors on board, at a price of around € 30 per person.

What are the benefits for me? For the territory?

FISHERMAN/PRODUCER	TERRITORY
<p>Increase in sales: the more angles you provide to your product, the more you will attract different types of customers. Providing a unique experience can also help to improve sales margins.</p>	<p>Increasing the attractiveness of the area: the more experiences offered locally, the more attractive a territory becomes.</p>
<p>Standing out from the crowd: providing an experience rich activity can be the way to differentiate in a crowded playing field.</p>	<p>Strengthen the relationship between tourists and the territory: a strong experience provides a motivation for visitors to talk about their experience and to develop a special bond with the area.</p>
<p>Enhanced producer-customer relations: developing a positive and productive relationship with customers creates a virtuous circle, where customer feedback provides you with new ideas.</p>	<p>Strengthen economic partnerships and dynamism: providing experiences create new forms of cooperation between the producers and catering, culture and tourism professionals.</p>

Figure 10: These four dimensions can be steps towards designing a complete product experience.

- 1. The fish is more than the sum of its proteins:** its biology and its environment can be valued through sharing facts that will make the customer smarter.
- 2. Stage your fish:** the mood and feeling created around your products and activity is a big part of the experience.
- 3. The fishermen are the fish's human factor:** usually poorly connected with final customers, they can be a source of discovery and learning.
- 4. Your fish is part of a bigger picture:** local fish and shellfish are connected to a "terroir". Find out how it can enhance your product.



Questions I need to ask myself before starting

Collective promotion of territory/products or individual promotion?

Getting together with others can lead to longer discussions but also to more visibility. In a collective project, assess how to develop specific experiences that best value each partner, and ensure a coherent approach (e.g. in a fish discovery pack). In the Axis 4 project, [à l'Ostendaise](#), in Belgium, fishermen, chefs and restaurants have teamed up to sell a local fisheries experience: some restaurants invite fishermen to **share a table with customers** to meet and chat about the fish of the month.

One shot, year round or seasonal experience?

A successful one-off event might attract a lot of attention locally and could be organized to coincide with the peak of the tourist season, but it might not be sufficient to establish and build your reputation. A year round experience calls for dedication but can be used to prolong the tourist season and help to maintain the attractiveness of the territory off season (see the efforts of [Mogens Klausen in Denmark](#) to offer a quality, year-round experience in Northern Jutland).

Do I like to talk about my work with customers?

Or do you prefer to let the fish do the talking? Fisheries are better explained by fishermen but not everybody will be suited to this. A successful experience will be a combination of interpersonal skills and originality in showcasing your product or service.

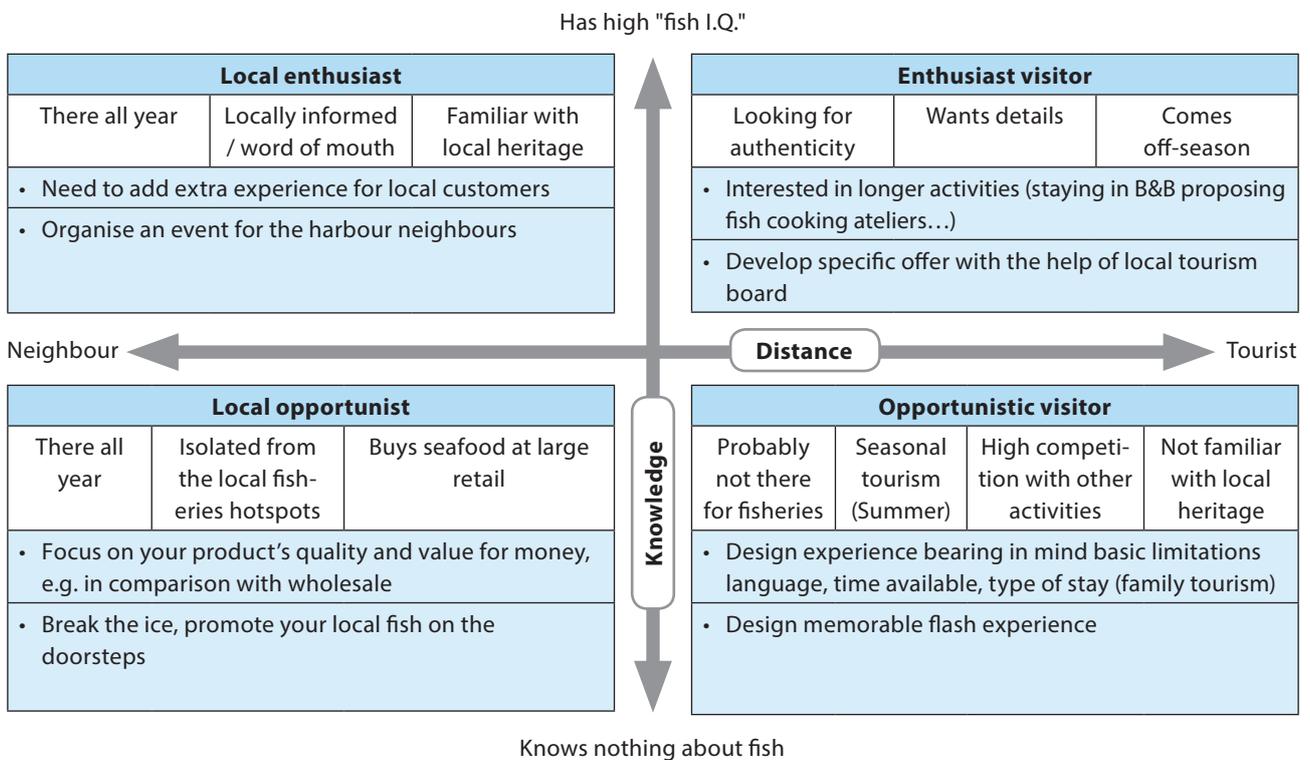
Are there any specific cultural traditions/ emblematic species/products I can capitalise on?

