Abstract

Historically, fishing has been a key factor for the development of coastal towns by providing important cultural, economic, environmental and social values. In the last decades, the change of economic model has caused a considerable fall in traditional activities like inshore fishing and the subsequent negative effects. In this context, tourist activities directly linked with fishing emerge as an interesting diversification alternative for the coastal zones traditionally dependent on fishing, both in Spain and the European Union (EU).

This paper sets out the experience of the SAGITAL Project (2005-07). SAGITAL was carried out by twenty partners from the fishing sector under the coordination of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM) and it was financed by the European Social Fund. The Project was aimed to promoting, both technically and legally, the development of fishing tourism activities. SAGITAL used a management and empowerment methodology which brought about a consensus among professionals, organizations and public authorities in the fishing industry to adapt legislation in force so that it permits and regulates the implementation of these activities.

Keywords: fishing policy, fishing tourism, coastal zones development, management of development projects.

1. Introduction

The evolution of socioeconomic, political and environmental conditions affecting fisheries in the European Union, and particularly in Spain, has provoked a situation of deep crisis in the fishing industry which is leading to a progressive abandonment of the productive activity, both by the companies and by the workers (García, & Montero, 1985).

During past decades the Spanish coastal fishing industry has been drawn into a process of gradual weakening with multiple causes, among which the following stand out:

- Structural problems of the industry: Policy aimed at reducing the activity, increase in the cost of fuel and stagnation of the selling prices of the products.
- Scarce diversification of the economy in coastal regions which have been dependent on fisheries.
- Temporary or seasonal employment and existence of a black market economy.
- Fishermen having turned away from other economic activities not linked to the sea and thus being too dependent on the fishing activity.
- Exclusion of women from the labor environment, women being confined to the least recognized jobs requiring very little qualifications.

As a result, professional fishing activities have endured a progressive loss of profitability; Many fishermen and ship-owners have been forced to abandon their jobs while others must remain inactive for the best part of the year, which provokes a growing decline of social and economical conditions of regions which
have traditionally relied on fishing and fisheries (Viruela, 1995). In some regions fishermen do have access to jobs in other industries or in the tertiary sector, but they feel they have lost their roots working in activities far removed from their traditional way of living. In other coastal regions, those particularly marginalized and with fewer employment alternatives, significant depopulation is on the increase as a consequence of migration to the cities, given the fact that activities on board fishing boats are deemed very arduous for the scarce economic profits they yield (González, 2002).

For all these reasons as well as in order to avoid the disappearance of the fishing activity as such, but also to prevent the demise of a way of living and a set of traditions which are part of our cultural heritage, in recent years a number of initiatives are being considered. These initiatives are aimed at reconciling the interests of the fishing industry, focused on maintaining a way of living, with the circumstances which are currently conditioning its main activity, which is fishing (Cochrane, 2005).

Both National and European administrations are promoting policies and regulations aimed at seeking alternatives which, based on a sustainable fisheries approach, would allow progress towards an improvement in both working conditions and profitability of fishing activities. The new Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union, of which the main objective is maximizing the sustainable use of the oceans and seas, considers that fishing activities should be part of an cross-sectoral integrated approach for the management of the seas which is called an eco-system approach to fisheries management (Directive 2008/56/EC, of 17th June 2008). Therefore, the European Commission considers that the Common Fisheries Policy should include the biological, economic and social dimensions of fishing and should establish coherent measures in the fields of preservation, management and exploitation of living marine resources aimed at reducing the negative environmental impacts of fisheries. In the long term, the fact of including sustainability considerations in the fisheries policy will not only be useful for the environment, but also for the industry itself, since resources need healthy marine ecosystems for their development.

Regarding the improvement of the negative economic and social conditions affecting the industry, the Common Fisheries Policy through the European Fisheries Fund (Regulation (EC) 1198/2006, 0f 27 July 2006), suggests a number of socioeconomic measures and alternatives for diversification with the aim of improving both present and future situations as foreseen. Likewise, the Spanish administration will foster the diversification of activities as an alternative or as something complementary to the traditional fishing activity and its incomes, always favoring those socioeconomic measures which would guaranty sustainable employment, an improvement in working conditions as well as the promotion of local development, as is described in the White Paper on Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food ("Libro Blanco de la Pesca", Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, 2007).

