



# Innovative recruitment strategies in the fisheries sector

France

**Introduction**

**Recruitment challenge in France**

**Inventory of innovative recruitment initiatives**

**Conclusions**

**Bibliography**

**List of interviewees**



This report is available in electronic format only.

**Author:** Benoit Caillart

**Research institute:** Homarus Ltd, UK

**Research managers:** Gregorio de Castro and Xabier Irastorza

**Research project:** EMCC

## Introduction

The aim of this study is to establish an inventory of the various innovative practices and recruitment tools that have been implemented in the French fisheries sector in the past 10 years in order to address the problem of lack of manpower.

### French fisheries sector in the national economic context

#### *Economic importance of fisheries*

The total production of the French fishing industry has averaged 850,000 tonnes a year over the last decade. Landings by the fishing sector (both fresh and frozen products) account for 70% of the total. The French fishing industry generated a total first sale turnover of 1.1 billion euros in 2004. Production from shellfish culture generated an additional turnover of 380 million euros, and the fish aquaculture sector a turnover of 49 million euros. By comparison, the total production of the agriculture sector was close to 70 billion euros in 2004, with the fruit and vegetable sector alone accounting for six billion euros. So fisheries is not a particularly important contributor to the French economy.

The most important product from the industry is fish for whole consumption (about 70% in terms of value, 45% in terms of landings by weight). Frozen fish for human consumption after processing made up about 40% of landings by weight but only about 15% by value. The remainder includes landings and aquaculture production of crustaceans, molluscs and seaweed (FAO estimates).

Downstream sectors from the fishing industry in France include primary processing (*mareyage*) and secondary processing. Although the activities of these two economic sectors depend to a large extent on imported raw material, the supply from the domestic catching sector remains significant. Overall, the downstream sector generated a turnover of approximately 5.1 billion euros in 2004.

From a policy perspective, the fisheries sector is supported by the state for its important place in the economy of certain coastal areas, particularly Brittany (which has both industrial and artisanal fleets), but also the Mediterranean coast (mainly artisanal). Fishing is a sector that can create employment opportunities in coastal areas where there are few alternatives. In addition, fishing activities play a role in the attractiveness of the coastline from a tourism perspective. It has been estimated that the tourism industry in French coastal areas generates a turnover greater than 20 billion euros.

#### *Employment in fisheries*

The overall picture in terms of employment is:

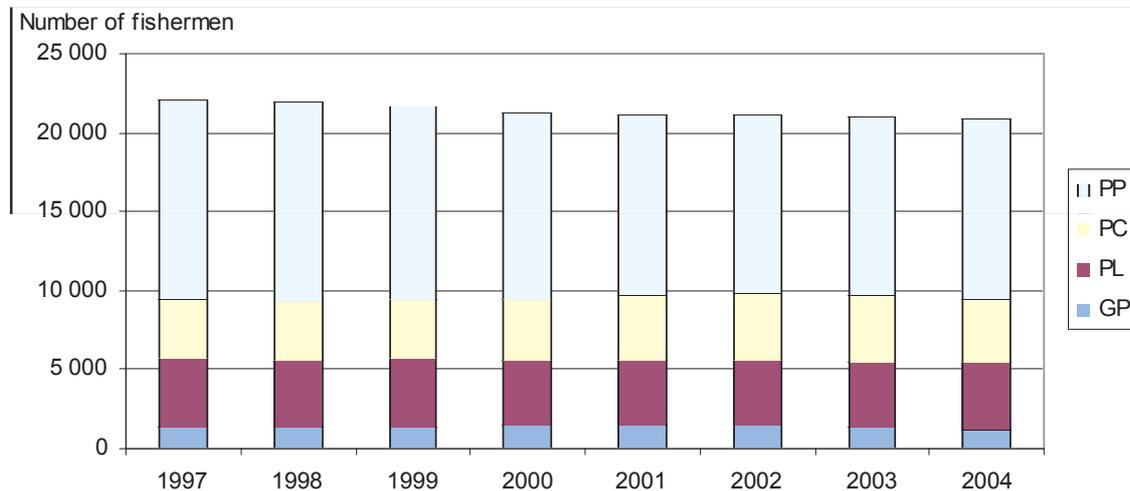
- 20,200 fishermen working on 5,500 fishing vessels;
- 10,900 jobs in the aquaculture sector (fish and shellfish);
- 13,300 jobs in 290 fish secondary processing companies;
- 5,000 jobs in 350 primary processing companies.

The most important area in terms of fishing dependence is Brittany, with 40% of the French fleet, second is the Mediterranean with 19%.

The following graph shows changes in the number of fishermen since 1997. Data are broken down by administrative type of fishing including inshore fishing (*petite pêche* – PP) with trips of less than 24 hours, coastal fishing (*pêche côtière*

– PC) with trips lasting between one and three days, high-sea fishing (*pêche au large* – PL) with trips of 14 days and distant-water fishing (*grande pêche* – GP) with trips lasting several weeks.

