



## FSU celebrates a successful first year



**The first year of operation of the FARNET Support Unit (FSU) has seen considerable progress in the implementation of Axis 4, with the selection process now underway in all 21 participating Member States and 124 FLAGS already operational.**

Established in May 2009, the FSU assists the European Commission with the implementation of Axis 4. The Unit comprises a core team of 12 (eight full-time equivalents), 21 geographical experts and a six-person advisory group. Over the past 12 months this team has undertaken a number of important activities, including:

- > Organising three major events: two transnational seminars (Estonia, June 2009 and Spain, March 2010) and the launch of the FSU (Brussels, October 2009);
- > Producing a number of multilingual publications: two editions of the FARNET Magazine; four editions of the FARNET Newsletter; two technical guides; and a report on the state of play of axis 4;
- > Developing the [FARNET website](#);
- > Methodological support to managing authorities and groups;
- > Organising three meetings of managing authorities and establishing links with existing national networks;
- > Organising focus group meetings in nine countries;
- > Producing 12 "country factsheets";
- > Compiling good practices and methodological tools.

Despite this progress, FLAGS have yet to be selected in ten countries and the lack of technical support systems at managing authority level remains a critical issue. Addressing these issues will be a key priority for the FSU in the coming year.

## Stakeholders "focus" on Axis 4 in Bulgaria



**A focus group meeting took place in Bulgaria on 31 May 2010, following the signing of the updated ordinance on the implementation of Axis 4 by the Minister of Agriculture and Food.**

The ordinance was presented to the participants by the Bulgarian managing authority. This was followed by an open discussion on the challenges and needs of the local groups. Key challenges identified include: State ownership of coastal zones, limited experience in the application of public-private-partnerships at community level, and difficulties in mobilising interest among local populations.

Following a programme of capacity building, which began in June 2010, five local partnerships are expected to submit development strategies by December 2010. The final selection of FLAGS will take place in January or February 2011. A total of just over €16 million has been allocated to Axis 4 in Bulgaria. Further details on the [FARNET website](#)

## Adding value to local fisheries products



**At the initiative of the European Commission, the FARNET Support Unit will organise a seminar in the Netherlands on the 17-18 November 2010 on the role of FLAGs in adding value to local fisheries products.**

The purpose of the seminar is to provide FLAGs with practical knowledge and skills on how to foster this important Axis 4 theme. It will also facilitate an exchange of experience between FLAGs and provide an opportunity to explore possible avenues for future cooperation.

To coincide with the seminar, the FARNET Support Unit will publish a methodological guide on adding value to local fisheries products.

This will provide guidance for FLAGs on some of the different strategies and approaches that can be applied in order to facilitate and support this process at local level. The next issue of the FARNET Magazine will also focus on this topic. For more information please contact the FARNET team at [info@farnet.eu](mailto:info@farnet.eu)

## FLAG selection gets underway in Belgium and Italy

**The regional authorities in Flanders (Belgium) and Sardinia (Italy) recently launched calls for the selection of FLAGs.**



Flanders, which has a total budget for Axis 4 of just over €4.4 million, expects to select one coastal FLAG. The deadline for submitting development strategies is the 15 October 2010 and the selection process is expected to be finalised by the 30 November 2010. The successful FLAG will then commence its activities in January 2011.

With a budget of just under €1.4 million, the region of Sardinia also plans to select one coastal FLAG, with the possibility of another being selected within the next two years. The deadline for submitting strategies is 21 October 2010. For further details, see calls in [Flanders](#) and [Sardinia](#).

## Work begins on local strategies in Romania

**At the end of June 2010, representatives of potential FLAGs from nine inland and coastal fisheries areas took part in a training programme organised by the FARNET Support Unit (FSU) and the Axis 4 managing authority in Romania.**



Working closely with the European Commission and the Romanian managing authority, the FSU has been actively supporting the development and implementation of the Axis 4 programme in Romania since January of this year. This process culminated in the submission of expressions of interest from nine prospective FLAGs in June.

Representatives of these groups were subsequently invited to participate in a three-day training programme (June 29-July 2), which was designed to assist participants in developing their local partnerships and in preparing their local strategies. The groups concerned now have six months, until December 2010, to complete and submit their strategies.