1.1. Fishing tourism as an alternative for diversification

Through the Commission for Socioeconomic Measures and Diversification Alternatives, the studies carried out for the drafting of the White Paper on Fisheries in Spain specifically addressed the need to look for alternatives in order to diversify the Spanish fishing industry. The proposals for diversification which emerged from this Commission responded to the forecasts for the fisheries resources in the short, medium and long term. They where presented as an opportunity for the fishing industry in order to put it on the same level with other industries while complementing the traditional fishing activity and its income as well as providing a way to disseminate the values of the industry that will dignify the profession of fisherman.

Among the proposed alternatives, the activities of Fishing Tourism represent an innovative proposal which, while responding to the needs for diversification of the traditional fishing activity, offer a new alternative tourism product of which demand is on the increase across the market. This growing demand has to do with the interest in rediscovering the environmental values as well as the cultural traditions of our environment; from that point of view, the customs and traditions of the fishing industry provide enormous possibilities for the development of complementary tourist products which would include the contact with nature as well as with the traditional culture of coastal regions (De La Cruz, 2003; Besteiro, 2004; Rodrigues, 2004).

Fishing tourism intends to bring the visitor closer to the world of fishing and to do it through the fishermen themselves (Aldrey, 2000; Pérez & López, 2005). The activities of fishing tourism, whether on land or on board a fishing boat, can be very different and varied depending on each region, each harbor, the period...
of the year or the profile of the tourist. On land, the offer made to tourists can be very diverse; it may include visiting fish markets, lighthouses, shipyards or even walking paths along the shore. In addition it would be possible to enjoy the gastronomy of sea products, to stay in fishermen’s houses or to participate in workshops in order to get acquainted with all the variety of fishing equipments or learn to weave fishing nets or to recognize the local marine species.

Now, if there is an activity which could promote recognition and respect for the marine ecosystem and the work of fishermen, on the part of the visitor, this is precisely fishing tourism which consists in accompanying the crew of a coastal fishing boat during a whole fishing trip, enjoying the voyage and learning from professionals how to value the marine environment and its resources. However, this activity cannot be carried out in Spain since current regulations do not allow the use of fishing vessels for any other purpose than commercial fishing and it prohibits embarkation of persons not belonging to the professional crew.

2. The experience of the SAGITAL project

SAGITAL stands for Services for the Adaptation of the Management of Fishing Tourism Initiatives in Coastal Regions (“Servicios de Adaptación para la Gestión de Iniciativas Turístico-pesqueras en Áreas Litorales”), and the project was carried out in the framework of the European Social Fund EQUAL II Initiative during the period 2005-2007 having been promoted by the Polytechnic University of Madrid. The project proposes a strategy aimed at the development of fishing tourism activities in accordance with the objectives of the European Fisheries Fund as an economic and employment alternative for those towns which depend on the fishing industry. This alternative brings as an innovative approach the promotion of a new concept of alternative tourism for coastal regions and builds upon experiences which have been carried out and validated in the field of rural tourism, experiences which have been transferred to coastal regions after having adapted them to the needs of the organizations and the persons involved in fishing activities. This included adding new activities linked to the sustainable management of marine resources.

The specific objectives were the following:

- To contribute to harmonization of Law within the industry, and more specifically to promote a change of the current regulation of the fishing activity in Spain in order to allow the development of fishing tourism activities.
- To encourage the adaptation of artisan fishing to the structural changes and the environmental impacts by fostering the development of activities of fishing tourism within the framework of a sustainable and responsible fishery.
- To facilitate the integration and adaptation of workers of the fishing industry to the management of other coastal activities, directly involving the fishermen as the main actors of the preservation of the economic structure and of the sustainable development of the coast.
- To promote women’s access to the labor market in the fishing industry or in activities linked to the dissemination of the culture of the fisheries.

