

# CHERISH



## Interreg Europe

**PEER REVIEW REPORT 4<sup>th</sup> ILEEE**  
**Fourth Interregional Learning and Exchange of Experience (ILEE) event**



**Viana do Castelo (Portugal), 23-24 October 2019**

The fourth Interregional Learning and Exchange of Experience Event (ILEEE) took place in Viana in the **Alto Minho region** of Portugal, on **23-24 October 2019** 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 two days of ILEEE in the Alto Minho Region, partners and stakeholders met and discussed about the fishery community in Alto Minho, 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 Alto Minho, providing a basis of reflection for Peer Review.

## THEME A: Policies & Strategies

### Regional policy and areas of improvement

The regional policy is Norte 2020. Goals of Norte 2020 are (amongst others):

- SMEs competitiveness
- Employment and labour mobility
- ROP technical assistance

The Regional Operational Programme Norte 2020 focuses on delivering policy measures which could eventually benefit fishermen and their cultural heritage. But even though Axis 4 of the Regional Operational Programme covers the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, it lacks a clear strategy for fishing communities.

Alto Minho will deliver the good practices of their cultural heritage to the Secretariat of Norte 2020 and thus ask for a stronger focus on cultural heritage in the regional policy.

Alto Minho also launched calls in FLAG where a strong focus was at Cultural Heritage as a deliverable.

There was no strategic gap in strategies as there are several projects linked with cultural heritage in fishery, and relevant authorities have told delegates that the Managing Authority of Norte 2020 was `open` for calls about Cultural Heritage.

### Transferability of Good Practices

The Riga planning Region adopted the idea and good practice of the Learning Centre in the Eco Museum.

### Recommendations for the host region

- There are a lot of rather small museums, which all attract a small number of visitors. Is a merger or intense cooperation an option to increase visitors and reduce costs?
- A common marketing would place the region more unified as an attractive touristic place, for example, museum ship “Navio Gil Eannes”: when you buy a ticket there you get 10% reduction on entrance fee at another museum.
- The good practice Navio Gil Eannes receives a lot of visitors (50,000 per year), but the foundation doesn’t know exactly where they’re from. For example, you know that they are in majority from France, you can focus your marketing and communication in that focus group.
- Make all signs at the Navio Gil Eannes in 2 languages: both English and Portuguese.
- Investigate a museum about “bacala”: it is almost national heritage and a very important export product, can give a great spin off in gastronomy.

### Lessons learnt

The connection/relation between municipality of Alto Minho with fishermen communities is very outspoken and a good example for the Zeeland Region.

## **THEME B: Cultural Heritage Assets (tangible & intangible)**

### **1. Which cultural assets can be found in the region?**

Museums, online platform Lugar do Real, and the project AMAReMAR (in Esposende). Aquamuseum of Vila Nova de Cerveira and Gil Eannes Ship Foundation are museums that represent traditional local activities in different life aspects, showing fluvial and sea traditions.

### **2. What is particularly interesting and relevant?**

The relation – interaction between the land and the sea; the cultural differences between people from the river and people from the sea. The contact made possible with the past of the fishermen. What lacked would be the contact of the present of the fishermen.

### **3. Have good practices been adopted or rolled out more widely?**

The project AMAReMAR, and the Aquamuseum. The latter has done great work for promoting and interviewing the people. And is an interesting combination of a museum and an aquarium: target audience of the aquarium are the children; the museum's target is the adults. Consequently, a rise of the number of visitors can be expected. Also, the museum is easily consultable, well organized, and has good indications. But no information is translated in English. An audio guide could improve the accessibility of the museum. The Gil Eannes Ship Foundation is another good practice, especially its social aspect. As a gap was mentioned the absence of fishermen during the visits.

### **4. What could be done to boost this process and to stimulate transfer of Good practices?**

The project AMAReMAR is easily transferable, due to the fact that every region has similar social problems to solve. The good initiatives of this project are very indicated to adapt. But it can only be adapted to local community, and not as a touristic asset at an international level. A recommendation would be to organize an event (festival) that would gather owners of sailing boats, like a gathering of traditional boats owners, and to create a formula that would connect them to the fishermen.