Figure 1: *Number of fishermen working in French vessels by type of fishing (full-time equivalents)*



Source: *Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries*

The total number of fishermen has decreased by 5% since 1997. The average annual rate of decrease varies between -1 and -2% per year; much lower than the annual rate of decrease before 1995 (-4 to -6% per year). Over this period, the number of fishermen engaged in small-scale fishing (PP) and distant-water fishing (GP) decreased by 10%, while the number of fishermen working in coastal fishing (PC) increased by 10%.

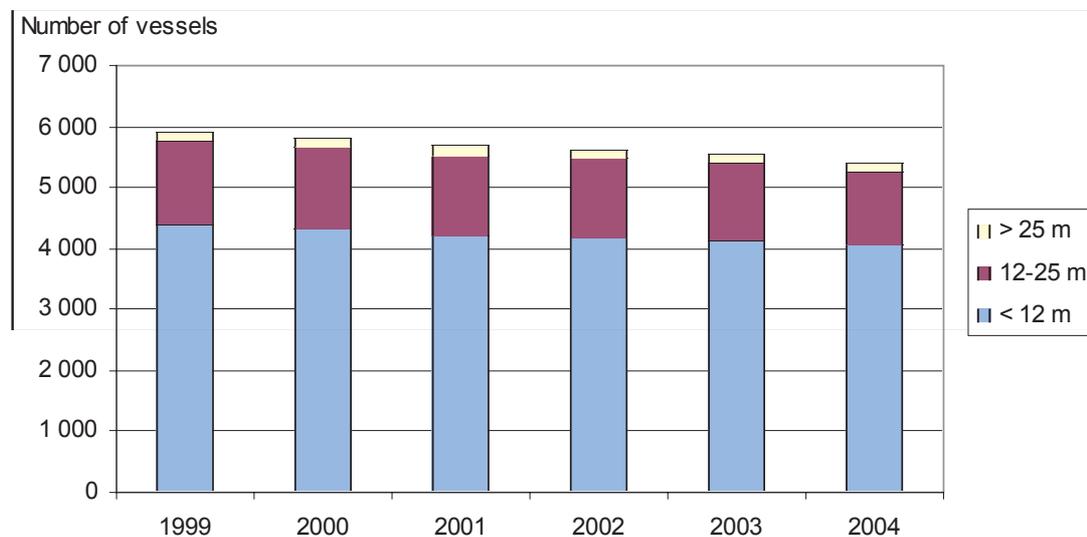
In 2004, 54% of the total population was working on inshore vessels (daily fishing trips), 20% on coastal vessels, and the remainder on vessels staying longer at sea.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries records the number of days worked by each fisherman. In 2004, 62% of the fishermen had worked more than nine months in the year. Part-time fishermen (between three and nine months) represented almost 24% of the total number. Occasional fishermen (worked less than three months) represent 14% of the population. For this category, the duration of work does not correspond to a real professional activity.

### **Structure of the French fleet**

The French professional fishing fleet (French mainland only) included 5,412 vessels in 2004. Of this total, 75% is made up of vessels of less than 12 m (generally inshore vessels), 22% of vessels measuring between 12 and 25 m, and 3% of vessels of length greater than 25 m ('industrial'). The total number of vessels has decreased by 8% since 1999, with the three size classes equally affected by this trend.