Unlike tourist hotspots, remote areas in search of an economic boost can see their apparent lack of resources as a “clean slate” to work from. Like the Shetland Islands, in Scotland, where a tourism economy has been built on the transformation of remoteness and unspoilt nature into a cultural and environmental experience, now sought after by many tourists in [search of authenticity](#).

How do I grab customers' attention?

Consumer expectations vary according to knowledge, origin, and the time they have available for discovery. Combining several activities or styles according to the season and products might secure a wider audience looking for different experiences.

Figure 11: know your different customers their origin, knowledge level, their characteristics and expectations, and the type of experience you could put forward will be very different.



Things to watch out for

- > Beware of busy summer calendars and competing events;
- > Ensure what you offer stands out from the crowd;
- > Don't overdo it, and make sure you are coherent in your experience offering (keep it real, ensure respect for local traditions and avoid becoming just a tourist attraction);
- > In the case of tastings or cooking/filleting classes, comply with food safety and hygiene rules;
- > Don't fear "transparency": an open door policy will show customers that you are passionate about what you do and will encourage them to tell your story to friends and family.

Additional resources if you want to go further

- > [Outputs of the FARNET.Lab in Stockholm: the experience economy, by Berit Nørgaard Olesen](#)
- > [Background concepts in the experience economy applied to small rural businesses to theory](#)



3.5 Local branding and labeling

What is it?

A brand or a label is an easily identified mark that highlights specific characteristics of a product. It helps the consumer in its choices by reassuring him/her of certain aspects of the product. The main added value of these marks is that they allow for transferring certain information through the value chain, all the way to the final consumer. Local sourcing labels, regional branding, eco-labeling, quality schemes bridging different sectors of the local economy...

are all possibilities for local producers to create an image for their product and improve recognition and commitment by consumers.

Labels or brands, some people use these terms interchangeably, but we prefer to clearly distinguish them on the basis of the criteria explained in the box below.