2.1. Territorial scope

From a geographic point of view, the Project was carried out in three of the Spanish coastal regions which had been most affected by the crisis in the fishing industry: Cabo Peñas in Asturias, the Gulf of Cadiz in Andalusia and the islands La Graciosa and La Palma in the Canary Isles. The choice of these regions which have clear differences in terms of climate as well as of socioeconomic and cultural structure, was dictated by the objective of maximizing the potential for transfer of results from the project to wider regions (in the Bay of Biscay, the Mediterranean coast or the Balearic and Canary archipelagos).

In addition, from a thematic perspective, the project activities where carried according to three different approaches depending on the region: In Asturias the aim was to foster the development of fishing tourism initiatives building upon the successful experiences of rural tourism transferred to coastal regions (Cebrián, 2008). In Andalusia the focus was on promoting the development of fishing tourism activities in so-called “Zones of Regulated Exploitation of Aquatic Resources” (“Zonas de Aprovechamiento Regulado de Recursos Acuáticos”) (Molina, García & Llanos, 2009). In the Canary Islands the thematic approach
intends to facilitate the development of fishing tourism activities linked to the sustainable management of the resources of Marine Reserves (Pascual, 2003).

2.2. Structure of the partnership and management methodology

The SAGITAL Project involved 20 partners directly concerned by the employment problems faced by companies and workers within the fishing industry. The coordinating and managing body was the General Foundation of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (FGUPM). The partner organizations and their functions where the following (see Table 1):

- **Fishermen Associations**: Federation of the Fisherman’s Guilds of Asturias; Fisherman’s Guild of Conil de la Frontera and Cooperative of the Fishermen of Rota in Andalusia; Fisherman’s Guild of Tazacorte, Fisherman’s Guild of La Palma and Fisherman’s Guild of La Graciosa in the Canary Islands, all of these organizations represented fishermen and ship-owners who where the final beneficiaries of the activities of the project.

- **Trade Unions**: National federation of Communication and Transportation of Comisiones Obreras, which represents the workers of the fishing industry.

- **Local government**: City Council of Gozón (Asturias); City Council of Chiclana de la Frontera (Cadiz), Association of Municipalities of the Lower Guadalquivir (Cadiz); Inter-Island Council of La Palma and Inter-Island Council of Lanzarote (Canary Islands). They acted as facilitators for the actions of the project in their municipalities and territorial spheres of influence.

- **Regional administrations**: Department of Rural Environment and Fisheries of the Principality of Asturias and Department of Fisheries of the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands as entities in charge of fisheries policies with the task of ensuring he complementarity of the actions and to prevent duplications of activities.

- **National Administration**: General Secretariat of Maritime Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Social Institute of the Fleet of the Ministry of labor and Social Affairs as entities in charge of the planning and management of the fisheries policy as well as of the training and professional qualification of the workers of the sea. Both departments had the task of ensuring the complementarity of the projects actions with the National policies as well as the transferability of practices to other coastal regions.

- **Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations**: Association of Young Farmers (“Asociación de Jóvenes Agricultores”), in charge of transferring their experience with rural tourism to the field of fishing tourism; The Association of Women and Families of the Rural Environment (a partner of the huge Union ASAJA) with the task of working with rural women as well as of providing advice and promoting measures aimed at achieving equal opportunities for men and women throughout all the phases of the project; The Institute for Responsible Tourism with the task of providing training and advice concerning practical aspects of the development of sustainable fishing tourism.

- **Educational centers**: The Polytechnic University of Madrid (UPM), the General Foundation of The Polytechnic University of Madrid (FGUPM) and the Superior School of Marketing and Commercial Management (ESIC) with the task of providing technical assistance, management of the project and specialized training regarding the adaptability of the target groups.

- **Other organizations**: The TRAGSA Group which is a state owned company linked to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which specializes in technical assistance.