## Progress on Axis 4 implementation in Italy

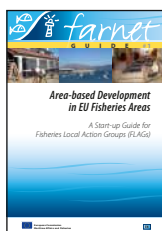


**On June 1, the region of Sicily hosted a second meeting on Axis 4 implementation in Italy.**

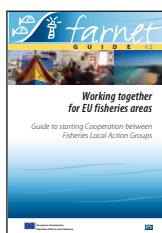
The meeting was jointly organised by the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the European Commission and the FARNET Support Unit (FSU) and focused mainly on efforts to advance the implementation of Axis 4 in Italy. Mr Pietro Gasparri from the ministry presented a methodological guide on the implementation of Axis 4, which was developed recently by the Axis 4 working group. The working group brings together all the regions concerned with the implementation of Axis 4 in Italy. The region of Sardinia, the most advanced in terms of the implementation process in Italy, provided details of its local capacity building programme, while the Italian Rural Network shared its experience from the implementation of the LEADER programme, highlighting in particular the potential for collaboration with existing local development institutions. Regions participating in the meeting also had the opportunity to work on their implementation plans. Further details on the [FARNET website](#)

## New guides for FLAGs

**The FARNET Support Unit recently published two new guides: a “Start-up Guide for FLAGs” and a “Guide to Starting Cooperation between FLAGs”**



The start-up guide is designed to assist existing and prospective FLAGs in setting up and operating an area based partnership, as well as in developing and delivering a local development strategy. The guide is divided into three main sections: defining fisheries areas; building local partnerships; and developing effective strategies, which are linked to examples and tools on the [FARNET website](#)



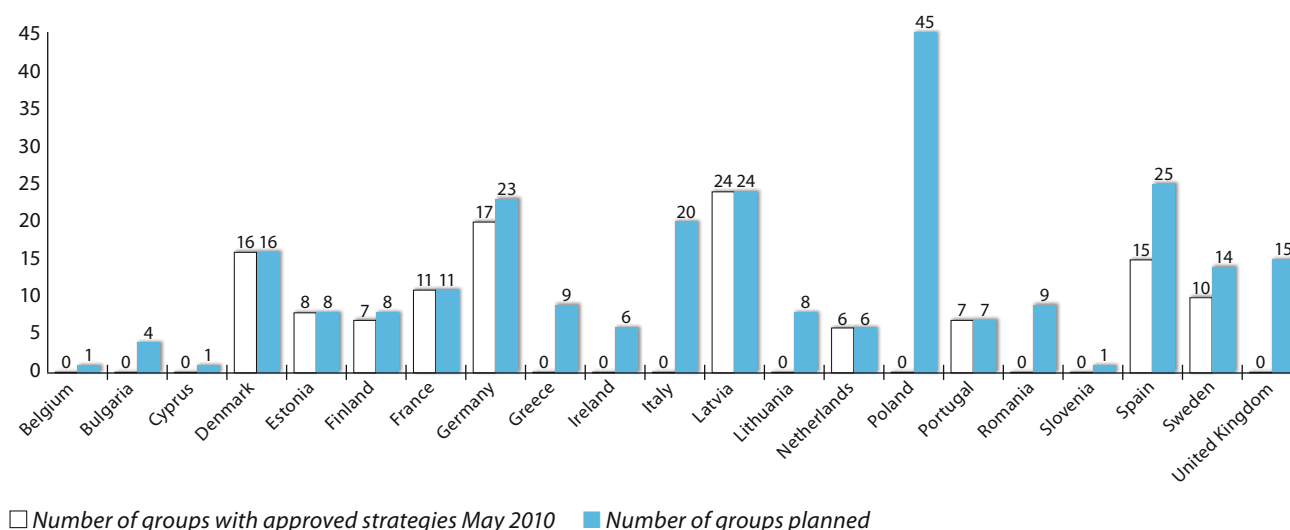
The guide to starting cooperation aims to explain what is meant by cooperation in the context of Axis 4, the potential benefits for FLAGs and their areas, and how support for cooperation can best be organised and administered at national, regional and local level. This should be particularly useful for FLAGs that want to use cooperation to acquire practical knowledge that helps in the early stages of their development. Both guides can be downloaded from the [FARNET website](#)

## Forthcoming events and activities

September 2010	Managing authority meeting on finance	Brussels
September 2010	FARNET advisory group meeting	Brussels
November 2010	FARNET seminar: adding value to local fisheries products	Netherlands

## State of Play: 124 FLAGs with approved strategies

At the end of August 2010, there were 124 FLAGs with approved strategies. There were no new FLAGs approved since the last update in June 2010.



## Other news

### Poland a key testing ground for Axis 4



Addressing Polish parliamentarians in Warsaw recently, EU Fisheries Commissioner, Maria Damanaki, stressed the importance of demonstrating good use of EFF funding in Poland. Referring to Poland's "sizeable allocation under the EFF", and to the allocation of 40% of the overall EFF budget to Axis 4, the Commissioner said that this was "an important opportunity for fisheries-dependent areas in Poland", and that success in Poland was "also important for the future financing of our policy as a whole." Failure to demonstrate the utility of this funding would weaken the case for funding in the next financial perspectives, she warned. Download the [Commissioner's speech](#).

## Send us your news

The FARNET newsletter is a resource for all those engaged in building a more sustainable future for Europe's fisheries areas. Please send us news and information on your activities which might be of interest to other groups or actors working in this field.

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