Labels versus brands

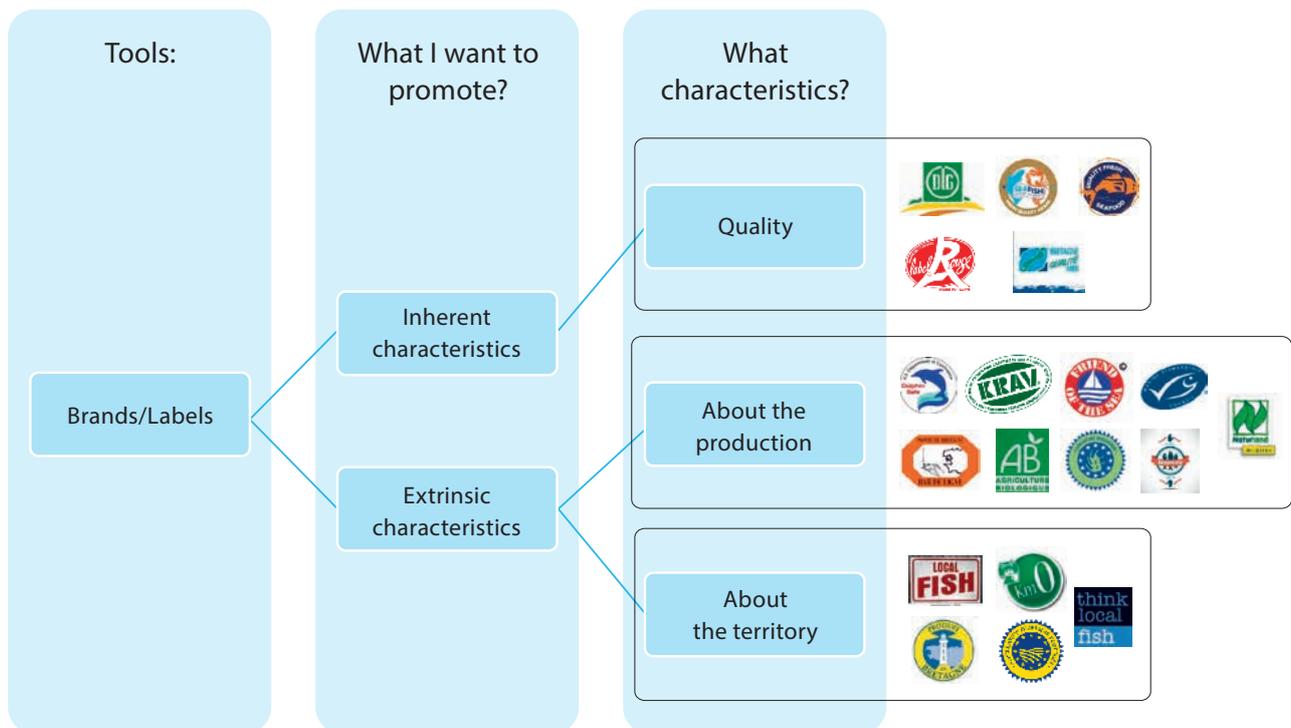
The term “label” is often used when the specifications behind the production are defined by a public body (Europe, national authorities...) and the term “brand” when the specifications are defined by the producer. These procedures can be the result of an individual initiative (brands generally), but usually involve a group of producers (this is the case of labels and collective brands). Labels always include technical specifications, aimed at ensuring coherence in the production process and hence the quality or sustainability of the product. Respect for technical specifications is usually ensured by third party monitoring and certification of the production process. A brand does not have to have any specifications attach to it, in which case it is used mostly as a promotional tool. Brands are more flexible than labels in the sense that the brand belongs to the person or organisation that created it, which is then free to change its production process as it pleases and is only bound to respect the rules they set for itself. The downside is that the trust the consumer places in a brand relies more on emotional aspects (reputation, image conveyed e.g.) than on objective criteria, which are ensured by the technical specifications labels have to follow.

	Label	Brand
+	Benefit from already established image	Flexible, can be adapted freely by the owner
	Trust is ensured by third party certification	Full control of the image
	Can help to improve product quality/sustainability through technical specifications	
-	Certification costs can be expensive	Often need large investments to achieve awareness/recognition
	Technical specifications constrain the production process	Private brands are less likely to receive support from public money

Options

Brands and labels can be used to differentiate a product, highlighting specific characteristics. Those characteristics can be inherent to the product (quality, taste...) or extrinsic (mode and place of production).

Figure 12: Brands and labels come in all shapes, sizes and complexities. They can tell very different stories about the products they are attached to.



What are the benefits for me? For my territory?

FISHERMAN	TERRITORY
Improves the image of the product for consumers and perhaps allows for premium pricing	Creates a link between the producer and consumers
Makes the product stand out from the crowd (avoid the mass market, develop niche markets)	Ensure traceability and trust in local products
Acts as a promotional tool	Can help to improve sector organisation as a federating project
Creates an identity for the product	Can help to improve the image of local producers and of the sector as a whole
Increases recognition of the quality, authenticity and sustainability aspects of the production	Promotion for the whole territory through iconic products or activities
Helps to build customer loyalty	
Opens new market opportunities or helps to keep existing ones	

Questions I need to ask myself before starting

What is the objective behind the development of a label or a brand? What will a brand or a label add to the marketing of my products?

- > Will it help in expanding my customer base (attract additional customers)?
- > Will it help me enter new markets (reach out to new customers)?
- > Will I be able to raise my price?
- > Will it help me to stand out from the crowd? Do I want to enter a specific market niche?

The objectives behind the development of a label or a brand can be very different. Being clear about what you are trying to achieve is important, in order to choose the right type of mark to be developed, and to put in place the conditions required to succeed.



Definition of the objective

What type of brand/label corresponds to my needs?

- > A brand/label on what scale? Aimed at the local level or to reach wider consumption circles?
- > For which products (one species/product or for all my production)?
- > Who is my target public (consumers, restaurants, wholesalers...)?
- > Will it be an individual or a collective project?
- > What are my resources, both in terms of time and money?

Developing a brand or a label should form part of a coherent marketing strategy. The type of brand or label will depend on the strategic choices made regarding pricing, product positioning, distribution channels, promotional activities... The costs associated with the use/development of a label or brand should be integrated into the feasibility study ([see Introduction](#)) and assessed against potential benefits.