In order to make sure that all the partners got involved in decision making as well as to allow the participation through them of the final beneficiaries, that is of the companies and the workers of the fishing industry, a decentralized structure was devised. On the one hand, there where Regional Monitoring Commissions (CSR) where the partners of each region met and through which they coordinated themselves, the entities in charge of implementing the project in each region acting as facilitators. On the other hand, there is a Monitoring Committee (CS) made of representatives of each of the three Regional Monitoring Commissions plus the nationwide partners. The coordinating organization...
of the project, namely the General Foundation of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (FGUPM) carries out the tasks of the Secretariat.

Through the CSR the Fisherman’s Guilds, the municipalities and the regional administrations define in detail the different actions included in the SAGITAL Project and draw up a plan for implementing the measures involved. The CSR is also in charge of controlling the actions carried out by analyzing the results through a system of ongoing evaluation. The CSR ensures the participation of final beneficiaries as well as the complementarity of the actions with policies at the regional level.

The CS main purpose is to achieve the internal coherence of the Project and the coordination of all the partners. The CS selects the actions to be carried out by the responsible organizations in the regions, decides on them and approves their final budgets. The CS also controls the activities at the project level and analyses the results by applying an ongoing assessment system, deciding upon any adjustments or corrections deemed necessary in order to achieve the planned objectives. Complementarity of the activities with National policies is ensured through the CS. The Monitoring Committee is also in charge of preparing the eventual transfer of results to other regions in Spain or in the EU.

### Table 1: Diagram of the partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Administration</th>
<th>Regional Commissions</th>
<th>Educational Centers</th>
<th>Other Organizations, Foundations and Environmental Organizations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federación de CCAA. de la pesca y actividades de ocio</td>
<td>CRS (Regional Monitoring Commissions)</td>
<td>Instituto de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Social</td>
<td>UNED</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretaria de Pesca y de la Acuicultura</td>
<td>CRS (Regional Monitoring Commissions)</td>
<td>Instituto de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Social</td>
<td>CSIC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación</td>
<td>CRS (Regional Monitoring Commissions)</td>
<td>Instituto de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Social</td>
<td>Ayuntamiento de la FederaciónEspañola de Pesca y la Acuicultura Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red pesquera de la Comunidad Autónoma de Canarias</td>
<td>CRS (Regional Monitoring Commissions)</td>
<td>Instituto de la Pesca y la Acuicultura Social</td>
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### 3. Implementation and results achieved

In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives it was necessary to address two important challenges: On the one hand, the foundations had to be laid for the development of a legal framework which would allow the fishing tourism activity to be carried out by the professionals of the fishing industry and using their fishing boats and would regulate this activity. On the other hand, it was necessary to develop tools for supporting the adaptation of human resources (Training and advice) as well as for the adaptation of the vessels.

The definition of the specific activities of the Project as well as the drawing up of a working plan were both carried out by the partners involved using a “bottom up approach”, and this was done through the Regional Monitoring Commissions (CRS) and the Monitoring Committee (CS), always bearing in mind the need to coordinate the activities with Regional and National policies as well as ensuring complementarity with these policies. The activities were divided in three working programs:

- **Program 1**: Drawing up an agreed strategy for the promotion of activities of fishing tourism
- **Program 2**: Developing and start using tools for supporting the diversification of activities.
- **Program 3**: Supporting the implementation of initiatives aimed at the diversification of activities.
As far as the first challenge is concerned, the Project led to the drawing up of a common strategy for promoting fishing tourism activities based upon a wide consensus within the fishing industry. To that end, in the framework of Program 1, legal and technical studies were carried out.

