

Successfully coming to an end...

During more than two years of cooperation the North Sea Fish project partners developed many interesting and practical ideas on how to innovate from catch to plate. North Sea Fish produced some good results which are suitable for broader application in the future.

Future trends in the North Sea Region

The University of Hull provided a comparison of the regional trends in fishing, economics and the use of technologies in the fishing industry based on the data delivered by the four partner countries. Trends towards innovation which will drive European fisheries towards sustainability and new market opportunities were identified. However it was recognised that a combination of top-down regulation and bottom-up initiatives is needed to align incentives and to encourage joint working focusing on socially, ecologically and economically sustainable fisheries.

Port development

The ports of Hanstholm, Harlingen and Lauwersoog explored ways to adjust port facilities to facilitate sustainable fisheries. Hanstholm invested in an economic model for the performance

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of ports and applied this in their new port development plan. Harlingen, the home fishing port of Urk, invested in new notched jetties and piers and Lauwersoog developed a bottom-up Port Vision 2020 which includes the extension of the fishery quay and restructuring of the marina.

The experience of fish

North Sea Fish offered the Municipality of Sluis the possibility to invest in the Fishery Experience Centre, which builds on the identity of Breskens as a fishing town and connects the fishing sector with the consumer. The Municipality of De Marne facilitated several initiatives to link fisheries and tourism, for example through promoting knowledge and understanding of sustainable fisheries amongst the general public.

Sustainability

The willingness of consumers to pay fair prices for quality fish would provide a real opportunity, but this requires reliable information about the origin and catching methods of the fish. ILVO has developed a Fish Information System on Sustainability and visited fish auctions around the North Sea to gather feedback for its further development. All partners investigated existing initiatives supplementing this to the EU initiative of 'inseparable'. Another interesting output of the North Sea Fish

project, coordinated by the University of Hull, is the supply chain analyses of different important fish species, such as Saithe, Icelandic caught white fish and shrimps.

Extending networks

The project created an important opportunity for the North Sea Fish partners to extend their networks through working with a wide range of stakeholders: fishermen, fish auctions, research institutes, consumers. For example, new contacts were made while mapping the supply chains of fish and investigating the transnational quality rating and sustainability initiatives. Partner De Marne appointed a 'supporter of the fishery' who took some important steps to increase the communication and mutual understanding between different stakeholders in the port of Lauwersoog.

Events

In the last two years the results of the North Sea Fish project have been disseminated at several key events including the North Atlantic Seafood Forum in Bergen, the Humber Seafood Summit in Grimsby and the European Maritime Days in Bremen. The project's website and twitter account have also proved to be very useful in this respect and will continue to be used after the closure of the project.