Figure 2: Number of vessels comprising the professional fishing fleet



Source: *Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries*

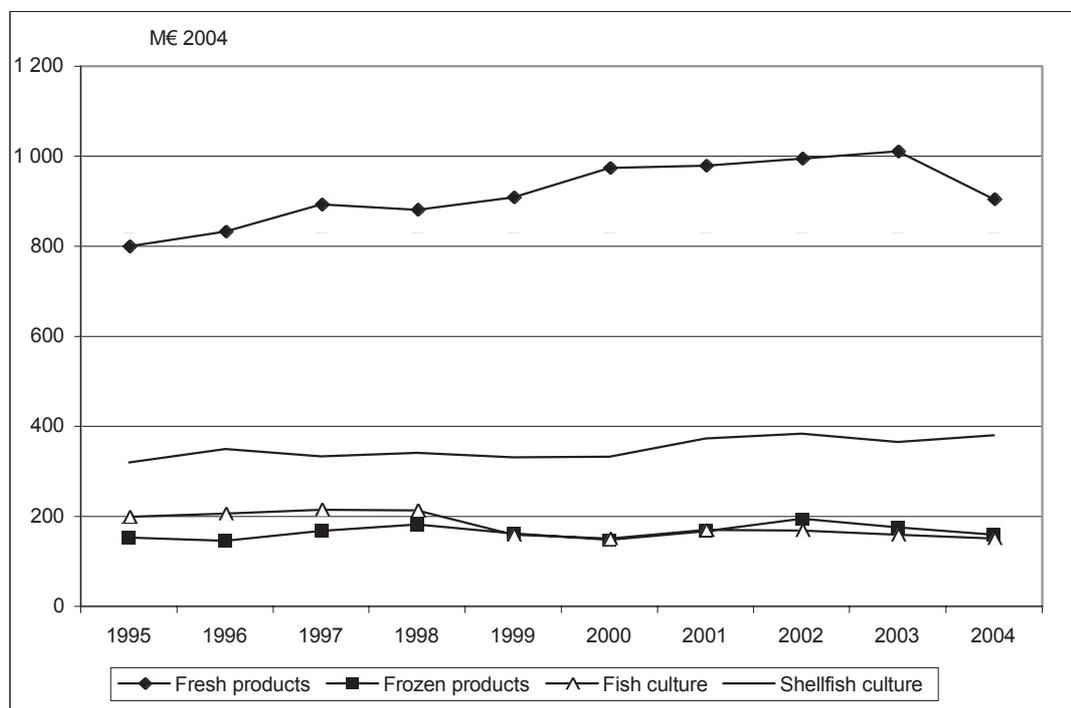
The French fishing fleet is more difficult than most to characterise by group, since a great diversity of species and fishing techniques is represented. The industrial fleet is fairly distinct, based mostly in the three largest French fishing ports: Boulogne in the eastern Channel, and Lorient and Concarneau in Brittany. These vessels require a large number of crew (typically about 25 people) and usually fish in northern European waters in trips of one or two weeks' duration, although a few fish distant grounds, mainly in the tropical Atlantic, with trips of several months. These vessels generally belong to large companies, the crew and officers are paid salaries (sometimes also a proportion of the catch) and the skipper is generally not the owner.

By far the majority of the French fleet, in terms of vessel numbers, is made up of small boats and can be characterised as 'artisanal'. These boats are generally owner-operated, with a small number of crew (frequently relatives). This fleet is most active in Brittany and the Mediterranean.

### Historical trends

Landings have followed a decreasing trend averaging -2% per year. As shown in the following figure, the value of landings in actual terms has tended to increase over the same period, although there was a drop in 2004 (the last year for which data were available).

Figure 3: Turnover of the fishing industry in France, 1995–2004



Source: Office National Interprofessionnel des Produits de la Mer et de l'Aquaculture (OFIMER)

The main species in terms of value are yellowfin tuna (caught by the French tuna purse seiners operating outside EU waters), sole, monkfish, scallops and hake.

The following table shows trends in the number of full- and part-time fishermen.

Table 1: Trends in the number of full- and part-time fishermen by proportion of time spent fishing

Year	< 3 months		3-6 months		6-9 months		>9 months	
	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change	Number	% Change
1997	3,489		2,882		4,329		16,251	
1998	3,418	-2%	2,908	1%	4,016	-7%	16,536	2%
1999	3,492	2%	2,853	-2%	3,945	-2%	16,313	-1%
2000	3,409	-2%	2,667	-7%	3,581	-9%	16,479	1%
2001	3,523	3%	2,635	-1%	3,636	2%	16,336	-1%
2002	3,488	-1%	2,773	5%	3,701	2%	16,071	-2%
2003	3,655	5%	2,691	-3%	3,471	-6%	16,080	0%
2004	3,653	0%	2,632	-2%	3,520	1%	16,051	0%
1997-2004	164	5%	-250	-9%	-809	-19%	-200	-1%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

The figures shown in the foregoing table reveal the persistent problem of recruitment in the fisheries sector:

- The number of permanent fishermen (more than 9 months) remains more or less at the same level; many of these are owner-operators of small fishing vessels.
- The reservoir of crew constituted by part-time fishermen (3–6 months and 6–9 months) has decreased dramatically over the period (respectively -19% and -9%). These individuals frequently provided crew to the larger industrial vessels, who require large numbers of crew, as well as working periodically on smaller vessels.
- The number of occasional fishermen (< 3 months) increased (+5%). This probably reflects individuals who previously spent more of their time working in fisheries but now mainly work in other sectors. So these individuals would not be available as crew for the larger vessels.

### **Institutional background and social actors**

#### *Institutional background*

While the regulation of fishing activities is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the administration of fishermen falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Equipment and Transport. This ministry includes two important technical directorates as far as employment is concerned, the *Direction des Affaires Maritimes* (DAM) in charge of training, legal aspects of work conditions and security on board, and the *Direction de l'Établissement National des Invalides de la Marine* (ENIM), in charge of the social protection of fishermen (pensions). DAM is in charge of a network of 12 professional maritime schools spread along the French coastline, four professional schools specialising in the merchant navy, and the European Centre for Training at Concarneau (Brittany). Both the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of Equipment and Transport fund the maritime schools (costs of personnel and subsidies for equipment). The annual investment of the state in maritime training through those two ministries is in the region of 15.5 million euros (2004 data). In addition, the regions<sup>1</sup> can contribute to the costs of training, and fund specific expenses linked particularly to continuous and lifelong training.

