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TEK Progress Report

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Cover Photo: Fishing Nets of Pafos, Courtesy of Evdokia Balamou

Introduction

One of the objectives of the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) component of the CHERISH-project is to enhance co-learning and knowledge sharing among participating regions. This progress report has been created to support this process.

Snowchange has asked all partner regions participating in the TEK aspects of the CHERISH project to share news and updates on how their own TEK work is progressing. The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the Cherish project in multiple ways. One of these is a reduction in communications and information sharing between organisations.

Despite these difficulties caused by the pandemic Snowchange is excited and proud to inform all partners that the TEK work is progressing well. Also, that final TEK outcomes will be presented from some of the partner regions later this spring.

We feel this report combined with the real practical regional TEK case studies will be of inspiration and support for all CHERISH partners. We also hope that it will offer practical guidance, ideas and methodological advice for any region in Europe interested in starting TEK-themed work involving local fisheries.



Lamprey Net, Riga Latvia Courtesy of Inese Koluškina

UPDATES FROM THE REGIONS:

MUNICIPALITY OF MIDDLEBURG

Jack Dooms has progressed well with the TEK work outcomes, with the final report being ready for release later this spring. The report consists of two parts, these are: an introduction to the traditional fishery in the region based on archival materials and photos. Also, a practical section based on participatory research methods. This work focuses on living TEK in the region practiced by selected professional fishers.



Mini trawlers build by young people of Arnhemuiden Courtesy of Middelburg Municipality

MUNICIPALITY OF KAVALA

Kavala has created a detailed practical methodology for their local fishery TEK work. The scale of the work in Kavala is ambitious and carefully planned. Below is a summary of the main points and methodology of this study carried out by Effrosyni Boskou.

TEK and elements of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of fishing communities in the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex by Effrosyni Boskou

The aim of the study is to record, study and showcase not only the 'Traditional Ecological Knowledge' (TEK) of fishing communities in the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex but also other elements of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. This approach has been chosen in order to include both local fishers' traditional knowledge as well as aspects of this knowledge that has been lost or to a large extent "forgotten". That is the knowledge that existed, but does not exist anymore in

the current daily fishing practices. The above mentioned two-fold aim of the research safeguards a more holistic and integrated approach.

Study area: Nestos Delta Lagoon Complex

Nestos Delta Lagoon Complex is a part of the East Macedonia and Thrace National Park and is located in the North East of Greece. It includes eight lagoons, that cover an area of 9.5km, while seven of them are found in Kavala Regional Unit. This case study focuses on four lagoons of Kavala Regional Unit: Keramoti, Aghiasma, Erateino and Vassova. These four lagoons are utilized by the local fishermen cooperative, named Nestos Lagoon Fishing Cooperative (NLFC).

Methodology

The current case study focuses mainly on qualitative data, that are being collected using various methods. The bibliographic and archival research has been the basis of the study. A variety of primary and

secondary sources, such as books, articles, photographs, postcards, official records and art, have been examined and analyzed thoroughly, in order to outline and determine the main objectives and the themes of the study. The bibliographic and archival research has been conducted successfully thanks to the precious and fruitful collaboration with the researchers of the Fishing Research Institute of Kavala and the PERICLES project.

An essential part of the study is the ethnographic methodology, an on-site research approach that provides rich, holistic insights into fishing communities' views and actions, as well as the nature of the location they inhabit. It uses various techniques for data collection that are summarized below:

Participant observation deals with what the researcher sees, hears and encounters in the field. Detailed notes, photos, videos, conversations and sometimes participation in the fishing-related activities are the tools that are being used.

Semi-structured interviews that have been carefully planned beforehand and are usually conducted as one-on-one conversation with the fishers. Questions are predetermined but open-ended in order to allow more freedom for the interviewee to answer and explain.

Oral history methodology, where historical research is conducted through recorded interviews between a narrator with personal experience of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of adding to the historical record. These interviews were

recorded using audiotapes, videotapes and transcriptions of planned interviews.

Another key theme of this study is the contribution of the stakeholder meetings to the development of proper relations, the building of trust between the researcher and the fishing communities, and the communication of the recognition of the role and the importance of the CHERISH project. This has made the TEK work much easier.

Content of the study

The research themes are:

- Demographic profile of the fishermen
- Geography of the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex
- Natural Environment of the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex
- History and organization and management of the Lagoon Fishing Cooperative (LFC)
- Lagoon fishing
- Fishing infrastructure and tools of the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex
- Fishing in the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex and art
- Intangible Fishing Cultural Heritage in the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex

The target group includes the fishers of the Nestos Delta Lagoon complex (Keramoti, Vassova, Karaschou and Aghiasma), with a focus on:

- The President of the LFC.
- The Captains of the LFC.
- A member of the Management Board of the LFC.
- Fishers of different age groups (from old to newcomers).
- Retired fishers.

An Update on TEK work in Kavala based on e-mail exchanges with Effrosyni Bouskou:

The Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions have suspended the planned field work in Kavala region thus far in 2021. Work has concentrated on transcribing existing interviews and organizing data collection. Restrictions permitting, interviews will continue later this spring. On the 9th March 2021 Kavala held their 7th stakeholder meeting, where the best use of collected data was discussed with the participants.