Table 2: Diagram summarizing the process of carrying out the studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Action Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 06</td>
<td>Legal Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 06</td>
<td>Elaboration of the studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 06</td>
<td>Technical Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 07</td>
<td>PRESENTATION TO THE PARTNERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 07</td>
<td>Modifications are added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 07</td>
<td>CONSENSUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DEFINITIVE STUDIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUBMISSION TO ADMINISTRATIONS AND DISSEMINATION WITHIN THE FISHING INDUSTRY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Starting from the “study on the legal regulation of the fishing tourism: Definition of the activity, analysis of the current legal framework and proposal for a new regulation” which was conducted by a team of jurists from both the Complutense and the Polytechnic universities of Madrid, the legal impediments which prevented the carrying out of fishing tourism activities where identified and a proposal for the modification of State Law 3/2001 on Maritime Fisheries, currently in force, was drawn up. As a complementary measure a team of naval engineers from the Polytechnic University of Madrid prepared a “Technical study on the modifications to be made to fishing vessels in order to carry out fishing tourism activities in Spain”. This study was aimed at determining the adaptations deemed necessary in order to carry out the activities of fishing tourism on board fishing vessels in conditions of adequate security and comfort.

Once the studies had been drafted (by October 2006), they were presented to the project’s partners as working documents. This was followed by a three months period during which the partners would be able to study, individually, the proposals made and make remarks or suggestions. These observations and allegations would then be shared and reviewed in a meeting held in March 2007 during which the partners agreed on additions and modifications of the drafts. In consequence, and according to the agreements which had been reached, new versions of both documents were drafted and sent to the partners in case they might make further remarks. By the end of April the drafting phase of the proposal for the regulation of fishing tourism came to an end and in early June the proposal, together with the legal and technical studies in their final versions, were submitted to the Ministries of Labor, of Public Works and of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for their review and, if need be, the beginning of the process of modification of rules and regulations currently in force.

Finally, in the island of Lanzarote, at the end of November 2007, in the framework of the final conference where the results of the SAGITAL project were being presented, and once the vast majority of the representatives of the fishing industry had adhered to the proposal, the so-called “Declaration of Lanzarote” was drafted: It aims at promoting the regulation of fishing tourism activities and to foster its development, focusing specifically in Fishing tourism on board fishing boats (See Table 2).

As stated before, the other challenge focused on the design of supporting tools for those final beneficiaries who might be interested in starting up activities of diversification around fishing tourism. To that end, on the one hand a methodology for the analysis of the potential adaptation capacity to diversification activities related to Fishing Tourism of both companies and workers was drafted and a first selection of those activated better suited to the characteristics of each coastal region was made. On the other hand, a set of innovative supporting tools was developed. These tools, aimed at the
accompaniment of the process of starting up different activities related to fisheries tourism, took the form of so-called “Project Guide books”, which set the technical and commercial parameters and discussed the management capacities needed to run activities related to fisheries tourism.

Table 3: Diagram summarizing the design of tools for supporting management

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TRAINING PLANS AND PROJECT GUIDES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handbook for awareness raising for sustainable Fishing Tourism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre for Fishing Tourism Activities (CARF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing Tourism activities on land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fishing Tourism activities at sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>The sea chef</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handbooks on Local Opportunities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TRAINING OF ADVISORS

At the same time and in order to stimulate adaptation to these new activities related with tourism and fisheries, a number of companies were selected and their staff (both managers and workers) was informed about the new possibilities offered by fishing tourism related activities. In order to conduct these awareness raising activities technical personnel in charge of advising companies and fishermen in connection with the needed adaptation to and the starting up of fishing tourism activities had to be trained. Likewise and as a support to the starting up of diversification initiatives, the project set up Support Services Centers in each of the three coastal regions. From these Centers, the support personnel, trained in the SAGITAL project’s methodology have been conducting technical assistance activities directed at companies and workers all along their process of adaptation to and starting up of activities linking fisheries and tourism (See Table 3)

As a supporting element to the introduction of fishing tourism activities, a Geographic Information System, called GIS_SAGITAL has been developed. This system having been included in the SAGITAL platform (Geographic Web Service) has made all the information on fishing tourism activities readily available for anyone interested, and it has done so in a simple a quick manner (See Table 4). The system is based on the GIS-WEB technology and allows the use of thematic maps with different scales and levels of detail which provide information about the fishing tourism related services and sites of interest for each of the three targeted coastal regions. Access to the platform is granted through the SAGITAL website (www.sagital.upm.es), which has made available “on line” all the different products which make up the SAGITAL methodology for the identification and implementation of fishing tourism related activities.

