

THE NEW DEMAND COMBINED OF COASTAL TOURISM AND FISHING TOURISM: MOTIVATIONS AND EFFECTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since principles of 2000, the EU keeps a line of helps to projects of fishing tourism. Along this decade and with the background financial support European of Fishing were developed diverse projects of fishing tourism in regions of Spain that had an uneven evolution owing to the difficulties to elaborate this new offer, but also by the fault of a suitable juridical frame that gave security to the fishermen.

Comparing the projects carried out, we can observe that the philosophy of this typology of tourism offers on the one hand the participation in the works of fishing and tends on the other hand, to transform the fishermen in a professional «Polyvalent». The aim is to boost the diversification of activities and look for a reduction of the effort fishing with a more rational use of the resources, as well as the environmental conservation. In sum, modify the attitudes and behaviours of the fishermen, no always respectful with the concept of sustainability.

One of the pioneering experiences in the fishing tourism product can be seen in Lega Pesca, the Italian Association of Fishing Cooperatives, which in the late 80's in Sicily decided to offer the combination of fishing in the summer months with tourists of the area to learn this hard profession. The interest generated among visitors quickly showed the benefits of this idea for environmental conservation and logically for the income of fishermen as well. This prompted a legal definition for the offer of fishing tourism in Italy in 1992, and a new update in 1999, including the possibility of boarding families with children. With certain irregularities in its evolution, Lega Pesca continuous being a European reference in fishing tourism and remains the most stable experience in the reports and documents of the EU.

On his behalf, the singular and specific experiences in Spain show a general aim of diversification of fishing activities and an improvement in managing the resources.

Chronologically, the first project was ACUIPESCA, born in 2002, under the above-mentioned European program FARO and the result of collaborative work between related sector administrations and economic and social actors most representative of the fishing industry. Its main goal was focused on the implementation of a Strategic Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Spain, performing a collaboration with Italy and Portugal, which included actions in the field of fishing tourism. The latter were barely materialised due to the lack of regulations regarding fishing tourism activities at that time.

The two most important fishing tourism projects in Galicia are located on the northwest coast (known as «Costa da Morte») and further south, on «Ría de Arousa». The first was started with different tourism, ecological, cultural and gastronomic activities by the fishermen of the town of Lira in 2004, which sought to improve the social environment of the fishing community and raise awareness of the world of fishing within society as a whole. This offer has been made under a new brand, called MARGALAICA, which offers activities on board, itineraries along the coast, accommodation in rural tourist homes, a museum of fishing and traditional cuisine (www.margalaica.net). In addition, the project PESCANATUR was created by fishermen of Pontevedra and O Grove in 2006. Its programme, «*Experiencias do Noso Mar*» (experiences of our sea), integrates the participation of tourists in fishing and aquaculture and food tasting at associated restaurants.

2. MOTIVATIONS OF THE DEMAND AND DESIGN OF THE PRODUCT

2.1. Demand characteristics

In the last two decades demand segments which are interested in knowing the characteristics of other societies other than their own have grown significantly, devoting part of their leisure time to learn and experience new sensations in relation to nature, tradition, culture, crafts, etc. The rise of rural, urban and adventure tourism is a reflection of these changes.

Fishing tourism has targeted this new market by providing original proposals to consolidate in the medium term an attractive offer, initially for coastal secondary source markets where tourists have already gone, and in a second phase, one specifically oriented towards those other demand segments. The medium-term challenge lies in attracting tourists taking advantage of the opportunities created by the growth of alternative tourism (rural tourism, cultural, active, adventure, caring, ecotourism, etc.), and presenting the culture and ways of life of fishermen and their families, closely involved in fishing and the sea, as the centre of motivation for this demand.

In any case, apart from the perceptions provided in the projects above-mentioned, or the specific results in some countries, there are few relevant studies on the effective demand for this product. Outside Europe, the references are focused on analyzing scenarios of tourist response to an offer that is above all concerned with diversifying fishing strategies in light of the problem of dwindling resources.