In what concerns the seaweed storytelling, it would be interesting to organize a festival or event to show this TEK to people, to present it as a touristic asset so as to maintain this knowledge/craft.

### **5. What factors would need to be taken into account to transfer to other places with different heritage structures, historical, social, economic, political and cultural contexts?**

A common guide could be created, showing all the regional assets for touristic purpose. Creation of a net of museums, with an English language pattern.

## THEME C: Traditional Ecological Knowledge

### What the host region has done

The available Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) encountered in the host region includes the following:

- “Aldeias Do Mar: interaction with heritage and economy” project aims at the production of a set of audio-visual contents for online viewing, whose main objective is the enhancement, dissemination and empowerment of the fishing community in the Aldeias do Mar territory. In this framework the “Aldeias do Mar” platform, created by a AO NORTE - Audio-visual Production and Animation Association, focuses on the one hand on the dissemination and enhancement of the social image of fishing activity and professionals of the sector in the Aldeias do Mar territory and on the other hand on the safeguarding the memory of that present in accelerated transformation. The topics of the platform cover the economic, cultural, ethnographic and social dynamics related to the activity of fishing communities and are divided into four categories: Sea and Resources, Memory and Traditions, Gastronomy, Museums and Museum Centres.
- The seaweed harvesting (Sargasso) of the study area, dated back to the 12th century, was presented through the storytelling by a seaweed harvester during the study visit in Castelo de Neiva and the museum exhibition of seaweed harvesting including objects related to the pickup of the Sargasso as a haystack, a raft, specific tools and the traditional costumes, photos of the picking of the Sargasso in Castelo de Neiva, a film on the Sargasso, traditions and history and some of the algae of the parish with its medicinal properties. The host region has identified seaweed harvesting as major part of their cultural identity and intends to protect and preserve it.
- The Aquamuseum of Rio Minho includes a fishing museum, an aquarium and an otter area, and deals with researching, recording, presenting and disseminating the aquatic ecosystem of river Minho and the fishing natural and cultural heritage of Minho basin.

### Strengths, areas for improvement and gaps

- The platform is a very good example of recording and communicating the host regions TEK. The fact that the fishermen become protagonists, the bottom up approach of the fishing communities by the multidisciplinary team, the video productions, the deep and continuous communication between the multidisciplinary team with local communities, the accessibility of TEK through internet and the possibility of the platform’s continuous update are considered strengths of the study area.
- Notwithstanding the importance of the platform in recording and disseminating TEK of the region, there is area for improvement: the translation of the content of the platform into other foreign languages, besides the Portuguese one, in order to broaden the dissemination of TEK to more potential interesting groups.

- The fact that a qualified scientist, the anthropologist Alvaro Campelo, has done a 20-year field research on the seaweed harvesting and the support and appreciation of the policy makers of his field work is considered a strength for the research and recording of Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Nevertheless, there are areas for improvement:
  - The renovation of the museum with modern museological and museographical approach, including the introduction of interactive and participatory techniques of presentation of seaweed harvesting.
  - The translation of exhibition informative labels into foreign language for the better understanding and dissemination of the cultural heritage of the area.
- The long term relationships between fishermen and scientists and the educative programs in laboratories or in the river with students ran by the museum, the support and funding of the projects from the municipality and other sources are considered as strength, as they help scientists to record the areas' TEK, disseminate it to young generations through the museum's exhibition and interactive workshops and make the Aquamuseum of Rio Minho vital for the present and viable for the future.

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

- The "Aldeias do Mar" platform can be considered a good practice and there is a strong potentiality for transferability to the Cherish partners' areas.
- What can be considered as good practice and transferred to Cherish partners' areas is the fact that a major part of the TEK of an area, as the seaweed harvesting, can be researched on a long term basis by scientists, developing close and permanent relationships with local communities and safeguarding the record of its beginning, growth, decline and transformations through the years.
- The Aquamuseum of Rio Minho can be considered as good practice, because of the close relationships between the fishermen and the scientists, and the important collaboration and support of the local and other administrative authorities, scientific institutions, private and public funds in recording and diffusing the natural and cultural heritage of river Minho and, thus, there is a potentiality of transferability for other Cherish partners' areas.