Ensuring coherence with the wider marketing strategy and assessing the costs of different options

What characteristic of my products do I want to promote?

- > What are the attributes of my products? Are there any specificities of the product I can use to make my product stand out?
- > Do I want to capitalise on the inherent (quality, freshness...) or extrinsic characteristics (method of production, local origin, know-how,...) of my product? What is the message that I want to communicate?

Labels or brands can highlight certain aspects of a product and this can help the product to stand out from the competition. However, many different options exist and it is important to identify the right approach for the right market (e.g. sustainability of fishing practices for eco labels, special craft food products...) and develop the label/brand accordingly.



Definition of the specifications

Should I create a new brand or get into an existing scheme?

Creating a brand from scratch can require a lot of time and money. In addition, branding fresh fish is close to impossible as one fresh fish looks similar to another. Piggy backing on an existing scheme can be an interesting option as it saves time and money. However, it also means you have to go along with the rules and conditions that are already established.

It is important, therefore, to carry out a thorough review of existing brand and labelling schemes active in your territory before launching yourself into the process. Assessing the situation in terms of existing initiatives is also important to avoiding confusing consumers further by creating yet another brand or label.



Start from scratch or join existing scheme, analyze the existing environment thoroughly.

Things to watch out for

- > Carefully estimate the costs and constraints imposed by specifications, traceability requirements, procedures, controls... of the brands/labels, and especially the existing schemes (MSC, European labels...), and define who supports the costs;
- > Define the information transfer at each stage to avoid information loss all along the value chain and to ensure that consumers receive the right message;
- > Avoid confusing the consumer with too much information.
- > Mentioning the place of origin is not eligible in the EFF, except in cases where the product is recognized under the official EU denomination of origins (Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI)¹⁴). The challenge for the FLAG, therefore, is to support the development of a local brand or label without mentioning the place of origin, hence avoiding infringing the limitations imposed by the market competition rules.

¹⁴ PDO (prepared, processed AND produced) stronger than PGI (prepared, processed OR produced)



How to promote a local product in a FLAG?

You should choose the name of the brand carefully and try to **“catch” the local aspect without mentioning the origin.**

- > Focus on the local characteristic of products, the production or perhaps the fishing area. In some places, fishing is carried out in a specific way, using specific tools or special boats. All local characteristics that can be used to attach the product to a specific area without specifically mentioning the geographic origin should be explored (e.g. in Germany, the Kutter, is a type of boat which is traditionally associated with coastal/local fishermen. By promoting **“Fisch vom Kutter”** (fish from the “kutter”), the local FLAG actually sends out a message that the fish is local without mentioning any geographical origin, and thereby not contravening the EU legislation);
- > Focus on the limited “mileage” the product has to travel to reach the customer. Highlighting this implies the product is a local product. The “Km 0” initiative in Portugal (see below) is based around this principle. In Catalunya (Spain), the local FLAG has developed a label called “Pescado de Lonja” or “Fish from the auction”, which basically grants recognition to local restaurants which are using locally caught fish in their kitchen (see below for more information).
- > Remember also that the market regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013)) requires that the catch area is mentioned for the sale of many fisheries products. While traditionally very large catch areas based on the FAO categorization have been used, art. 38.2 also states that, *“operators may indicate a more precise catch or production area”*. Local producers could therefore look into associating the catch area to a product label;

Bear in mind that while the “local” aspect of a product might be appealing in itself for some customers, this appeal will be lost if it is not backed up by premium quality. Hence the importance of combining any local label with product quality specifications.

Links with other themes

In the *digital market place* you will find examples of traceability systems and tools to communicate and promote these scheme in a cost effective way. *Labels* can also be used to reinforce a specific *experience* for the consumer. Finally, brands and labels can be created to support/market *Community Supported Fisheries* schemes and *direct sales* initiatives.

Direct sales



Short chain circuits



Digital marketplace



Experience



Real life examples

Example Axis 4: “KM 0” is a branding initiative to promote local sourcing. It brings together stakeholders from the entire chain involved in the production, processing, sales, marketing and consumption of fisheries products in the Minho-Lima area. [Link to good practice](#)



Example Axis 4: “Pescado de Lonja”, (fish from the auction) is a labeling initiative of the association of Cofradías of Catalunya (Spain), which aims to reward local restaurants that use local fish with the help of “seastars”. Basically, the more local fish the restaurant buys, the more “seastars” it will receive. This label aims to ensure the promotion of quality local fish in the local catering sector and it manages to refer to the local origin of the product without making any geographic reference. [More information on this good practice is available here.](#)



Additional resources if you want to go further

> [Outputs of the FARNET.Lab in Stockholm: branding and labeling, by Anne Doeksen](#)



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