

CHERISH

Interreg Europe



PEER REVIEW REPORT 1st ILEEE
First Interregional Learning and Exchange of Experience (ILEE) event



Middelburg 15/16-11-2018

The first Interregional Learning and Exchange of Experience Event (ILEEE) took place in Middelburg on 16-17 November 2018 with the participation of all partners and key stakeholders of all partner regions.

The learning process focused on the following topics:

- A. Policies & Strategies
- B. Cultural heritage assets (tangible & intangible)
- C. Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- D. Economic opportunities
- E. Stakeholder involvement

During 2 days of ILEEE in Middelburg, partners and stakeholders met and discussed about the fishery community in Zeeland, paying attention to the five themes of the Peer Review, to identify support methods for local producers and their associations, to encourage introduction of innovation, while preserving traditional and specific character of new product market combinations and storytelling based on cultural heritage of fishing communities.

The questions and comments have contributed to create an exhaustive and relevant picture regarding the current situation of fishery community in Zeeland, providing a basis of reflection for Peer Review.

THEME A: Policies & Strategies

Within the 2007-2013 European Fishery Fund (EFF), the Dutch framework is defined by the OP-ZUID Operational Programme “Perspectives for a sustainable fishery sector”.

The objectives of this OP are twofold:

Strengthening the competitiveness of the local economy;

Stimulating projects to improve the prosperity of the Zeeland fishing families and communities.

Contrary to the 2007-2013 planning, the 2014-2020 EMFF has favoured big projects with supra –regional impact whose main ambits are: logistics, maintenance, life sciences and health. The fishery sector makes little or no use of EMFF. Furthermore, CLLD is not included in the Dutch OP.

The reasons for this situation can be found in the following aspects:

Fishery sector has had a lot of issues in the past with the reimbursement of grants;

Complex administrative procedures;

EMFF is not always aligned with the scale and size of Zeeland;

Core values of Zeeland are not part of the priorities.

It is therefore strategic to include a priority within the upcoming OP South

Programme that complies again with the core values of Zeeland e to introduce in the next EU programming period the funds to the fishery sector linked to Axis 4.

- ***What the host region has done***

With reference to the strategic issues, the Zeeland Province has used the results of the granted operations to improve the regional policies and in this regards they have granted some operations which contributed to stimulate the “sense of place”. The Province has more over created many opportunities for fisherman.

- ***Strengths, areas for improvement and gaps***

One of the main strengths detected during the ILEE event is that the traditional heritage of the local fishery community are well accepted by the local people.

Relevant are the experiences that have encouraged the cross sectorial work.

An important gap is instead related to the fact that the fishery sector does not make use of the EMFF.

- ***Good practices - and potential for transferability***

The experience of greatest interest for all the partners is the success found in the exploration of new products linked to traditional heritage.

Many are the entrepreneurial projects that have been presented and in essence the most repeatable demonstrating the success of the initiatives

- ***Lessons learnt and their implications***
 - Involved stakeholders demonstrated different best practices of crossovers between cultural heritage and food, fashion, design, and tourism industry.
 - Importance of cultural distinctiveness of place.
 - Market combination based on old tradition and heritage: model “HOFSTEDE”

- ***Recommendations for the host region***
 - Include a priority within the upcoming OP South Programme that complies again with the core values of Zeeland
 - To introduce in the next EU programme period the funds to the fishery sector linked to the Axis 4

- ***Recommendations for other CHERISH regions***
 - To create an authentic local experiences and connection product to the place
 - Hofstede’s operationalisation of culture;
 - Focus on the themes “culture, food, tourism and art” and approach the small-scale fishing and innovation in fishing-traditions initiatives with these themes.

THEME B: CULTURAL HERITAGE ASSETS (tangible & intangible)

1. What the host region has done

The host region has been working in trying to make cultural heritage economically sustainable by finding new ways to produce incomes.

They have also initiated the process to recover traditional crafts and intangible cultural heritage assets to raise the awareness of local people related these heritage, as a first step to make local people feel proud about their cultural heritage assets and keep it alive.

2. Strengths, areas for improvement and gaps

The capacity of establish a collaboration network between different economic sectors to be more stronger and sustainable.

The capacity of commercialize traditional products by developing new brands and new products based in the cultural heritage of the region.

The transmission of knowledge related to cultural heritage, that is done in common spaces with volunteers from all ages, making possible the transmission from elderly to younger people.

As an area of improvement it could be the possibility to find a way to promote these new products in foreign markets.

3. Good practices and potential for transferability

Set up a place that effectively combines a work place with a traditional craft exhibition available for all people/visitors. But also the transmission of knowledge from elder to younger people by restoring traditional boats. The cooperation of public administration to promote a place where to work on the restoration of traditional heritage.

The good practice from "From catch 2 plate" is also a good example about how to ensure the incomes for local fishers, but also to promote local products among local people and visitors.

4. Lessons learnt and their implications

It is necessary to develop the sense of place on local people so it will be easier to protect cultural heritage assets and make people feel proud about it.