The Ministry of Equipment and Transport has an important role in the definition of training systems and certification procedures. It must make sure that the needs corresponds to the requests of the fishing industry and is further constrained by the international obligation applying to France as a Member State of the European Union (Directive 2001/25/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the minimum level of training of seafarers and its further modifications) and as a party to the IMO, having ratified the SCTW 95 convention.

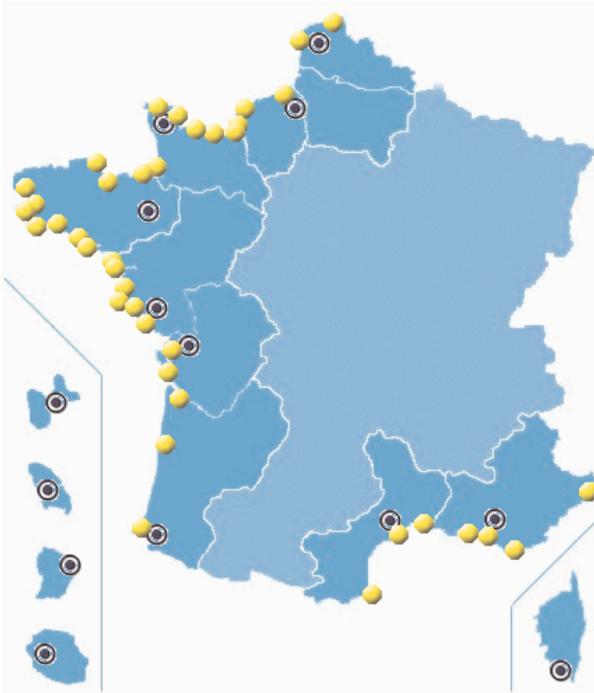
Another important player in the training framework is the Ministry for Social Affairs. This ministry sets the minimum standards for employment (including working time, protection of the young under 18 years old) and implements the policy for continuous training of workers. Its overall role is to promote equal opportunities for all citizens. The role of this ministry was strengthened after the second election of President Chirac. As a consequence, a significant number of reforms were voted over 2004/2005. Broadly speaking, the reforms promote the right to continuous training for anybody and provided dedicated support to unqualified people having problems finding a job. This has been implemented in the form of specific contracts guaranteeing a minimum wage and fiscal incentives for the employers (CIE, CI-RMA). The challenge for the fisheries sector was therefore to take up the opportunities offered by these reforms by modifying the training system, in particular for the lowest level qualifications.

<sup>1</sup> As per the laws on decentralisation, continuous training falls under the responsibility of the regions (e.g. NUTS II)

### *Local and regional committees for fisheries*

The institutional representation of fishermen is established by law. The 1991 law and its application texts implement a pyramidal system of representation, starting from Local Fisheries Committees spread along the coastline, each being under a Regional Fisheries Committee (one per administrative NUTS II region). The Regional Fisheries Committees are in turn under a National Fisheries Committee located in Paris. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the Local and Regional Fisheries Committees.

Figure 4: Map showing the distribution of Local Fisheries Committees (yellow dots) and Regional Fisheries Committees (black dots)



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

By law, the Fisheries Committee must be consulted by the authorities about any measure or action affecting the fisheries sector (including training). On the ground, the Local and Regional Fisheries Committees deal with the local administrations while the National Fisheries Committee is consulted by the ministries and the central administrations. The mandate of the committees officially includes:

- representing the fishing industry in front of local, national and EU authorities;
- supplying economic information to all parties in the fishing industry;
- participating in the definition of fisheries management measures;
- providing information about the industry and promoting it at national and international level;
- participating in research activities;
- participating in social support to the fishing industry, including management of a social fund and implementation of a fund to protect fishermen against unemployment related to bad weather (*caisse chômage-intempérie*).

By law it is compulsory for every person working in the fishing industry to be a member of the National Fisheries Committee. The representatives of fishermen at the Councils of the Committees (the governing body) are designated by vote by their peers. Every five years the government organises the elections at Local Fisheries Committees level. The elected members then nominate their representatives at the regional, then national, committees. The number of seats in these committees is balanced to have equal representation for employees and business owners.

Funding of the fisheries committees is secured by a compulsory tax paid by all private stakeholders working in the fishing industry (fishermen, buyers, processors). The tax is a percentage of salary for fishermen, and for shore industries is proportional to the number of employees in the business. This source of income represents over 90% of the budget of the committees. Other incomes are derived from taxes on fishing licences, services rendered, and occasional subsidies.

#### *Other social actors*

Additional to this institutional representation, there are number of union/professional associations providing support to the fishing industry. These include:

- producer organisations: there are about 20 POs in France; they are structured into two national associations: the FEDOPA (Paris) and the ANOP (Quimper);
- unions: the traditional French labour unions (CGT, CFDT) have a section dedicated to fisheries – these unions traditionally represent the interests of workers and are the social partners of the national authorities.

Note that these two types of organisations have representatives in the councils of the Local, Regional and National Fisheries Committees.