Lagoon Fishery Kavala, Courtesy of Effrosyni Bouskou

RIGA PLANNING REGION

Riga Planning Region has a diverse and living lamprey fisheries heritage. Latvians are well aware of the importance of this heritage and have been strongly active in developing and safeguarding their lamprey-themed practices and traditions. They have succeeded in promoting these traditions locally, nationally and internationally prior to the CHERISH project.

Update on TEK work in Riga Planning Region by I. Brieze and Ā.Ādler.

Riga Planning Region (RPR) has selected lamprey catching and cooking as a focus of its traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) work within the context of the CHERISH project. Documentation of Lamprey catching and cooking is a selected activity in TEK work.

At present, the information, data and visual material are being collected and systematized to develop Lamprey catching and cooking TEK descriptions. As a result of the activity, detailed description with photos, graphs and maps are being created.

These will be summarised in both English and Latvian. The work is intended to be both published and downloadable online.

Latvia is one of the richest countries in Europe in the context of traditional knowledge. Fishing practices are centuries old and in most cases are related to the Baltic trade routes, spawning grounds, family traditions and catching areas. TEK is not only for museums but can be useful for fishers and communities. TEK also has the potential to be integrated into fisheries and coastal nature management plans.

This knowledge can be used to increase the economic activity of the territory. It should also be recognised for its value to increase self-esteem and pride of the communities keeping and popularizing TEK.

The main sections of TEK description are:

- 1. Characteristics and description of lamprey*
- 2. Mapped lamprey catching places and tools*
- 3. Lamprey catch volumes and resource multiplication*
- 4. Lamprey catching families, and locations*

5. Lamprey TEK keepers and promoters
6. Cooking and recipes for lamprey preparation
7. Selling and commercialization of lamprey
8. Sources of information

Objective and potential use of TEK description:

- Publishing and promotion of TEK in various internet platforms, local community groups, coastal municipalities, tourism information centres, museums.
- Promoting TEK among school children and young people in their environmental and local history studies.
- As material for dissemination of TEK to other audiences and target groups to increase awareness in its value.



Lamprey cooking on the fire, Courtesy of Gustavs Vītols

Future lamprey catching and cooking TEK work:

- Documenting detailed knowledge of skills and tools related to lamprey catching;
- Few video testimonies are available about lamprey catching TEK, thus recording of concrete practices (fishing, placing wires, etc.) is necessary.
- Timely identification of possible threats to knowledge transfer of the lamprey catching trade.
- If such threats arise the Municipality of Riga has developed the capacity to respond.

Lamprey catching and cooking TEK developments:

This work is currently being compiled in Latvian with an English translation to follow. The layout design, development and publication are expected in early May, 2021. The works strategic dissemination will then be agreed among the CHERISH team and Riga region stakeholders.

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Cyprus has taken an active role in the TEK work concerning the local fishery from the beginning of the CHERISH project. They have established relationships and good

communications with their fishers and are active in creating methods, collecting data/material. The possible outcomes and uses for the TEK materials collected include a book about the traditional Cyprus fishery and a database/platform to host and safeguard the materials.

As the Pafos partners were unfortunately unable for discussing their TEK work plans at the Riga CHERISH meeting (October 2020), Snowchange have summarized their TEK workplan, based on a presentation prepared by Evdokia Balamou:

Main themes of Pafos TEK work:

- Documenting rare traditional net making as only a very few practitioners are left in Cyprus.
- Investigation of fish species, fishing mesh sizes and fishing places.
- Changing fishing practices and fisheries in Cyprus.
- Traditional fishery and fishing gear.
- Recording and understanding the role of maritime professions in Cyprus, with a special focus on local ship building traditions.

Methodology, Key stages:

- Interviews with fishers and stakeholders.
- Archival research on fishing and shipbuilding.
- Systematic documentation during fieldwork using a series of appropriate forms.
- Archival research of photographs.
- Creation of a database / archive.

Possible outcomes of the TEK work in Cyprus are:

- Publications – a book about the history of fishing and shipbuilding in Cyprus with a small publication documenting testimonies of traditional fishing practices.
- Videos.
- Photo exhibitions.
- Training of net making techniques with workshops for young people.
- Creation of an online platform to host all material.



Fisherman at harbour, Courtesy of Evdokia Balamou

Workplan

A lot of data and material, including videos, interviews, testimonies and photos, have already been collected, with processing of all those materials currently underway.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we can see from the examples above TEK work is well underway in all the participating CHERISH regions. This is despite the present challenging working environment caused by Covid-19. All regions have been able to create methods and workplans best suited to their local fisheries TEK work. Practicing and active small-scale local fisheries and their long-running traditions and environmental knowledge they carry deserve and need attention if they are to survive, thrive and offer high-quality fish products to local and

international markets.

It is encouraging to see that the desired outcomes of the CHERISH TEK work include not only the very important preservation and safeguarding of knowledge in report, book and online database form. But also includes ideas of immersion and training of young adults and children in the fishing traditions, combined with outreach to wider local, national, and international audiences. This work ensures the continuity and transfer of the local traditional fisheries knowledge to the region's younger generations.

References

CHERISH: website <https://www.interregeurope.eu/cherish/>
twitter: https://twitter.com/cherish_eu

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