The necessity of produce an economic impact on the society who is protecting the cultural heritage assets.

5. Recommendations for the host region

One recommendation should be to involve young people to make cultural heritage remain a long time. Maybe the need to insist or the need to looking for new strategies to connect with younger people.

In order to disseminate the cultural assets values among visitors it could help to translate some kind of cultural heritage assets to english.

6. Recommendations for other CHERISH regions

The importance of establish a system to develop and implement new brands that focuses at the local identity and promotes the sense of place.

Make an effort to connect different economic sectors that are actually not connected in order to establish a wider net of relationships between people who works with cultural heritage aspects.

THEME C: Traditional Ecological Knowledge

What the host region has done:

The municipality of Middelburg has worked closely with local stake holders and academic institutions (Greenwich University) to document the oral histories of their fishing communities. Extensive work has also been carried out by Dr Jeanine Dekker (advisor on folk culture at the Foundation for Cultural Heritage of Zeeland) on tangible and intangible cultural fishery heritage in the Zeeland region. The most pertinent in the context of traditional ecological knowledge, is the work to document low impact fishing techniques e.g. fish traps and onshore seining, that are both historic and contemporary. Extensive work has also been conducted by Dr Dekker to record traditional fish net craftsmanship and preservation techniques, e.g. net making by hand and the smoking of nets in the traditional method of the region for preservation purposes. Work has also been conducted to document the historic fish processing and preservation techniques of Middelburg.

Much work has also been undertaken to preserve the traditional boat building techniques of the Middelburg region, with a functioning traditional wooden boat yard that is still building boats in the town of Arnemuiden. Work in the boat yard is being carried out by both master boat builders and part time apprentices with the hope of preserving these crafts. Stakeholder within Middelburg have also used historic photography of the fishers of the municipality to identify and recreate woollen jumpers unique to the region. The stakeholders have identified different woollen knit patterns on old photographs, and from this have recreated the sweaters using new vibrant colours with the jumpers being currently sold as a fashion item.

Strengths, areas for improvement and gaps:

Middelburg has worked diligently to identify key areas of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and has operated closely with both local stakeholders and academic institution to document this. Areas for improvement may be the inclusion of young people in the low impact fishing techniques of the region, to revitalise these practices in the area, as in the example of the wooden boat building at Arnemuiden.

Good practices and potential for transferability:

The inclusion of young people e.g. in the preservation of boat building techniques, is a key good practice that should be transferred to all CHERISH regions. To preserve traditional knowledge in its living form the young people of a region must be involved in the work of both documentation and practice of these methods.

Lessons learnt and their implications:

To maintain tangible and intangible cultural heritage in its living form the methods and techniques that are present in a region need to be worked and maintained in the contemporary world. The long-term future of this living cultural heritage is only possible through the inclusion of young people in these lived practices, as in the case of the wooden boat yard of Arnemuiden.

Recommendations for the host region:

- To work closely with stake holder to foster a positive environment where young people can become skilled practitioners in these living heritage techniques, as in the example of the wooden boat yards of Arnemuiden, ensuring their transfer to the next generation. Particular focus should be placed upon the low impact fishing techniques of the region.
- The Middelburg partners have also taken steps to work with academic documentation of oral histories devoted to the fisheries with the University of Greenwich. The potential of this material is major. The potential of an inventory website and summaries of the culture, fisheries and their changes over the past 100 years could be a first step in dissemination of this heritage to the public.

Recommendations for other CHERISH regions:

- To follow the example of the municipality of Middelburg in the inclusion of young people in the maintenance of living cultural heritage, as in the example of the traditional boat yard.
- To work with academic institution in the documentation of oral histories of the fishing communities of their own regions, but to also include young people of the region in the process of the recording and documentation of these stories.

Theme D: Economic opportunities

Best practice: Arnemuiden and the Zeeland fishery sweaters

1. What has been done so far ?

Middelburg established a women think tank to create, realise and promote new economic initiatives that could give a social and economic boost to the small fishing village of Arnemuiden based on the tangible and intangible heritage.

One of the initiatives was the production in a small scale of the “Arnemuidse Fishing Sweater”. A marketing campaign was made and a professional catwalk was organised.

2. What possibilities for economic opportunities are available?

Based on traditions a lot of new product market combinations are available, such as food.

Local and regional food products are an important way of the culture and economy. To make viable the whole process from catch to plate is important. From line fishing and pulse trawling to gastronomic dish prepared by one of the master chefs in Zeeland. One or two brasseries/ restaurants in Arnemuiden would contribute to the living museum of Arnemuiden and to the social and economic development of Arnemuiden.

3. What has been achieved en what are the succes factors ?

The inhabitants of the fishery community discovered the traditional craft and heritage . They have made residents aware and proud of their tangible and intangible history.

The fishery sweater project had been picked up by the other fishery communities in the Netherlands and in Devon and Cornwall (UK).

4. What key lessons are there and challenges remain. Recommendations for other CHERISH Regions.

If fishery villages, cities or entrepreneurs with a business want to position and profile themselves , place branding and place making strategies are important ways to do so. Distinctiveness is very important to differentiate one product or place to another.