### **SWOT analysis**

#### *Strengths:*

- Highly diversified fleet with many target species and different gear types
- Exploits a wide variety of different environments (inshore and offshore in the Channel, Atlantic coast, Mediterranean, NW European shelf, distant water and French overseas territories)
- Strong national market for seafood, consumers prepared to pay relatively high prices for quality
- Good representation of the industry in policy-making, strong political voice relative to importance to national economy

#### *Weaknesses:*

- Labour market rather inflexible – difficult to move from one job to another
- Bureaucratic and expensive to be self-employed and particularly to employ people
- National market rather seasonal (e.g. peaks in demand over Christmas period)

### *Opportunities:*

- Flexibility within the fleet as a whole to take advantage of new opportunities in terms of new target species, fisheries, techniques etc.
- Attempts by national government to liberalise labour market and training structure

### *Threats:*

- Declining stocks around NW European shelf, increasing environmental regulation, e.g. of tuna fishery
- Risk of re-nationalisation of EU EEZ
- Increasing costs of social payments associated with being self-employed if government liberalisation not successful

## Recruitment challenge in France

During the 1990s the ship owners complained regularly to the public authorities about the problems they had in recruiting crews and maintaining a stable crew of personnel on board their vessels<sup>2</sup>. The situation was serious for many fishing companies, and particularly for those operating vessels staying at sea for several days. In some cases, boats were stuck in port because they lacked the minimum crew imposed by legislation.

The reasons behind this recruitment problem have been investigated by a national ad hoc committee involving the private and public sectors<sup>3</sup>. The findings of this committee highlight the following barriers to recruitment:

- The organisation of the work with alternation of periods at sea and onshore, detrimental to a family life
- The harshness of the job, in particular on older vessels lacking modern and automated equipment
- Weather conditions at sea that amplify the harshness of the work itself (again, greater on older vessels)
- Living conditions on-board, with a lack of comfort and hygienic conditions especially on older boats
- Deficient social support: fishermen are not eligible for unemployment insurance and encounter administrative problems in validating their services for the retirement fund<sup>4</sup>
- Financial difficulties for fishermen in following compulsory training courses
- Isolation of the fisheries training system from other training systems (problems in entering or leaving the job due to poor equivalence of certificates)

---

<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that out of 1,000 young recruits receiving an initial training in fisheries, only 600 remain active in fisheries after five years.

<sup>3</sup> The *Contrat d'études* prospectives.

<sup>4</sup> This occurred because time spent ashore working for the fishing company (e.g. administration of the company, technical repairs, sickness) was not formally included in the period of activities used to calculate the amount of pension entitlement; only time spent at sea was included. This has now been reviewed, with new regulatory texts stating precisely what onshore activities can be taken into consideration.

In parallel, the image of the fisheries sector has deteriorated: overexploitation of stocks, difficulties in building new boats, security at sea, stagnation of quality of life, increase in international competition through imports and lack of young recruits are the elements that contribute to the current poor image of the job. This negative image dissuades young trainees from considering a career in fishing.

These negative elements tend to offset the positive aspects of a career in the fishing sector. Wages remain higher than the national average. In the fishing industry, the average wage is between 30 and 35,000 euros (gross) per year. For a non-qualified deckhand, the salary (20–25,000 euros) is higher than for almost any other non-qualified job (in principle eligible for the minimum legal wage, 15,000 euros per year).

## Inventory of innovative recruitment initiatives

Fisheries recruitment initiatives in France have been limited, so this study has not selected specific case studies, but rather has analysed the whole spectrum in as much depth as possible.

Two categories of recruitment initiatives have been identified through interviews and telephone surveys. The first category refers to measures taken as adaptation of the reforms at national level on training to the peculiarities of the fisheries industry, while the second category refers to measures taken by the professional associations to promote the job. This second category for the moment consists only of small, localised initiatives such as visits of members of the local committee for fisheries to recruitment fairs, with nothing that can as yet be categorised as innovative. These initiatives are briefly described below for the sake of completeness, but the majority of our discussion will focus around the first category of initiatives: the response of the industry to national training reforms.

### National training reforms

#### *Reformed training opportunities*

In France traditional training in fisheries is based on initial training in dedicated schools at secondary level (from 16 years old). The courses last two years and are formalised by an initial certificate which allows the seaman to operate as deckhand and thus accumulate the number of days at sea necessary to apply for higher-qualified positions. Under this regime, it was difficult, if not impossible, for somebody with another degree to enter into the fisheries profession because no official training opportunity was open. Under recent reforms it has become possible for somebody taking a late decision to enter the business (i.e. no longer of school age) to follow a qualifying course similar to the traditional initial training, in order to have the qualification to work as crewman in the first instance, and then to obtain higher degrees. The initial certificate is called the *Certificat d'Instruction Nautique* (CIN).

#### *Funding of continuous training*

Progress from initial training in France requires practical experience (time at sea) and periods of training ashore in dedicated schools. A second structural problem in this system was the absence of salary during those periods in school. A framework has been designed to propose funding fishermen through a dedicated association (the FAF *Pêche*) along with subsidies from the regional authorities.