#### **Lessons learnt and their implications**

- The bottom up approach in the research and recording of the fishing communities' TEK, use of a multidisciplinary working team and continuous and deep communication between the team and the fishing communities safeguard an integrated and successful record of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge of an area and the enhancement of the social image of local fishing communities.
- The use of new technological and information systems for safeguarding memories of the past and the present in an inevitably fast and continuous transforming world.

- A long-term field work of TEK elements can safeguard an integrated scientific record of it that can help to its dissemination to new generations.
- The support and good collaboration of major stakeholders of the Aquamuseum safeguards its viability, a good quality of interdisciplinary scientific research, record and dissemination of natural and cultural heritage of river Minho.

#### **Recommendations for the host region**

- Translation of the platform into other foreign languages, besides the Portuguese one, in order to broaden the dissemination of TEK to more potential interesting groups, such as scientists, students, scholars, tourists etc.
- Go on supporting the research of seaweed harvesting and setup a marketing plan for the dissemination of this competitive advantage of the area.
- Do not focus only on the folklore dissemination of the seaweed harvesting, but give incentives to young locals in order to maintain it.
- Develop alternative forms of tourism, such as agritourism, that might give incentives to the poor local people to maintain the tradition, remain in the area and have a financial affordable life.
- Go on supporting the multidisciplinary research of natural and cultural heritage of river Minho and maintain close relationships with local communities.

#### **Recommendations for other CHERISH regions**

- Allocation of qualified people in finding funds for, not only the creation of a platform, but for its maintenance and continuous update.
- Substantial and lasting collaboration with young generations in order to maintain and diffuse the TEK of an area.

## THEME D: Economic opportunities

### What the host region has done

The best example is VianaPesca's canned fish. But we can also consider indirectly the AMAReMar project because it allows community participation in workshops of Theatre, Music, Illustration and Creative Sewing. Activities that some people would not enjoy without this project, which is funded by the Municipality.

### Strengths, areas for improvement and gaps

The production of canned fish in a traditional method of the VianaPesca PO intervene in the regulation of the minimum prices and fill gaps in the affirmation of the canning industry in the region. So, it is given value/appreciation to the fish and the fishermen have financial results to maintain their activity.

As an area of improvement, it could be the possibility to find a way to promote this product in the region. 70% of sales are foreign, of which 20% are French.

In the AMAReMAR project, the financial resources are assumed by the Municipality, but more incentives /public support is required.

### Good practices - and potential for transferability

The canned fish of VianaFishing PO can be considered a good practice, because there is evidence of success and there is potential for transferability, maintaining authenticity. An example is the international retailers (Paris, Macao, Warsaw and Vienna).

The AMAReMAR project is also a good example and is already being replicated in another parish of the municipality of Esposende.

### Lessons learnt and their implications:

- It is necessary to develop a sense of belonging to a group / community;
- Administrative regulation is one of the reasons seaweed harvesting is decreasing;
- Museums are safeguarding activities that are in danger of disappearing.

### Recommendations for the host region:

- Take tourists to know the reality outside the museums (e.g. the seaweed harvesting);
- There must be a change in museums so they become more interactive;
- Take advantage of the seaweed in gastronomy and cosmetics (i.e. soaps). We tried in the Casa da Joana restaurant, but are no longer known in the area and there is a real opportunity to differentiate;
- It is very important to involve young people.

### Recommendations for other CHERISH regions.

To follow the example of the municipality of Esposende to strength the community's involvement.