It is important to stick to the traditional skills of making the products. But that makes the product very exclusive. On the other hand you want to sell the product and reach a wider audience. That is only possible if the product

is made by machines on a bigger scale. It is important to find a balance between handcraft and large scale production.

The residents should be the starting point for a community led regeneration and place and product branding, which also enlarges the chances that visitors will have meaningful experiences in Arnhemuiden, because meetings between host and guests will occur. The inhabitants are the best ambassadors. It is very important to involve young people in the whole process, from the idea to the marketing. Storytelling is a way to attract a lot of tourists.

A good business plan is essential to make a success of the initiative/ product. Publicity and marketing and promotion outside the region are essential but the costs are high. So we have to find new ways to convince people to buy the product. Telling the story behind the product and find exclusive ambassadors for your product.

Food is an important carrier of identity and gives a lot of economic opportunities. The symbolic value of fish is high. The fishery community in Arnhemuiden is heavily dependent on fishing. They focus on taste and styles of the regional kitchen and promotes another way of life.

Theme E: Stakeholder Involvement

This peer review is intended to provide a short overview of examples for stakeholder involvement within the CHERISH partner regions with the main focus on the hosting region of the first ILEEE – the Municipality of Middelburg, the Netherlands.

Situation within the host region and recommendations

During the different presentations and the excursion to the historic shipyard at the first ILEEE it was clearly evident, that representatives from a lot of different stakeholder groups were already involved in the active maintenance of the cultural heritage of the fishing community in Middelburg/Arnemuiden.

For instance, in course of the GIFS project different stakeholder groups were directly involved e.g. policy makers and the local community. A lot of products were devolved by or for the local people, addressed to very different target groups – like the detailed toolkit ‘Practical approaches for sustainable inshore fishing communities’, the photo project or the lipdub video made with inhabitants of Arnemuiden. Another impressive example was the development of the “Zeeland Fishery Sweaters”. The concept was developed by a women think tank. Hence local women with the knowledge of traditional knitting patterns were involved right from the beginning and the local community benefited directly from the sale of the sweaters. Besides the large participation of the local community, the sweaters are also an impressive example how products (like the sweaters, the knitting books or the fashion show) are suitable to communicate the cultural history of the fishing community to the wider public, to raise the appreciation of the local people for the cultural heritage and to reach different target groups. For all the attempts authenticity and identity were very important issues. These aspects were also part of other local initiatives, like the “Zeeuws Blauwe” or the maintenance of the historic shipyard in combination with the development of informational material for visitors.

During the presentations and discussion, it turned out that in the course of upscaling local initiatives, difficulties may arise and that it is important to ensure that the local community benefits from the initiatives in a long-term perspective. In view of the project, it should be aimed to use the experience gained and the existing networks and contacts for the CHERISH working process and to further develop the involvement of the different stakeholder groups. The following stakeholder meetings should be used to support the exchange of policy makers, local entrepreneurs, scientist, educational institutions, etc. to adapt future policy efforts better to the

needs of the local people. Since Arnemuiden lost the direct connection to the North Sea, it could also be beneficial to involve active fishermen of neighbouring municipalities for identifying possible synergies with those communities to support the maintenance of the cultural heritage of Zeeland.

Recommendations for all CHERISH regions and following ILEEEs

Over the course of the first semester the project partners intensified the contact to their currently involved stakeholders and tried to include more representatives from the different stakeholder groups in the CHERISH working process.

The participants in working group E reported that most of the people contacted with reference to the CHERISH project, were interested in some extent and they didn't receive any negative feedback; but it was partially quite difficult to involve the stakeholders actively – e.g. to raise their interest to join a stakeholder meeting. The project partners highlighted that the first contact is vitally important and that it can be beneficial to contact the stakeholders directly on site and not via mail or phone. Further, social skills play an important role to establish the contact and the type of contact/language should be adapted to the targeted stakeholder group – e.g. fishermen or local entrepreneurs should be addressed in a different way than scientists or policy makers.

With regard to the transnational exchange, language barriers partly represent an obstacle. To raise the number of participants in the interregional learning and exchange events, a simultaneous translation of the lectures into the language of the hosting region would be quite advantageous, if financeable. Otherwise translator apps or linguistic support for the stakeholders by the respective project partners could assist the transnational exchange. To support this exchange, a short introduction round of the attending stakeholders at the beginning on an ILEEE would be helpful.

Another way to reach more people and to raise the number of participants in stakeholder meetings and ILEEEs is the combination of those meetings with other existing events or festivals dealing with cultural/gastronomic/touristic activities, fishery or local entrepreneurship. Otherwise a practical session or excursion should be part of the stakeholder meeting or ILEEE.

Depending on the experiences during the first stakeholder meetings, it could also be a good idea to organize at least one of the stakeholder meetings or maybe one day of an ILEEE at the weekend. For representatives of certain stakeholder groups it can be quite complicated to attend such events on working days.