The FAF *Pêche* is an organisation which has been established by the government to collect funds for continuous training. Each professional branch has at least one collecting organisation agreed, by legal obligation. FAF *Pêche* is governed by a board composed of an equal number of managers and employee representatives. These colleges are further broken down to include i) companies having more than 10 employees, ii) companies having less than ten employees, and iii) the marine culture sector.

The resources of FAF Pêche originate from a compulsory tax paid by companies employing more than 10 people. The tax is calculated pro rata from the salaries paid (1.05% for an SME with between 10 and 20 employees, and 1.6% for an SME with more than 20 employees). Self-employed people (a large number of fishing companies in France) pay a tax to FAF Pêche equivalent to 0.15% of salary.

In 2005 FAF Pêche collected:

- 390,000 euros from companies of more than 10 employees;
- 640,000 euros from companies of fewer than 10 employees;
- 410,000 euros from the self-employed;
- 490,000 euros from miscellaneous sources;
- 1,930,000 euros in total.

The financial support offered by FAF Pêche to eligible people consists of:

- support for payment of training fees: 1,600 to 2,000 euros (depending on the training course considered), plus ad hoc support for training courses in security at sea, foreign languages or management of an SME (accounting, computer literacy);
- support for refund of transport costs to/from place of training (fixed rate per km by car);
- support for payment of accommodation (100 to 200 euros a month according to duration of training).

In addition, FAF Pêche is considering a financial framework to support the fishing companies in identifying and hiring an employee who would replace the trainee while ashore following courses. This would prevent the vessel having to remain in port because of crew shortage.

According to French regional policies, the regional councils (*Conseils Régionaux*) are in charge of supporting training on their territories, but very few of the regional councils have any programmes which relate in any way to the fishing industry. Some maritime regions (Brittany and Normandy) have adopted a scheme that can be used to complement the financial intervention of the FAF Pêche, i.e. trainees under the above financial framework might be eligible for further support from the regional council. This is at present merely a proposal, however, and no quantitative figures are available on the amount of support that would be offered.

Financial support to trainees is further increased by a contribution offered by the local committee for fisheries. Although their financial resources are scarce, the local committee for fisheries may offer up to 500 euros to eligible people. This is a kind of symbolic contribution given the actual costs of training, but this scheme is a way to ascertain the involvement of the fishermen themselves in solving the problem of recruitment.

According to FAF Pêche (interviews, archives) in 2005, their interventions covered 655 training actions (424 for companies of fewer than 10 employees and 231 for more than 10 employees). While 15% of trainees were older than 45 years old, the majority of trainees were less than 34 years old (the majority were in the 25–34 age class). Out of these 655 training actions, only 43 concerned women but this is put in perspective by the low number of women in the fisheries sector (less than 12% of employees). The costs supported included 286,400 euros for companies of more than 10 employees, and 454,000 euros for smaller companies (corresponding to 46,000 and 105,000 hours of training respectively).

### *Opening up the labour market*

The labour workforce in fisheries was previously very isolated from other economic sectors. Young recruits who entered the profession could find it difficult, if not impossible, to validate their experience and degrees when searching for work outside fisheries. This situation prevented mobility and acted as a deterrent for potential recruits. The problem also operated in reverse: since the training system required an initial training period immediately after secondary school, it was impossible to recruit older workers into fisheries from other sectors of the economy, as described above.

The cause of this isolation of the fisheries labour market was due to the specific requirements that existed for work in the sector. A certificate obtained to work in fisheries could not be used to work in other related sectors and, conversely, other type of certificates could not be used to work on board a fishing vessel. Under the control of the ministry, a system to evaluate experience has been put in place which grants certificates based on experience, and not only on initial education (VAE: *Valorisation des Acquis et de l'Expérience*). This measure fosters mobility between similar professional branches in different sectors.

The system is in principle relatively simple: any person having proven experience in another professional branch and wishing to change his activity can submit a request to the authorities to have an equivalence of his degree in the said branch. An example would be professionals who had worked in engine maintenance and repair (car, truck, other machineries), who wished to start careers in the fishing industry as engineers. On the basis of previous qualifications and, more importantly, of actual professional experience demonstrated by the applicant, a commission may decide to convert his past professional experience into an equivalent qualification in the fishing industry (chief or second engineer, for example). The equivalence can be granted automatically, or pending the result of an additional exam that the commission may require. To ease the system, the applicant may be granted a dedicated period of 24 hours' paid leave to prepare his dossier.

As far as the fishing industry is concerned, this reform may help to attract qualified personnel wishing to work in the industry, and conversely may offer improved career opportunities to workers starting in the fishing industry and eventually wishing to change in a second stage of their professional life (moving out the fishing industry to commerce or offshore oil exploitation).