Figure 4: Outline of SIG-SAGITAL and SAGITAL platform
4. Transnational cooperation activities

Fully aware of the fact that the strategy proposed by the SAGITAL Project would be easy to transfer to other regions, as well as of the fact that experiences conducted in other countries could bring innovative elements to the process of adaptation by our companies and workers, a transnational partnership was established. The Transnational Partnership included the “Cap Emploi Pêche Et Culture Marine” project from France and the PINTA project (“Proposta Integrata Natura Turismo Adattabilità”) from Italy. The results of the Transnational Working Plan have allowed the creation of a forum where the Spanish, Italian and French administrations could debate on the adaptation of the artisan fishing industry to the structural changes and the environmental impacts, supporting the development of fishing tourism related activities within the framework of sustainable and responsible fisheries.

5. Conclusions

As with rural tourism, with has achieved the diversification of employment and the generation of new income for farmers and stockbreeders, fishing tourism presents a valuable opportunity which would allow companies and workers of the fishing industry to carry out complementary activities in addition to commercial fishing as well as to tackle the employment crisis they are facing. On top of bringing new income for fishermen and their families, the development of fishing tourism related activities, brings the tourists closer to the world of commercial fishing thus facilitating the dissemination of the fishing culture and contributing to the spread of knowledge and appreciation of the value of the commercial fishing activity and of the marine resources.

The SAGITAL Project has highlighted the interest of the fishing industry towards new activities and approaches, the will to assume new functions and the wish, on the part of fishermen, to be recognized for their role as managers of the resources of the sea, since they depend on the sea and its resources much more than anyone else. The project has identified fishing tourism related activities as those able to reconcile the world of commercial fishing with the tourism demand along our shores through the promotion and dissemination of the traditional fishing culture. Among all those possibilities, activities of fishing tourism proper have been set apart from all other activities related with tourism linked fisheries, and these fishing tourism activities, which have a much more sensitive nature, have been defined as “activities involving professional fishermen in the maritime commercial fishing, which aimed at the dissemination, appreciation of the value and promotion of the way of living, the customs and the culture of those persons working in the fishing industry, allow that third persons, non crew members, embark on fishing boats and pay an agreed amount of money for so doing” with the aim of observing and getting acquainted with the fishing activities, the tools of the trade, the coastal routes and the marine environment.

In this context, support is growing among both responsible authorities in Spain and representatives of the main organizations of the fishing industry, for the idea of developing a legal framework that will allow the regulated practice of those activities.

Likewise, at the European level, given the approach that has been adopted for the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy of the Union as well as the guidelines of the European Fisheries Fund, and taking into account the fact that some member States have already passed legislation on the issue (such is the case in Italy which passed the 13th April 1999 Decree setting regulation of the fishing tourism activity, developing the provisions made by the Law of 17th January 1982 regarding fishing tourism activities), it seems reasonable to think that a proposal to regulate this fishing tourism activities at EU level might be well received by the Commission.

In this regard, we should highlight the importance of the so-called “Declaration of Lanzarote”, linked to one of the main objectives of the Project, and aimed at promoting the regulation of fishing tourism activities and the development of those, and specifically of fishing tourism proper. This Declaration is indeed fostering legal changes as can be seen in the motion presented to the Spanish Congress (Reference 161/001057) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on May 19th 2009, a Green Paper that was unanimously approved. According to the aforementioned motion or Green paper, the future Sustainable Fisheries Act, now in the process of becoming a Bill that will replace currently in force Act 3/201, of March 26th, regulating Maritime Fisheries of the State, does include in its draft articles the very definition of fishing tourism proposed by the SAGITAL project.
References


Contact details (For further information contact with):

E.T.S.I. Topografía, Geodesía y Cartografía
Campus Sur UPM
Ctra. Valencia km 7,5 (28031 Madrid)
Agustín Molina García
Phone: +34 91 336 6480
Fax: +34 91 336 7932
E-mail: agustin.molina@upm.es
URL: www.sagital.upm.es