## THEME E: Stakeholder Involvement

### **What the host region has done, good practices - and potential for transferability**

The Alto Minho Region involved many different stakeholders within the diverse projects and local initiatives, shown during the ILEEE and also in the whole term of the CHERISH project. Already during the application process, stakeholders from municipalities, fishing associations, managing authorities, local cooperatives and scientific institutions were identified. The first regional stakeholder meeting was held and used to identify other stakeholders that should be involved.

Stakeholders from the different municipalities of the intermunicipal community of Alto Minho participated in the development of the cultural heritage analysis and the identification of the possible good practices, which were presented in the course of the 4th ILEEE. Throughout this ILEEE the participants got to know these good practices as well as other initiatives. Some examples:

- Platform “Lugar do Real”: a platform to disseminate and enhance the social image of fishing activities and professionals of the sector.
- Canned fish “Vianapesca”: investment in the production of traditional canned fish; highlighting the local origin and the relevance of the fishing sector for the Portuguese culture (in order to get a good price for the products to keep the fishing communities alive).
- Project “AmareMar”: social support and occupational activities of the fishing community, in order to enhance the ‘sense of place’ and to support the social inclusion.
- Municipal project “Aquamuseum do Rio Minho”: the museum combines scientific research with environmental and cultural education (great involvement of different stakeholder groups) about nature and artisanal fishing culture of the Minho basin.
- Museum ship “Navio Gil Eannes”: a museum ship, that contributes to the dissemination and preservation of the fishing and shipbuilding culture of Viana do Castelo and the whole country. Remarkable was e.g. the dedicated work of many local volunteers.

### **Strengths, areas for improvement, gaps and recommendations**

During the presentations and excursion, the good involvement of stakeholders became obvious. The stakeholders seemed really engaged, well informed and had a very good knowledge about their regional cultural heritage. The FLAG plays an important role and serves as a contact point for the stakeholders.

The platform “Lugar do Real” was a really nice example for the direct involvement of fishermen, their families and people working in the sector. The filmed people decided on their own, what they wanted to present and there was no explanatory background – the videographers had the aim to “give the people their voice” and to safeguard their memories. This initiative clearly showed the importance of a well-established and trustful relationship with the local stakeholders for the success of such activities.

The “AmareMar” project was another example for the strong link within the community as well as for the very intense involvement of local people during the development of all the different outcomes and events. There was no formal learning process or rigid frame for the realization of the diverse initiatives. The local people were free to decide what they wanted to present and how they wanted to show their culture. These aspects lead to a great involvement of various target groups, especially to a remarkable participation of children and young adults. During the realization the organizers also designed the offers as barrier-free as possible – people didn’t need to pay a participation fee for the different workshops and were free to join the events spontaneously without any registration.

The other good practices also illustrated the close cooperation between different stakeholders as well as the development of activities by the inhabitants and the high appreciation by the general public. The people were aware and proud of their cultural heritage and the initiatives experienced a lot of voluntary support. Additionally, the great engagement of women was remarkable; they were actively involved in the projects and also presented some of the initiatives during the ILEEE.

Nevertheless, the participants of the ILEEE highlighted, that some important stakeholder groups were missing during the exchange of experience process:

- Fishermen didn’t join the interregional exchange event and were also sometimes not really involved in some of the initiatives shown. It would have been nice to discuss some of the good practices with local fishermen to get their input and feedback on the projects and good practices.
- Representatives from the port authority were also missing. The involvement of the authorities can be a crucial point for the development and especially the implementation of all the different local attempts.

In addition, the circumstances that no project about fishery culture was realized within the ROP Norte 2020 – because no municipality applied for such a project, yet – demonstrated a possible lack of communication and collaboration between the municipalities and the policy makers.

Secondly, the participants noticed that the involvement of the business sector could be expanded. Sometimes the link to the local economy and a vision for the further business development was missing.

Another suggestion for improvement was the development of more interactive offers to impart cultural heritage in a modern way and to combine the cultural aspects with a positive economic effect for the region. For example, the development of fishing tourism offers (and/or educational fishing tours for pupils) or the inclusion of cultural assets in the touristic strategy for the region (e.g. a cultural route between different cultural attractions – including fishing culture).