### *Professional training contract (contrat de professionnalisation)*

The professional training contract provides an opportunity for any unqualified person to be hired by a private company in partnership with a training institution, with the objective of obtaining an initial certificate after two years of both practical experience and training. In exchange the company receives aid from the state in the form of tax relief on salaries. This general framework has been adopted as part of the national reforms of professional training.

The principle of this innovative measure is that any young person between 16 and 25 years old, or any officially registered job seeker of 26 years old or more can be offered an official work contract with a salary proportional to the official minimum wage (55% for an unqualified person less than 21 years old up to 100% of minimum wage if 26 or older. The principle is that the signatories of this contract should work part time in a company, and part time follow a training programme from which they could then obtain the minimum qualification required to work. This contract is signed between three parties: i) a company that provides the professional training as well as dedicated management of the trainee, ii) the training institute which will provide a minimum of 25% of the contract time in training, and iii) the applicant. In exchange for this contract, the employer is granted tax relief, and the training institute is paid for the courses provided.

This measure has been adapted to the fishing sector. The owner of a fishing vessel can recruit a deckhand under a work contract of a minimum duration of six months. The funding is guaranteed by FAF Pêche which pays the training fees

(10 euros an hour of training for 245 hours, i.e. 2,450 euros) and the fishing company (15 euros an hour up to a maximum of 150 hours, i.e. 2,250 euros). FAF Pêche pays in addition a charge to the designated manager of the training (in French, the *tuteur*) equivalent to 230 euros a month, i.e. 1,380 euros per trainee. The measure is new (the regulation applying to the fishing industry was adopted in March 2006) but it is hoped that it may attract 50 applicant fishermen in its first stage.

### Promotion by professional associations

#### *Recruitment fairs*

Recruitment fairs aim to facilitate contact between job seekers and companies wishing to recruit. For a couple of years, members of the Local Committee for Fisheries in Concarneau, and in Nord-Finistere (two of the biggest) have been systematically attending these fairs to explain the job of fisherman and to inform interested people about the characteristics of the work (conditions, salaries). They regard this initiative as a small start to what is planned to become a national promotional programme, involving many or all the local committees across France, and possibly also national government. However, so far this national initiative remains in the early planning stages (discussions only, no financial commitments or institutional framework as yet).

In one sense, this can hardly be regarded as innovative, since most other industries market themselves in this way as a matter of course. However, it is new for the French fishing industry, which has until recently relied on people with local and family connections with the industry to enter fisheries as part of a family tradition.

Of course, it is not possible (without an extensive survey far beyond the scope of this project) to assess whether these visits have had any quantitative impact on recruitment of crew to fishing vessels in the local area. Discussions with young crew members (anecdotal only) suggest that young people going into fisheries are still likely to do so for reasons of tradition (family etc.) rather than to choose it as a job for more objective reasons.

#### *Centralisation of job opportunities*

The local committees for fisheries, which are the institutional representation of the fisheries sector at the local level, and therefore in daily contact with fishermen, have offered to centralise work opportunities and applications from job seekers, to ease the recruitment process on-board. This action is carried out on a voluntary basis and free of charge for users. It is relatively simple since it consists in concentrating requests, publicising them on a local scale, and making introductions between job seekers and recruit seekers.

This centralisation of job opportunities is done at the local fisheries committee level. The job seeker comes to the office of the committee and fills out a form describing his capacities and experience. Any shipowner looking for a crew member can send an enquiry to the committee who provides the list of job seekers to him. This work is done manually, and only at local committee level, rather than via a central database system. An experiment was tried in Brittany where requests were posted on a dedicated website, but this did not prove to be efficient, for two reasons. Firstly, internet literacy is not widespread among fishermen. Secondly, and probably more important, the delay between application and posting was generally too long, not because of any particular inefficiency on the part of the committee, but rather because shipowners are frequently looking for a crew member at very short notice: for example a departure in the afternoon of the same day.

According to local committees, this effort has not been particularly successful at easing crew shortages. At the local level at which the system operates, the qualities of most individuals available for work are known by most skippers in any case. An experienced and efficient crew member will be well known and will not have to register on the list of job seekers of the local committee to find an employment. Crew members or shipowners with a poor track record are therefore the main clients of this system, but since their reputation is already known, the process does not support

employment very efficiently. So, to make any difference, the system would have to function more at regional or national level, but there are two key barriers to this: i) lack of IT competence among the clients and ii) the short time scale generally required by the skippers.

In addition, these measures cannot really be regarded as innovative, since they are simply standard initiatives taken by any sector of the economy suffering from recruitment shortages (agriculture, building).

## Conclusions

There have been no innovative recruitment initiatives in the French fisheries sector in the sense understood at the conception of this report. With the exception of some very basic activities (visits to recruitment fairs etc.), there have not been specific educational or marketing initiatives to promote the sector to the French public as a whole, or to target sections of the public such as schoolchildren and the unemployed. There have not been projects aimed at generating new sources of recruits, such as immigrants. Such activities as have been undertaken by the sector (visits to recruitment fairs, centralisation of job opportunities) have been organised at the local level (often by a few individuals) and are limited in scope, ambition and budget. The impact on recruitment of this type of activity is almost impossible to analyse, but is almost certainly very limited.