2.2. Aims of the offer design

Regarding the structure of the offer and the motivation of the fishermen who participated in fishing tourism projects in Europe [13], a majority stand out who establish a main relationship with ground facilities, such as, museums (38%) while a smaller percentage focuses on fishing trips (30%). Around 50% offer a complete package (on-shore visits, on board, food and accommodation). When asked about how to integrate tourism and fishing activities, 28% alternates the two activities on the same boat, 14% uses some boats specifically to accommodate tourists and the rest look for other combinations.

Some differences appear between Spain and Europe when accounting for the reasons that impulse fishing tourism projects. For Spanish fishing communities the main motivation lies in reducing the number of fishermen and the search of complementary activities and diversification (32% and 25%), while in Europe the greatest motivation to participate in the projects seems be the importance of tourism in the area (48%), that is, more tourists would be interested in knowing about the fishing activity. In parallel, the approach to develop the offers also shows a clear difference in Spain since the answers given express the interest to know the work and life of the fishermen (24%), cultural and historical heritage (22%) and the attainment of extra income (20%), while in the other European regions achieving extra income has a 23% of motivation, cultural heritage an 18%, and a reduction of young people leaving the fishing activity, 14%.

3. EFFECTS OF THE FISHING TOURISM

3.1. Environmental effects

- The proposal of several projects contemplates the creation of a Blue System of Quality, expanding the concept of coastal tourist management
- Good practices in fishing guarantee the existence of resources, ensuring the main motivation of the tourists to participate in the fishing
- The creation of common spaces of fishing and observation of the nature involves a change of model with innovation and new uses of the resources
- Itineraries and visits in ship on the Rías and coastal areas force to a strict environmental consciousness. Dirty waters are not attractive for tourists

3.2. Sociocultural effects

- Good practices in fishing tend to change the traditional image of predator and transform fishermen in resources management
- The own tourist demand oriented to participate in fishing (which means giving value), serves not only fishermen, but the whole of society as well, elevating the image and value of these activities and the culture associated with the coastal social communities
- The positive social perception and improved incomes and quality of life of fishing communities tend to keep young population in this activity

3.3. Economic effects and in the local development

- Demand of fishing-tourism in summer coincides with the biological stops for several species facilitating the reorientation of the tourist fishing activity to species with fishing open, with the opportunity of higher incomes
- The projects contemplate as the main objective the horizontal cooperation between fishing, accommodation and gastronomy, tending in the midterm to a conjoint offer, with aggregated profits for all the local community
- They exist already in Galicia networks to offer fishing tourism that cover geographically several Rías, what means an extension of the benefits of the activity even higher at a local field

4. THE FUTURE OF FISHING TOURISM: SOME CONCLUSIONS

Already they were stood out the difficulties to elaborate properly a new offer in the seaboard, without specific training of the fishermen and without a normative support that protect the security of all. Anyway, and still admitting the problems, we can affirm however, that the fishing tourism has future because it could be a factor of development in the coastal local communities, with the financial support of the EU and especially, because it has demand.

Very schematic, the summary of the exposed could be the following:

- Since 2002 we find a high number of projects joint financed by the EU, which nevertheless have had a very uneven development
- Demand of fishing tourism considers it in this moment a complement or combination to beach tourism and the main motivation for this offer connect with the interest in its landscape and gastronomy, and lastly, the lifestyle and culture of fishermen
- The most notable effects of the fishing tourism orient to achieve good practices in fishing and in consequence, an increase of the environmental consciousness of fishermen. At the same time, tends to elevate the social value and the image of fishermen work. In the economic sphere, one of the most important aims will be to achieve a high contribution to local development, based on horizontal cooperation of diverse complementary activities of the tourism
- The challenge to stress the positive impacts of this offer is the consolidation of existing organizations and the creation of those horizontal network of business initiatives