However, there have been broader changes on a national level which have had the effect of allowing the fisheries sector to try and tackle the recruitment problem. The fisheries sector has taken advantage of major reforms adopted by the French government over the 2003–2005 period to tackle the national priority of unemployment. The set of measures adopted at national level included special dispositions which i) provide the right to training over an entire professional career, and ii) promote mobility between sectors on the ground that some sectors could not provide employment to all their applicants, while other economic sectors were striving to find manpower.

The major challenge faced by the fishing industry was to adapt these general national measures to the specific requirements and challenges of the fishing sector. In this sector of the economy, like most others in France, qualifications and rights of employers and employees are constrained by a tight legal background. Also, all qualifications must be officially approved and registered. This left the fisheries sector with limited scope for action. The professional fishing sector engaged in negotiations with the various national authorities and training institutions to design frameworks that could be used in the fisheries sector according to the national measures adopted. They succeeded in reinforcing the role of the FAF Pêche and its national prerogatives, obtaining a suitable framework for recognition of experience, and implementing the professional training contracts. The output consists in a set of new measures applicable to the fishing industry which could give more flexibility to recruit personnel of all age and of all qualifications, and which provide financial support, particularly for mandatory training.

These measures are new and their efficiency cannot be assessed as yet. What is certain is that mobility is fostered. This is in a sense an innovation, since previously only individuals who chose to enter the fishing industry at a young age (16 to 18 years old) could work on fishing vessels. Now, the fishing industry can recruit from outside the fishing industry individuals with any (related) qualification and of any age.

What remains to be done in France is to attract potential recruits. The instruments to do it are there, but the fishing industry needs to start a large promotion campaign to present the job of a fisherman, its career opportunities and its advantages, notably in terms of salary. The concept has been approved by all the parties concerned, but the nationwide

promotion campaign is still to be designed, funded, and started<sup>5</sup> The small, local initiatives so far undertaken focus on just one aspect of a problem which really needs to be addressed at national level.

### Bibliography

- <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/publications/CEP/peche/index.html> – page on jobs in the fishing industry from Ministry of Work
- [http://www.mer.equipement.gouv.fr/hommes/00\\_presentation/index.htm](http://www.mer.equipement.gouv.fr/hommes/00_presentation/index.htm) – Ministry for Fisheries pages on employment
- <http://www.lycee-maritime-guilvinec.com/> – Maritime school of Le Guilvinec
- <http://www.comite-peches.fr/site/index.php> – National Fisheries Committee (incl. Regional and Local Fisheries Committees)
- <http://www.metiersdelamer.com/> – website presenting jobs related to the sea
- <http://www.mer.gouv.fr/enim/> – institutional website of the social fund for fishermen
- <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/informations-pratiques/fiches-pratiques/formation-professionnelle/validation-acquis-experience-vae-1074.html> – Ministry of Work: pages on the Validation des Acquis
- <http://www.cefcem.fr/> – website of the Concarneau-based European Centre for Fisheries Training
- [http://www.capcreation-peche.com/02\\_cap\\_creation/actions.php](http://www.capcreation-peche.com/02_cap_creation/actions.php)
- [http://www.ifop.agriculture.gouv.fr/pap\\_fep/contributions/FAF\\_Peche.pdf](http://www.ifop.agriculture.gouv.fr/pap_fep/contributions/FAF_Peche.pdf) – presentation of FAF Pêche
- Appui technique préalable à la réalisation du contrat d'études prospectives de la Pêche maritime. Ithaque, Rapport final, avril 1999
- La reconnaissance mutuelle des brevets dans le secteur de la pêche maritime en Europe. Europêche / Cogeca / ETF, Rapport final, Bruxelles, décembre 2000
- L'avenir de la formation maritime en Bretagne. Enjeu de l'adaptation de la formation professionnelle. CLPMEM Guilvinec, décembre 2006
- Le secteur des pêches maritimes. Contrat d'études prospectives. CEREQ / LESSOR / LEN CORRAIL / Ithaque

---

<sup>5</sup> Note that other economic sectors have funded their own promotion campaigns (construction, for example) through press releases and TV advertisements.

## List of interviewees

Unfortunately, exact dates and times of interviews were not recorded. A general date is given.

- Mme Lisette Le Rheun: Local Fisheries Committee of Le Guilvinec (telephone) – January 2007
- Marc Bigot: Local Fisheries Committee of Concarneau (face-to-face) – January 2007
- Michel Soulas: Côtes d'Armor Développement (face-to-face) – January 2007
- Yvon Riva: President FAF Pêche (face-to-face) – December 2006
- Francis Kleitzel: Direction des Affaires Maritimes (telephone) – December 2006
- Philippe Bleunven: shipowner (face-to-face) – December 2006